

What's Yours Then?

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA
Free Newsletter



Contains Full List of Highlands & Western Isles Real Ale Outlets



Castle Tavern

**Highlands & Western Isles
Pub-of-the-Year**



As a new
decade
begins
we look
back at
the 00s



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Spring 2010

Welcome... to the Spring edition of our quarterly newsletter. In this edition:

- > Updated Branch Diary
- > Tasting Panel Update
- > Socials & Outings - Reports
- > Festivals Update
- > Focus on - Mark Kilby
- > Your Letters and E-mails
- > Real Cider News
- > Pub & Brewery News
- > Updated Real Ale Pubs list

We welcome your letters, news, views and opinions. Let us know what is happening at your local, or tell us about pubs you have visited. Thanks to all who have taken trouble to send in pub and beer reports, or articles, but especially to regulars Bill, Eric, Gareth, and Steven, who keep us up-to-date with brews and what is happening in local pubs.

Please note that the editor reserves the right to edit contributions sent for publication. All marks and copyright are acknowledged.

Summer edition **deadline** is 1st June, with publication in time for the Summer visitor.

If you would like to place an advert, please contact one of the branch officers (page 6). Advertising rates are as follows:

- Full Page Advert..... £58.00
- Half Page Advert..... £33.50
- Quarter Page Advert..... £18.00

There is a discount on placement of a fourth consecutive advert. Adverts are accepted on condition that inclusion does not necessarily imply an endorsement or approval of content.

We much prefer to receive artwork as a PDF or JPEG file, or Word document. We can help in preparing your advert if you wish.

3,500+ copies are distributed to Branch members, to Highlands & Islands brewers, to Good Beer Guide listed and Real Ale pubs; plus extra copies to advertisers.

What's Yours Then is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Highlands & Western Isles Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The views & opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA, nor its Branches.

Highlands & Western Isles

Pub-of-the-Year 2010

Congratulations to Landlord George MacLean, Manageress Veronica Finlayson, and everybody in the hard-working team at the **Castle Tavern** in Inverness on their being selected as our Pub-of-the-Year for 2010. The full list of winners by district, as voted for by local CAMRA members, can be found on page 4. Sadly only one pub can go forward to the Scottish and then British Pub-of-the-Year judging, and the unenviable task of selection falls upon the committee. CAMRA judging guidelines were strictly followed and scores were awarded according to the following: Quality of Beer/Cider/Perry, Atmosphere/Style/Décor, Service/Welcome, Clientele Mix, Sympathy with CAMRA aims, and Good Value.

Website Matters

We have been updating our website. There is work to do still, but please take a look and let us know what you think. New address is -

<http://highlandcamra.webnode.com/>

or follow links from our published address - www.highlandcamra.org.uk

Pub Closures

According to press reports the rate of pub closures has slowed. This is obviously good news for drinkers but, on the down side, has the rate slowed merely due to the decreasing number of pubs still in business?

Pubs will no doubt continue to close for what ever reason, and no doubt some new ones will open, but hopefully there will always be a call for pubs with hard-working landlords or landladies who, with willing and knowledgeable staff, provide high quality food and drink and a warm welcome for locals and visitors alike.

As we have seen recently at one of our top award-winning pubs poor stewardship can bring even the most successful business to its knees! Thankfully a rescue act is in progress.

Trading Standards Office: Contact details for issues such as no price lists or consistent short measures - 0845 600 4 222

e-mail - consumer.advice@highland.gov.uk
www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/highland



"In a country where some things are confusing . . ."



"Some things are clear . . ."

A crisp golden ale with a citrus finish . . .

June Beer Festival

"Sweet FA"



BREWERY AND SHOP

Opening hours:

Mon – Sat : 10am -4pm Sun : 12.30pm – 4pm

Just off the A83 at the top of Loch Fyne

Tours by appointment - www.fyneales.com

Sat 19th June - A Beer Festival at the Brewery - Tel 01499 600120

Highlands & Western Isles Pubs-of-the-Year 2010

We are very pleased to announce that our Pubs-of-the-Year for 2010, as selected by local members, are:

Inverness & District North

Inverness & District South

(tied vote)

South Skye & Lochalsh

(tied vote)

North Skye & Hebrides

Fort William & Lochaber

Aviemore & Cairngorms

Wester Ross

Caithness & Sutherland

Benleiva Hotel, Drumnadrochit

Castle Tavern, Inverness

Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel, Nairn

Plockton Hotel, Plockton

Plockton Inn, Plockton

Stein Inn, Waternish

Grog & Gruel, Fort William

Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge

Applecross Inn, Applecross

Scourie Hotel, Scourie

Benleiva Hotel, Drumnadrochit

Popular, friendly village inn near Loch Ness. The sweet chestnut outside this 400-year-old former manse was once a hanging tree. Four handpumps, mostly Highlands & Islands ales, usually one from Isle of Skye Brewery. A fifth handpump dispenses Westons ciders. Evening meals, lunches and Sunday roasts are served all year. The pub hosts the Loch Ness Beer Festival in September, occasional quiz nights and traditional music. Dog friendly.

Castle Tavern, Inverness (tied vote)

Minutes from the city centre, this 19th century listed building faces Inverness Castle and overlooks the River Ness. There is always a warm welcome and lively buzz in the bar, a favourite haunt for discerning visitors and locals. Six handpumps dispense an Isle of Skye Brewery house beer plus changing guests mostly from Scottish independents. Good value bar meals are served all day. A Victorian-style canopy covers the large patio.

Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel (tied vote)

Five handpumps serve local Scottish ales, mainly from Islands of Skye and Orkney, plus a changing selection of English brews. Real cider on handpump. Close to Nairn beach and the historic Fishertown with Thomas Telford harbour, this family run hotel is renowned for its Scottish and seafood menu served in the sea view restaurant which boasts stunning views over the Moray firth. A beer festival is held every March featuring up to 50 ales.

Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge

Nestling in the centre of a traditional Scottish Highland village, just off the A9 and close to the Landmark Heritage Park, this busy, cozy bar is popular with both locals and visitors. Walkers and cyclists are welcome, and there is dry storage for bikes. Bar meals, soup and toasties are available all day. Two handpumps dispense mainly Scottish ales, usually from Cairngorm, Isle of Skye, Caledonian, Black Isle, Orkney, and Atlas breweries.

Grog & Gruel, Fort William

In the shadow of Britain's highest mountain, this bare-floored traditional ale house keeps up to six beers in summer. Owned by the same family as the Clachaig Inn in Glencoe, it holds regular live music and beer festivals. Beers are predominantly Scottish, often from the local Glenfinnan Brewery, and the bar is busy with locals, outdoor enthusiasts and tourists. Home-cooked food in upstairs dining room or light meals and snacks in the bar.

Applecross Inn

Owned by the same family since 1989, the inn is spectacularly situated on the shore of the Applecross Peninsula. It is reached by a single track road over the highest vehicular ascent in Britain, or by a longer scenic route. Two Isle of Skye Brewery beers on tap. Comfortable accommodation, and local seafood is a menu speciality. Regular ceilidhs feature, and the area is ideal for climbing, walking and wildlife watching.

(Continued on page 8)



Good things brewing in the Highlands



2009 SPECIALS

Available
Apr/May



Available
May



Available
Jun/
Jul/Aug



Available
Sept

Available
Sept/Oct



PERMANENT BEERS



Black Gold
Supreme
Champion of
the Year 2009
as voted
by SIBA

tel: 01479 812 222

email: info@cairngormbrewery.com
www.cairngormbrewery.com

Why not visit our shop at the brewery in Aviemore, now open (Mon-Sat), or book a tour (available Mon-Fri) and see how we make our beer.

10% discount when you bring this ad along to the shop.

Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)


Mon 29th March - Mon 5th April >>> **National Cask Ale Week** <<<

Tues 30th March Tasting Evening Castle Tavern, Inverness

Thurs 1st - Sat 10th April * Easter Ale Festival Grog and Gruel, Fort William

Wed 7th - Sun 25th April * Real Ale Festival Kings Highway, Inverness

Tues 13th April Branch Meeting Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit

Sat 24th April  Social/Outing around Loch Ness - Meet at Inverness Town House for 11:00 Bus

Tues 27th April Tasting Evening Meet at Culbockie Inn, Black Isle

>>> **May is Mild Month** <<<

Tues 11th May Committee Meeting Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore

Tues 25th May Tasting Evening Meet Riverside Tavern, Conon Bridge


Thurs 3rd - Sat 5th June Aberdeen Beer Festival Pittodrie Stadium

Tues 8th June Branch Meeting Cawdor Tavern

Sat 19th June Marymas Fair Real Ale Bar Northern Meeting Park, Inverness


'Mid Summer' * Summer Ale & Sausage Festival Grog and Gruel, Fort William

Thurs 24th - Sat 26th June Scottish Real Ale Festival George St, Edinburgh

Tues 29th June  Social/Outing - Glenfinnan Brewery and the road to Mallaig - Meet at Town House

Tasting Evening Aviemore, meet at Glenmore Lodge

Sat 10th July

Tues 13th July  Social/Outing - Isle of Skye Brewery and Real Ale pubs - 09:00 meet at Town House

Committee Meeting Kinlochewe Hotel

Please see on-line diary at <http://highlandcamra.webnode.com/events-calendar/>

Contact

Gareth Hardman (Secretary & Branch Contact) - 01463 238462

Details

18, Scorguie Gardens, Inverness, IV 3 8 5S.

contact@highlandcamra.org.uk or secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk



Eric Mills - 01456 459343

Mike Whittall - 01463 831259

chair@highlandcamra.org.uk

news@highlandcamra.org.uk

BANDSTAND

BAR & RESTAURANT, NAIRN

CAMRA Highlands & Western Isles
PUB OF THE YEAR 2009



Inverness & District South
PUB OF THE YEAR 2009



Inverness & District South
PUB OF THE YEAR 2010
(joint winner)



6 Real Ale Pumps
Scottish & English
from a wide selection of
your favourite breweries

Dine in our popular
SEA VIEW
RESTAURANT
excellent Bar Meals,
Sea Food & Steaks



Braeval Hotel, Crescent Rd, Nairn Tel: 01667 452341
www.braevalhotel.co.uk email info@braevalhotel.co.uk

OPEN
ALL
YEAR

Benleeva Hotel

Tel:
01456
450080

Drumnadrochit, Loch Ness

www.lochnesshotel.com

CAMRA Pub-of-the-Year Awards

Highland 2003 & 2005, Inverness 2006 & 2007 (tied)

Inverness & District North Pub-of-the-Year 2009

**9th Loch Ness Beer Festival
17th - 25th September 2010**

**En-Suite Accommodation
Excellent Food Every Evening
Lunches Every Day**

Scourie Hotel

An historic coaching inn on the site of an old fortified house, the hotel is a popular retreat for fishermen and has 36 fishing beats held exclusively for guests. Overlooking Scourie Bay it is handy for the bird reserve of Handa Island and the peaks of Ben Stack, Arkle and Foinavon. In addition to the bar menu, the hotel dining room serves high quality meals featuring local seafood, the menu changing daily. Four handpumps dispense mainly Scottish beers, usually from Cairngorm in winter and one, or two, Westons ciders.

Plockton Hotel (tied vote)

Sheltered by mountains and fanned by the warm air of the Gulf Stream the hotel is set in a sweep of traditional white-washed Highland cottages at the edge of Loch Carron and boasts breathtaking views across the bay. Seafood is the specialty on a menu which also features Highland venison and locally reared beef. The National Trust conservation village has much to offer and is a regular haunt for outdoor enthusiasts. Brews from the local Plockton Brewery are regularly on tap.

Plockton Inn (tied vote)

This popular village inn, set in the heart of the beautiful village of Plockton, has been owned and run by a local family for many years.

Locally caught fish and shellfish take pride of place on the menu and the seafood platter includes fish smoked on the premises. Every Tuesday and Thursday there are live music sessions in the public bar and all present are very welcome to join in. A regularly changing selection of real ales includes locally brewed Plockton Brewery ales.

Stein Inn

Family-run eighteenth-century inn, nestling in a row of cottages on the shores of Loch Bay. Home-cooked local produce, including fresh seafood, is served in the bar and restaurant from a menu that changes daily in accordance with the season's availability. Both bar and large shore-side garden afford stunning views over the sea loch to Rubha Maol. An open central fireplace warms the cosy low-beamed bar. Facilities for passing seafarers include council moorings, showers, food supplies (by arrangement), and message relay services.



Blackfriars Highland Pub



*Traditional Highland Food (New Menu)
Cooked to order using fresh local produce*

Real Ales and Real Ciders On Tap

Open all day, every day - food served every day

NATIONAL
**Cask Ale
WEEK**
29th MARCH - 5th APRIL 2010

**Easter Weekend
2nd - 5th April**

Blackfriars Events:



Friday 2nd April is Plockton Brewery Day

A Great Day to Enjoy with

Crags, Starboard and Plockton Bay Ales

PLUS Traditional Music from Plockton's

"The Ale Is Dear" Trio

**Andy the Brewer on the Fiddle! Dave Hardy on Guitar, Banjo and Pedal
John Phillips on Whistle, Harmonica, Concertina & Bodhran (from 9.30pm)**

Saturday 3rd April

Inverness's Top Rock & Blues Band "Twisted Blues"

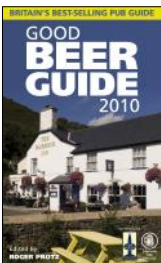
**Featuring Ian, Bobby and Roger playing the Best of Music
Don't miss them, from 9.30pm onwards**

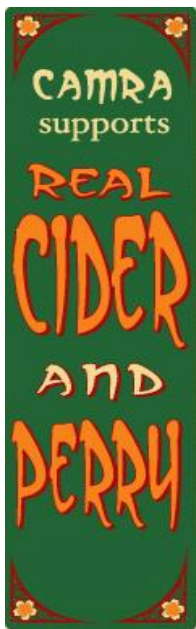
Sunday 4th April

**50's, 60's and Country from your very own
"Singing Landlord"**

**and maybe the Odd Guest
4.30pm until Finish, with breaks**

**93-95 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1 LU
01463 233881 www.blackfriarshighlandpub.co.uk**





Traditional Cider Matters

Real Cider and/or **Real Perry** is sold (or has recently been sold) in the following inns & hotels. (Please note that some may be seasonal outlets). Please let us know if you find additional outlets selling real cider or perry.

The Anderson, Fortrose - Thatchers Heritage Cider

Eagle - Inn on the Loch, Laggan Locks - Thatchers Original Cider

Stronlossit Inn, Roy Bridge - Thatchers Cheddar Valley Cider

Strathcarron Hotel - Thatchers Cider (rotated with cask ales)

Glen Hotel, Newtonmore - Westons Old Rosie or 1st Quality Cider

Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit - Westons 1st Quality Cider

Scourie Hotel - Two Westons Ciders on handpump

King's Highway, Inverness - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Cider; Thatchers Heritage & Dry Cider

Alexander Bain, Wick - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Cider; Thatchers Heritage & Dry Cider

Badachro Inn - Westons Cider is served here

Argyll Hotel, Ullapool - Westons ciders from the box

Altnacealgach Inn, nr Ledmore Junction - Mike & Kate are giving some thought to serving a real cider. Tel: 01854 666260

Kinlochewe Hotel, at the foot of Beinn Eithe, is serving Westons 1st Quality Draft Cider

Blackfriars, Inverness - Westons Old Rosie Scrumpy and 1st Quality Ciders on handpump

Clachaig Inn, Glencoe - Thatchers Heritage Cider was found here last August.

Bandstand Bar, Nairn - Westons ciders on a recently installed handpump. If successful we understand that a second handpump will be installed for the Summer season (at least).

Cider Pub-of-the-Year

Congratulations to (singing) landlord Del Graham on Blackfriars Highland Pub & Restaurant being nominated as our Highlands & Western Isles Cider Pub-of-the-Year for 2009.

Blackfriars will now join the search to find the CAMRA Cider & Perry Pub of the Year and will be judged against Branch nominations from throughout the land.

The competition is in its sixth year and the judges are looking for a pub that actively promotes real cider ahead of other drinks, and where staff are committed to serving high quality real cider and perry.

The Orchard Inn, a one-bar street corner local in the heart of maritime Bristol, is the current holder of this prestigious award. Your cider correspondent has visited this welcoming hostelry, and can confirm it is worthy of the award!

I'm sure Blackfriars regulars will join us in wishing Del and his team good luck in the judging.




Real Ales
Real Cider
50+ Malt whiskies



Isle of Skye beers on draught
– including our own
“Beinn Eighe” house ale
... dark and delicious

We don't do fast food here!



As members of  we take care and pride in preparing our food. We are fortunate enough to have some of the best local produce in the world and we believe in letting the flavours of our food speak for themselves. No “jus” or “coulis” here! ... just plain, honest, wholesome and fulfilling food.

Take time to enjoy a pint or two of our Real Ales and savour the simple delights of a home cooked meal.

Kinlochewe Hotel,
Kinlochewe, by Achnasheen
Wester Ross IV22 2PA

Tel: 01445 760253
www.kinlochewehotel.co.uk



The Cairn Hotel
Main Road
Carrbridge
Inverness-shire
PH23 3AS

Tel: 01479 841212
Fax: 01479 841362
info@cairnhotel.co.uk
www.cairnhotel.co.uk

*20p real ale discount
for card carrying
CAMRA members!*

Enjoy the country pub atmosphere – log fire, malt whiskies, real ales and affordable food (soup, toasties and desserts served all day) in this family-owned village centre hotel.

Close to the historic 1717 packhorse bridge over the River Dulnain, and nestling in the very heart of the Scottish Highlands, the Cairn Hotel is the perfect base for exploring the Cairngorms, the Malt Whisky Trail, Loch Ness, Strathspey and Badenoch; and including the Cairngorm and Black Isle breweries.

Walkers and cyclists are welcomed, and cyclists following Sustrans NCN Route 7, which goes past our front door, can take advantage of secure dry storage provided for bikes.

Real Ale - A Noughties News Item

A Highland pub has beaten off national competitors to land a highly regarded award for the quality of its real ales. The Clachnaharry Inn in Inverness is the first pub to bring CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) Scottish Pub of the Year Award to the Highlands.

The organisation rewards only those real ales that are produced to the highest quality.

Peter Finneran of CAMRA thinks the recognition long overdue for the Clachnaharry's proprietor, David Irvine.

Mr Finneran said: "The members of each branch throughout Scotland select their pub of the year and all the winners go through to the Scottish finals. "The quality of ales served by David and his staff has been of the highest quality for many years and this award is long overdue."

David Irvine said: "I am absolutely delighted by the award and would like to thank all my staff for their contribution. "We have a fair few regulars - we're basically a real ale pub - and they are all happy to get a good pint." The

search for the Clachnaharry's successor has already begun with CAMRA starting the arduous task of sampling quality ales from around the country for this year's title of Scottish Pub of the Year.

From *Nessie's Loch Ness Times*

(The Friendliest Newspaper on the WWW)

Issue No 280 **Saturday 18th May 2002**

Lots of useful information lurking on the web!

Just one Scottish Pub of the Year winner so far, so best of luck to Castle Tavern in the judging this year - we are due another. Ed.

More Cider News

Real Cider Window Stickers

Real Cider drinkers can find a list of real cider pubs on-line, simply follow the 'About Cider' links at **www.camra.org.uk**

So far only three Scottish pubs have signed up, all in our Branch area -

The Anderson

Benleva Hotel

Blackfriars Highland Pub



The Riverside Tavern

Regular Live Entertainment

(Please phone for Info)

Regular Bands include: Frayed Edges, Time Beings, The Revvz, Martin Stephenson, Andy Murray, Face The West, Sharp Exit, Scott MacDonald

We use fresh local produce including beef, fish, shellfish and game



Highlands & Islands Real Ales On Tap

Open 12-11pm every day Fri until 1pm - Sat until 12pm

Tel. 01349 866922

(formerly The Drouthy Duck), Conon Bridge

WANTED

Newsletter

Editor

Applicants are likely to be real ale enthusiasts. Must have desktop publishing skills, time to spare, and be able to meet publishing deadlines.

~~REWARD~~

*Please contact
Gareth Hardman
(see page 6)*

Capital Walkabout 2009

A chilly Tuesday night in mid-December and a record turnout of twenty-four local real ale enthusiasts had gathered at the Castle Tavern for our annual Inverness walkabout.

Houston Warlock Stout (NBSS average group score - 4), Isle of Skye Flora Macdonald (4), An Teallach Hector (3.5), Cairngorm Winter Flurry (4.5), and Highland Dark Munro (4) were all sampled, accompanied by a very tasty warming buffet to set us on our way. Highland Scapa Special just finished and was replaced by An Teallach Ale as we left.

Our group split to visit pubs in the south and east of the city. The Heathmount have only one handpump on the bar now, dispensing a poor quality Black Isle Yellowhammer (2). Nico's, at the Glen Mhor Hotel, have settled on two regular Cairngorm brews with Stag (3) and Tradewinds (3) on tap for our visit. The Palace Hotel had no clip on the handpump so you could pass by, but when asked they had Isle of Skye Red Cuillin (4). Johnny Foxes has changed their only real ale from Old Speckled Hen to Black Isle Red Kite (0), but this was very cloudy and certainly not worth £1.80 for a half pint (most expensive of the night).

The Waterfront was a surprise in that they had a real ale on tap, a 4.5% St Andrews Ale (3) special from Cairngorm. Number 27 were preparing a Deeside Brew, so only had one ale on tap, Atlas Three Sisters (1) which was not at it's best. The Caledonian had a vinegary Cairngorm Sheepshaggers (0), which was taken off and Santa's Sledgehammer (2.5), also from Cairngorm. Service was slow, the music was loud, and some of our party left without waiting to be served. The Exchange was serving Green King Abbot Ale (3).

We all met up again at Hootananny's, where they usually have two Black Isle real ales. Heather Honey Ale (3), ran out after a couple of halves, and Red Kite (3.5). On to the King's Highway where Mauldon's Bah Humbug (3), Houston Warlock Stout (4), Cairngorm Stag (4) and Sharps Nadelik (4) were all tried; also available were Greene King Abbot Ale and Caley Deuchars IPA. Has the Phoenix risen from the ashes? We went to find out. Good quick service gave us Orkney Dark Island (2.5), Atlas Three Sisters (3), Theakstons Old Peculier (4), Atlas Latitude (2) - this beer seems ever lighter in colour - Gales Seafarer's Ale (2), and Caley Deuchars IPA (not tried).

Across the road to Blackfriars, to our final stop of the evening. We were warmed by some hearty plates of stovies as we enjoyed the range of brews on offer - Deeside Nechan (3.5), Highland Orkney Best (4), Plockton Crag's Ale (3.5), Robinsons Mr Scrooge (3) and Batemans Rosie Nosey (3.5).

A new award in the Highlands & Western Isles Branch area is Cider Pub of the Year where, in future years, all members can vote, and the presentation will be in October, CAMRA's Cider month. To start things off the Committee had voted on a nomination for 2009 (page 10).

The Branch Chair presented a surprised Del (Blackfriars landlord) with the certificate and they go forward to the Cider Pub of Scotland competition. Blackfriars now have two ciders on handpump. A good night was had by all and a fine selection of real ales was available in the Capital, something to suit all tastes.

Thanks especially to George & Veronica at the Castle Tavern, to Del & Janette at Blackfriars, for their warm and welcoming hospitality.

The Old Inn

Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BD

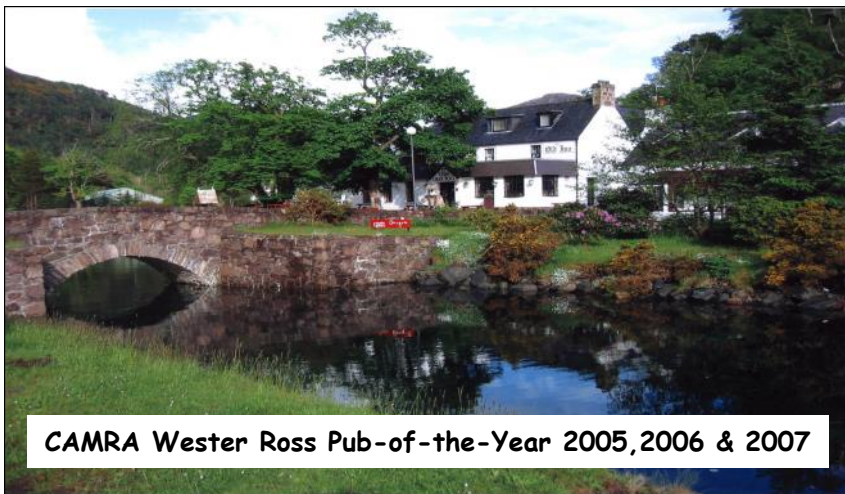
Telephone: 01445 712006 Enquiries - *Call Free* - 0800 542 5444

Scottish Tourist Board 3 Star Inn

AA Best Seafood Pub for Scotland 2005/06

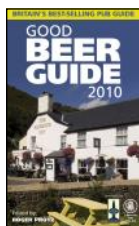
Abbot Ale Perfect Pub for Scotland 2005/06

AA Pub of the Year for Scotland & Northern Ireland 2003



**Real Ale, Real Food, Real Fires, Real Welcome
Accommodation - All rooms en-suite - Families welcome**

Nestling at the foot of the Flowerdale Glen, with the river flowing under its charming old stone footbridge, The Old Inn is a traditional coaching inn located in a picturesque setting with spectacular views across Gairloch Harbour to Skye and the Outer Isles.



Up to eight Real Ales

Beer Garden

Food served all day

Website: www.theoldinn.net

E-mail: enquiries@theoldinn.net



Inverness & Highland CAMRA Country Pub-of-the-Year for 2004



CAMRA LocAle Update



CAMRA's **LocAle** is an initiative that promotes pubs stocking locally brewed real ale. The LocAle scheme builds on a growing consumer demand for quality local produce and an increased awareness of 'green' issues.

We are delighted to be able to publish this list of participating LocAle pubs in the Highlands & Western Isles Branch area:

- The Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore
- Carrbridge Hotel, Carrbridge
- Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
- Castle Tavern, Inverness
- Suie Hotel, Kinbraig
- Macdonald Hotel, Kinlochleven
- Scourie Hotel, Scourie
- Kingshouse Hotel, Glencoe
- The Glen Hotel, Newtonmore
- Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge
- Arch Inn, Ullapool
- Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
- Seaforth Hotel, Ullapool
- Morefield Motel, Ullapool
- Ben Nevis Bar, Fort William
- Cobbs at Nevisport, Fort William
- Glen Nevis Restaurant & Bar, Fort William
- West End Hotel, Fort William

We are always looking to expand this list.

Please contact the Branch Secretary if you are a local publican would like to join the LocAle scheme. (Contact details on page 6).

News of Brews

The Isle of Skye Brewery has been experimenting with maturing Black Cuillin and Cuillin Beast in Ardmore Whisky Quarter Casks. A limited amount will be out soon in cask.



An Teallach Brewery - Corrections to GBG 2010 Tasting Notes (Pages 680/681) can be found at www.camra.org.uk under 'Updates to the 2010 Good Beer Guide'.

Brewery Expansions are in progress at a number of Highlands & Islands breweries - An Teallach, Black Isle, Cairngorm, Orkney, and Plockton - which presumably means that sales of local real ales are increasing. Good news!



Cairngorm Brewery have brewed a festival special for Wetherspoons -

Culloden 1764 at 4.2% abv

A reddish, malty brew (using five malts), with a dark fruit finish.

National Cask Ale Week

During Easter week 2009 over 6,000 pubs nationwide joined us to celebrate Britain's National Drink - Cask Ale. The Daily Telegraph supported the event and ran a daily free prize draw offering a year's free beer, a weekend in Paris, weekend breaks and lots more.

The week was such a success with pubs, brewers and customers alike that Cask Ale Week will be running again in 2010 between Monday 29th March and Monday 5th April.

At the Highland Brewery Rob Hill has brewed a second 9% abv beer, **Old Norway**, his first barley wine, to go with the 9% Orkney Porter.

Please see page 6 for JDW festival dates.

Local JDW outlets are Alexander Bain in Wick, and King's Highway in Inverness.

Kinloch Lodge, in the south of Skye, is not only championing beer as an accompaniment for its Michelin-starred food – it's going local to prove it apparently. An article on the trade website imbibe.com notes that the beer list for their 'Beer Flights' menu, in which an ale is paired with every dish, includes beers from the Scottish islands of Skye, Black Isle, Orkney and Arran. *Perhaps winter flooding has cut off Black Isle (a Highland peninsula) residents!*

the glen hotel

NEWTONMORE

Monarch of the Glen Country

Fine Food

Lunchtime & evenings

Entertainment

on selected nights

Accommodation

stay the night and relax...

Four Hand Pumps

Plus selected bottled ales



The Glen - an Oasis within
the 'Real Ale Desert'
of Badenoch



10p per pint
discount for card carrying
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Focus on Mark Kilby

Mark is the cellar-man and bar manager at the award-winning Clachnaharry Inn. In CAMRA circles he is affectionately known as Mark I as he often works behind the bar in tandem with another Mark, unsurprisingly known as Mark II. Regulars know the service and craic are at its best when the two Marks are on duty.

Mark lives in Inverness with Megan, his girlfriend of thirteen years.

Q) Where were you born?

A) Guisborough in North Yorkshire.



Q) What is your background?

A) I attended Terrington Hall school near York (incidentally Paul Theakston of Black Sheep Brewery fame was there with my father), before moving on to Oundle School near Peterborough. It was during my time at school that I developed my love of all sports, and an ability to get on with people from all walks of life. Some school work was done as well!

After I finished school I went to Leeds Polytechnic to study Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management, but the lure of sunshine was too strong and I moved to Lanzarote where I lived for two and a half

years working in a number of bars and helping out with Jeep safaris - all great fun and good experience.

On my return to these shores I completed the British Institute of Innkeepers Pub Management course before heading off to Australia for a year and a half (where I met Megan).

Q) Why did you move up to the far North?

A) On my return from Australia and Canada (Megan's homeland) my brother got a job with the Press & Journal in Inverness so we decided to help him move here.... That was 11 years ago!!

Q) When/Where introduced to real ale?

A) I first had dealings with real ale at the Dudley Arms in North Yorkshire where I worked between travels in the early 1990's, as well as on numerous trips to other hostelries in the area!

Davie Irvine (long time previous owner of the Clachnaharry Inn) was an enormous influence during my first years here.

Q) What real ale types/style do you like?

A) I prefer lighter ales such as the Kelham Island Pale Rider or, of course, anything from the Black Sheep Brewery! (I obviously have to mention the Yorkshire ales otherwise I will not be allowed back across the border to visit!!)

I continue to be impressed by Rob Hill's ales from Orkney and Williams Brothers in Alloa, also the consistent quality of the beers from Inveralmond Brewery in Perth.

Q) What is the best part of your work?

A) The people that you meet are from all walks of life and getting them interested in trying real ales if they haven't done so before. Converting lager drinkers is my mission!

Tasting the new ales that I have ordered and broadening my knowledge of beers is enjoyable too!

Q) What is the worst part of your work?

A) Unsociable hours, but after all the years that I have been in the business I have become accustomed to them.

(Continued on page 20)

Clachnaharry Inn

Under NEW Management

5 Real Ales on tap, and with food served all day - created by an award-winning chef



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Guide
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Email: stay@morefieldmotel.co.uk

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Accommodation bookings accepted online



www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk

Real Ale in the Real Highlands



- Q) What are your hobbies/interests
- A) I love mountain-biking and living where we do is perfect for getting out there in the hills. There are so many routes to explore, both man-made and natural. We also go away camping whenever the weather suits (about twice a year!) and have recently bought a 4x4 campervan with a wood burning stove for all the times the weather is slightly inclement!

As Megan hails from Canada we go across every summer to see her family and of course to enjoy the mountains and all they have to offer.

I am also a very keen photographer and I thoroughly enjoy the constantly changing lights, colours, and the wildlife that abounds in the Highlands.

We also have an inflatable Canadian canoe... Anyway, I think you're getting the picture, whenever we're not working we're off exploring!

- Q) What limitations do Belhaven/Greene King have on your beer selection?
- A) Obviously it would be great to be able to

buy ales from the smaller more local breweries on a regular basis but I have been pleasantly surprised by the increasing range available to me through Belhaven and I am able to provide ales from the length and breadth of the UK.

Scottish ales are starting to feature more strongly on the list, which is always a good thing and enables me to feature three or four ales from Scotland at most times.

- Q) So why should we make the Clachnaharry Inn our local?

A) This is a pub where people come and feel instantly at home, no matter where home may be. The locals are the friendliest bunch I have ever met during my years behind the bar. We have five ales to choose from at all times and I can offer a selection of both Scottish ales and brews from south of the border. The beers are always in top condition of course!

The quality and variety of the food being produced by the (new) chefs is absolutely outstanding and so the pub is well worth a visit just to see what is being offered.

Real Ale Pubs

These Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale. Please let us know about the quality of real ales on offer (see page 25), particularly if you think Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited.



We make no claims as to the quality of the beer, and you should note that some of the pubs listed may only stock real ale on a seasonal **(S)** basis:

We have taken the liberty of listing some pubs which fall within adjoining Branch Areas - Glasgow & West of Scotland (G&WS), Aberdeen & Northern Isles (A&NI) - but which are not very far from our "border" and merit a visit.

Inverness & District North

Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness
Palace Hotel, Inverness
Waterfront, Inverness
Old North Inn, Inchmore
Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
Loch Ness Inn, Lewiston
Steading Bar & Restaurant, Kilmartin (TP)
Munlochy Hotel (TP)
The Anderson, Fortrose
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Cromarty Arms (TP)
Royal Hotel, Cromarty (TP)
Culbokie Inn
Slaters Arms, Cannich (S)
Conon Bridge Hotel
Riverside Tavern, Conon Bridge
National Hotel, Dingwall
Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer
Inchbae Lodge Hotel, Garve
Aultguish Inn
Star Inn, Tain (S)
Castle Hotel, Portmahomack
Edderton Inn, Edderton

TP - Served using top pressure

Inverness & District South

Blackfriars, Inverness
The Caledonian, Inverness
Castle Tavern, Inverness
The Corner Grill, Inverness
The Exchange, Inverness
Nico's Bar, Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness
Heathmount Hotel, Inverness
Hootananny, Inverness
Johnny Foxes, Inverness (TP)
Kings Highway, Inverness (*Wetherspoons*)

“a beer drinker’s
mecca”

Good Beer Guide 2005-2007



real ale
80 Belgians

real cider
200 malts

**Highlands & Western Isles
Pub of the Year 2008**

the
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restaurant • bar • accommodation

Fortrose, by Inverness

tel. 01381 620 236

www.theanderson.co.uk

Number 27, Inverness
 Phoenix Bar, Inverness
 Snowgoose, Inverness
 Tomatin Country Inn (S)
 Dores Inn
 Whitebridge Hotel, Loch Ness South
 Bothy, Fort Augustus
 Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
 Caledonian Hotel, Fort Augustus (S)
 Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
 Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel, Nairn
 Claymore Hotel, Nairn
 Golf View Hotel, Nairn (TP)
 Invernairne Hotel, Nairn (S)
 Seaforth Club, Nairn (Members only) (TP)
 Old Mill Inn, Brodie (A&NI)

Suie Hotel, Kinraig
 Glen Hotel, Newtonmore
 Lodge Hotel, Newtonmore
 Kingussie Golf Club
 Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie
 Topsy Laird, Kingussie
 Ben Mhor Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey
 Mash Tun, Charlestown of Aberlour (A&NI)
 Highlander Inn, Craigellachie (A&NI)
 Croft Inn, Glenlivet (A&NI)
 Glen Avon Hotel, Tomintoul (A&NI)

Aviemore & Cairngorms

Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
 Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge
 Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore
 Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore
 Glenmore Lodge, Nr Aviemore
 Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore
 Winking Owl, Aviemore

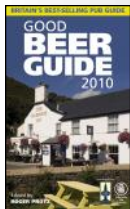
Fort William & Lochaber

Alexandria Hotel, Fort William
 Grog & Gruel, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Bar, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Inn, Fort William
 Cobbs at Nevisport, Fort William
 West End Hotel, Fort William
 Glen Nevis Restaurant & Bar
 Invergarry Hotel
 The Eagle, Laggan Locks
(An Inn on a boat on the water)
 Loch Oich Restaurant/Bar, South Laggan

Stein Inn

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 Stein Inn, Waternish,
 Isle of Skye, IV55 8GA**

Tel: +44 (0)1470-592362

angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk

Old Station Restaurant, Spean Bridge
 Spean Bridge Hotel (S)
 Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge
 Tomdoun Sporting Lodge
 Moorings Hotel, Banavie
 Glenfinnan House Hotel
 Glenuig Inn, Lochailort
 Loch Shiel Hotel, Acharacle
 Old Forge, Inverie
 Corran Ferry Hotel, Onich
 Four Seasons, Onich
 Inn at Ardour
 Ice Factor, Kinlochleven
 MacDonald Hotel, Kinlochleven
 Mamore Lodge, Kinlochleven (S)
 Laroch Bar, Ballachulish (G&WS)
 Clachaig Inn, Glencoe (G&WS)
 Kings House Hotel, Glencoe (G&WS)

Wester Ross

Applecross Inn
 Summer Isles Hotel, Achiltibuie (S)
 Am Fuaran Bar, Altandhu (S)
 Ledgowan Hotel, Achnasheen
 Aultbea Hotel
 Drumchork Hotel, Aultbea (S)
 Dundonnell Hotel
 Loch Maree Hotel
 Kinlochewe Hotel
 Loch Torridon Country House Hotel
 Torridon Inn (S)
 Badachro Inn
 Glendale House, South Erradale (S)
 Millcroft Hotel, Gairloch
 Myrtle Bank Hotel, Gairloch (S)
 Steading Cafe & Restaurant, Gairloch (S)
 Old Inn, Gairloch
 Lochcarron Hotel, Lochcarron
 Rockvilla Hotel, Lochcarron
 Strathcarron Hotel
 Tigh-an-Eilean Hotel, Shieldaig
 Arch Inn, Ullapool
 Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
 Ferry Boat Inn, Ullapool
 Morefield Motel, Ullapool
 Seaforth Bar & Restaurant, Ullapool

Caithness & Sutherland

Inchnadamph Hotel
 The Caberfeidh, Lochinver
 Scourie Hotel, Scourie
 Altnacealgach Inn, nr Ledmore Junction



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Castle Hotel, Dornoch
 Eagle Hotel, Dornoch
 Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar Bridge
 Invershin Hotel
 Sutherland Arms Hotel, Golspie (S)
 Sutherland Inn, Brora
 Belgrave Hotel, Helmsdale
 Bay Owl Restaurant, Dunbeath
 Tongue Hotel
 MacKay's Hotel, Wick
 Alexander Bain, Wick (*Wetherspoons*)
 Central Hotel, Thurso
 Commercial Hotel, Thurso

South Skye & Lochalsh

Cluanie Inn
 Kintail Lodge Hotel
 Jac-o-bite Restaurant, Kintail
 Clachan Bar, Dornie
 Dornie Hotel
 Loch Duich Hotel, Dornie
 Balmacara Hotel (S)
 Plockton Hotel, Plockton
 Plockton Inn, Plockton
 Tingle Creek Hotel, Erbusaig

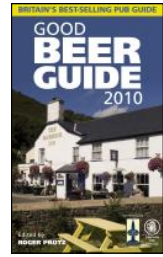


Kyle Hotel, Kyle of Lochalsh
 Saucy Mary's Lodge, Kyleakin (S)
 Duisdale Hotel (S)
 Isle Ornsay Hotel
 Ardsasar Hotel
 Stables Restaurant, Armadale
 Claymore, Broadford
 Dunollie Hotel, Broadford
 Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
 Sconser Lodge Hotel
 Sligachan Hotel (S)
Closed October - March
 Old Inn, Carbost
 Taigh Ailean Hotel, Portnalong

North Skye & Hebrides

Isle of Raasay Hotel
 JJ's Bistro at Struan
 Dunvegan Hotel
 Old Schoolhouse Restaurant, Dunvegan (S)
 Stein Inn, Waternish
 Edinbane Hotel
 The Lodge at Edinbane
 Bakur Bar, Uig
formerly Pub at the Pier

Ferry Inn, Uig
 Uig Hotel, Uig
 Flodigarry Hotel
 Greshornish Lodge
 Bosville Hotel, Portree
 Isles Inn, Portree
 Royal Hotel, Portree
 Tongadale Hotel, Portree
 An Lanntair, Stornoway
 Carlton Tavern, Stornoway
 Harris Inn, Tarbert (S)
 Lochmaddy Hotel, North Uist
 Tigh Dearg Hotel, Lochmaddy, North Uist
 Langass Lodge, North Uist (S)
 Westford Inn, North Uist
 Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula (S)
 Borrodale Hotel, South Uist (S)
 Orasay Inn, South Uist (S)

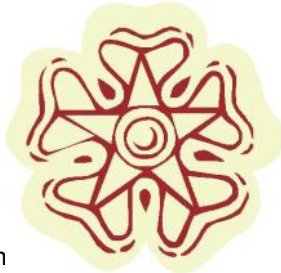


A total of 34 of the pubs listed here are in the *Good Beer Guide*. We are not allowed to indicate GBG entries, you will have to buy the guide for that, but there is a chance you may find some clues elsewhere in this newsletter.

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Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2010

Orkney Brewery - Brewing commenced in March 1988, at the old hoolhouse in Sandwick on Orkney Mainland.

of Skye Brewery - Based at Uig, next to the Western as ferry terminal, and has been brewing since December 95. Ales include Red & Black Cuillin, Hebridean Gold, ng Pretender and Blaven. Seasonal, House, and special it ales are regularly brewed.



alla Brewery - Most northerly brewery in the UK, started brewing 1 December 1997. Ales include White Wife and Auld Rock.

Black Isle Brewery - Started brewing in December 1998 in converted farm buildings. Ales include Red Kite and Yellowhammer. Organic ales are a speciality.

Isle of Arran Brewery - Located close to Brodick Castle. Opened in late March 2000. Ales include Blonde, Dark, and Sunset.

Fyne Ales Brewery - Based in Argyll, at the head of Loch Fyne, brewing started on St Andrew's Day 2001. Ales include Piper's Gold and Maverick.



Cairngorm Brewery Company - Set up in late 2001 to market the beers of the Tomintoul & Aviemore breweries, which they own. Ales include Trade Winds, Wildcat, Stag, Highland IPA, and Black Gold.

Seasonal ales are regularly brewed.

Hebridean Brewing Company - Based at Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides. Brewing since January 2002. Beers include Islander Strong Ale, Berserker Export Pale Ale, and Clansman Ale (first ale ever brewed in Stornoway),

Atlas Brewery - Has been brewing in one of the old Aluminium Smelter buildings at Kinlochleven since February 2002.

An Teallach Brewery - Moved to the family's croft, near Dundonnell, in March 2003. Ales include An Teallach Ale, Beinn Dearg Ale, and Crofter's Pale Ale.

Islay Ales Co Ltd - Established in an old Tractor Shed in Bridgend, in March 2004. Ales include Finlaggan, Black Rock, and Dun Hogs Head; plus seasonal brews.

Cuillin Brewery - The brewery was born on 10th September 2004, in the old public bar of the Sligachan Hotel. Skye, Eagle and Pinnacle Ales are brewed.

Highland Brewing Company - Located in the old Swannay cheese factory at Birsay, on Orkney Mainland. Ales include Scapa Special, Orkney Blast, Dark Munro.

Isle of Mull Brewery - Started in May 2005 with a 5 barrel plant in Tobermory. McCaig's Folly and Galleon Gold ales.



Sinclair Breweries Ltd - Set up in 2006 by hotelier and restaurateur Norman Sinclair, who purchased the Orkney and Atlas Breweries. Ales regularly brewed include Three Sisters, Latitude, and Nimbus from Atlas; plus Raven Ale, Dark Island, Red MacGregor, and Skull Splitter from Orkney.



Glenfinnan Brewery - The first beer, A' Chiad Fhear, was brewed in their 4-barrel plant in October 2006 - a limited edition of 1,000 bottles plus one barrel.

Colonsay Brewery - First brews in March 2007. IPA, 80/- and Lager (no real ales)

Plockton Brewery - The first brew was produced on 1st April 2007. Craggs Ale and Starboard IPA may usually be found in Plockton, and at other local outlets.

Oban Bay Brewery - Brewing since mid 2009. 5 barrel brewery attached to Cuan Mor.

Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area: the Highland Brewing Co, Valhalla and Orkney are all in the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles area; the Arran Brewery falls in the Ayrshire & Galloway area; while Fyne, Islay, Mull, Colonsay & Oban Bay Breweries are covered by Glasgow & West Scotland. Similarly for Highlands & Islands pubs listed in the GBG, pubs in Orkney and Shetland are submitted by the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles Branch, and the Clachaig Inn somehow falls within the Glasgow & West Scotland branch area!

Beers-of-the-Year 2010

Dark & Light Mild -	Highland Dark Munro
Bitters -	Orkney Raven Ale
Best Bitters -	Highland Scapa Special
Strong Bitters -	Highland Orkney Blast
Golden Ales (tied vote) -	Highland Orkney Best Fyne Avalanche
Speciality -	Cairngorm Tradewinds
Stouts & Porters -	Cairngorm Black Gold.
Old Ales & Strong Milds -	Isle of Skye Black Cuillin
Barley Wines & Strong Ales -	Isle of Skye Cuillin Beast
Real Ale in a Bottle -	Black Isle Porter



AS selected by local CAMRA members. Beers from all Scottish breweries qualified for your vote. Eligible beers in each category may be found on our website (see Beers-of-the-Year).

Favourite Local Ale

Gold (tied vote)	Cairngorm Black Gold / Cairngorm Trade Winds
Bronze	Isle of Skye Black Cuillin

As selected by local CAMRA members.

Eligible Local Ales are beers from –

An Teallach Brewery	Black Isle Brewery	Cairngorm Brewery
Cuillin Brewery	Glenfinnan Brewery	Hebridean Brewery
Isle of Skye Brewery	Plockton Brewery	

Congratulations to all brewers. Interesting to note again, in an age of increasing popularity (it seems) for quaffable light golden ales, that local members obviously favour the darker brews.

Beer of the Year Categories

Dear Gareth, Someone should grab CAMRA by the neck and tell them to sort out their beer categories. I would be grievously disappointed to come to Scotland, from say London or Yorkshire, and be offered Fyne Ales Pipers Gold when I wanted a pint of Bitter. Nothing to do with the beer, everything to do with the categorisation. Lunacy.

And don't get me started on the Speciality Beer section. "Oh I put a single juniper berry in the brew, don't forget to list me as a speciality beer". Nonsense. I believe this section should be dropped. Or, surely, a speciality beer should be something that is different, but brewed to celebrate a "special" occasion, and produced in small volumes. Not some mass market, all year round availability beer like Cairngorm Trade Winds.

Even by my standards, I am in a particularly grumpy mood today, but I find the current categorisation list BONKERS. I know I am not alone in this. DM. *Quite so! Ed.*

CAMRA Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2010

1872 Porter from the Elland Brewery, West Yorkshire, was crowned the Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2010 in January by a panel of judges at the National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester. The 6.5% abv porter is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide as a 'creamy, full-flavoured porter, with rich liquorice flavours with a hint of chocolate from roast malt, and a soft but satisfying aftertaste of bittersweet roast and malt.'

Elland Brewery beers have been on tap at Clachnaharry Inn very recently. Not seen the 1872 Porter, hopefully that is a treat in store, but I can certainly vouch for their regular brews. Ed.

the Old Bridge Inn - Aviemore



Roaring log fire, cheerful atmosphere, excellent food and fine selection of wines, cask ales and malt whiskies.

The varied menus, featuring the very best of Highland produce from river, sea and land, are carefully designed to tempt every palate.

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Aviemore, PH 22 1 PU
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Tasting Panel Update

Our first tasting panel meeting of the year, held at the end of January, found us at the Clachnaharry Inn. Two of the regular tasting panel were joined by local members Mike, Andy and John. Cellarman Mark (see Focus) had ensured a good range of beer styles were on offer. We declined the locally brewed Trade Winds as we have covered this excellent beer many times in past tastings, and so we started on Clyde Puffer from Arran.

A new beer to us, this 4.5% abv dark brown beer is classified in the Old Ale/ Strong Milds group. Just some faint malt, roast and fruit in the aroma, the taste was quite well balanced, if a little on the thin side. There was some malt and roast, with the roast increasing into the aftertaste, along with a touch of caramel and some fruit. The sweetness outweighed the bitterness although a little astringency gave it some unwanted sharpness.

At 4.5%, a little disappointing flavour-wise - scores of 6 to 7 (out of 10) were given.

Next was the Christmas offering from Williams

Bros of Alloa, Yule Smile. The same abv as the Clyde Puffer, but this brown beer had more body. Fruit and hops in the aroma were very evident in the well balanced flavour with the spiciness of the hops making for a very enjoyable Christmas style beer, and without going overboard as can happen with a lot of Christmas beers. There was a good bitterness which carried nicely through into the aftertaste. Scores of 7's and 8's were recorded.

Third beer to be tried was an old favourite, Orkney Dark Island. This 4.6% abv dark brown beer is an absolutely classic Scottish Old Ale. Malts, roast and caramel were very evident on the nose, with strong malt and roast flavours. No real hop tastes but a good blackcurrant and slight liquorice fruit flavour, with the sweetness just edging out the bitterness. The lingering aftertaste is of roast and fruit with a hint of bitterness. 7's & 8's again were scored.

Last beer of the night was Kelham Island Pale Rider, a past winner of the CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain. The strongest beer of the evening at 5.2% abv, this yellow coloured beer which is actually categorized as a strong bitter, is dominated by a hoppy citrus aroma.

Very little malt in the taste it was again fruit and hop which dominated, and with a slight syrupiness and a good bitter bite. The flavours do fade in the aftertaste, just leaving a nice bitterness. A slightly dangerous beer as it drinks below its abv, it scored 8's all round just giving it the edge as beer of the evening.

Thanks to Mark and everybody at the Clach for providing a good choice of beers in the cosy surrounds of the lounge bar.

The February tasting was combined with a Branch meeting and was held at The Anderson in Fortrose. Six members of the tasting panel were joined by another six branch members. A busy night with food in the rear whisky bar meant we were located in the front public bar for a change, where the new wood burning stove made for a very pleasant ambience.

First beer of the night was Arran AB, a 4% abv golden colored ale. The aroma was almost totally dominated by sulphur with faint hints of

(Continued on page 30)

The Kings Highway

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**160 pints of hand pulled
cask-conditioned ale sold per day.**

We have 10 hand pulls on which you will always find:

**Greene King's Abbot (£1.79) &
Caledonian's Deuchars IPA (£1.49)**

As I write this piece I have in my cellar;

Summerskills Guzzale (all £1.79)

TSA's Sporrán Warmer

Newmans Wolvesale

White Horse' Wayland Smithy

Skinner's Figgy's Brew

Jennings Sneck Lifter

Bateman's Hooker

Oakham's Bishop's Farewell

(we have a range of 50 ales from all over the UK to
choose from so please ask for your favourite)

**As well as beers from our 'regulars'
Cairngorm Brewing Company, Houston Brewery
and the Isle of Skye Brewery.**

And new to the pumps, Weston's Old Rosie cider.

All ales served in an ale pot unless otherwise requested.

Rooms available too - from £32 - best deals online

Search on line; **Kings Highway, Inverness.**



Scourie Hotel

Scourie, Sutherland, IV27 4SX

Tel: 01971 502396

FAX: 01971 502423

patrick@scourie-hotel.co.uk

www.scourie-hotel.co.uk

Cask Ales and Real Cider are served

An ideal base for game fishing, hill-walking, bird watching (Handa Island is nearby), or exploring the famed empty quarter of Western Sutherland, a lunar landscape of lochs and mountains.

Overlooking Scourie Bay and with views to the distant tops of Ben Stack, Arkle, and Foinaven.



To connoisseurs of game fishing there is simply nothing to compare to the 25,000 acres of Loch, River and Hill Loch fishing held for the guests of Scourie Hotel. The Hotel has 36 fishing beats held exclusively for guests, plus 3 beats on Loch Stack and Loch More for sea trout and salmon. Additional salmon fishing is taken on local salmon rivers.

(Continued from page 28)

malt and hop getting through. Good fruit and hops in the taste but with a mouth drying astringency which tended to spoil it somewhat and this dryness carried right through into the aftertaste making you need a glass of water. This astringency reduced the scores to 6's & 7's. What we had first thought to be a new beer from Arran looks in fact to be a lower abv version, for cask, of the 5% Arran Blonde. This is not the first time a brewery has done this as both Greene King Speckled Hen and Wychwood Hobgoblin have been reduced from 5.2% to 4.5% for cask ale with the higher abv version being available in bottles.

Next beer up was Inveralmond Independence from Perth. This 3.8% copper coloured ale is a great easy-drinking bitter. Faint malt, fruit and hop on the aroma lead into a well balanced malty bitterness with plenty of hop and fruit flavours and a hint of caramel. Plenty of value in this beer as all the flavours hold well into the aftertaste. High scores of 8's & 9's were recorded by the panel.

Our third beer of the evening was Highland St

Magnus from Rob Hill's brewery on Orkney. A 4.5% abv best bitter with a slightly lighter copper colour than Independence, it had good hop and fruit on the aroma along with some malt. Again, another beautifully balanced beer featuring malt, fruit, a hint of caramel and a strong spicy hop flavour. Another good value beer with all the flavours holding well into the aftertaste, including the bitterness. Slightly more 9's than 8's just gave it the edge over Independence for our beer of the evening. Just when we thought our evening of tasting was over, landlord Jim Anderson came over with some tasters of a bottled beer he had opened for us to have a guess at. From the hoppy aroma I guessed it may have been from the boys from Fraserburgh at Brewdog. It was a dark, slightly murky stout full of dark and roast malts, as well as plenty of hop, which gave it a strange but slightly enticing brew. We were then given the bottles to check the labels, which identified the beer as the Brewdog Bashah. It weighed in at a massive

(Continued on page 34)



THE PHOENIX



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A Year in the Life of Nairn's Award-Winning Bandstand Bar

The award-winning Bandstand Bar at Nairn's Braeval Hotel has undergone a transformation since owners Gordon and Morag Holding bought it in 2006, but this last twelve months has been its most successful yet.

"When we bought the bar it was called "The Shambles", laughs Morag "and it certainly lived up to its name!"

Gordon explains, "The hotel was run mainly as a bar for youngsters. There was no restaurant, no bar meals, and not very many guests." But Gordon and Morag had a different vision and wanted to attract a broader clientele. They completely renovated the hotel and bar, and installed disabled access facilities.

"But I was keen to do more" explains Gordon, who had begun to learn about Real Ales from his CAMRA customers. "I believed Real Ales would be a great addition for the pub" says Gordon. Soon, the Bandstand was building a reputation for ale. Starting with two pumps, it quickly rose to five pumps with a selection of regularly changing Scottish and English ales. "Real Ale has become a very important part of our business" says Gordon "We now sell more Real Ale than 'chemical' beers". Gordon and Morag are keen promoters of CAMRA. There are posters in the bar and on-screen adverts displaying the benefits of membership, and membership forms are available in the bar.

In February 2009, the Bandstand was awarded CAMRA Inverness & District South Pub-of-the-Year, then CAMRA Highlands & Western Isles Pub-of-the-Year. "Everyone at the Bandstand was thrilled" says Morag, "It's a wonderful tribute to Gordon who works so hard to maintain the quality and range of ales, and to the staff who make our supportive customers feel welcome".

"Winning these awards has been great for business" says Gordon. "We attract more ale drinkers and room occupancy is improved by guests who book to stay in the hotel just to enjoy the ales".

In March 2009 the Bandstand hosted Nairn's 1st Beer Festival. There were over thirty real ales on tap, plus live music and entertainment. The event was well attended, attracting

around 700 ale enthusiasts. "We were very nervous about the first festival, but it far and away exceeded our expectations" says Gordon. The festival is now an annual event and the 2nd festival is scheduled to take place between 19th – 24th March 2010.

In June Gordon constructed a new chilled cellar solely for cask ales and complete with (cask) tilts. "The new cellar has made life a lot simpler" says Gordon, "But I still insist that the ales are touched by no-one but me!"

When the new cellar was in place, work began on construction of the new sixty seat Sea View Restaurant. "We completed the work in just six weeks, in a race to catch the summer trade" explains Gordon.

By mid July, the new restaurant was open and customers were enjoying the food and stunning views of the Moray Firth. In September the restaurant was further enhanced with the addition of soft leather sofas to provide a quiet seating area for guests to enjoy a drink while overlooking the beach.

In October Gordon organised a day out for some of his regular ale enthusiasts with a visit to Perth-shire breweries and Real Ale venues. "A very big thank-you to my son Jordan, our Bar Manager, who "volunteered" to do the driving" laughs Gordon.

In January 2010 Gordon introduced a Real Cider. "So far, it's been well received" says Gordon "and I intend to have a second Real Cider product on tap soon".

By February further change was underway. The bar was re-designed to create space for regular live music and dancing. "We want the Bandstand to be a vibrant focal point where people come to socialise and make new friends" says Morag.

Despite how much has already been achieved the couple have even more plans for 2010.

"Next on the horizon is the beer festival" says Gordon. "It will be bigger and better, with over fifty ales dispensed together. We'll have live music, dancing, and great Scottish food as well as opportunities to meet brewers."

"We'll also be fund-raising for "Cash for Kids" adds Morag "and brewers have been helping by providing ale related products for sale at

Highlands & Western Isles Pub-of-the-Year



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our charity stall”.

“Before the summer season, we’ll extend the bar to create a separate games room, leaving more space for bar meals and for a quiet drink for those who prefer it.” explains Gordon.

“I’m also planning several more trips to Real Ale pubs and breweries. It’s important to try different ales and to see what others pubs are doing”. “Yes, it’s a hard job but someone has to do it!” laughs Morag.

It’s obviously been an eventful twelve months for the Bandstand. It will be interesting to see what this year brings in the development of this thriving and successful Bar.

CAMRA Discount Scheme, Support for Community Pubs

CAMRA has launched a new initiative to help drive trade to community pubs by introducing a national, unified real ale discount scheme for CAMRA members.

Plenty of kind pubs across Britain already offer CAMRA card-carrying members discounts on the real ales they sell. This new scheme will help these pubs, and hopefully some new

pubs, to clearly promote these offers to CAMRA members resulting in hopefully more trade.

If there is a good take up for this scheme, then CAMRA hopes to launch an online database in the future for CAMRA members to search for the pubs that are participating in this scheme.

www.camra.org.uk/discountscheme/

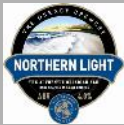
CAMRA have produced empty-belly posters for pubs to display the discounts they are offering to CAMRA members behind the bar. This will help CAMRA members identify that the pub is participating in the scheme.

These posters have space for the pub to write in the discount they are offering to CAMRA members on pints and half pints.

The discount is at the discretion of the pub and can be as little or as large as the pub feels suits their business.

The poster offers space to add any Terms and Conditions of the offer or additional discounts on items such as accommodation or food.





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(Continued from page 30)

8.5% abv and it's official description is "Black Double Belgian IPA".

The Branch meeting was conducted in an informal manner by chairman Eric, mixing the agenda items in between the beer tastings, and accompanied by "non taste damaging" nibbles of French fries and warm pitta bread kindly supplied by Jim.

A couple more beers were enjoyed after the meeting finished to round off yet another splendid night over at the Anderson. Our thanks to Jim for his generous hospitality.

Inns & Things

The former Nether Lochaber Hotel, for a while known as the Corran Inn, and now called the **Corran Ferry Hotel**, offers local real ales from Kinlochleven, e.g. (Atlas) Three Sisters, or Blizzard, according to their website.

New owners Richard Stojak and Lesley Hiron, who previously ran the Harbour Heights Hotel in Tobermory on Mull, intend to complete various renovations and improvements, and to re-establish this hostelry on Loch Linnhe as a

good-class traditional country inn.

We have read that the **Stein Inn** is 'now WiFi compliant'. *Hopefully it is not compulsory!* Ed. Nigel Reid is now a 'Catering Facilitator', and the new management team at the **Old Bridge Inn** in Aviemore are Owen Caldwell and his business partner Gordie. Owen and Gordie are keen to serve the local Cairngorm Brewery ales and to sign up for the LocAle scheme. Two Cairngorm brews will be on tap alongside the regular Caley Deuchars IPA.

Stars of the Noughties:

The following Highlands & Western Isles pubs appeared in every edition of the Good Beer Guide from 2000-2009

- Grog & Gruel, Fort William**
- Old Inn, Gairloch**
- Old Forge, Inverie**
- Blackfriars, Inverness**
- Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness**
- Stein Inn, Waternish, Isle of Skye**

No mean feat, and all six continue to feature in the 2010 guide.

(Continued on page 38)



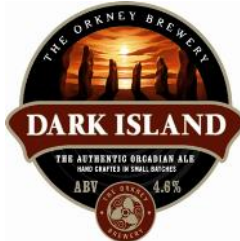
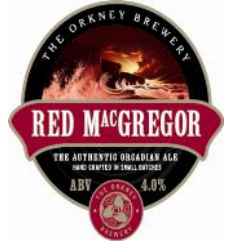
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Why Join CAMRA?

At least 26 pubs close every month and most of these are local community pubs which are often run down by their owners and turned into private houses for a quick profit.

Many communities no longer have a pub and CAMRA is acting through initiatives such as the **Community Pubs Foundation** - www.communitypubs.org.uk - and **Pub is the Hub** - www.pubisthehub.org.uk - to stop unnecessary pub closures.

The next one under threat could be **your** local!

9 out of 10 pints served contain less than 100% liquid.

Consumers lose over a million pounds every day due to short measure! We are lobbying the Government to change the law so that you get what you pay for - a full pint every time.

6 out of 10 pubs are prevented from serving a guest beer of their choice.

Two thirds of pubs are restricted to selling beers brought from the brewery or pub company to which they are tied. CAMRA is campaigning for the introduction of a guest beer law which will give licensees the right to serve a guest beer of their choice and will improve the accessibility of real ale in British pubs.

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is a consumer group that was formed in 1971 to campaign to keep real ale alive. Thirty five years later we now have over 100,000 discerning members and there are now more than 600 real ale breweries brewing over 2,500 different varieties of real ale in Britain.

CAMRA achievements:

We have had many successes over the years which include:

- Being instrumental in allowing pubs to open longer to suit the local community.
- Running a powerful campaign that helped the introduction of small brewers' relief which enabled many small breweries to invest money into their operations and become more viable.
- Working with many local communities to save hundreds of community pubs from closure.
- Organising over 150 beer festivals a year including the Great British Beer Festival, which saw over 66,000 people visit last year at Earls Court.
- Having over 5,000 volunteers who give up their time to survey pubs, work at beer festivals and actively campaign for real ale and pubs.

To read about more of CAMRA's successes please visit www.camra.org.uk

Join CAMRA today!

If you care about these issues, and would like to help make a difference, then join CAMRA today! For less than £1.70 a month you can join over 100,000 members across Britain and help to campaign for quality real ale and good pubs. As a CAMRA member you will also receive the following:

- A monthly colour newspaper, and quarterly Beer magazine, informing you on beer and pub news and detailing events and beer festival around the country
- Reduced entry prices to over 150 beer festivals, including the Great British Beer Festival.
- Chance to join CAMRA / Brewery Complimentary Clubs that are exclusive to CAMRA members. These clubs offer members a variety of promotions including free pint vouchers, brewery trips, competitions and merchandise offers.
- Discounts on CAMRA books including the Good Beer Guide.

Join on-line at www.camra.org.uk/joinus

Alternatively complete and post to us the membership form on page 42.

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More Inns & Things A look back at the Noughties

Looking back it is sad to have had to report, in WYT Summer 2004, "This area is still feeling the loss of Bernard Justice and all he did for real ale in the Highlands. Bernard built up the Royal Hotel at Kingussie (not to mention the National at Dingwall, and the Mains opposite the Glen) into one of the most popular and progressive real ale outlets in the Highlands, with the numerous handpumps, the Iris Rose brewery and the annual beer festival bringing thousands of visitors to the area from all over the country. Successive owners have made a right mess of it all since."

Bernard Justice championed the real ale cause in Badenoch for many years. When he died the Royal Hotel became badly managed, and it finally closed due to a licensing problem in 2003. It is now a block of flats.

On a happier note, Chris Goodhill arrived on the Badenoch scene in the mid noughties, and the Glen has been a GBG regular ever since. Good news also in Drumnadrochit where the

brothers Crossland set up their stall in the Benleva Hotel. I wonder how many who used to make the annual trek north to Kingussie at festival time now travel to Drumnadrochit to enjoy the Loch Ness Beer Festival at the Benleva Hotel, now in its ninth year?

The turn of the century marked the end of an era at Blackfriars, and with Dougie Fraser moving on we seemed to have lost a real ale mecca and regular beer festival venue. More good news as a succession of landlords and landladies kept the real ale flowing, with only a couple of hiccups, until Del & Janette arrived to put Blackfriars firmly back on the real ale map - and to even hold beer festivals!

In fact the Highlands is now awash with real ale festivals, from Ullapool to Glencoe, and there is even one in Nairn!

Please check our on-line diary, or Highland Beer Festivals page, for full details.

And so the noughties decade has been a case of lose-some, win-some - but mostly win-some as real ale in the Highlands & Western Isles has gone from strength to strength.

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it's what's under the surface...



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Rate our Beer

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA would welcome your help in surveying the pubs in our massive Branch area. To help us decide which pubs in the Highlands & Western Isles are worth considering for the Good Beer Guide, we are using CAMRA's 6-point NBSS (National Beer Scoring Scheme) to record Beer Quality.

What do the scores mean?

- 0 - Undrinkable.** No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.
- 1 - Poor.** Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
- 2 - Average.** Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
- 3 - Good.** Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.
- 4 - Very Good.** Excellent beer in excellent condition.
- 5 - Excellent.** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.



Your regular input will help ensure that pubs consistently serving good quality real ale make it into the next Good Beer Guide. Please send pub reports (good beer, poor beer, no beer) plus any real ale and real cider news to our Branch Contact (Please see page 6).

Friends in High Places

Congratulations to Colin Valentine on his being appointed as CAMRA's National Chairman. Colin is a former CAMRA National Vice-Chairman, and Branch Chairman of CAMRA's Edinburgh and South East Scotland, and has succeeded Paula Waters, who will remain on CAMRA's board of Directors, the National Executive. Not quite Westminster perhaps, but great to see yet another Scot flying the Saltire down in England's corridors of power!



Prize Winner - When we asked you to vote for Pubs-of-the-Year and Beers-of-the-Year we promised that all who voted would be entered in a prize draw. Michael Rooke's name was drawn out of the hat, and he has elected to spend his £50 voucher, redeemable at one of

our Pubs-of-the-Year, at the Castle Tavern.

Looking Back.. ..and Forward

As the last decade of the 20th century started there was only one brewery in the Highlands & Islands, the Orkney Brewery. During the 1990's Isle of Skye, Valhalla, and Black Isle breweries started brewing - as did Tomintoul and Aviemore breweries (both owned by and beers marketed by the Cairngorm Brewery since 2001). Iris Rose flowered briefly (see page 38), and the Far North Brewery (1 barrel plant) started brewing at the Melvich Hotel.. In the 00's however no less than fourteen new breweries opened in the Highlands & Islands, a picture mirrored across Scotland and in the English brewing hotspots of Yorkshire and Cumbria. As we enter a new decade let us hope that pub closures and pub ties do not prevent our enjoying their wonderful ales.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our Spring newsletter. Unless you intend to keep it for some reason, please **DO NOT** throw it away. Why not pass it on to a friend, or just leave it in a pub somewhere for others to read. Newsletters are often found many miles from source! The Summer edition will be out in early July.



Cheers! Ed.

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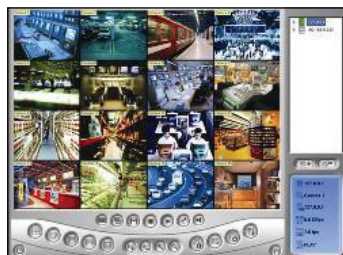
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0709



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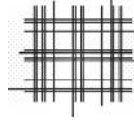
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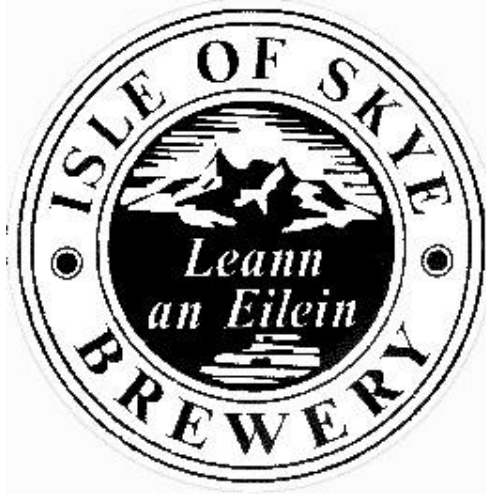


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