

PINTS of VIEW

~THE MAGAZINE FOR EDINBURGH & S.E. SCOTLAND~

Issue 57

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

FREE

Summer 2011

Take a bow - The Bow Bar

It's congratulations to the Bow Bar in Edinburgh on winning our Branch Pub of the Year title for 2011. Because of the size of our area, the branch is divided into City of Edinburgh, the Lothians and the Borders. There is a winner for each of the three areas and then an



Manageress Helen McLoughlan receives her 'Pub of the Year' and 'Edinburgh Pub of the Year' certificates from CAMRA's National Chairman, Colin Valentine.

overall winner for Branch Pub of the Year. As the winner of our Edinburgh area title, the Bow Bar came out ahead of the Lothians winner, the Volunteer Arms (Staggs) in Musselburgh and the Borders winner, the Border Hotel, Kirk Yetholm, to take the main prize. The Bow will now compete with the other CAMRA branches' winners for the Scotland & Northern Ireland title and the winner of that will represent S&NI at the national final. We wish the Bow all the best. Full details of our Branch Pub of the Year awards appear on page three.

The Scottish Real Ale Festival has a new venue. We're at Adam House, Chambers Street, Edinburgh - 16 to 18 June. See page 4 for full details.



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 Gavin Meiklejohn
 of Tempest Brewing
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Pints of View is read by 20,000 drinkers in Edinburgh, Lothians and the Borders

The Ed's bit

Hello fellow real ale fans

Here we are again, seeing the price of our pint spiral, but that's no fault of our hard pressed licensees who have had to endure a second bad winter followed by a succession of increases including crippling duty hikes; and with the social levy to come. Why is the drinks industry (and pubs in particular) an easy target for those intent on placing at its door the responsibility for all the social ills that afflict certain elements of our society?

And then there's Punch proposing to off-load a good proportion of its leased estate. The company says that many are not viable because they cannot provide food. Now that may well be the case for some, but if you want examples of pubs that can thrive without doing food then look no further than our Branch Pub of the Year, the Bow Bar, and the runner up, Staggs! Neither are Punch owned. One Punch pub that did do food, and very well too, was the Dell Inn, now sadly closed and boarded up. Is it perhaps more the high rents and restriction on free trade that are making these pubs unviable? Whatever the reason, let's hope that Punch offers these properties at a fair market price to interested parties keen to continue to operate them as pubs.

By the time you read this the Scottish elections will have been decided. CAMRA is asking Scottish politicians to:

Represent the interests of Scotland's beer and cider drinkers;

Support the economic growth of Scotland's small breweries;

Promote well-run community pubs and not-for-profit

members clubs, as part of the solution to alcohol misuse, by ending the current advantages enjoyed by the lightly regulated off-trade at the expense of the heavily regulated on-trade.

Champion the social, economical and cultural importance of pubs and not-for-profit members clubs.

And now to the good news - real ale drinkers have never had it so good with the number of breweries and choice of real ales available higher than at any time in CAMRA's forty years existence. And that brings me to a birthday - our birthday! CAMRA was forty years old in March. See page 3 - CAMRA Celebrating 40 Years of Campaigning - 1971-2011.

The beer scene today is vastly different from what it was back in 1971 but don't let anyone tell you that CAMRA's job is finished. We will continue to promote and work with breweries, we will continue to campaign against pub closures, we will continue to lobby governments on issues affecting our industry, its people, its customers and our members. CAMRA's job is far from done and 120,000 members agree.

So, as you are enjoying a pint or two, please give a thought to what you might be drinking had it not been for the efforts of four disillusioned guys way back in 1971!

Finally, Alastair Muat of Broughton Ales retires at the end of May. As CAMRA's Brewery Liaison Officer for Broughton I worked closely with Alastair on CAMRA and Broughton matters. Regardless of how busy Alastair was he always found time for me. A real gentleman and always courteous, it was a privilege to be involved with him. Enjoy your retirement, Alastair.

See you all at the Scottish Real Ale Festival.

Fred

Guess the Pub?

Can you guess the pub from its sign?

No prizes, just get out there and find them!

Also go in! (Answers of page 17)



(A)



(B)



(C)

Levenhall Arms

10 Ravensheugh Road

Musselburgh

0131 665 3220



Newly refurbished lounge.

Good food and good company.

Pints of View is the magazine of the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale.

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CAMRA Celebrating 40 Years of Campaigning - 1971-2011

CAMRA is celebrating its 40th birthday in 2011 and we hope you will join us in raising a glass of real ale to celebrate this landmark.

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) was formed on 16th March 1971 by four founding members - Michael Hardman, Graham Lees, Jim Makin and Bill Mellor whilst visiting a pub on holiday in Ireland. The quartet had become deeply disillusioned with the domination of the market by a handful of national brewing companies, determined to push lower quality keg beer brands into the market, displacing smaller, local breweries and ales from the bars of pubs across the land.

It turned out they weren't alone in their anger at the rapidly reducing choice and quality available to drinkers across the UK - hundreds and then thousands joined the cause.

Forty years later and CAMRA now has more than 120,000 members who, like you, love a good pint of beer in a great pub. Saving pubs and breweries under threat from closure, the introduction of Small Brewers Relief, the LoAle scheme and the promotion of endangered beer styles are just a few of CAMRA's achievements over the last 40 years. These and many others have played a major role in there now being more than 3,000 different real ales brewed in the UK by over 750 real ale breweries.






Scottish Real Ale Festival 2011

NEW VENUE
ADAM HOUSE, CHAMBERS STREET, EDINBURGH, EH1 1HT
16th-18th JUNE 2011



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Friday 17th June	12.00 - 23.00
Saturday 18th June	12.00 - 21.00

Hot and cold food available at all times

ENTRY PRICE
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Includes souvenir programme and badged glass (pint or half pint)
Admission to all subsequent sessions FREE on presentation of your glass

'TRY SOMETHING NEW' COMPETITION
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Sample 6 of the 9 beer styles on offer at the festival to win a t-shirt

ENTERTAINMENT
(Sponsored by Caledonian Brewery)
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Saturday afternoon Caledonian Pipe Band

For further information: www.scottishrealalefestival.org.uk
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Our branch Pub of the Year awards

Overall winner - *The Bow Bar, Edinburgh.*

Set in West Bow (Victoria Street) the Bow Bar is already a mecca for real ale drinkers and is a worthy winner of our Branch Pub of the Year award 2011. The Bow is the perfect example of a traditional pub that focuses on what it does well - offering its customers an excellent range of eight real ales from tall founts as well as an exceptional range of malt whiskies displayed on an imposing mahogany gantry. Food is not on the menu here (though you can buy a pie) but there are numerous eateries nearby, so that's not a problem. As soon as you step in the door you realise that here is a pub of genuine character. Drink in the atmosphere as well as the beer and reflect on the many original brewery mirrors such as Campbell & Co Edinburgh Ales, Mackay's Edinburgh Pale Ale and Ballingall's of Dundee IPA.

Manageress Helen McLoughlan (in her tenth year at the Bow) said "On behalf of the cellar crew, Mike, Ben and Neil, and all of us at the Bow Bar I would like to say a big thanks to CAMRA for this award; it feels great to be appreciated! We can do good things with quality beer and the vast choice of ales from so many different breweries is just great; there are too many favourites to list!

Among the recent trends, we've seen a growing interest in dark beer; stronger ales, especially the heavily hopped American styles, have gained a real following. As a free house,



Photo by John Pinheiro

we can experiment freely with our range of beers, support microbreweries new and old and try the new and exciting, both week to week and during our Beer Festivals - the next starts Thursday 21st July.

So, thanks again to CAMRA and all those who make the beer and help it on its journey to our cellar but most of all, a huge thanks to all our customers who enjoy our beers and support us so well."

And finally to the beers. Deuchars IPA, Stewart's No 3 and Taylor Landlord are the regulars. Four guests are sourced from breweries nationally and frequently feature new beers as well as those from new breweries. The eighth fount is reserved for stouts, porters, dark and mild ales of varying strengths.

Runner up - *The Volunteer Arms (Staggs), Musselburgh.*

Staggs is another well known pub and a regular Lothians Area winner. Like the Bow Bar it focuses on its beers. You'll find a great choice of guest ales and though Nigel is known for favouring light hoppy beers, he always has one dark beer on. Tryst, Fyne Ales and Highland, are just three of the many Scottish breweries frequently represented, as are Thornbridge, Oakham and Dark Star from over the border.



Third Place - *The Border Hotel, Kirk Yetholm.*

Our Border Area winner, appropriately named the Border Hotel, was our Branch Pub of the Year last year and also in 2009. It's



a super rural retreat as well as a focal point for those walking both the Pennine Way and St Cuthbert's Way. The hotel continues a tradition started by Alfred Wainwright by giving walkers who completed the Pennine

Way a free half pint of an ale brewed exclusively for the hotel by Broughton Ales. The other two beers are guest ales from a wide range of breweries from near and far.

The runners up and third places in the area contests went to :

Edinburgh: Runner up - Cloisters, Brougham Street, Tollcross.
Third - Cask & Barrel Southside, West Preston Street.
Lothians: Runner up - Nether Abbey Hotel, North Berwick.
Third - Volunteer Arms, Dunbar.
Borders: Runner up - The Craw Inn, Auchencraw.
Third - Cobbles Inn, Kelso.

Great British Beer Festival 2011

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The Interview

Gavin Meiklejohn,
Craft Brewer and proprietor,
Tempest Brewing Company, Kelso



POV: Tell us about Gavin Meiklejohn, what brought you to Kelso and what inspired you to start Tempest?

GM: We moved from New Zealand in 2007 with the intent of starting a brew-pub; it was something we'd been planning for some time. Unfortunately suitable premises were non-existent at the time. We discovered The Cobbles in Kelso which required a complete overhaul and thought with our experience in hospitality we can definitely make this place work. The brewery idea was shelved until I found premises in 2010 and decided to start brewing our own beers.

POV: Why the name Tempest?

GM: With brewing you have such a great opportunity to be truly creative and imaginative with both the beers you produce and the way you want to sell them. I wanted to incorporate a brand identity for the brewery that highlighted the creativity of the brewing process. The brand suited the way I like to approach making beer; it enables us to brand the brewery and then release different beers under the Tempest umbrella and, most importantly, it enables me to have a monster on the pump clip!

POV: You are known as not being afraid to experiment with your brews. What is your brewing philosophy?

GM: I'm not a 'comfort' brewer in that I'm not interested in creating a beer and sitting back and thinking that is all the hard work done. We are always looking for new ways in the process and the ingredients to improve our beers with the biggest flavours we can! We dry hop 50% of our beers, use a lot of specialist malts and mostly the expensive New Zealand and American hop varieties. Every brewery has its preference - this is ours.


POV: What staff do you have and what is the brewery's weekly output?

GM: It's currently just myself and sales manager Allan Rice. We [will] have part-time staff for bottling runs and a brewing student over the summer. We have recently doubled fermenting capacity to 60HL (6000L) with a brewlength of 15HL, 30-40 casks a week with a 15HL bottling run whenever possible. Beers are available in 40l and 20l cask to on-trade.

POV: Your website shows an impressive range of seven beers. Are they all regulars?

GM: We have our core beers which are pretty much always available

The Old Aberlady Inn



The Old Aberlady Inn is a traditional style hotel set in the historic and picturesque coastal village of Aberlady in East Lothian. The Inn is now under the new ownership of Kevin Cockburn, former manager of several local restaurants.

His new original menu featuring fresh local produce and Scottish fish and meats is now available. Diners have a choice of eating in the terraced garden, south facing conservatory or dining room. The old traditional public bar features an open log fire, and is well-stocked with "olde worlde" charm.

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T: 01875 870503 www.theoldaberladyinn.co.uk

(Craftlager, Elemental Porter and Emanation Pale Ale), we then alternate through the others, some of which have not been brewed for a while and some which may be re-worked in the future. As well as the new beers such as our RyePA I also like to make variations of our core beers to keep things interesting. This week we've brewed a beech smoked variation of our elemental porter, using traditional rauchmaltz from Bamberg, Germany.

POV: You are about to start bottling your

beers. Will this be done at the brewery and will all the beers in your portfolio be available in bottle?

GM: Yes, all bottling is done in-house by ourselves. It gives us complete control of the process and we can release small batch limited runs into both cask and bottle. Not all of our beers will be available bottled, I might make some cask only, it depends on demand and the ability to supply.

POV: Will any be bottle conditioned?

GM: More than likely at some point, however we'd almost certainly require more space before we can do any large volume runs of bottle conditioned product. It's definitely the best way of maintaining as much flavour as possible in the bottle, but also has many drawbacks with creating consistent carbonation, beer clarity, preventing wild yeast and microbe contamination...pretty important from a production viewpoint.

POV: The buzz words at the moment are craft keg. Do you see yourself brewing craft keg versions of your beers?

GM: Yes, we will be offering some of our higher ABV beers in keg. It's an expensive process but if done with care without removing all the yeast and stripping the hop flavours through 'overprocessing' you can still package a great tasting beer. While not to everyone's ideological preference, as a craft brewer it means we can offer a vegetarian suitable product, attract drinkers who like good beer just more chilled and carbonated, appeal to the younger and perhaps the female market and increase greater diversity of beer styles such as strong IPAs at the bar. Ultimately though, cask conditioning is the best way to package fresh beer, something which our North American friends are now discovering. I think someone needs to send them over some finings though as they assume traditional real ale should be dispensed with a yeast haze.

POV: When you opened, you were brewing mainly for the Cobbles Inn and selected pubs in the Borders, but now your beers are seen throughout our branch area. How do you see the future?

GM: The remainder of 2011 for Tempest will be spent creating new beers, focusing on our bottled products, and searching for bigger premises. My hope for the future is that craft brewed beer sales will continue to grow its overall share of the British beer market. We are still only a fraction of where we should be.

POV: How do you balance brewing with running Cobbles?

GM: With difficulty; my wife, Annika, basically runs The Cobbles and my time is now 90% brewery.

POV: Finally, if and when you do have free time, how do you, Annika and Maia spend it?

GM: In winter we try and go snowboarding whenever we can; I like to get out on the mountain bike to keep fit and if someone wants to offer me a round of golf at the Roxburgh I'm in!

POV wishes to thank Gavin for taking the time to speak to us. We wish Tempest and The Cobbles Inn all the best for the future.

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Cask and Barrel (Southside)

24–26 West Preston Street, Edinburgh EH8 9PZ

0131 667 0856 – casksouthside@btconnect.com

Congratulations to Matt and all the staff at the Cask and Barrel (Southside). After being open for only nine months, they have seen their bar awarded third place in Camra’s City of Edinburgh Pub of the Year Awards 2011.



Since opening in May of last year, over 400 different guest ales have been enjoyed by a growing clientele. Not to mention the three mainstays; Orkney Best, Stewart’s 80/- and Deuchars IPA.



To complement this ever changing array of ales, the ‘Cask Southside’ serves a wide range of malt whiskies, from a’bunadh to Uigeadal.



With certain inclusion in the forthcoming Good Beer Guide 2012, this young pub’s future looks bright. Cheers!

Open: Mon-Thurs 12pm to 12am, Fri 12pm to 1am, Sat 11am to 1am, Sun 12:30pm to 12am



Firstly it's congratulations to the **Bow Bar** on being our Branch Pub of the Year 2011 (see page four). This city icon is situated between King George IV Bridge and the Grassmarket. Do make the Bow your first stop, but allow plenty of time to enjoy a host of other real ale pubs in this historic but cosmopolitan area. Nestling in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle there's the **Black Bull** (Deuchars IPA and three guests), the **Beehive**



Inn (four guests), the **White Hart Inn** (three guests) and the **Last Drop Tavern** (Deuchars IPA or Caley 80 and one guest). Walking up Candlemakers Row you'll come to **Greyfriars Bobby** (Deuchars IPA and one guest) then **Sandy Bells** (Deuchars IPA, Caley 80, Ossian and Ghillie Ale both from Inveralmond. Ghillie is brewed solely for Sandy Bells and Ghillie Dhu at Rutland Place). Further along on the opposite side of Forrest Road is **Doctors** (Deuchars IPA, Caley 80, Bitter & Twisted, a beer from Stewart and four guests) named because of its proximity to the former Royal Infirmary. Sadly, manager David Hall died tragically whilst on holiday last winter. David was well respected within the industry and he will be a great loss. Calvin Mcfarlane has taken on David's role.

In the quiet residential area between Tollcross and Newington, north of the Meadows, there are two real ale pubs. The **Earl of Marchmont** in Marchmont Crescent has Deuchars IPA and a guest, as does the **Argyle** in Argyle Place. In Buccleuch Street, a fire above the **Meadow Bar** saw it closed for most of the winter and spring. However, hopefully it will now have reopened. It had Deuchars IPA, Caley 80 and a guest. **Bierex** at Ratcliffe Terrace has two beers on, with one or both

likely to be from Cairngorm. The real ales are at the Grange Road side of the bar. In Morningside, **Bennet's Bar** is now named **Bennets of Morningside**. A sister to the **Cumberland Bar** it has Deuchars IPA, Taylor Landlord and four guests. In Morningside Road, the **Merlin** has two guest ales. **Lock 25** at Fountainbridge has reopened and has three ales; Deuchars IPA, Stewart 80/- and Edinburgh Gold were on recently. In the city centre **Jenny Ha's** at Brown's Close in the Canongate is now run by James Nisbet formerly of the Blue Blazer. Stewart's Pentland IPA and a beer from the Caley range are regulars, plus one guest. James also intends to feature bottled beers from around the world, coupled with occasional tastings. The **Omni Centre** has two real ale outlets, the **Playfair** (Wetherspoon) and the **Slug & Lettuce** which has three guest ales. Not many wine bars in the city sell real ale, but one that does is **Whigham's Wine Cellar** in Hope Street. Deuchars IPA is a regular and the guest is mainly a beer from Stewart. Across the road, **Ryan's Bar** has extended its ales to four - Deuchars IPA and three guests. In Melville Place, **Slainte Mhath** (formerly the **Randolph Bar**) has Deuchars IPA and two guests. **Au Bar** in Shandwick Place has Deuchars IPA, Caley 80 and a guest. The **Stockbridge Tap** has a new manager, Archie, who has come from Cloisters. The Tap has Stewart 80/- and IPA, Cairngorm Tradewinds and two/three guests.

Leith is a popular area and well served by real ale pubs, but you can also take a bus towards



Newhaven to find the **Newhaven Quay**, Newhaven Place (Hobgoblin), the **Harbour Inn**, Fishmarket Square (Deuchars IPA and a guest), the **Starbank Inn** (Belhaven 80/-, Greene King IPA, Taylor Landlord and four guests) and finally, perched on the shore side, the **Old Chain Pier** (Deuchars IPA, Greene King Abbot Ale, Taylor Landlord and one guest).

Across on the western side of the city at Corstorphine the former **Agenda Hotel** is due to open on 21 June as a Wetherspoon pub, the **White Lady**. In Gorgie, **Diggers** (Athletic Arms) has Deuchars IPA and Stewart's 80/- as regulars plus two guest ales from near and far at a budget price. An institution within the Edinburgh pub scene, this Victorian masterpiece should

be on every pubgoer's itinerary, but avoid football match days! Nearby, the **Caley Sample Room** (Deuchars IPA, Caley 80 and two guests) is considering a beerfest in October.

Further afield the **Pavilion** in Buckstone Terrace has Deuchars IPA and a guest, whilst the **Stables Bar**, set within the attractive Mortonhall Park, has Deuchars IPA and two beers from Stewart.

Finally, it was sad to see the **Dell Inn** at Slateford closed and boarded up for the second time in so many months. For a number of years it was run by Bill Moulding and was a good community food pub. Let's hope it soon finds someone willing to re-open it as a pub. (See Ed's bit on page 2)



Ed - It's impossible to mention every outlet in one issue; however if your pub has something to tell our readers then let POV know.

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Beyond the Bypass

Congratulations go to **Staggs** in Musselburgh for again being our Lothians Area Pub of the Year and also runner-up for the overall branch title (See page four). Things have been happening at the eastern end of the town at the Levenhall roundabout. Those who will remember the old Mrs Forman's will not recognise it. **Mrs Forman's** has been transformed into a stylish and modern eatery. The focus is therefore on food - and jolly good it is too - and at busy lunch and dinner times tables are naturally occupied by diners. However there are a few stools at the bar counter for those not dining. There is also a garden overlooking the racecourse and golf course. They have two hand pumps, with Stewart's Gold and Black Sheep Bitter on during a recent visit. Also, next door the **Levenhall Arms** has had a make-over both inside and out. It has Stewart's Pentland IPA and two guests.



Along at the **Gothenburg** in Prestonpans, hopefully the brewery will be up and running again and serving the pub. (see page 14). The

Thorntree Inn in Cockenzie has Stewart's 80/-. It's in the old High Street and borders right onto the shore, giving superb sea views. In Aberlady, the **Old Aberlady Inn** has at last got real ale. This super little inn has been taken over by Kevin Cockburn.

Kevin came from the Longniddy Inn and has also had spells at the **Victoria Inn** and the **Tyneside Tavern** in Haddington. He has Deuchars IPA and a guest. Oh, and the food's great too!

Over in Haddington Paul Kinnock at the **Waterloo Bistro** is keen to showcase his bar. He is considering



a makeover after which he may add a second pump; the current pump has Deuchars IPA. At North Berwick there has been a staff change at the **Nether Abbey Hotel** with the retirement of bar manager Pat Hanson. CAMRA member Pat has been at the Nethers for the past five years. We wish Pat all the best and look forward to him joining us on the other side of the bar. How fitting that this year the hotel has been voted "Second Best Pub in the Lothians" in our branch Pub of the Year awards. Of course with owner Stirling Stewart and manager Steve Donaldson at the helm ably assisted by real ale enthusiast Keith Robertson, there are no fears that the quality of the beers will not continue to be of the highest standard. Still mentioning our Pub of the Year awards, it's well done also to Sue and Donald Wright at the **Volunteer Arms** in Dunbar for being voted "Third Best Pub in the Lothians".

Moving west and that friendly local the **Winton Arms** at Pencaitland has Caley 80 and Black Sheep Bitter, whilst at the **Stair Arms Hotel** on the A68, Stewart's Edinburgh Gold remains a favourite. On the A7 at Lothianbridge between Eskbank and Newtongrange, the **Sun Inn** has Deuchars IPA and a guest. It underwent a change of ownership and extensive upgrading a few years ago which has resulted in several awards for its food and accommodation. In Loanhead, the **Mason's Arms (Paddy's)** has Stewart's Pentland IPA on all the time - not surprising, considering that the pub is not far from the brewery. In Dalkeith, the **Blacksmith's Forge** is a Wetherspoon pub that has Deuchars IPA and Greene King Abbot Ale as regulars and up to four guests, whilst the **Buccleuch** has Caley 80 and occasionally a guest ale when custom demands. The **County Hotel** has been extensively refurbished and is trying real ale to see if it will sell. So go along and prove that it will! The **Retreat Castle Hotel** in Bonnyrigg has been closed following a fire but it hoped to reopen by May. It had real ale prior to closing and hopefully it will have again. Just beyond the bypass, the **Steading** continues to be a popular food stop and has Deuchars IPA, Taylor Landlord and a guest. If you're a fan of the Black Isle Brewery then you're guaranteed to get at least one of their beers at the **Juniper Green Inn**. Finally, the **Grey Horse** at Balerno is having a beer festival in the village from 19th to 21st of August.

Ed - It's impossible to mention every outlet in the one issue. However if your pub has something to tell our readers then let POV know.

The Volunteer Arms

17 Victoria Street, Dunbar

Tel; 01368 862278



Our cosy pub nestles down by the harbour. An eclectic mix of Cask Ales served on two handpulls - see board for what's coming! There is an outside seating area, just what you need in Sunny Dinnie!

The Volunteer Arms

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Borders Booze News

They say everything comes in threes and so it's well done to the **Border Hotel** for winning our Borders Area title for the third year running and for coming third overall, in our Pub of the Year Awards (see page four). And it's also congratulations to the **Scottish Borders Brewery** for hitting the ground running, with its beers being widely seen in pubs throughout our branch. With Tempest expanding its distribution, Broughton looking to new brews and Traquair releasing cask to pubs "as and when", then the Borders brewing scene has never been stronger.

In Lauder, Hazel Threadgall from the **Black Bull** has taken on the lease of the **Eagle Hotel** just up the road. Expect a greater emphasis on real ales,



Heatherlie House Hotel

but at the moment Deuchars IPA is the regular and possibly one guest, which was Trade Winds when calling. At the **Buccleuch Arms** in St Boswells beers from Scottish Borders Brewery (SBB) are regularly seen. Billy Hamilton hopes to put in a second pump, but at the time of writing this was still to happen. The only place you'll get real ale in Jedburgh is the **Exchange (Cannon)**. Theakston's Best Bitter is its regular and Deuchars IPA might be the second beer in summer. The pub doesn't always open at lunch times. At Bonchester Bridge the **Horse & Hounds County Inn** has been selling the popular Game Bird from SSB as well as Deuchars IPA. Continuing southwards, a lovely run will take you to the **Liddesdale Hotel**

in Newcastleton, the most southerly outlet in our branch area, where its one hand pump has seen Game Bird (SSB) and Blonde and Red Squirrel from Arran amongst others.

Wetherspoon has finally come to Hawick, with the opening of the **Bourtree** in the former Conservative Club building in Bourtree Place. Ruddles IPA and Greene King Abbot Ale are its regulars and there are usually two guests on as well. Also carrying the flag for real ale in the town is that traditional community pub the **Exchange Bar (Dalton's)** which has Caley 80 and a guest. Let's hope real ale fans appreciate the

merits of both these diversely different outlets.

In Selkirk the **Town Arms** has sadly taken out real ale, which leaves

the **Heatherlie House Hotel** as the sole outlet. Beers from Fyne Ales and Tempest have been among those seen on its two guest pumps. The summer is the ideal time to venture west to the **Cross Keys Inn** at Ettrickbridge where you'll find three guests on at this country pub. Another hostelry deserving of a summer's run is the **Tibbie Shiels Inn** at St Mary's Loch. Here you'll find Broughton Reiver. Moving north towards Galashiels the **Clovenfords Hotel** always tends to have a beer from Broughton on plus an occasional guest. Galashiels has three real ale outlets, the **Ladhope Inn** (Deuchars IPA and a guest), the **Salmon Inn** (Deuchars IPA and two guests) and **Wetherspoon's Hunters Hall** (Deuchars IPA, Greene King Abbot Ale and two guests).

Further east, the **Templehall Hotel** at Morebattle has one guest beer, with Game Bird (SBB) on during a recent call. At Birgham, the **Fisherman's Arms** is rightly popular for its food, but word is that it's also now focusing on its community pub role which is what it is. Stephen Bispham always greets his customers with a smile and friendly chat. Fyne Ales **Avalanche** and Stewart's Forth **Mist** are just two of the guests seen on the two hand pumps. Simon and Diane Gray continue with their improvements at the **Plough** at Leitholm, the bar area having been extended. Beer here is mainly from Hadrian & Border. That stylish country inn the **Wheatsheaf** at Swinton looks out across the village green. The one hand pump dispenses mainly Deuchars IPA but beers from



Stewart and Greene King have also featured on occasions. Opening times vary so best to phone. Another country pub, the **Craw Inn** at Auchencrow (runner-up in our Borders Area Pub of the Year award) has two guest pumps. Tempest Into the Light was proving very popular, along with Cairngorm Trade Winds. At Coldingham the **Anchor Inn** only has real ale on in the summer. However at the **New Inn**, you're guaranteed beer all year, with two guest ales on during the summer. Finally it's westwards again to Peebles where we're told that real ale is now in **Peebles Rugby Club**. Sadly the **Cross Keys Inn** has closed, but for how long?!

Ed - it's impossible to mention every outlet in the one issue. However if your pub has something to tell our readers then let POV know.



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The Perfect Pint

As a CAMRA member, hopefully you will be collecting scores for the real ales that you enjoy in the pubs that you visit. However what constitutes the “Perfect Pint”? According to the definition given in the CAMRA “National Beer Scoring Scheme” (NBSS), a score of (5) is “Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.”

Therein lies the conundrum:-

Do you wait until the last possible moment before the closure date for the submission of scores for The Good Beer Guide, and then select the one beer that would deserve a single score of (5)? (There is no requirement, of course, to allocate a score of (5) in every, or any, year). The problem with this approach is can you really remember the quality of all of the beers that you have drunk, perhaps up to nine months previously, and then meaningfully compare them?

Or, do you collate your scores throughout the year and submit them on a regular basis? This can, of course, lead to more than one “perfect” (5) being submitted within the annual scoring cycle, which incidentally runs from March to November.

Also, what happens when you have given a (5) for your “perfect” pint in the pub one day and then you return to the same pub the following day, drink the same beer from the same cask and it is still “perfect”? I would suggest that another (5) should be given, as CAMRA encourages you to

record a score every time you visit a pub and try a beer, even if it’s the same pub and the same beer you tried the previous night. Remember the more scores you submit for beers the more these scores accurately represent the quality of the beers in the pubs visited.

Of course the CAMRA’s scoring system- (5) to (0) where (0) is scored when the beer is undrinkable and not taken off - is an attempt to get as much objectivity into something that, by its very nature, is subjective. One person’s (5) is another’s (4); the same person’s (3) is the other’s (4). I would hope, however, that all real ale drinkers would be able to detect, and agree on, a (0)! Please also bear in mind that we are not scoring beer for a good pub guide, but for “The Good Beer Guide”.

The National Beer Scoring Scheme makes it quick and easy for CAMRA members to submit their scores on a regular basis. However our Beer Scoring Coordinator can provide members of our branch with scoring sheets for return to him either electronically or by post for those so inclined or without web access. The important thing is for as many CAMRA members as possible to submit their scores by whatever means.

So, if you want to submit scores and are not a CAMRA member, then join today and influence the choice of pubs to be given a place in The Good Beer Guide - and you can search for your “perfect pint”!

Ron Elder

Help ma bob - it’s 80 bob - give a beer a name!

In the nineteenth century brewers produced an extensive range of beers which would be enumerated by the Shilling System where the strength of the beers was graded in ascending order. For example Harvest and Table beers were at 28/- (28 shilling) per barrel and 35/-, Light and Mild ales were 42/- and 48/-, Pale and India Pale Ales were 54/- and 60/-, Scottish and Export ales at 70/- and 80/-. The term “90/-” was never an arithmetic progression - it was simply a hogshead (a barrel and a half) of 60/- ale. Where a brewer had a surplus of 60/- ale it would often be bottled with the label showing “90/-” which may have made the beer appear more interesting than the 60/- ale it actually was. After the Second World War the range of beers available was reduced with the surviving ranges being 60/-, 70/- and 80/- representing light, heavy and export beers. During the Real Ale boom period from the mid 1970s these terms were being used on pump clips and beer labels. In addition the term “90/-” was now being used to identify strong ales. Orkney Skullsplitter is an onomatopoeic name used for a heady strong beer with an abv of around 8.5% and in any case Thorfinn Skullsplitter was a real person - a Lord of Caithness. The terminology “70/-” has all but died out and there is only the occasional reference to “60/-” and “90/-”. Perhaps brewers should finally call time on the term “80/-” or “80 bob”, as the Shilling Numerology no longer has any real significance, given that in the not too distant future the average pint of beer in Edinburgh will cost 80 bob. Let’s give a beer a name!





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Brewery News

Broughton Ales

After almost half a century in the brewing trade Alastair Mouat will officially retire at the end of May 2011. Alastair joined Broughton from Belhaven in June 1994 and has been responsible for the continued growth and success of the company over the last decade. Everyone at Broughton hopes you will join them in wishing him a long and well deserved retirement.



Broughton Ales has been working with the Border Hotel over the past few months to reinvent the hotel's signature ale, Pennine Way Bitter. Landlady, Margaret Blackburn, felt that the previous version of the ale at 4.2% ABV needed a revamp and asked us to come up with an alternative. After lots of changes in colour and ABV and enthusiastic feedback from Border Hotel regulars, we have produced a light copper ale which at 3.4% is a full drinking, satisfying beer with a crisp, refreshing aftertaste. Pennine Way Bitter is available all through the year at the Border Hotel, Kirk Yetholm.

September will see the return of the always popular Two Breweries race between Traquair and Broughton, starting in the grounds of Traquair House and finishing at the brewery in Broughton. All finishers receive a bottle of Greenmantle Ale at the finish line in Broughton before heading down to the village hall for the award ceremony and more beer! The summer months will see Broughton produce its usual seasonal ales with Summer Ale at 3.5% and The Ghillie at 4.5% always proving popular.

Chris Mouat
Broughton Ales

Stewart Brewing

On the cask scene, two beers that we will showcase at the Scottish Real Ale Festival in June are Steve's 40th Ale brewed to coincide also with CAMRA's 40th birthday. CAMRA has also encouraged us to produce an American Red Ale, brewed using our patented "Hopinator" device resulting in bags of hops. There has been lots of great feedback on Coconut Porter



- especially people wanting it in bottle - watch this space as we will definitely be doing it again.

At the end of March we had brewed our 2,500,000, (2 ½ millionth pint) since our first brew in 2005.

Look out for Hop Wheels at Edinburgh Marathon, Royal Highland Show, Taste of Edinburgh and Foodies at the Festival.

George (our assistant brewer) has produced our very first soft drink, George's Ginger Beer, and he will be graduating to brew our 7th Birthday Ale later in the year.

The move to our new brewery is edging closer, again watch this space.

Steve Stewart
Stewart Brewing

Scottish Borders Brewery

Things are "all go" down at Chesters. After a successful launch, we now have over 100 pubs taking our first two ales and we are looking to launch our third and fourth, Holy Cow and Dark Horse at the end of May. Game Bird has already been a festival winner in Preston, and the plough-to-pint ethos of the brewery seems to be gaining real traction with consumers; it seems to be something that they are definitely looking for.

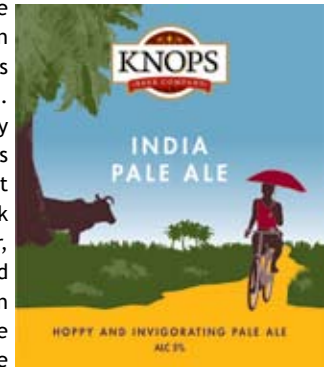
John Henderson
Scottish Borders Brewery



"The very first pint - Game Bird - from SBB being poured by Stewart Mabon of the Fox & Hounds in Denholm"

Knops Beer Company

The first known mention of India Pale Ale was in 1835. Before that it was known as beer for the India market or India Beer. This was beer that was brewed for export to the colonies and had to be able to withstand months at sea in hot climates. The beer tended to be relatively high in alcohol compared to today's beers (5% to 9% abv) and heavily hopped. Naturally, with their close proximity to the East India Company docks which dominated colonial trade, it was the London brewers who took advantage of these markets. However, with the opening of the railways and improved transport links, the Burton and Edinburgh brewers began to take more of the market share and became



THE CASK & BARREL - F



Photo: pubinatable.com

QUALITY PUB AT THE FOOT OF BROUGHTON

famous for their India Beers. As colonials returned home they retained a taste for these beers and brewers responded by brewing them for the domestic market.

During the First World War, due to increased taxation and raw material shortages, brewers decreased the strength of beers and the hopping rates. IPA as a style almost died out but was kept alive by a small number of regional breweries albeit as a shadow of its former self. More recently there has been a resurgence in the style and it is now one of the most recognised ale names.

Knops Beer Company has remained true to the traditional style of IPA but has included some contemporary elements. The beer is 5% abv; the malt used is Maris Otter Pale Ale and the hops are New World hops which in general provide a more intense flavour and aroma.

As with our other beers (California Common and Musselburgh Broke) Knops Beer Co. IPA is about exploring the history of beer styles and producing a beer that is drinkable, refreshing AND full of flavour. The last taste should be even better than the first.

*Robert Knops
Knops Beer Company*

Tempest Brewing Company

See the interview with Gavin Meiklejohn on page 5



Thistly Cross Cider

Located at Belhaven Fruit Farm west of Dunbar, Thistly Cross Cider - both in draught and in bottles - has gained great popularity since it was established in 2008. At the moment cider maker Peter Stuart is working towards meeting CAMRA's exacting criteria for "real" cider, one of which is using locally grown apples. Peter said "Thistly Cross Cider hopes to be at the heart of the resurgence of commercial fruit growing in Scotland. We hope our efforts will offer an incentive to landowners and community groups, encouraging them to plant new orchards and maintain established plantations. Remember - the definition of an orchard is three or more apple trees. And a small number of well maintained trees can yield anything up to a ton of fruit. We will have 3,000L of Cider made to CAMRA specification to be sold when it has matured - certainly by Sept."



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Fowler's Prestonpans Brewery Roddy Beveridge - an appreciation

Roddy Beveridge, head brewer of Fowler's Prestonpans Brewery at the Prestounrange Gothenburg in Prestonpans, sadly passed away in November of last year. His sudden death shocked everyone and he will be greatly missed by all. Roddy was a CAMRA, SIBA and Scottish Craft Brewer member and that alone tells everyone of his commitment to brewing and real ale. He started on the ale trail early in life with full mash



home brewing and progressed from there. Roddy was very much a people person with the unique ability to make friends easily and would help anyone out without being asked. Whilst he was particularly passionate about traditional Scottish Shilling Ales, he wasn't slow to diversify - his Gothenburg Porter and Lemon & Ginger Wheat Beer are proof of that! My fondest memories of Roddy are when we worked together as bar staff during CAMRA beer festivals, where he would always engage with customers to get feedback on his beers. I would always notice a smile on his face and knew he was getting positive feedback. For Roddy, being at the Gothenburg in Prestonpans was very special to him as he enjoyed the brewing and pub history of that area. The commissioning of the brewers alley wrought iron gate at the Goth was a proud moment for him, as you can see from the photograph taken at that time. The staff has kindly mounted this photograph of him in his memory, next to the window of the brewery. I'm sure he would be happy with that. Roddy would have a chuckle at this famous beer saying from Benjamin Franklin: "Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy" - well said. Cheers Roddy.

Rab Cowan

Friend & CAMRA Brewery liaison Officer of Fowler's Prestonpans Brewery

At the time of going to print, fellow craft brewer Dave Whyte, was negotiating to take over the brewery. Let's all hope that this has been concluded successfully and that beers are now being brewed here once more. That's what Roddy would have wanted.

Caley's new beer

Caledonian welcomes the return of the Flying Scotsman. The world's most famous locomotive has been completely restored at The National Railway Museum in York and will go back on the rails this summer. The restoration is already attracting national press and TV coverage. In tribute to this legendary locomotive being back on track, our premium bitter offers First Class refreshment from Edinburgh to London and beyond. Flying Scotsman is a sophisticated, full flavoured premium bitter beer combining the best barley from the north and robust southern hops; profoundly malty in aroma but balanced with hints of raisiny spiciness and toasty dryness; fresh, slightly citrus tang with a rich rounded finish. The Flying Scotsman will be on track from July and will be a permanent addition to the Caledonian Beer Portfolio.

Craig Steven (aka Shakey)
Caledonian Brewery

1ST CLASS REFRESHMENT

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The Flying Scotsman will be on track from July and will be a permanent addition to the Caledonian Beer Portfolio.



Flying Scotsman locomotive is a registered trademark no 2449033A

A Beer and a Bite at The Canons' Gait

The Canons' Gait is a traditional boozier steeped in history. The Canongate area (the bottom part of the Royal Mile) is named after the monks of Holyrood Abbey which was established in 1128 by David I and the area was only unified with Edinburgh in 1856. If interested, more 'wiki-history' is available via google but meanwhile onto the pub, the food and the beer!

Mr Bite and I have visited a few times. The chef, Craig McKend, has been at the pub for two years and although the menu still includes pub staples he has introduced more ambitious dishes and a specials board. What we really appreciate though is the fact that the dishes have suggested beer matches. On this solo visit I chose the special of wild rabbit braised in white wine with thyme and pancetta on a celeriac puree (£9.95) with the Knops California Common on tap.

This beer is a Scottish interpretation of a traditional 'steam beer', a term that originated in gold rush times when prospectors wanted something refreshing after a long day of often reward-less digging. The solution was to brew lager yeasts at ale fermentation temperatures thus producing the lightness of lager with the creaminess and depth of ale. The term has been trademarked by The Anchor Brewery in California hence the name 'California Common' for this Edinburgh offering. It is a refreshing, zesty, highly drinkable beer. It does not have a great deal of complexity but you must judge it for what it is; a light, tasty, hoppy beer. These characteristics make it perfect to drink alongside a substantial plate of food and in this case the citrus notes complemented the light rabbit meat perfectly whilst also acting as a foil to a rich, buttery mash and the puree. The hops accented the thyme jus too.



For dessert I chose the apple, rhubarb and sweet cicely crumble with vanilla ice cream (£3.75) and a Thistly Cross cider to match. This was a large portion of sweet crumble which could have done with a bit more of a toasty topping. The flavours were good but the star of the show was the home-made ice cream, cool and chock full of fresh, vanilla specks. I could see why cider was the suggested match for the crumble as the clean apple finish married the fruit flavours well.

Now I know that cider is not cask ale but it is nice to drink and thus support any home-grown brew as long as it hits the spot. In this case the grog is made by Scottish Cider maker Peter Stuart and Ian Rennie near Belhaven Fruit Farm, Dunbar, East Lothian. They have brewed a range of ciders since 2008 and won a handful of awards for doing so. I drank the Thistly Cross Traditional cider which weighs in at 4.4%, a lighter but similar offering to the 'Original' (7.2%). They also produce strawberry, ginger and elderflower infused versions. Note that many of the East Lothian orchards used for the cider production are clustered around the sites of ancient monastic plantations which brings us neatly back to The Canons' Gait.

This pub is part of a portfolio that includes The Abbotsford, The Guilford and Leslies, all bars that in my opinion celebrate our Scottish drinking heritage. The Canons' Gait is no exception and is a great place to experience some home grown food, beer and hospitality and you will always find a number of interesting ales on tap.

Sharon Wilson

*Sharon Wilson is the Editor of Bite Magazine
www.bite-magazine.com*



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Calling time on “The Session”

If you walked up to the bar in your favourite CAMRA-approved pub what would you see on offer? Hopefully a range of well-kept beers from near and far to tempt the money from your pocket. But if you were there for the whole evening, how many would you get through? Would it be a long session on the same low abv cask ale? But are times changing? Does the younger generation of beer lovers still head out for numerous pints of 3.8% bitter? Should we call time on the session?

The revival of British brewing has resulted in a huge choice as brewers who embrace experimentation increasingly produce more styles and as foreign bottled beers are imported in larger numbers. Put me on a comfortable bar stool (if such a thing exists) in a great Edinburgh pub and I'll feel spoiled. The notion of sticking to the same beer for the rest of the night seems so restrictive when the present day pub can (and should) offer a wide and appealing choice. Why limit yourself to a long slog through pints of the same session ale?

Why do we like beer? Because we enjoy the flavour. Not for one minute am I suggesting session beers cannot be flavourful - Beer Cast's Beer of the 2010 Scottish Real Ale Festival was the

tremendous Fyne Ales Jarl at 3.8%. Even with something as good as that, after a couple I'd be scanning the counter, blackboard or even fridges for my next choice. I think what it comes down to is I prefer the bold, punchy flavours of a strong IPA or an imperial stout. Once you get north of 5% these beers really deliver and have the freedom to stand out from the crowd.

All this comes at a cost of course. If you're asking yourself whether I happily chew my way through half a dozen barrel-aged imperial porters of an evening, the answer is no. But I would much rather drink three beers that give me more of a 'taste sensation' (forgive the phrase) than say twice that number that chug merrily along being slightly hoppy with a hint of biscuit. If that means my nights out are shorter, then so be it. When even a session beer could set you back well over £3 in the city, I might even be better off!

Maybe it's the beer writer in me - this desire to always try the new and move on to something else. But over the last few years I've noticed some pubs in Edinburgh routinely serve cask ales that are over 6% abv. This is great and should be encouraged, particularly in the face of continuing rises in duty. This new wave of stronger cask and bottled beers is changing the way we look at a session. On a recent night out, instead of buying four pints in a round I bought a 750ml bottle of an imported Belgian beer and asked for four glasses.

If that admission has you tutting and gripping your Deuchars a little tighter, fair enough - as I said at the start the idea of increased choice means there should be room for all beer strengths and styles. But at the risk of sounding like a certain Aberdeenshire brewery, session beer just doesn't cut it anymore - there's too much good stuff out there to remain in that low abv comfort zone. Quality over quantity should be the way to go forward.

Richard Taylor

Recognition at last!

According to a Guinness poll (no this is not about keg beer) pub landlords come second only to postmen as the friendliest workers. But of course we already know this and surely the poll applied to both sexes.

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Craft Beer - what does it mean?

The production of beer revels in descriptive terminology - from the agricultural-sounding methods of lautering and sparging to the archaic firkins and kilderkins that contained the end product. Some of these words are no longer used, but today we still have plenty of descriptions around - not least of which is the one given to the world by CAMRA - Real Ale. But there could be a new kid on the block, arriving (as many things do) from over the Atlantic - Craft Beer.

But hold on a minute...what does Craft Beer actually mean? While CAMRA backed Real Ale with an exact definition (which some would argue is too exacting), the new term is gaining acceptance in certain circles without too much provenance. Admittedly, those circles are largely beer writers hunched over their keyboards - though it is a phrase I have heard more and more recently in the UK. But you know what? It means nothing.

Not here, at least. In the land of its birth, Craft Beer is a very real movement. When the Craft Brewers Association of America won tax relief for their members (being a trade body representing small US brewers) they realised pretty quickly a definition was needed to decide just who could qualify. So in 1976 if you produced fewer than two million barrels a year, were independently owned and had an all-malt flagship (i.e. your best-seller did not contain rice or corn to 'lighten' the flavour) - you were thenceforth a Craft Brewer.

A beery gold-rush began and the number of Craft Breweries rocketed from 8 in 1980 to over 1,600 in 2010. However last year a major hurdle was reached - the Boston Beer Company (brewers

of Sam Adams) announced they were about to exceed two million barrels - the first Craft Brewer to do so. Would they then have to be classed as a Macro-producer? Well, no, as the CBA simply moved the goalposts and amended their definition of Craft to a brewer producing under six million barrels a year.

When the American system has to be amended in this way it does slightly undermine the Craft message. All beers are crafted - some more than others, obviously - but when the organisation that created the term has to fudge the definitions, the limitations become apparent for all to see. Now the term is being used increasingly over here. But in the UK it has no historical context, so can have no real meaning, other than 'beer I like'.

This is where the term falls down - without the rigid definition of a Real Ale, Craft Beer becomes too subjective. As a buzzword, beer writers and bloggers in the UK can make use of it, but how do you argue Beer A is a Craft Beer but Beer B isn't? We might all agree that a small micro producer putting out carefully brewed casks to local pubs would be a Craft Brewer, but it might also be your opinion that industrial lager is crafted - such is the complex nature of the modern space-age brewhouse.


With no defined ideals of what it means over here, the term Craft Beer might be on a hiding to nothing. Looking at the problems the Brewers Association is having in the States, that might actually be a good thing. Do we really need a precursor to the word beer, anyway?

Richard Taylor

Richard is a CAMRA member and also editor of the Beer Cast (<http://thebeercast.com>) - a guide to all things beer-related in Edinburgh.

Guess the Pub?

(A) Costorphine Inn; (B) Doctor's (C) Joseph Pearce



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AVENUE

Our Chairman's bit

In the last issue of Pints of View I discussed the new social programme that we had introduced for the autumn. As you will read in social secretary Don Bell's piece, this has been a significant success, and one of the most pleasing factors is that it is not always the same faces - welcome though they are - at every event. Another noticeable trend has been an increase in attendance at branch meetings with a recent one at a certain well known hostelry in Musselburgh reaching almost record numbers.

There is always debate in CAMRA circles about the nature of branch meetings, with some folk arguing that members get easily bored with talk about policies and campaigns and so branch meetings should be short, snappy and infrequent. Personally, I have always found such arguments pretty patronising. After all, when members join CAMRA they know it is a campaigning organisation. This recent branch meeting was a full blown affair with a lot of discussion and even some argument. I did not notice anyone leaving early and as far as I could see no one fell asleep - unlike in the House of Commons. There were, of course, sufficient beer breaks and the very high quality of the real ales on offer did make the meeting particularly pleasurable, but the actual format of the meeting was very similar to those we held in the early days of the branch. 'If it's not broken, don't fix it' comes to mind. Speaking of early days, I recently had the pleasure of visiting Sheffield for a celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Campaign. The participants were rather grandly called CAMRA



pioneers and included the four founding members of the Campaign, who even managed a short cabaret appearance! Attending the meeting was obviously an initiative test, in my case a day out involving five different trains, but I did get home just before midnight. Seeing so many of the original CAMRA members there got me thinking about the health benefits of real ale. Any user of life insurance actuarial tables would have been impressed by the turnout and by the apparent mental vigour of the participants. But of course we do not consume a drink called alcohol, we drink real beer, with its lack of artificial ingredients and its moderate level of alcohol. We do however acknowledge one of the side effects of cask beer consumption, namely, a tendency to feel hungry. The organisers of this celebration function were of course only too aware of this and had thoughtfully provided the traditional accompaniment for such activities - a 'Ruby Murray' or curry for that great number of you too young to remember the Irish singer origin of this rhyming slang. Mind you, there was one departure from tradition; eating a curry at lunchtime was certainly a novel experience! You might be reading this article in the middle of a heat wave, but more likely not. If the weather is hot your thoughts will naturally turn to a delicious summer real beer such as a golden ale. It is worth remembering that when the Campaign started such newer beer styles had not even been thought of, let alone brewed. We have definitely been doing something right over all these years. Long may it continue!

Roger Preece

Chairman, Edinburgh & South East Scotland Branch

Our Social Secretary's bit

When I wrote my article for the previous issue of Pints of View we were in the middle of a pretty nasty period of winter where it was difficult for some people to even get out of the house let alone make it to the pub. However with the warmer weather now, I'm happy to report that we have had a very encouraging first few months of the year on the social side of our branch.

Every month we have had a "Two Pub Social" where we try a

couple of the interesting pubs in different areas of Edinburgh. Recent examples of these have been to Leith Walk (Robbie's Bar and the Windsor Buffet), Stockbridge (Kay's Bar and the St Vincent Bar) and Morningside (Bennets and the Waiting Room). All of these have been well attended, with Tuesday evenings seeming to suit more people than Wednesdays.

Once again our members were able to enjoy another excellent brewery visit. In March we were delighted to accept an invitation from Steve Stewart of Stewart Brewing to visit the brewery and of course sample its fine beers. Our thanks again go to Steve, Jo and the team for their hospitality.

Possibly the most important social event of all was our New Members evening which was held at the Cask & Barrel Southside in February. This was an excellent evening attended by around twenty five members who had joined our branch in recent times. Our committee members were on hand to chat about all things CAMRA related as well as providing a drink or two from the pub's extensive range of ales. It was great to see so many new faces and hopefully those who attended will be able to also attend some of our other events. The branch is certainly going to have similar evenings in the future.

Although the numbers being attracted to our social events is increasing, there's always room for more. So, if you are a member who wants to take part in more activities within your local branch or simply someone who appreciates a good pint of real ale and a chat with like-minded folk, then come along. And if you are not yet a member and would like to see what CAMRA is all about, then feel free to come to any of our events where we will be delighted to see you. They will be advertised on our branch website

www.edinburghcamra.org.uk

Cheers!

Don Bell

Social Secretary,

CAMRA Edinburgh & South East Scotland Branch

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An American in Edinburgh

The door to the flat shut behind me. I set my bags on the floor and sighed deeply.

Edinburgh! I'd made it!

I'd made it through months of planning, through a day's worth of international travel, through seven hours crushed against the 757's window. But the oven clock read 09:00 and I needed a beer.

I'd made a tactical error - the Bow Bar wouldn't open for three hours. There goes that sigh again!

The Bow Bar's bright blue frontage and homey dimness, noticeably lacking music and television, beckons me to return. Invariably, I return for the number and quality of their real ales. On this most recent visit, I sip a pint of Tempest Elemental Porter. It's dark, rich and delicious and at 5.1% ABV, it's also got more alcohol than most real ales I've seen around town. It's a curious trend. Most American microbrews tend to start at 5% ABV and go up. Could real ales not handle a higher alcohol content? Why make such weak beer and charge the same amount for it? The beeronomics didn't add up. These questions would remain a mystery for now, but one thing was crystal clear: Tempest Brewing Company makes damn fine beer.

My vague directions to The Halfway House prove to be horribly inadequate as I climb up and down the wynds of the Royal Mile, peering in closes and scratching my head for what feels like hours. Eventually I arrive, grab the last seat in the house, and hunker down with a bowl of Cullen Skink and a pint of Cairngorm's Trade Winds. I forget about the cold and lengthy search. The place, little more than a living room in someone's house, is filled with boisterous patrons. It feels natural, like it's grown organically from the rock. I like it here. A lot.

And the beer? No complaints. The Trade Winds is light in color, fresh with citrus, and silky. I remember how John Edwardson likened most American beers to "fizzy pish." I immediately liked him. John and his buddy Ken, both CAMRA stalwarts, spoke to me about Scotland's pub culture and shed some light on those mysteries I'd first encountered in the Bow Bar. We talked about "the session," a characteristic of Scottish pub culture that doesn't really exist in America. The guys kindly explained that sometimes you want to have pints - a lot of pints - but not get silly drunk. It explains the low-alcohol brews I'd frequently seen, ales like Deuchars IPA and the delicious Stewart's Pentland IPA.

It's my last night in Edinburgh. In the intervening weeks I've visited thirty-something pubs and come to find that not every drinking hole is worth a visit, but Sandy Bells, a mere block from my flat, repays my curiosity. It's small, bright and lively with the sound of a folk session in the back. The music gives the place a soul that the pubs back home too often lack.

I guard a pint of Deuchars from the throng. Over the last three weeks I've come to really enjoy this so-called "flat, warm beer." The flavors


are strong and smooth without the constant tingle of carbonation. When I get home the next day I greet my wife with a big hug and I smile - my refrigerator doesn't have opening times. But the smile withers as the situation dawns on me. It's filled only with fizzy pish.

Sigh!

Keith Savage

Keith is Traveling Savage, roaming travel writer

Read about Keith and his travels at www.traveling-savage.com



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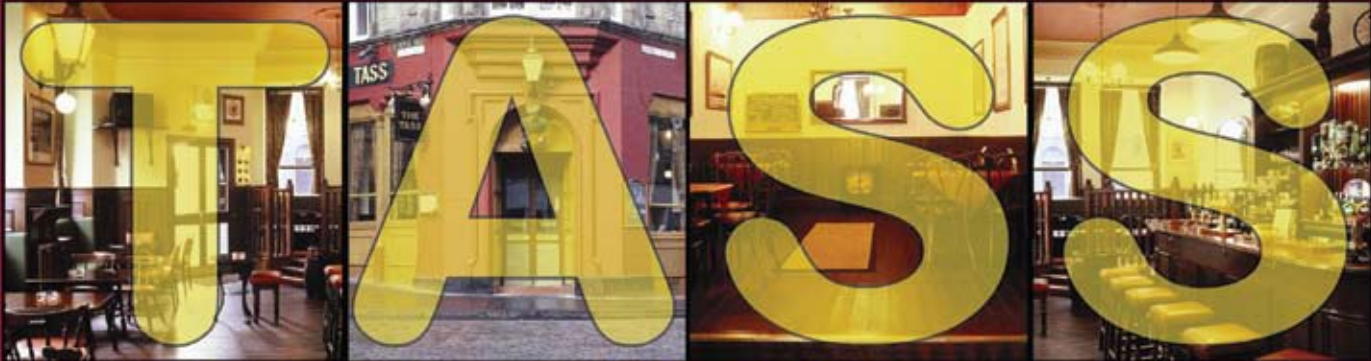


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A SCOTSMAN ON THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ALE TRAIL

I recently undertook a holiday (more of an expedition, really) flying from Edinburgh to Panama City via Newark, New York, travelling overland through Panama to Costa Rica then through Nicaragua before exploring El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala before finally stopping over in New York on the return journey. As with all my holidays, apart from seeking stunning sights, local cultures, history and language, food and drink also form an important part of the whole experience and, having researched what local delicacies I might expect to unearth, I was rather expecting to imbibe a procession of not very inspiring local lagers; however, there were some pleasant surprises. First off was finding a Samuel Adams brew pub hidden at the end of a long corridor in Newark Airport offering four micro brewed beers, two of which were dark - Boston Lager (confusingly) and a Cherry Warmer (very strong and sweet). Not much time to linger here, but the Boston Lager was excellent in taste and flavour. At \$9.10 (£6 a pint) I won't be making this pub my local, though!



Next, Panama, where quite by chance, I found a brew pub - Panama's only one - in Panama City within walking distance of my hotel! Itsmo's Brew Pub was conceived a few years ago to offer a wider choice of "Cerveza Artesanal" (craft beer!). Four beers are produced from coppers situated behind the bar: Colon, a mid strength wheat beer; Chiriqui, an excellent amber coloured flavoursome ale; Cocle, a sweeter, darker brew and Veraguas, an almost black porter. The language barrier prevented me from establishing the hops and malts used but the following morning was testament to their obvious strengths!

Panama's national lagers are Atlas, Panama and Balboa which are available everywhere and the latter, Balboa (same name as their currency) was quite palatable.

On to Costa Rica and no real ale here but a choice of canned and bottled Imperial (4.8%), Bavaria (4.8%) and the very sweet Rock Ice (5.0%) which I found disgusting! Of the six Central American countries I toured, Costa Rica seems to produce the fewest number of beers and doesn't have its own brand of rum (don't worry, the others made up for it!)

Next stop, Nicaragua. This amazing country lists Flor de Cana rum as one of its principal exports along with sugar cane, bananas and

coffee which is perhaps why they don't produce much beer; however, the Tona Beer (4.6%) was very palatable. Victoria Pilsner (4.9%) is the other nationally produced beer to be found everywhere.

Honduras was next and plenty of beers on offer, though none found on draught. Salvavida and Imperial were heavy beers at 4.8% and 5.0% respectively; Port Royal and Barena mid strength brews with Nationale and Polar being the lighter models.

Crossing into El Salvador, more beers on offer, the four national examples being Golden (4.8%), Pilsener (4.4%), Regia (4.8%) and Suprema (5.2%) which wasn't! Brahia is the other available beer, but not easily found.

Last stop in this region was Guatemala and the amazing city of Antigua. Here the quality of beers was excellent, the main one being Gallo (5.0%). Brahma imported from Brazil is also popular and there is one dark beer, Moza, produced here. I even found a bar selling draught beer so was able to try the local favourite, Mixta, which is half clara and half oscura, a pint of "half and

half" in our language!

The only Central American destination not covered was Belize, the most northerly of the seven countries with its strong Creole/Caribbean influence. Rum is the national drink and the principal beer, Belikin, comes in several varieties - regular; a lager type in both bottled and draught versions; bottled stout and two more exclusive bottled brews - Lighthouse and Premium.

I shall have to make sure I return as soon as possible to give them all a good tasting!

Douglas Newlands



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A SHAKY PINT OR TWO . . .

So, we begin in Comrie, Perthshire, and as it's the earthquake capital of Britain, that's what I mean. Every so often we get a chance to escape the big city and head off for a few days in glorious tree country. Real ale can be found, but out of season almost anything can happen.

In Comrie the Royal Hotel (a former coaching inn) has real ale in the old byre, separate from the lounge and restaurant. Marston's English Pale Ale is the regular here. At the other end of the town is the family owned Comrie Hotel where one beer can sometimes



be found in the summer. The first Comrie beer festival took place last July in tents by the river.

In the metropolis of Crieff, where Glenturret distillery resides with the twee Famous Grouse "attraction", you will find the Caledonian Bar in the main square. It usually has two guest ales on

mainly from the Belhaven/Greene King list. Up the main road at the unassuming Crieff Hotel; two in summer, one in winter - always one from Inveralmond. In October 2010 they had some very nice Hairy Coo from Inveralmond, a godsend on one of the many rainy days to be found here.

Back in Comrie and in search of a decent pint and exercise, we usually walk down the road seven miles or so to the lovely village of St Fillans on Loch Earn. The Drummond Arms Hotel - now calling itself the Drummond Hotel - has Ossian (Inveralmond again) and friendly new owners It's a great place for a pint on a sunny day,

particularly as you get to carry it across a road to the beer garden with a cracking view down the loch to Ben Vorlich. Look out for deer in the hills above, spot ospreys and avoid feeding the ducks. The walk from Lochearnhead up the old railway in Glen Ogle to Killin on Loch Tay is lovely, but as we don't drive, the only way

for us to get to Lochearnhead is via the summer-only City Link bus. So it's bus to Lochearnhead, walk to Killin, have some beers and dinner and then get the only bus back. Job done. Killin has four real ale outlets. First after the walk will be The Falls of Dochart Inn (wonder how they got that name!),

with three beers (not all from Inveralmond) but I found them far too cold. If you walk right through the village to The Bridge of Lochay Hotel you will find Deuchars IPA, but closer is The Coach House Hotel, with two beers, likely to be from Cairngorm. Take some time and sit out looking at Ben Lawers towering above. It's getting on now and so to The Killin Hotel, located in a historic Scottish baronial building and with a great view. One beer is available from Inveralmond, which was Independence on this occasion. Another chance to speak to some ducks, and check out the excellent Scottish menu (hey, leave the ducks alone).

That's it, back at Comrie and now I'm away for a sleep.

Jim Darroch



Rock on Whistlebinkies

When POV asked for customers to report on their local, Jim Rae was one of the first to respond. Jim's first sentence also reflects the fact that we are late in publishing his article, for which we apologise. It's as Jim Rae tells it . . .

Late late, how late it is, how late. For a year or three now I have been making promises to write a review on Whistlebinkies Live Music Bar just off the High Street in Edinburgh. Here finally, is the promised review. I like rock bars. Whistlebinkies is a rock bar featuring live music every night, loud down in the music room, the way I like it. The floor features the Orkney stone that used to pave our fair city streets until the council sold it all to the London Borough of Westminster, but that's another story. Up three steps is the bar-room where the beer taps are. You can still hear the music and each other, whilst an area beyond that is relatively quiet. There are also party rooms under the arches of the South Bridge that hold a dozen or so.

And to the beers. Generally you would find Deuchars and Caley 80 along with one guest, or one Caley and two guests. In the seven years I have been drinking here there has been a stream of quality ales in great condition top to bottom. Favoured breweries include Orkney, Kelburn, Inveralmond, Atlas, Stewart, Belhaven and of course Caley. Various English beers, such as Abbott Ale, Spitfire, Hobgoblin and Summer Lightning make appearances. The array of badges only tells half the story as they ran out of ceiling space.

Uniquely, to my knowledge, there is no one cellar man, though young Steve seemed to be a major influence. There were four managers, each as capable as the other of maintaining the continuity required to ensure a seven year clean beer record. The service is quick, well informed and professional though many of the staff work part-time. The music is vibrant including a number of original artists. The mood for the most part is civilised, though there is a solid R&B set early Saturday evening finishing around 9pm which can involve exuberant dancing causing occasional spillages! Turn down the High Street from The Bridges, first right (Niddry Street), first bar on the right-hand side. There is another entrance off the South Bridge, down some steps. This is a top quality rock bar that sells top quality beers. Ah, that's the way I like it! www.whistlebinkies.com

Jim Rae

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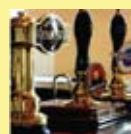
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