

# What's Yours Then?

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA  
**Free** Newsletter



*Contains Full List of Highlands & Western Isles Real Ale Outlets*



Isle of Skye Brewery  
**Cuillin Beast**

**Champion  
Beer of Scotland**



Cairngorm Brewery  
**Black Gold**  
Silver Medal  
Winner

A never-ending stream  
of Highland beer festivals!  
*Check our Diary on Page 6*

# Summer 2011



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

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

- > Updated Branch Diary
- > Tasting Panel Update
- > Socials & Outings - Reports
- > Festivals Update
- > Focus on - Nigel & Franer Jordon
- > 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.

Autumn edition **deadline** is 1<sup>st</sup> September, with publication in time for the Summer visi-

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 JPEG file, or Word document. We can help you in preparing your advert if you wish.

**4,000+ copies** are distributed to CAMRA 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.*

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brew from the Isle of Skye



**Ruby**  
4% ABV

A new beer from the Isle of Skye Brewery to celebrate CAMRA's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, it is a 4.0% dark coloured mild with a plum fruit aroma combined with roast and malt barley. A lovely lightly hopped flavour which is well balanced with malts and caramel, where the strong fruit flavours of plum and dark berries come through in the taste. Slightly more sweet than bitter, this evens out in the mellow aftertaste.

### Marymas Medieval Fair

Real ale fans at the Marymas Fair were the first to sample Ruby and it proved to be very popular, outselling the other brews on offer. Sadly the weather was wet throughout the day and led to a very poor turnout at the 25<sup>th</sup> and, we understand, last Marymas Fair.

The poor turnout meant that despite a great range of ales on offer - Ruby, An Teallach Ale, Cairngorm Trade Winds, Orkney Raven, Fyne Vital Spark; plus Westons Traditional Scrumpy and Ross-on-Wye Medium Dry Farmhouse Cider - sales were well down on recent years.

It was obviously a great shame to finish 25 years of Marymas Fairs on a washout, but we must thank everybody who has supported our real ale bar, not least all the willing helpers who have set up the bar or served on the day.

**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](mailto:consumer.advice@highland.gov.uk)  
[www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/highland](http://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 . . .*

*"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](http://www.fyneales.com)

## Champion Beer of Scotland for 2011

### *Isle of Skye Unleashes the Beast!*

Isle of Skye Brewery's Cuillin Beast has been crowned 'Champion Beer of Scotland' for 2011 at the Scottish Real Ale Festival which took place in Edinburgh in mid-June. Cuillin Beast was one of the range of around 150 excellent beers available at this year's festival, which featured beers from 38 Scottish brewers.

**Cuillin Beast**, a 7% ABV strong old ale, is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide as a 'winter warmer; sweet and fruity, and much more drinkable than the strength would suggest. Plenty of caramel throughout with a variety of fruit on the nose.'

An elated Angus MacRuary, Managing Director of Isle of Skye Brewing Company, on hearing the results, said: 'We're absolutely knocked out. As one of the earlier new Scottish Brewers, we've come close to winning on a number of occasions and couldn't be more delighted to win this year.' Mr MacRuary went on to credit the Head Brewer, Pam MacRuary, and the rest of the team for all their hard work.

A first Champion Beer of Scotland winner for the Isle of Skye brewery, and the first time that a strong ale has won (showing that the category is not about strength alone), and also the first time that a brewster has won.

Pam was Scotland's first female brewer of modern times and now she shows herself to be one of the top ones too with her Beast being crowned champion beer for 2011.

*Well done to Pam and her brewing team. Ed.*

Runner up in this year's competition was the Cairngorm Brewery's **Black Gold**, while third place went to Houston Brewery's Peter's Well. Judging the final entrants this year were a panel of CAMRA members, brewers, publicans and beer writers. Judges noted the difficulty in choosing between the sheer quality of all the entrants on show this year.

### **SIBA Scotland Region Champions**

SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) beer competitions are being held to find regional winners, and judging for Scotland Region also took place at the Scottish Real Ale Festival.

Great to see that Highlands & Islands brewers featured prominently, with Cairngorm Black

Gold taking Gold in the 'Porters, Strong Milds, Old Ales & Stouts' category to go with their CAMRA Champion Beer Silver, plus Bronze for Wildcat. Black Isle Brewery's Yellowhammer won a Silver, while Red Kite and Porter both won Bronze medals. Orkney Dark Island took Bronze in the Premium Bitter category.

Overall Champion went to Fyne Ales 3.8% abv Jarl, exactly one year after it was launched.

Full list of winners at [www.siba.co.uk](http://www.siba.co.uk) under Regional Competitions (Scotland).

### **News of Brews & Breweries**

**An Teallach Brewery** - has a website, plus a very striking range of new pump-clips.

[www.anteallachale.co.uk](http://www.anteallachale.co.uk)



Both designed by local company **Smart Owl**.

**Loch Ness Brewery** - Test brews have gone down well. A few technical issues to resolve, but they should have everything connected and be brewing by the time you read this - there will certainly be beers for you to try at the 10<sup>th</sup> Loch Ness Beer Festival in September.

**Great Glen Brewery** - Brian and Caroline Wright have set up a one barrel plant at their Lewiston home and have been experimenting since September. They have settled on two brews that they are happy with. News, when we have it, on where brews may be sampled.

**Another New Brewery?** Rumour has it that Harry Heskey, ex Atlas brewer, is setting up a new brewery in the old Atlas brewery building in Kinlochleven, and that some equipment is already in place.

We were unable to substantiate this news before our publication date, so please get in touch if you have any information.

**Isle of Skye Brewery** - The Ardmore Beast is on the loose again this year. Cuillin Beast is matured in Ardmore malt whisky casks.

**Orkney Brewery** - The new Corncrake ale has proved to be so popular that the regular brewing schedule has had to be revised to accommodate the additional demand!

**Black Isle Brewery** - The export shipment of Goldeneye to Sweden in March proved so popular that another 2,000 cases followed at the end of May, along with a first shipment of their award-winning Yellowhammer.

# CAMRA CHAMPION BEER OF SCOTLAND 2011



We thank all our trade customers,  
their customers, and camra members,  
for your support over the years  
and for enabling us to go forward  
to win Scotland's top award.

**Moran Taing agus Slainte Math**

[www.skyebrewery.co.uk](http://www.skyebrewery.co.uk)

## Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

Sat 9<sup>th</sup> July



Minibus Trip along A9 North of Inverness with stops at real ale hostelries between Bonar Bridge and John O'Groats

Tues 12<sup>th</sup> July

Committee Meeting

Glen Hotel, Newtonmore

Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> July

\*60<sup>th</sup> Sutherland County Show with Real Ale from Black Isle

Tues 26<sup>th</sup> July

Tasting Evening

Fort Augustus hostelries

Tues 30<sup>th</sup> August

Tasting Evening

Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness

9<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> September

\* 8<sup>th</sup> Inverness Beer Festival at the Castle Tavern

Fri 9<sup>th</sup> September 3.00 pm

Social & Tasting 8<sup>th</sup> Inverness Beer Festival

Tues 13<sup>th</sup> September

Branch Meeting

Blackfriars, Inverness

16<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> September

\* 10<sup>th</sup> Loch Ness Beer Festival at the Benleva Hotel

Sat 17<sup>th</sup> September

14:00 Tasting Course

10<sup>th</sup> Loch Ness Beer Festival

16:00 Branch Social

30<sup>th</sup> Sept - 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct

\* Cider & Blues Festival

Argyll Hotel, Ullapool

30<sup>th</sup> Sept - 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct

\* Real Cider Festival

Bandstand Bar, Nairn

### **October is National Cider Month - Celebrate Cider in October**

7<sup>th</sup> Oct - 9<sup>th</sup> Oct

\* Real Ale & Music Festival

Torridon Inn

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Oct



Social/Outing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Torridon Inn Festival and West Coast Real Ale Hostelries along the way

Tues 11<sup>th</sup> October

Committee Meeting

Bandstand Bar, Nairn

14<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> October

\* Octoberfest

Clachaig Inn, Glencoe

20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> October

\* 7<sup>th</sup> Ullapool Beer Festival at Morefield Motel, Ullapool

Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> October

Annual Outing to the Ullapool Beer Festival and Real Ale Hostelries along the way

\* Not all events listed are necessarily organised by CAMRA.

This diary is as much about the local Real Ale scene as about Branch activities.

Please see our regularly updated on-line diary at [www.highlandcamra.org.uk](http://www.highlandcamra.org.uk)

### Contact

Gareth Hardman (Secretary & Branch Contact) - 01463 238462

### Details

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

[contact@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@highlandcamra.org.uk) or [secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk)



Eric Mills - 01456 459343

Mike Whittall - 01463 831259

[chair@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:chair@highlandcamra.org.uk)

[news@highlandcamra.org.uk](mailto:news@highlandcamra.org.uk)

# 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  
CAMRA members

**Tel: 01540 673203**  
**www.theglenhotel.co.uk**

## Black Isle Easter Outing

Easter Saturday saw our first minibus trip of the year. Regular driver Sandy and minibus from Fraser's were on familiar ground as they are both based on the Black Isle. It was a dull morning with hints of rain as we left Inverness with a full minibus. We were delighted that octogenarian John Aird, who had recently spent time in hospital, was able to join us.

First stop was the Black Isle Brewery at Old Allangrange on the outskirts of Munloch. Prior to visiting we had asked about a tour of the new brewery, but sadly there was no one available to show us around. We settled on being shown around the old brewery but unfortunately this message had not reached the lady holding the fort, so there was a bit of a panic when a busload of us turned up!

Nevertheless she found the time to give us an informative trip around the old brewery.

On to the Conon Bridge Hotel where there was no real ale available - they usually have Cairngorm Trade Winds, but not today. Across the road is the Drouthy Duck, now under the same ownership as the hotel, and where we had heard rumours that real ale was again being served, but it did not open until 18.00.

*In early April the Drouthy Duck was due to open as MAMA's at The Drouthy Duck, the Hotel's new Italian Restaurant. Ed.*

A short drive to Dingwall and a quick visit to the Caledonian Hotel, where they tried serving real ale a few years ago, but no handpump present today.

At this point we were thinking that we should have changed the title to of our outing to 'Trip around the Black Isle', dropping the 'with visits to real ale hostelries' description!

Better luck at the National Hotel where we found a handpump advertising Isle of Skye Hebridean Gold, but this was past its best and was quickly replaced with Isle of Skye Blaven (average group score 1 on the NBSS scale).

The weather had improved by the time we arrived at the Culbokie Inn where the single handpump dispensed Cairngorm Trade Winds (Score 3), albeit under 'top pressure'. Keeping the beer under a blanket of carbon dioxide gas is not a CAMRA approved method of dispense,

as it can make the beer unpleasantly fizzy and affect the flavour, but it does help to keep the beer for longer than normal. There was a discussion about the Culbokie Inn pricing strategy - £2.95 for a pint and £1.70 a half!

Next to the Cromarty waterfront, and to the recently refurbished Royal Hotel, now under new ownership. Black Isle Yellowhammer (2) was available but ran out after three pints and they had nothing to replace it. So up into the village to the family-run Cromarty Arms. A very good Cairngorm Trade Winds (4) was available. The beers used to be kept under top pressure here, but as sales increased they were able to come off - a success story.

The sun came out as we made our way to the Plough Inn at Rosemarkie. Again just one handpump in the small historic bar, this time dispensing Isle of Skye Brewery Hebridean Gold according to the pump clip (score 4, but we wondered if it really was this beer? It did not seem to have the usual Hebridean Gold oaty background. A touch flowery and almost a cross between Trade Winds and Hebridean Gold. We should have asked).

A short drive to The Anderson at Fortrose, where Gareth went straight for the Tetley brew - Mad Trumpet (4). Also sampled were Stewart Brewing Edinburgh Gold, served from gravity dispense from a stillage on the bar (2), Atlas Golden Amber (4), Raw Brewing's Grey Ghost IPA (3), and from the cellar, the new 4% abv Deeside No3 Pale Ale (3).

Alas time was not on our side (it never is) and so we had to reluctantly leave Jim's hospitality behind. Our last stop was at the Station Hotel in Avoch, once a Good Beer Guide entry but over the years had stopped selling real ale.

Locals Richard and Lorraine Comfort have recently taken over and refurbished the hotel, before re-opening and offering two Cairngorm beers - Winter Flurry (3) and Trade Winds (4). There is a bar area, adjoining seating area with large TV screen, and a further adjoining room with two pool tables and a dart board. The restaurant is through in the old lounge bar/conservatory and was fully booked on the Saturday evening we were there.

We got back to Inverness on time to catch our buses home. A good day out, enjoyed by all.





# *Blackfriars Highland Pub Great Beer*



*Traditional Highland Food*

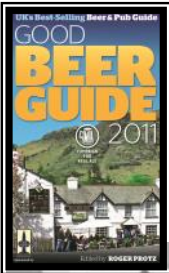
*All meals are cooked to order using  
freshly prepared local produce*

**Real Ales and Real Cider On Tap**

**Selection of bottled ales,  
malt whiskies, and wines**

**Open all day, every day**

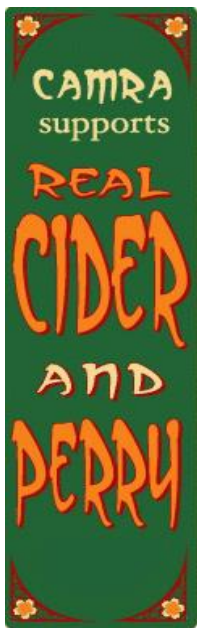
**Food served every day  
from 11am until 9pm**



*Regular Live Entertainment  
Featuring Local Bands*

*93-95 Academy Street  
Inverness IV1 1 LU  
Tel 01463 233881*





## 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 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Cider

**Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit** - Westons 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Cider all year round, plus good selection of real ciders for September festival

**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

**Blackfriars, Inverness** - Westons Traditional Scrumpy and 1<sup>st</sup> Quality

Ciders on handpump. Highlands & Western Isles **Cider-Pub-of-the-Year 2009/10/11.**

**Kinlochewe Hotel**, at the foot of Beinn Eighe, is serving Westons 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Draft Cider

**Torriddon Inn** - Westons Ciders are served in the bar.

**Clachaig Inn, Glencoe** - An initial trial (at Mayfest 2010) but (with your support) continuing through the Winter, Westons cider on hand pump. Having had difficulties getting hold of the Thatchers we've had over the last few years we've been looking for a change. (From Website)

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

**Grog & Gruel, Fort William** - has been selling Thatchers Heritage cask cider since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. On tap for as long as sales make it viable - could be all year round but unfortunately sales usually drop dramatically during winter months.

**Glen Affric Bar, Cannich** - serving Westons Cider after requests from hill-walking customers.

In addition to increasing numbers of Highlands & Western Isles pubs serving real ciders, much more attention is being given to ciders at our growing number of real ale festivals.

Last year Loch Ness Beer Festival featured such an impressive range that we fully expect a name change to 'Beer and Cider Festival', and we are eagerly looking forward to seeing what may be on offer at the Benleva this year.

The Bandstand Bar offered six ciders at their annual Spring festival, and they proved to be so popular that a **Real Cider Festival** has been scheduled for beginning of October!

Real Cider fans will be disappointed to learn that the legendary Somerset cider house that is/was Tuckers Grave finally closed it's doors for the last time on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May.

Described as a 'pub of pubs', one of those in which you stepped out of the continuum of time when you entered, a parallel universe in which electricity seemed to have been added as an afterthought..

There was no bar counter - casks of beer and cider were stacked in the bay window...

More at [www.heritagepubs.org.uk](http://www.heritagepubs.org.uk)

> **Cider Champions for 2011** - see page 41


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](http://www.kinlochewehotel.co.uk)



### **the finest steaks in town!**

The Steakhouse is already a well-established favourite with local diners. A wide choice and grills available for dinner.

---

Open every night: 5.30pm - 9.30pm  
The Steakhouse Restaurant,  
Dalfaber Golf & Country Club, Aviemore



**Call 01479 811 244 or email  
dalfaber@macdonald-hotels.co.uk**

### **Wetherspoons Spring Beer Festival**

Another spring and to lift the gloom of winter what better than a beer festival that runs for nearly three weeks? Past successes at the Kings Highway meant manager Mark Phinn ordered all 50 festival beers. Having sampled 27 at the festival in October I was determined to up my game and try more. This selfless dedication meant I had to pop in every day after work and take advantage, once again, of the excellent three thirds for the price of a pint offer. I was well rewarded though, as I covered 35 of the 50 during the festival and managed to push my total up to 41 as a few more beers came on tap after it ended.

Not an occasion to seek out old favourites as this festival set a record for the number of beers never featured before by Wetherspoons. Specialty beers, ho hum, featuring the delights (?) of banana, blackberry, chocolate, honey, elderflower, ginger, lemon, orange and plum; though thankfully not together in the one ale, meant a record equalling 12 specialty beers. Five guest international brew masters had

brewed their choice of ale at breweries in the UK, including for the first time brewers from Jamaica and Sweden. I managed to taste 3 of the 5 international brews: Zeunerts Ale from Swedish brewers Richard Vougt and Roger Osth was brewed at Everards in Leicestershire and was a 4.5% abv copper coloured bitter. It had a smooth almost buttery flavour with some fruit flavour but was quite average and I gave it 6 out of 10. Feral the Runt was a 4.7% pale beer brewed it at Wadsworths in Wiltshire by Australian brewer Brendan Varis. It used a single hop variety, Citra, and was a tasty easy drinking beer with tropical fruit flavours and aroma which I gave a 7. Big City Jamaican Stout was brewed by Kimberly Gordon at Banks's Brewery in the West Midlands, and came with smoked sausage maltiness and had a roasted dry finish. I gave it a 7 but, good as it was, I would not rate it as highly as some of the excellent Scottish stouts - Cairngorm Black Gold, An Teallach Hector, Deeside Talorcan and Houston Warlock.

Speaking of Scottish beers it was good to see four featured at the festival. The new brew

# BANDSTAND BAR & RESTAURANT



CAMRA Highland & Western Isles

**PUB OF THE YEAR 2009 & 2011**

Inverness & District South

**PUB OF THE YEAR 2009 - 2011**

*“Visit us in the beautiful seaside town of Nairn and make new friends in our friendly, family run pub hotel” - Gordon Holding*

**7 Real Ale Hand Pumps**  
**1 Gravity Tap & Real Ciders**  
from a wide selection of  
Scottish & English breweries



**REAL CIDER FESTIVAL**  
**30 SEPTEMBER – 2 OCTOBER**  
**15 Real Ciders - Live Music**

Enjoy a drink in our lively Lounge Bar or in our quiet “Snug” by the wood burning stove. We have 8 en Suite Bedrooms some with sea views and offer a 10% accommodation discount for CAMRA members.

## SEA VIEW RESTAURANT

Sea Food, Steaks and  
Great Scottish Bar Meals  
up to 30 Single Malt Whiskies



Braeval Hotel, Bandstand Bar & Restaurant

Crescent Rd, Nairn Tel: 01667 452341

[www.braevalhotel.co.uk](http://www.braevalhotel.co.uk)

email [info@braevalhotel.co.uk](mailto:info@braevalhotel.co.uk)



from Orkney, Corncrake, is a 4.1% golden ale which has a floral aroma with a hint of honey. Very easy to drink it had a good bitter finish and I awarded it an 8. Another new beer was Roggen, from Cairngorm, classed as a 4.3% best bitter. Not that bitter, as is the Scottish style, it was full of soft biscuity malts with some gentle hop flavour and a bittersweet finish. I gave an 8. Doc Kennedy's Lipsmacker Lemon Ale, a seasonal from Caledonian, was a 4.3% specialty ale. To give it credit the lemon flavour was not overly dominant but it was a bit shandy like. Very easy to drink but more in the juice sense than a beer sense, I gave it 5. Inveralmond Old Brig was a ruby coloured best bitter at 4.0% and it had a satisfying robust malty taste with a gentle bitter finish. Very enjoyable, and I scored it an 8.

I won't trawl through all the beers but focus on my personal highs and lows in the flavour stakes. Despite being "always a popular choice at Wetherspoons real ale festivals" my wooden spoon with a score of 3 has to go once again to Wells Banana Bread Beer. At 4.5% it tasted of synthetic yellow foam banana sweets. This was closely followed by the 4.0% Hydes Plum Treat which smelt of plums, and tasted of plums with not much else, it got a 4. Springhead The Bees Knees (4) was made with local wildflower honey and although not overly sweet was completely dominated by the honey flavour. Finally Thwaites Bloomin' Smokey (5) - a specialty brew which tasted a bit like a fruity porter, but it had a lingering smokey aftertaste of old bonfires which stayed in the mouth - an acquired taste!

Moving on to better things, and to Robinsons Ginger Tom (7). This was a blend of Old Tom, their famous winter warmer, and Fentimans Ginger Beer which produced a mellow ginger beer style ale with a warming aftertaste. In addition to a large amount of contract bottling at their Stockport brewery in Cheshire, including some for Scottish brewers, Robinsons also produce the Fentimans range of upmarket old-fashioned soft drinks.

It was good that two of the lowest abv beers were among my favourites as I think this shows the true skill of the brewer in getting flavour without having to resort to strength.

Butcombe Mendip Spring Bitter (9) was a light amber floral fruity bitter with a good clean dry finish coming in at 3.8%. At the same strength was Kelham Island Red Molly (9.5). Fantastic taste value for its abv combining malts, a hint of toffee and blackcurrant fruit, and which together gave a great lasting aftertaste.

I thought four more beers were worthy of 9 scores. Wooden Hand Cornish Gribben was a light brown best bitter at 4.1%, lightly malted and packed full of soft fruit and citrus hop flavours. Phoenix Pale Imitation was a 4.3% golden ale with loads of hop character giving peach and strawberry flavours with a good bitter finish. Oakham Taipan was a 4.9% really hoppy strong copper coloured IPA with a good bitter aftertaste. Similar was the 5.0% Roosters Angry Yank, another hoppy IPA with tropical fruit flavours from two of the newer varieties of hop, Nelson Sauvin and Riwaka, and originally created by Gareth Lester-Olivier, a home brewer, it was dangerously drinkable!

Early on in the festival I had the Batemans All Seasons which I thought was one of the most watery ales I had ever tasted. I mulled this over as it was strange a quality brewer like Batemans would produce such a poor ale. I tried it again the next day and it was much better and merited an 8. I was the unlucky punter who must have just caught the last of the clean water used to flush out the lines between ales and the start of the beer!

Apart from this one slight blip on quality the ales were served in very good condition throughout the festival. Well done to the Kings Highway and I am already looking forward to their next festival in the autumn.

### **Bandstand (3<sup>rd</sup> Annual) Beer Festival**

60 real ales, six real ciders, great music and glorious sunshine – the result: another great beer festival at the Bandstand Bar in Nairn!

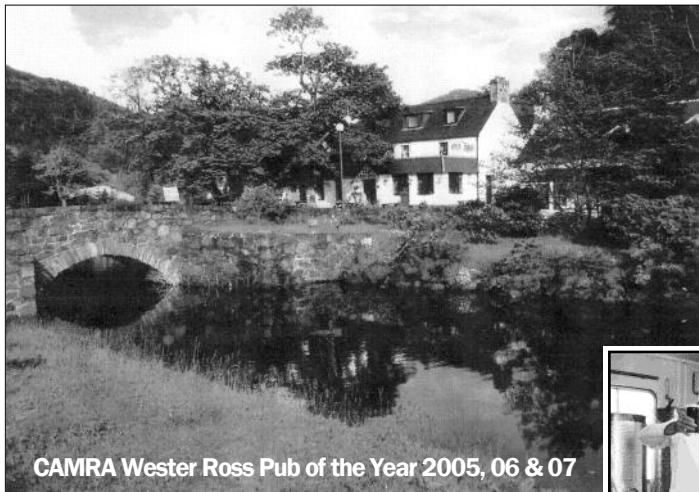
Organised trips from CAMRA branches from all over Scotland, plus individuals and groups of visitors from further afield, made this beer festival a Highlands Real Ale highlight.

The festival started a day early, on Thursday, giving locals a sneak preview of the 50 Casks in the Beer Tent and a taster from the ten pumps in the bar! The ales included two from

**NOW  
BREWING**

# The Old Inn

Gairloch ross-shire



CAMRA Wester Ross Pub of the Year 2005, 06 & 07



**Real food, real fires,  
Real friendly ... and  
now our own ales - really!**

**R**estling at the foot of the Flowerdale Glen, with the river flowing under its charming old footbridge, The Old Inn is a traditional coaching inn set amid picturesque surroundings. Specializing in locally landed fish and shellfish, together with seasonal game, The Old Inn enjoys a reputation for a friendly welcome and comfortable accommodation...and now, with the addition of its own brewhouse, you are assured of an even "cheerier" welcome at The Old Inn.

The Old Inn • Gairloch • Ross-shire • IV21 2BD

Freephone 0800 542 5444

E-mail: [enquiries@theoldinn.net](mailto:enquiries@theoldinn.net) • Website: [www.theoldinn.net](http://www.theoldinn.net)

*Where good food and ales come naturally*

Angus Ales in Fife: Birdie and Driver Dark (both scoring six out of ten on my chart); an IPA from Tryst; the champion from last year's festival: Hophead from Dark Star (6); the ever popular Jaipur IPA from Thornbridge (7) and the very fast selling Harvest Pale Ale (7) from Castle Rock in Nottingham. Also on the bar was an intriguing 1488 Whisky Ale from TSA - matured in Tullibardine casks for up to twelve weeks. Many people tried it, but at 7% it was out of my league so early in the weekend!

On Friday, to the sound of live music from two enthusiastic and talented local women, the bar was filling with visitors who had booked into the hotel for the event, happily getting stuck into the feast of ales. Locals welcomed the visitors with stories about the beer, the views, and why they think Nairn is such a great place; and then listened intently to the visitors' stories about other festivals they have been to, as well as the great golf shots they have played! The weather was perfect for sitting outside in the garden, listening to the music and sampling the plethora of ales that had never made it so far north - until now.

Saturday dawned with the realisation that I had to return to the pub for a CAMRA tasting course! Highlands & Western Isles Branch Chairman Eric Mills is a trained CAMRA tasting panel member and has led several tasting courses. Eric had arranged with landlord Gordon to run a course on Saturday afternoon and ran a very informative session. He gave us samples of different hops and malts to demonstrate smells and flavours, as well as some very unpleasant tasters of what ale should not taste of! Thankfully we had some lovely brews from the festival to sample (none more enjoyable than Cairngorm's Wild Cat (8), which tasted exactly as it should!). We were supposed to now be able to identify sources of the different tastes, and match them back to the ingredients previously sampled. As ever, I failed miserably; but I enjoyed the journey!

As we struggled through the course we could hear the dulcet tones of the Highlands' very own Singing Landlord winging through the bar: Del Graham from Blackfriars in Inverness. A good number of local CAMRA members joined the Tasters for a late afternoon/evening

Branch Social, plus members from Aberdeen and Ayr Branches, as well as a full minibus from The Highlander Hotel in Craigallachie.

More music in the evening when we were treated to the great sound of Andy May on the keyboards, with various pals from around the UK. Fantastic live music and ale, it just can't be beaten! And, as Des had finished his stint behind the bar and was now free to indulge himself in the ale, the music - and the pies! - the company for Kate and myself was great!

The ale flowed throughout Sunday and into Monday, but slowed down a wee bit from Tuesday as more and more casks sold out.

What about the choice of ale? Scottish ale was well represented with a great selection from breweries all over the country, including local favourites from An Teallach, Cairngorm, Sinclair (Atlas & Orkney) and Highland. It is a crying shame that it seems so difficult to get cask ales from the Black Isle Brewery, particularly as the pub overlooks the Black Isle!

Cairngorm supplied four beers, including the award-winning Black Gold. Cairngorm head brewer Sean Tomlinson's Original Liquorice Stout, first brewed in Pontefract in 1994, but now an occasional brew in Aviemore, did not quite settle in time for the early part of the festival - but once it did, it was beautiful!

New beers from Deeside (No3 Pale Ale - an award winning nine from me), Inveralmond (Duncan's IPA - 6), and the recently launched Orkney Corncrake (7 - a very promising first for me and bought for me by brewery owner Norman Sinclair himself, so what else could I say?!) accompanied more familiar, and reliable favourites from Inveralmond and Fyne Ales.

Brews from Angus Ales (Fife), TSA (Stirling), Tryst (Falkirk), Strathaven, Houston, Skye, Kelburn (Barrhead), Stewart Brewing (Edinburgh), and Williams Bros (Alloa) added up to a very good Scottish selection.

The Bandstand regularly features ales from south of the border, to accommodate lovers of the more well known English ales, including favourites from Wells and Youngs, Fuller's and Timmy Taylor. Well and truly at the bottom of the English list for me (running Wadworth 6X

*(Continued on page 27)*





**Award-winning Real Ales  
from the Highland Brewing Company  
130 Malt Whiskies, including local malts  
Open All Day, Open All Year**



A small and popular family-run hotel with family, double, twin and single rooms - all with full facilities

**Food served daily. Enjoy delicious home-cooked meals using local produce. All our meat is supplied locally by the award-winning Mey Selections.**

### **Seaview Hotel**

**John O'Groats  
Caithness  
Scotland  
KW1 4YR**

**Tel/FAX: +44 (0)1955 611 220  
[www.seaviewjohnogroats.co.uk](http://www.seaviewjohnogroats.co.uk)**



Cyclists following Sustrans NCN Route 1 can take advantage of our secure lock-up for bicycles.

## Focus on Nigel & Franner Jordan

Nigel and Franner are your hosts at the Argyll Hotel in Ullapool which recently won our Western Ross Pub-of-the-Year award. Although a Punch Tavern, over the last three years they have built up to four hand-pumps, including a beer from the local An Teallach Brewery.

Q. Where do you come from?

A. N: I come from Guildford originally, Franner comes from the South coast, Dorset.

Q. What are your backgrounds?

A. N: I practised as a solicitor for 22 years.

F: I was a singer/songwriter on leaving university and went on to teach music, first in secondary school, eventually lecturing in composition for the music degree at Bournemouth University.

Q. When/where introduced to real ale?

A. N: It was drinking pints of Courage Best with the local cricket club. I still remember my mother's words "You won't do that again, will you!" My first drink was Light & Bitter (unless you count the Babycham at Christmas) but I really discovered real ale on the outskirts of Bristol in a place called Pucklechurch. There were two elderly ladies who filled your jug from casks kept behind the bar. Wadworth's 6X I believe. My first experience of a micro-brewery was at the Blue Anchor in Helston, Cornwall, with some mates, where we were advised to only drink halves. I wish we'd listened! ("You won't do that again, will you"...)

Q. What real ale/styles do you like?

A. N: If it's well kept I have a varied taste.

Q. What is the best part of your work?

A. F: It's very rewarding when people appreciate what you do. We never tire of hearing how much someone has enjoyed their meal, appreciated their pint or has had a fantastic evening of live music.

N: I enjoy meeting different people.

Q. What is the worst part of your work?

A. It's pretty full-on and we're not good at work/life balance. On a weekly basis we gave up trying to have a day off in 2010 and generally only manage to find time for one meal a day. We're both pretty specific

about how we like things done, and we like to be hands-on to make sure we always do the best we can for our patrons.

Q. What are your hobbies/ interests?

A. N: It's hard to find time for hobbies but I am finally getting to grips with the guitar after first taking it up 43 years ago! Obviously I have a healthy interest in real ale and enjoy testing our different beers to make sure they are up to standard!

F: I'm just finishing a PhD in Composing for Brass Band at Salford University so that's kept me pretty busy! Once that's done I'm hoping to concentrate on writing and publishing more music.

Q. Why should anyone visit The Argyll?

A. Well if you like real ale we always have a good range on. We have four handpulls now and we like to think we keep it well - we were delighted to achieve Cask Marque status earlier this year, and were even awarded full marks from their representative in his assessment. Although we are a Punch pub, which limits the beer we can get from the depot, we have a strong enough beer trade to grant us access to their Finest Cask scheme which opens up a much wider range - another twenty or so which change every eight weeks.

As well as good beer we have a fine new menu which is going down a storm this year - lots of fresh seafood and steaks, all locally sourced and freshly cooked to order. Plus we have entertainment pretty much every day - live music four or five times a week, a weekly quiz on a Thursday, plus a couple of poker nights too. We like to think that the Argyll is a comfortable place, and people regularly comment on the friendly atmosphere and welcoming staff.

Q. Favourite song/group?

A. F: Well my favourite composer is Peter Graham who writes amazing music for Brass Band like 'On Alderley Edge'. On the pop side I'd have to go for James Taylor.

N: The Levellers are my favourite live band, their song 'One Way' means a lot to me.

Q. Favourite film?

A. F: The Thing! 80's schlock-horror from John

# The Torridon Inn



Great Accommodation



Great Food



Great Ale Selection

**The Torridon Inn is proud to announce a new CAMRA member discount for 2011, save 10% on accommodation on stays of 2 nights or longer**

**Enjoy a selection of real ale and a delicious menu at The Torridon Inn**

**Keep an eye on our website for all the latest ale updates as well as information on our live music and Real Ale Festival 2011.**

**Festival Dates are Friday 7<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October**



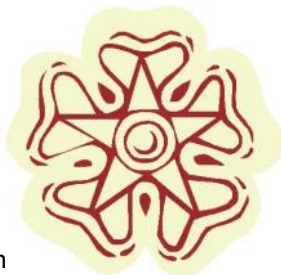
**Website:** [www.thetorridon.com](http://www.thetorridon.com)  
**Tel:** 01445 791242  
**Email:** [info@thetorridon.com](mailto:info@thetorridon.com)

The Torridon Inn  
Annat, By Achnasheen  
IV22 2EY

# Stronlossit Inn

at Roy Bridge

Freephone:  
0800 0155 321



Open all day,  
food & drinks  
available all day,  
3 real ales on tap

Stronlossit is a real gem of tradition - a warm, welcoming character. The Lounge Bar has an impressive range of malt whiskies, an open fire and pulled cask beers, making it a popular rendezvous for Inn guests, outdoor enthusiasts and the local regulars alike. All amidst some of the wildest and most captivating scenery in the Scottish Highlands, in "Western Europe's last great wilderness", as Lochaber is known.

Authentic Scottish highland inn-style Hotel of class and

'Real Ales, and a substantial Bar Meals Menu in "The Stronlossit Lounge.'

"The hospitality of the house will compliment the experience"

Your hosts: Maurice and Sandra Valley

[www.stronlossit.co.uk](http://www.stronlossit.co.uk)

E-mail: [stay@stronlossit.co.uk](mailto:stay@stronlossit.co.uk)

Carpenter. A classic where the survivors gradually get picked off one by one.

N: It's A Wonderful Life.

F: As you can tell, we don't watch many films together. I like explosions but Nigel's a chick-flick man.

Q. Favourite book?

A. F: Songmaster by Orson Scott-Card. Its about a boy whose perfect singing voice has the power of amplifying people's emotions, making him both a potential healer and destroyer. He is trained in the art of singing so beautifully that his songs can express ideas and emotions more truthfully than words. You really get to know the character and feel you have seen through his eyes.

N: Three Billy Goats Gruff. It's a short read, I like the bit with the troll and the bridge.

Q. What is your favourite part of Scotland?

A. Obviously we love the West Coast, the scenery here is amazing and there are some fantastic beaches. Ullapool is a cool village with lots of personality, and which also happens to be spoiled for the quality of live music that passes through.

Q. Plans for the future?

A. We regard the Argyll as a constantly changing place, and we're always working on new ideas and improvements.

We're looking forward to developing the Cider & Blues Festival further, (it's set for the weekend of the 30th September 2011).

Also we're looking to use our function room more. We just had a great gig from John Otway and Wild Willy Barrett in that space and it worked really well. Plus we've been busy refurbishing our rooms this winter so we're hoping to move onto the corridors and reception area next year.



Chairman Eric (centre) presents the award

## **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 40), 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  
Glenmoriston Arms Hotel, Invermoriston  
Steading Bar & Restaurant, Kilmartin (TP)  
Glen Affric Bar, Cannich  
Munlochy Hotel (TP)  
Station Hotel, Avoch  
The Anderson, Fortrose  
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie  
Cromarty Arms  
Royal Hotel, Cromarty  
Culbokie Inn  
Struy Inn (S) (TP)  
Slaters Arms, Cannich  
Conon Bridge Hotel  
National Hotel, Dingwall  
Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer  
Inchbae Lodge Hotel, Garve  
Aultguish Inn  
Commercial Inn, Balintore (S)  
Castle Hotel, Portmahomack

## **Inverness & District South**

Blackfriars, Inverness  
The Caledonian, Inverness  
Castle Tavern, Inverness  
The Corner Grill, Inverness  
Steak Academy Bar & Restaurant, Inverness  
The Exchange, Inverness  
Nico's Bar, Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness  
Heathmount Hotel, Inverness

TP - Served using top pressure

“a beer drinker’s  
mecca”

*Good Beer Guide since 2005*



real ale  
80 Belgians

real cider  
200 malts

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

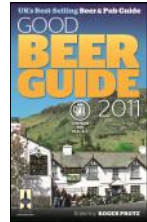
the  
**ANDERSON**  
restaurant • bar • accommodation

**Fortrose, by Inverness**

tel. 01381 620 236  
[www.theanderson.co.uk](http://www.theanderson.co.uk)

Hootananny, Inverness  
 Johnny Foxes, Inverness (TP)  
 Kings Highway, Inverness (*Wetherspoons*)  
 Number 27, Inverness  
 Phoenix Bar, Inverness  
 Innes Bar, Inverness  
 Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Inverness (TP)  
 Snowgoose, Inverness  
 Does Inn  
 Whitebridge Hotel, Loch Ness South  
 Bothy, Fort Augustus  
 Lock Inn, Fort Augustus  
 Caledonian Hotel, Fort Augustus (S)  
 Lovat Arms Hotel, Fort Augustus  
 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)

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  
 Letterfinlay Lodge Hotel, Loch Lochy  
 Roy Bridge Hotel  
 Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge  
 Tomdoun Sporting Lodge  
 Moorings Hotel, Banavie  
 Glenfinnan House Hotel  
 Glenuig Inn, Lochailort  
 Glenuig Village Hall  
 Lochailort Inn (TP)  
 Chlachain Inn, Mallaig  
 Steam Inn, Mallaig



**Fort William & Lochaber**

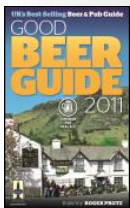
Alexandria Hotel, Fort William  
 Grog & Gruel, Fort William  
 Ben Nevis Bar, Fort William

34 of the pubs listed here are in the *Good Beer Guide* - We cannot tell you which, you will have to buy the guide for that, but there is a chance you may find clues somewhere in this newsletter.

# Stein Inn

THE OLDEST INN ON SKYE  
 1790

**Magical places do exist ... just journey down a narrow winding road that leads to the sea and nestled in a charming hamlet is the very place of your dream: the Stein Inn.**



**An eighteenth-century inn on the sea shore that will have you yearning to visit again and again to experience the warm Scottish welcome, fine food, superb accommodation and traditional highland bar offering real ales and over 99 malt whiskies.**

**The finest and freshest seafood and local produce is readily available and is transformed at the Stein Inn into mouth-watering, home-cooked dishes.**

**Angus & Teresa McGhie,  
 Stein Inn, Waternish,  
 Isle of Skye, IV55 8GA  
 Tel: +44 (0)1470-592362  
[angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk](mailto:angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk)**

West Highland Hotel, Mallaig  
 Loch Shiel Hotel, Acharacle  
 Old Forge, Inverie  
 Corran Ferry Hotel, Onich  
 Four Seasons, Onich  
 Inn at Ardgour  
 Ice Factor, Kinlochleven  
 MacDonald Hotel, Kinlochleven  
 Mamore Lodge, Kinlochleven (S)  
 Laroch Bar, Ballachulish (G&WS)  
 Loch Leven Hotel, Ballachulish (G&WS)  
 Clachaig Inn, Glencoe (G&WS)  
 Kings House Hotel, Glencoe (G&WS)

### **Aviemore & Cairngorms**

Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge  
 Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge  
 Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten  
 Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore  
 Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore  
 Glenmore Lodge, Nr Aviemore  
 Loch Insh Boathouse, Nr Aviemore  
 Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore  
 Winking Owl, Aviemore  
 Suie Hotel, Kincairg  
 Glen Hotel, Newtonmore  
 Lodge Hotel, Newtonmore (TP)  
 Kingussie Golf Club  
 Topsy Laird, Kingussie  
 Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie  
 Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie  
 Ben Mhor Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey  
 Craig Bar, Grantown-on-Spey  
 Seafield Lodge 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)

### **Wester Ross**

Applecross Inn  
 Summer Isles Hotel, Achiltibuie (S)  
 Aultbea Hotel  
 Drumchork Hotel, Aultbea (S)  
 Dundonnell Hotel  
 Loch Maree Hotel  
 Kinlochewe Hotel  
 Torridon Inn  
 Badachro Inn  
 Glendale House, South Erradale (S)  
 Millcroft Hotel, Gairloch  
 Myrtle Bank Hotel, Gairloch (S)

## *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.

23 Dalfaber Road,  
 Aviemore, PH 22 1 PU  
 Tel: (01479) 811137  
[www.oldbridgeinn.co.uk](http://www.oldbridgeinn.co.uk)



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

### **South Skye & Lochalsh**

Kintail Lodge Hotel  
 Jac-o-bite Restaurant, Kintail  
 Clachan Bar, Dornie  
 Plockton Hotel, Plockton  
 Plockton Inn, Plockton  
 Saucy Mary's Lodge, Kyleakin (S)  
 Isle Ornsay Hotel  
 Ardvasar Hotel  
 Claymore, Broadford  
 Dunollie Hotel, Broadford  
 Hebridean Hotel, Broadford  
 Sconser Lodge Hotel  
 Sligachan Hotel (S) *Closed October - March*



## Highlands & Western Isles Pub-of-the-Year 2010



# The Castle Tavern

Taigh-òsda à chaisteil

Open all day, food served all day, a great range of Real Ales  
At the top of Castle Street, Inverness, overlooking the River Ness  
at the start/finish of the Great Glen Way Tel: 01463 718178

Old Inn, Carboth  
Taigh Ailean Hotel, Portnalong  
Kinloch Castle, Rum

### North Skye & Hebrides

Isle of Raasay Hotel  
Old Schoolhouse Restaurant, Dunvegan (S)  
Stein Inn, Waternish  
Edinbane Inn  
The Lodge at Edinbane  
Bakur Bar, Uig  
Ferry Inn, Uig  
Uig Hotel, Uig  
Flodigarry Hotel  
Bosville Hotel, Portree  
Isles Inn, Portree  
Royal 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)

### Caithness & Sutherland

Inchnadamph Hotel  
The Caberfeidh, Lochinver  
Scourie Hotel, Scourie  
Altnacealgach Inn, nr. Ledmore Junction  
Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar Bridge  
Castle Hotel, Dornoch  
Eagle Hotel, Dornoch (S)  
Trentham Hotel (S)  
Invershin Hotel  
Achness Hotel, Rosehall, Lairg  
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  
Seaview Hotel, John O'Groats





## **24-Hour 7-Day Service**

**Locksmiths for Inverness & the Highlands**  
**Complete Mobile Workshop: Majority of Locks Carried Onboard - Key Cutting On Site, All Types of Locks Opened, Changed, Repaired, Fitted or Serviced.**  
**Locks Supplied & Fitted to BS3621 Standard**  
**Master Keyed, Keyed Alike and Multi-Point Locks**  
**Window and Garage Security - Insurance Upgrades**  
**uPVC and Aluminium Door Repairs a Speciality**  
**Warranty and Insurance Work Undertaken**  
**Wireless Alarms and Access Systems**



**Family-owned professional locksmith company providing a mobile locksmith service to domestic and commercial customers.**

**FREEFONE: 0800 083 1923**

**Telephone: 01463 731059 E-mail: [info@citylocksco.co.uk](mailto:info@citylocksco.co.uk)  
11, Craigrory, North Kessock, Inverness, IV1 3XH**

## Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2011

**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 ßs 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** - Closed. Brewing moved to Orkney late in 2010.

**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 10<sup>th</sup> 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** - From May 2005 in Tobermory. Sold plant to Oban Bay in 2009.

**Sinclair Breweries Ltd** - Formed in 2006 by local 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** - Brewing on a 4 bbl plant since October 2006 - Regular brews are Glenfinnan Gold, The Standard Ale, and Glenfinnan Dark (for the Winter).

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

**Plockton Brewery** - The first brew was produced on 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

**Old Inn (Gairloch) Brewery** - 100 litre micro-brewery. First brews in February 2010.

**Loch Ness Brewery** - First brews are planned for March Summer 2011.

*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!*



It's been over 150 years since Loch Ness last brewed real ale.

Using the finest quality ingredients, our 2 barrel brew plant and the famous waters of Loch Ness we produce real ale with all the majesty and mystery of the Loch itself!

The Loch Ness Brewery - Now there is something new in the water!



[www.lochnessbrewery.com](http://www.lochnessbrewery.com)



*Loch Ness Brewing Co Ltd - Benliva Hotel - Drumnadrochit - IV63 6JH - Tel 01456 450080*

*(Continued from page 16)*

pretty close!) was Wells Banana Bread Beer - no score on my chart will do that one justice! Of more interest to me were Cornish Gribben (7) from the Wooden Hand Brewery and Wild Swan from Thornbridge (6), as well as beers from Hopback, Kelham Island, O'Hanlon's, Ikley, and Magpie - fulfilling the main purpose of any good festival, in my opinion, the chance to drink ales that you wouldn't normally see.

There was a good range of strengths and styles of beers on offer, with a fantastic array of dark ales. My highlights: Isle of Skye Black Cuillin (6) was on form, Houston Black and Tan was middling (5), and the seasonal from Caledonian, Chocolate Drop, was good (7)!

Black Cat from Moorhouse was not as good as Highland Dark Munro, and Ikley Black was really tantalising (if for no other reason than it's evocative name), but there was no beating Deeside's Talorcan - what a fantastic ale!

The strongest ale was a rare day out in the cask for Orkney Dark Island Reserve (10% abv from Sinclair), loved by some but not by others, and Donnie, our resident Guinness

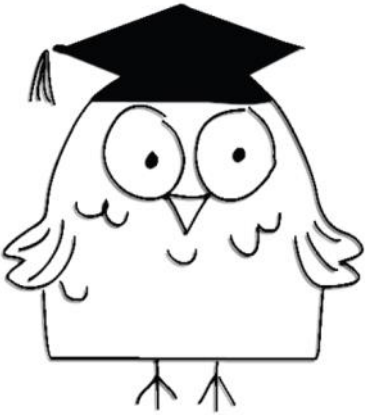
drinker, revelled in Paddy's Tout (the March seasonal) from Wychwood - so much so that he bought the T-Shirt!

My favourites? Always very close to the top of my list is Vital Spark from Fyne Ales (8), which has such a distinctive flavour (so much so that despite my new expertise from the tasting course, and my questioning the brewer, who was at the festival, I still can't pin it down!).

I found it hard to look beyond the new ale from Deeside - No3 Pale Ale (have they run out of Pictish Kings for their ale names?). This beer has a lovely hoppy aroma and taste, with a bitter aftertaste - ideal to cut through the multitude of flavours that had passed over my taste buds during the week!

As for the visitors; well, there was one very happy visitor - Steve from Bristol - who had seen an advert for the festival, travelled to Nairn, stayed for entirety of the festival, and had a glass of every single ale on offer! Now that is what I call dedication to the ale lover's raison d'être: seek out the best ales brewed!

And so there we have it, another huge success for Gordon and Morag and their hard-working



[www.smartowl.net](http://www.smartowl.net)

team at the Bandstand; Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA Pub-of-the-Year for 2011.

It was not that many years ago that Nairn was considered to be a real ale 'desert'. Now we not only have a pub which serves a range of real ales (from local and national brewers) and real ciders, but an annual ale & cider festival boasting 60 real ales and 6 real ciders.

The six ciders on offer three from Westons (1<sup>st</sup> Quality, Traditional Scrumpy, Organic Vintage) and three from Thistly Cross (Still, Still Red Strawberry, Ginger) sold out very quickly!

Too many ales? Not at all, Gordon was very grateful to the owner of Sinclair Breweries for an emergency supply of ales to fill the void left after all 60 ales were consumed in less than five days! Enough said!

Congratulations again to Gordon and Morag for putting on such a real ale feast.

*If you have festival photos please e-mail them to the Bandstand for posting on their website.*



### **CAMRA Members' Weekend and AGM**

The event this year was held in April at the Octagon Centre in the University of Sheffield. These weekends are there to provide all CAMRA members with the opportunity to discuss future policy and direction, as well as socialising with friends and members of the National Executive.

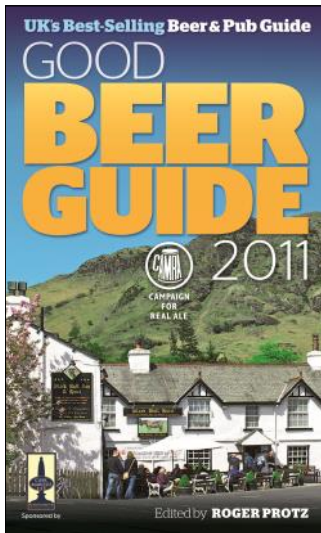
Around 1,100 members had pre-booked for the weekend. Friday is the day when most arrive but some were there a day or two early to have a look around the local pub scene and maybe visit some of the city sights. What a pub scene it is - there are more handpumps (and breweries) in Sheffield than in our whole Branch area! During the Friday afternoon a number of breweries were open for free tours and so I took advantage by visiting the Crown Brewery, which is located in the cellar of the Hillsborough Hotel; and the award winning Kelham Island Brewery, which is to be found behind the two times CAMRA Pub-of-the-Year winner, Kelham Island Tavern.

In the evening bus trips were arranged for

# The Kings Highway

72 Church Street,  
Inverness  
IV1 1EN  
01463 251 800

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



We are in  
**Good  
Beer  
Guide  
2011**

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

**Greene King's Abbot &  
Caledonian's Deuchars IPA**

As well as beers from our 'regulars'

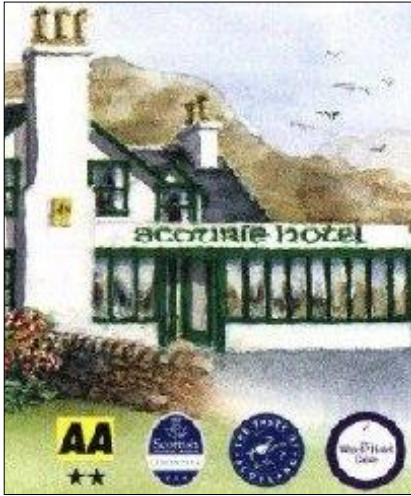
**Cairngorm Brewing Company, Houston Brewery  
and the Isle of Skye Brewery.**

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

All ales served in an ale pot unless otherwise requested.

Rooms available too - best deals online

Search on-line: **Kings Highway, Inverness.**



# Scourie Hotel

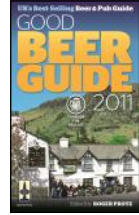
Scourie, Sutherland, IV27 4SX

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.**

visits to breweries further afield, and I visited the Thornbridge Brewery. First we were taken to Thornbridge Hall where it all began, and where all the new brews are now trialed on the 10 barrel plant. The whole estate is being very sympathetically brought back to life. Next a short trip down to Bakewell to the newly built, state of the art, shining stainless steel, 30 barrel brewery. The open plan reception/shop/bar/seating area is bigger than most breweries. Last stop of the evening was at the Greystones, the new flagship pub for the Thornbridge Brewery in Sheffield.

Saturday started with registration from 08:30 and the first session of the Conference started at 09:30. Lunch was taken between 12:30 - 14:00, and the conference finished for the day at 16:00. Workshops and discussion groups followed and brought the afternoon to a close.

In the evening there were more brewery trips, a ghost trip and a flood trip. The final session of the Conference started at 09:30 on Sunday and finished at 12:40 (an extra 10 minutes was given to finish off the Motions).

The Conference was the second that Colin

Valentine has chaired and took the format of a formal meeting, alternating motions with talks and presentations. Some of these motions were rather heated but some just went through the motion (pun intended). This is where the rules that we abide by are made.

All motion outcomes, presentations, etc. have been published in What's Brewing. During lunchtime and after 16:00 the members bar (mini-festival) was open with 60 local brews and 14 ciders on tap. Food was served from the University cafes. AND....all those pubs to visit, some having a mini-fest but most just keeping to their usual 6/7/8/9/12 beers.

In the pubs I visited - either I was just lucky or by very good local organisation - very few beers were duplicated. So well done Sheffield. Next year the annual conference will be held in Torquay from 30th March to 1st April.

Eric Mills, Branch Chairman.

## **Pub Recommendations**

Michael Philips e-mailed our Branch Contact address in February, ahead of a March trip to Inverness, looking for advice on real ale pubs

that might be worth visiting. Following his visit Michael sent up a report on his findings. Hi Gareth, I spent two nights in Inverness but due to an injured ankle my walking was restricted. I therefore did not manage to visit the Castle Tavern or Number 27 but did visit the other three pubs recommended and the quality of ales at all three was very good. Blackfriars had a good selection of Scottish Beers and from memory I sampled the Dark Munro, Lia Fail, An Teallach Ale, one of the Deeside ales and a Caledonian beer at 4.5% but can't remember which one (it was also on at the Kings Highway too). I had a chat with the singing landlord and I would rate the beer and pub at 4 out of 5.

Hootananny's I only visited on Friday night. I tried the Black Isle Red Kite which was very nice. The pub was very popular with diners keen to sample the Thai food on offer and as a result there was no available seating.

I felt a little uncomfortable as it felt like you were standing over people watching them eat but with the bar area full the standing room was restricted. I would rate both beer and pub at 3 out of 5.

Finally the Kings Highway which is where we stayed. I have found that there are good Wetherspoons pubs and others that simply need to be avoided. I am pleased to report that the Kings Highway definitely falls in to the former category. The quality of all the ales consumed was very good, and the service was more efficient than many Wetherspoons. Not certain if you have visited many Wetherspoons outlets but one of the main problems is not necessarily the slow service but the fact that the staff do not have any awareness of who is next to be served, often serving from the same spot all night. At the Kings Highway the staff were aware of what was happening and the service was far better than I have experienced in many other Wetherspoons. I would say that in my opinion this falls in between Blackfriars and Hootananny's and as a result will offer a mark of 3.5 out of 5.

I had a very enjoyable time in Inverness. This was my first visit but I plan to return in the future when hopefully I will be able to try the other two pubs.

Regards, Michael.

Social Secretary, Norfolk & Norwich Branch.

## WESTFORD INN

North Uist, Claddach Kirkibost  
Telephone: 01876 580 653

Small, traditional pub, part of a historic listed eighteenth century house set in its own grounds on the west coast of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides. Opposite Kirkibost Island on the A865, between the Kirkibost Centre and Balranald bird reserve, 15 minutes drive from Lochmaddy ferry terminal.

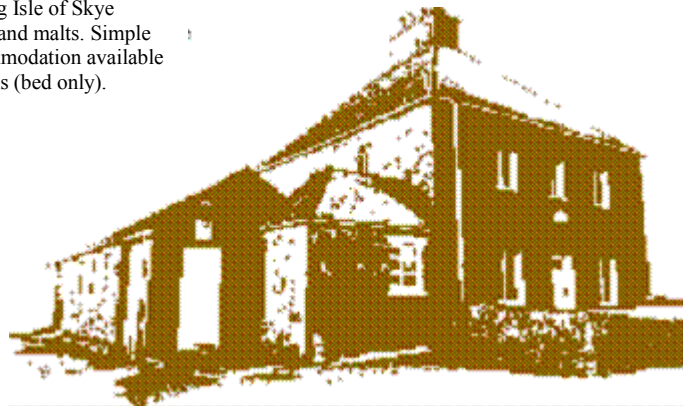
Real ale from the award winning Isle of Skye Brewery. Range of bottled ales and malts. Simple home cooked pub food. Accommodation available in small stone cottage in grounds (bed only).

**Summer opening from Easter 2011, midday to 11:00pm. Kitchen open midday until 2pm, and in the evening from 6pm to 9pm.**

**Outside seating; real fires in inclement weather.**

**Dog friendly**

**Good Beer Guide Listed 2008-11**





**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.



**e-ALE**

> Caithness & Sutherland Update:  
Hi Again Gareth, Have been in the north for a couple of weeks but have to return to Kirkcaldy soon.

Was impressed with my visit to the Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar Bridge. There was one ale on, Cairngorm Trade Winds which was in good condition and is on throughout the year.

During the tourist season a second handpump dispenses Cairngorm Gold or Sheepshagger. The current owners have been there for six years and are enthusiastic about real ale and were proud to announce that their real ale sales outstrip their lager sales. Food looks excellent - must try it next time here. A beer rating of 3 is well deserved and I consider that Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited.

Next time north I will do my best to visit more outlets. Kind regards, Jack Drake.

> Hi Gareth, A couple of additions:

1. The Achness Hotel, Rosehall, Lairg, IV27 4BD. They have served Deuchars IPA for 18 months and throughout the year. I had a jar

yesterday and would give it a rating of 3. The menu looked good also.

2. Success locally at last! The Commercial Inn (The Com) in Balintore, IV20 1UL have got Scapa Special. It's early days but a rating of 3 would be fair.. The locals won't budge from their Tennents Lager and Ember but, even worse, they serve MacLauchlans at 3.6% which has no taste whatsoever.

Will be in touch. Jack Drake.

> Real Ale in Thurso - Hi again Gareth, after a most enjoyable train trip on Tuesday, I visited the two real ale outlets and trust that the following information is of interest to you:

1. Commercial Hotel - I enquired about the source of an IPA on a handwritten font clip but the staff could not supply information. It was undrinkable and was replaced by a McEwans 80 cask from a similar font clip. Although not being to my taste, it was in good condition and merits a 3. I can only assume that the undrinkable stuff was from the same brewery.. The handwritten font clip of the IPA was not reversed.







# THE PHOENIX



**Family run pub with up to NINE real ales**

**Featuring Highlands & Islands breweries and ever changing guest ales from Arran, Deeside and Strathaven**  
**Good value traditional home made pub food cooked to order**



## **Local Real Ales**



**THE PHOENIX**  
**Inverness, IV1 1LX**

**106-110 Academy St,**  
**Tel. 01463 245990**

**FREE Function Room Available**



Cawdor Nairn IV12 5XP

Located just outside Inverness in the picturesque conservation village of Cawdor, serving modern Scottish food with flair. Log fires.

Outside drinking & dining. Quality, home-cooked food.

Lunch 12 - 2.00pm (Sun 12.30 - 3.00pm) Dinner 5.30 - 9.00pm



**Up to 4 ales on!**



Follow A96 from Inverness to Nairn, take B9090 to Cawdor village

t: 01667 404 777 e: [enquiries@cawdortavern.info](mailto:enquiries@cawdortavern.info)

2. Central Hotel - I was greeted by an enthusiastic young barman and, although only one ale, Orkney Best was available, it was superb and merits a 4 rating. The town-centre hotel bar is clean, well run and is called "Top Joe's Bar". The Good Beer Guide states that there are four hand-pumps whereas now there are three.. Cheers and Beers. Jack 7788

*Jack's regular reports are most helpful, and keep us informed on pubs to the north. Ed.*

> Real ale at Rockvilla Hotel in Lochcarron: Just to inform the branch that although the hand-pumps are no longer visible following the Rockvilla's recent redecoration, real ale is still on tap, and Pete reassures me that they will continue to stock one or two from the Isle of Skye Brewery depending on season; the existing range of bottled ales from other Highland & Island brewers is still available. Toby.

> Local Pubs - Hi Gareth, Saw your newsletter whilst on a two week holiday at my Brother-in-Laws, who has just moved to Inverinate, near Dornie, from South Yorkshire. (He and his wife have been travelling to Scotland for over 10

years though, he has one Munro left!).

Mike is a real ale fan, as I, and between walks we visited a few pubs. Thought you would like to know our findings:

Grog & Gruel, Fort William - Isle of Skye Red Cuillin and Hebridean Gold, and Cairngorm Nessie's Monster Mash, all 4. Glenelg Inn - Caledonian 80 shilling, very, very cold and 3. Kintail Lodge, near Shiel Bridge, had no real ale on 2 occasions, albeit close together. Plockton Inn and Hotel - Plockton Bay, both 4. (Food at Inn superb). Applecross Inn - Isle of Skye Red Cuillin and Hebridean Gold, both 4.

Keep up the good work, read your disappointment at a lack of replies to your mailing!

All the best, Graham Heninghem, Hinckley & Bosworth Branch.

> Hi there, I can give you an addition to the real ale pubs listed on your website:

The Roy Bridge Hotel, Roy Bridge, was serving (Isle of Skye Brewery) Red Cuillin on hand-pump last week. [www.roybridgehotel.co.uk](http://www.roybridgehotel.co.uk) John Armitstead, York.

SINCLAIR BREWERIES LTD  
Incorporating Orkney and Atlas range of ales

# Raising the bar

Scottish bottle and cask  
ales of distinction



## ATLAS RANGE

ORDER OUR RANGE OF CASK OR BOTTLED BEERS

t: 01667 404 555 f: 01667 404 584 e: [info@sinclairbreweries.co.uk](mailto:info@sinclairbreweries.co.uk) w: [www.sinclairbreweries.co.uk](http://www.sinclairbreweries.co.uk)

Head Office: Sinclair Breweries Ltd, Cawdor, Nairn, IV12 5XP



*Inverness and District North Pub of the Year*

*Accommodation*

*Restaurant*

*New Loch Ness Brewery opening Spring 2011*

*visit us @ [www.benlewa.co.uk](http://www.benlewa.co.uk)*

*Book now for the 10th Loch Ness Beer Festival 16th to 24th September 2011*



*Benlewa Hotel - Kilmore Road - Drumnadrochit - IV63 6UH - Tel 01456 450080*

### Tasting Panel Update

Our April meet was at Blackfriars, which is always a good location for a tasting meeting with its offering of Scottish ales. We started with the 4.6% abv **Plockton Bay** from the **Pockton Brewery**. Unfortunately this copper coloured best bitter was very flat in the glass with hardly any natural carbonation. Hints of malt, caramel and fruit in the aroma, which were also apparent in the taste along with a good helping of hops. A good bitter/sweet tang which lasted well into the after-taste, it scored an average of 6.5 (out of 10).

Next up was a dark brown stout from **An Teallach, The Hector**. This 4.7% complex beer had caramel, malts and roast in the aroma. Malts and roast dominated the taste producing chocolate and coffee flavours, with a hint of liquorice and blackcurrant fruit. A good lasting after-taste with a bitter/sweet dry finish. Enjoyed by all scoring an average of 8.

The last of our "local" Highland ales on offer was **Highland Orkney Blast**, a 6.0% golden coloured strong bitter. Hops, caramel and fruit dominated from aroma through to after-taste,

its bitterness increasing slightly in the after-taste. Very drinkable for its strength, despite a slight syrupy alcohol warmth, it averaged a score just under an 8.

To finish the evening we tried the **Flying Dutchman**, the current seasonal offering from **Caledonian**, which was initially brewed by the head brewer from Heineken shortly after its takeover of Scottish & Newcastle. Now a regular seasonal offering, this is a 4.5% golden coloured ale with a little fruit in the aroma. It tastes like an extra fruity, spicy version of Deuchars IPA, with the flavour of spicy oranges dominating. A very drinkable speciality ale it scored an average of 7.5.

Beer of the evening was a very close run thing, so well done to **An Teallach as The Hector** just edged out the Orkney Blast.

May took us to the Cawdor Tavern where we enjoyed beers from Atlas and Orkney, the Tavern being owned by the Sinclair family who own the breweries. Deciding to drink our up through the gravities we started with the 4.0% **Orkney Red MacGregor**. Great value, as usual, for its strength, it had something of



# CAIRNGORM

BREWERY COMPANY

Good things  
brewing  
in the  
Highlands



**SIBA  
Supreme  
Champion  
Beer of the  
Year 2009**

## PERMANENT BEERS



## SPECIAL ALES FOR 2011



Cairngorm Brewery based in the Cairngorm National Park develops ales using both old and new malt and hop varieties with a few new twists. With a full range of permanent and seasonal cask beers to suit all tastes, eight of its products are available throughout the year in 500ml bottles.

Visit our shop at the brewery, open Mon - Sat, Tours available Mon - Fri (booking essential) 10% discount when you bring this Newsletter along to the shop.



Dalfaber Aviemore The Highlands PH22 1ST

T: +44 01479 812222 F: +44 01479 811465 E: [info@cairngormbrewery.com](mailto:info@cairngormbrewery.com)

[www.cairngormbrewery.com](http://www.cairngormbrewery.com)

everything. Malts and roast with a hint of caramel in the aroma and taste, accompanied the spicy hop fruit flavours. A good smack of bitterness, which increased in the after-taste along with a good lasting dry roast finish helped it score 8s all round.

Next up was the **Atlas Golden Amber**. This 4.5% golden ale, classed as a speciality as it contains a proportion of wheat, is now brewed on Orkney following the closure of the Atlas brewery in Kinlochleven. Hops, fruit and a touch of caramel in the aroma seemed to hint at a standard golden ale. One sip quickly told you otherwise! A huge bitter hit packed full of hops and citrus fruit gave an orange marmalade flavour. Perhaps too bitter for some, with a little astringency, it is nevertheless an excellent speciality ale where the strong flavours and bitterness carry well into the after-taste. It averaged a score just below 8. It should be noted that since brewing of the Atlas range of beers has moved to Orkney they have lost the sulphur tang they all used to carry, and (in my humble opinion) are much better for it.

It was great to see that the **Orkney** brewery flagship beer, **Dark Island**, was on tap. This 4.6% old ale/strong mild style beer has been quite variable in taste over the past couple of years, even causing one of our members to tag it as "the lucky dip beer" flavour-wise, as it could vary from vineously fruity right through to powdery dark chocolate and cocoa. Happily tonight it was back to its best. In first class condition it was packed full of malts and roast with some caramel. Blackcurrant fruit with sarsaparilla accompanied the malts, but there was a division amongst the tasters as to whether it was more sweet than bitter or vice versa, although all agreed it was more bitter than sweet in the after-taste. Enjoyed by all it scored 9s all round.

Last beer of the evening was the 5.0% **Atlas Nimbus**. A golden ale with caramel, hops and fruit in the aroma, which continued into the taste producing hints of spice and honey. The fruity hops carried well into the after-taste as did the bitterness which slightly outweighed the sweetness. Very drinkable for its strength it averaged a score of 7.5.

Beer of the evening status was unanimously

confirmed as the excellent **Dark Island**.

Norman Sinclair, owner of Atlas and Orkney breweries came in to see us, accompanied by some very welcome sandwiches and sausage rolls. It was great to catch up with the news from him and to hear how well the brewery is doing on Orkney. We look forward to the new visitor centre opening there next year.

Thanks to Norman and Mandy at the Cawdor Tavern for their generous hospitality.

### **Inns & Things**

> For the weekend of the 29th April, in an effort to stifle a yawn over the biggest non-event that the 21st Century has yet managed to muster, The Anderson in Fortrose offered three royal wedding specials:

- Blue Monkey Brewery Something Blue
- Revolutions Brewing It Was Really Nothing
- Nottingham Brewery Wedlock

> Hi, We have recently taken over the Innes Bar in Inverness and would like to let your members know that we are a small friendly bar, just outside of the city centre, and we are now offering two real ales, currently I.P.A. and Theakston's Lightfoot.

Thanks, Craig & Collette.

> Gareth, I was up in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland last week, touring around, and found the list in What's Yours Then? magazine very useful but one pub on the list, "The Stables Restaurant" at Armadale on Skye, does not sell real ale at all, just bottles. I have put all my pub visits, etc. on the NBSS database, hope its of use. Had a good holiday, Doug Macadam, Southport Branch.

### **Black Isle Brewery Shindig**

Black Isle brewery held a "Summer Shindig" on 4<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate its recent expansion. The free-to-attend party featured seven music acts and a hog roast, as well as free camping and tours of the new brewing and bottling facilities. Over 800 people attended and the brewery were so delighted with the turnout that they are considering making it a twice yearly event, the next planned for autumn.

**Let Us Know (in good time)** and we will add your event to our diary! News of several festivals arrived too late for our Spring edition.

# the loch ness inn

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



## The Loch Ness Inn is now open!

The Loch Ness Inn, conveniently located between Drumnadrochit and Urquhart Castle in the village of Lewiston, is set in the heart of the local community where you will meet hikers, tourists and locals in friendly comfortable surroundings.

We look forward to welcoming you whether it's for a long weekend, a meal in The Lewiston Restaurant, a pint in The Brewery Bar, or just a coffee.

The Loch Ness Inn  
Lewiston  
Nr Drumnadrochit  
Inverness-shire IV63 6UW  
+44 (0) 1456 450 991  
info@staylochness.co.uk

the  
BREWERY  
bar

the  
LEWISTON  
restaurant

[www.staylochness.co.uk](http://www.staylochness.co.uk)

# Ullapool's Premier Dining Experience

MOREFIELD MOTEL & MARINERS RESTAURANT

North Road, Ullapool, Ross-shire, IV26 2TQ

**01854 612161**

[www.morefieldmotel.co.uk](http://www.morefieldmotel.co.uk)

Email: [stay@morefieldmotel.co.uk](mailto:stay@morefieldmotel.co.uk)

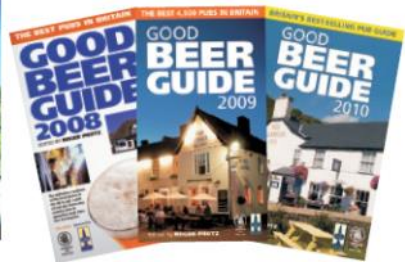
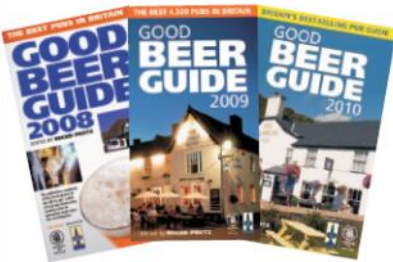
Proprietors: Mr & Mrs A.D. & B.J. Oulton

Accommodation bookings accepted online



[www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk)

Real Ale in the Real Highlands



## A Mild in May

As I hope you know CAMRA actively promotes Milds throughout the month of May. Branches are asked to encourage pubs to stock at least one Mild during May for local pub-goers to try. Once sold in every pub, mild experienced a catastrophic fall in popularity after the 1960s and was in danger of disappearing altogether. Happily, in recent years, the upsurge in the number of microbreweries has led to a major renaissance and an increasing number of Milds are now being brewed.

We are delighted to be able to report that a good number of Milds were to be found in Inverness, including Harviestoun's Born to be Mild in Blackfriars, Strathaven Craigmill Mild and Born to be Mild at Clachnaharry Inn, and Otter Mild at the King's Highway.

Cairngorm Mild May and Highland Light Munro were on tap at the Bandstand Bar in Nairn

At the Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit Steve Crossland again planned to have a Mild on tap for every day in May. In 2010 he failed by just one day but this year: Ilkley Black started the ball rolling on 1<sup>st</sup> May, followed by Foxfield Mild on the 4<sup>th</sup>, then Born To Be Mild from

Harviestoun on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Next was the Brewer's Dark from JW Lees, to be swiftly followed by Light Munro from Highland Brewing. Brewer's Dark and Born To Be Mild both made welcome reappearances and they finished May with Highland Brewing's Dark Munro. So eight in total without a break!. Not bad for a style of beer many publicans insist no-one drinks.

Cairn Dhu, a Mild from Fyne Ales, arrived at the Benleva a day too late for Mild in May - but June drinkers were not complaining!

In May 2012 we confidently expect to see a Mild from the Loch Ness Brewery at Benleva. 'Mild Ness' would surely fit their portfolio?

NATIONAL  
**Cask Ale**  
WEEK

1st-9th OCTOBER 2011



# 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).

## 2011 Cider & Perry Champions

CAMRA's National Cider & Perry Championship finals featured 24 ciders and 24 perries, from different regions of the UK, which were assessed on factors such as aroma, flavour, finish, and overall balance by a judging panel consisting of publicans, drinks writers and CAMRA members.

### Cider

- Gold - Virtual Orchard, Hard Core (Wolverton, Buckinghamshire)
- Silver - Gwynt y Ddraig, Black Dragon (Llantwit Fardre, Glamorgan)
- Bronze - Hartland, Sweet (Tirley, Gloucestershire)

### Perry

- Gold - Rathays, Painted Lady (Sutton St Nicholas, Herefordshire)
- Silver - Gwynt y Ddraig, Two Trees (Llantwit Fardre, Glamorgan)
- Bronze - Ralph's, Old Badland (New Radnor, Powys)
- (Joint) Oliver's, Medium (Ocle Pychard, Herefordshire)

Reading Beer and Cider Festival, the venue for the National Cider and Perry Championships, is one of the largest beer and cider festivals in the UK. This year over 16,000 visitors enjoyed the huge selection of nearly 200 real ciders and perries, and over 600 real ales!

Look out for these ciders and perries on your travels, and perhaps at local festivals too!

We hope you have enjoyed reading our Summer 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 next edition will be out in September. *Cheers! Ed.*



# For all your Office needs!

- Konica Minolta digital photocopier systems
- Panasonic Facsimile machines
- Full range of office furniture
- Full range of office supplies
- Local sales and service support



**Everything**  
for the office,  
from large to small



TECHNOLOGY HOUSE  
HARBOUR ROAD  
INVERNESS

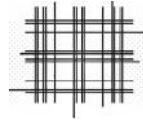
Tel: **01463 239764** . Fax: **01463 242710**  
[sales@highlandofficeequipment.com](mailto:sales@highlandofficeequipment.com)

*Established 1974 -  
The Highlands longest established office equipment centre*

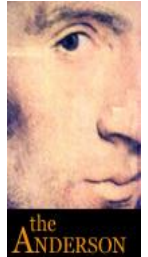
[www.highlandofficeequipment.com](http://www.highlandofficeequipment.com)



The and restaurant  
**GLEN** Hotel



**HOE**



Thanks to our advertisers for making publication of this newsletter possible.





RED CVILLIN — BLACK CVILLIN  
YOUNG PRETENDER  
BLAVEN — HEBRIDEAN GOLD  
CVILLIN BEAST  
SKYELIGHT — WITCHWAND  
House and Special Event ales

Souvenirs and gifts from

Buth an Leanna (The Brewery Shop)  
The Pier Vig, Isle of Skye

01470-542477

and from

[www.skyebrewery.co.uk](http://www.skyebrewery.co.uk)

**NEW ON-LINE SHOP  
NOW OPEN**