

Issue 81

Winter 2023/24

FREE

# PINTS of VIEW



Campaign for Real Ale

The CAMRA Magazine for Edinburgh and South-East Scotland

## 40 Years of Pints of View!



### In this issue ...

- The Scottish Tall Font
  - A Visit to the Kent Green Hop Beer Festival
  - Heritage Pubs: the Persevere
  - Latest real ale pub news
  - Latest local brewery news
- ... and more!

### In this issue ...

- Trams (and Cask Beer) to Newhaven
- Kay's Bar Treasure Trove
- Latest real ale pub news
- Latest local brewery news
- ... and more!

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promotions on a budget. In the Lothians and the Borders there were pubs still selling pints at around £2.60 whilst the highest price found was £3.60. To take one example: for Taylor Landlord, an

Interview with Rob Highland Brew


In this issue:

of Pints of View is read by more drinkers in Edinburgh, Lothians

*Pints of View* is the magazine of the Edinburgh & South-East Scotland Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), an independent, voluntary organisation campaigning for real ale, community pubs and consumer rights.



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## Editorial

In 1983, a free four-page A4 newsletter appeared in our local pubs, bearing news and other articles of interest to the keen ale drinker. Forty years, more than eighty issues (the issue numbering seems to have started again at No.1 sometime around 1990!) and many editors later, *Pints of View* has grown to 24 pages in full colour, and is still being supplied twice a year to real ale outlets in our branch area by our industrious distribution team. Here's to the next forty!

This issue is also the first for our new Pub News and Brewery News teams. Best wishes to Craig Millar, Craig Leith (no relation) and Grant S. House on their collective retirement. Now, the team can't get around all these pubs by themselves (their doctors advise against the attempt) so if you have news about your pub that we could feature please let me know. We aim to concentrate on the positive news and less on closures, vanishing handpumps and residential planning applications.

Thanks, and happy exploring. There are still a lot of good pubs out there.

*Scott*

*Cover photo: Scott Telford*

## Advertising Rates

Our standard fees for advertisements are as follows:

- Full page: £285
- Half-page: £190
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- One-eighth page: £75
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We normally also give a discount for multiple inserts in a single publication.

All enquiries to [advertising@edinburgh.camra.org.uk](mailto:advertising@edinburgh.camra.org.uk)

## Subscriptions

We currently publish *PoV* twice a year. You can also read the current and previous issues on our website. *PoV* is available by subscription at the following rates:

- 4 issues – £8.00
- 6 issues – £12.00

Subscription requests with a cheque payable to "Edinburgh CAMRA" should be sent to:

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# CAMRA Calling

## Branch News

### Forthcoming Branch Events

Occasionally we may need to cancel or re-arrange events after we go to press. Please check [edinburgh.camra.org.uk/diary](http://edinburgh.camra.org.uk/diary) (or use the QR code on the right) for the latest updates. All venues for branch events are in Edinburgh unless otherwise noted.



#### New Year Social

2pm 20 January

**Caley Sample Room**, then **Diggers**, Angle Park Terr.

#### Two-Pub Social

7:30pm 7 February

**Robbies**, Leith Walk, then **Old Eastway Tap**, Easter Rd.

#### Good Beer Guide Selection Meeting (Members Only)

2:45pm (for 3pm prompt start) 17 February

**Kilderkin**, Canongate

#### Two-Pub Social

7:30pm 13 March

**Bailie**, St. Stephen St, then **Stockbridge Tap**, Raeburn Pl.

#### Branch Social Meeting

2:30pm 23 March

**Merlin**, Morningside Rd.

#### Two-Pub Social

7:30pm 10 April

**Cask & Barrel (Southside)**, W. Preston St, then the **Abbey**, S. Clerk St.

#### Two-Pub Social

7:30pm 18 May

**Theatre Royal**, then the **Playfair**, Greenside Pl.

### Scotland & NI Branches (SNIB) Events

#### SNIB Social

2pm 13 January

**Bellfield Brewery Taproom**, Stanley Pl, Edinburgh

#### Quarterly SNIB Meeting

1pm 3 February

**J G Sharps**, Largs, Ayrshire

See [snib.camra.org.uk/whats-on/events/](http://snib.camra.org.uk/whats-on/events/) for further details.



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# CAMRA Calling

(continued)

In June our former Branch Chair, Pat Hanson, received a Special Award certificate and tankard for his outstanding services to the Branch, as Chair (2016-2023) and long-standing contributor to PoV.

*l-r: Chris Miller, Pat Hanson, Jon Addinall, at the Volunteer Arms, Dunbar.*



In August the branch paid a visit to the Newt Brew brewery in Musselburgh, where several casks were available, plus tastings of bottled beers.

In October we presented the Jolly Judge, Edinburgh, with the Scotland and NI Cider Pub of the Year 2023 award. *l-r: Karen Hetherington (cider rep), Adam (JJ), Chris Miller (chair).*



## Champion Beer of Scotland 2023

The winners of the 2023 CAMRA Champion Beer of Scotland competition, decided by blind tasting by judges at the Ayrshire Real Ale Festival in Troon on Friday 6th October, are as follows:

- Gold:** Cairngorm Black Gold
- Silver:** Loch Lomond Bravehop IPA
- Bronze:** Swannay Dark Munro

Other shortlisted beers were Arran Blonde, Fyne Ales Avalanche, Orkney Red MacGregor, Sulwath Knockendoch, Swannay Island Hopping and Windswept Wolf.

LOOKING FOR QUALITY AND VARIETY?

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# THE SCOTTISH TALL FONT

by William Campbell

Handpumps! Great, let's go in - this place sells real ale! Yes, we've all been guided by whether a pub has handpumps before deciding to go in. But 'twas not always so, for in fact the near ubiquity of handpumps for the dispense of cask conditioned beer is a relatively recent phenomenon in Scotland. True, they were in widespread use in the 19th century, but as early as the mid-1800s the use of air pressure systems was beginning to take over, to the extent that by the early 1900s almost every Scottish pub had adopted this form of dispense. Publicans wanted a system which required less effort, dispensed beer fast and perhaps most of all presented it with the tight, creamy head demanded by Scottish customers. Moreover the brewers evidently advocated this system for their beer in preference to handpumps.

The air pressure required to push the beer from the cask to the bar was initially supplied by water engines located in the cellar. These used the mains water supply to fill a cistern, thereby displacing air into the network of piping which connected to the casks. The air pressure created in this way propelled the beer to the bar where counter-mounted fountains dispensed it into the glass in full view of the customer. Water engines were manufactured by several suppliers of bar equipment, perhaps the best known being the Albany, made by McGlashan of Glasgow and later copied by Laidlaw, Edinburgh once McGlashan's patent expired. Allan & Bogle of Glasgow produced their own design of water engine in 1885, keeping it in production for several decades thereafter, while Gaskell & Chambers, headquartered in Birmingham but with bases in Edinburgh and Glasgow, designed their own Dalex model. Bowman & Webster of Aberdeen distributed the Little Wonder and Big Wonder hydraulic engines, manufactured by American firm Bishop & Babcock of Cleveland, Ohio, air pressure dispense evidently enjoying some popularity across the Atlantic.

Electric compressors were later developed, fulfilling the same function as water engines. The Scottish Champion appeared in

the early 1900s, sometimes installed in a cabinet in the bar rather than in the cellar, and in due course bigger compressors, such as those produced by Gaskell & Chambers, were introduced, these being located in the cellar.

Counter fountains (which became known as tall fonts, sometimes spelt 'fount') were likewise manufactured by several companies. These fonts were of the single-flow type taking beer solely from the cask until the 1930s when the type with spillage recovery, allowing overflow beer to be immediately recirculated, became almost universally adopted. At the time, this was a vast improvement on the then universal practice of salvaging spillage beer and returning it to the cask at the end of each day, each beer being supposedly returned to its cask of origin but the scope undoubtedly existed for less scrupulous practices. Even with due care, this process risked disturbance of beer in the cask which the new fonts avoided. Amongst the various designs of font the McGlashan Albany and various types of Dalex fonts from Gaskell & Chambers became widely used,

but Mackie & Carnegie was also a significant supplier and Aitken of Edinburgh too produced their own design. The tap on all of these fonts took the form of a lever which moved through 180 degrees, mounted at the base of the column in the case of the McGlashan Albany while the other designs had the lever mounted at the top. Although the 'full on' position was normally used, these taps gave the bar staff a considerable degree of control over the flow of the beer and of the formation of the desired creamy head. The Albany drew simultaneously from the tray and the cask, while the other types drew either solely from the cask or from the tray and



Photo by Mutt Lunker, used under CC-BY-SA-4.0 (cropped from original)

the cask, according to the tap position chosen by the bartender. Less common types of font included the Reid which incorporated a small beer reservoir above the operating lever. One of these unusual fonts once graced the lounge bar of the Liberton Inn.

While there was no reason in principle why air pressure dispense should not be accepted south of the Border, and on at least one occasion it was actively advocated at a professional symposium in London, it was to remain a peculiarly Scottish system, surely earning the status 'traditional' in view of both its longevity and its almost universal adoption.

By the mid-1970s, when cask beer was in serious decline, a type of pressure tap normally used for keg beers, the Cornelius, started to be used in conjunction with air pressure dispense for

cask beer. These taps sometimes produced acceptable beer but as they were outwardly indistinguishable from taps dispensing keg beer they did not offer the near-guarantee provided by the tall font that what was on offer was indeed cask beer.

When CAMRA produced its first Edinburgh Real Beer Guide in 1975, only 18 pubs by then sold cask beer (up from an all-time low of 14 a few months before). The esteemed Grey Horse in Balerno, one of the tiny minority of Scottish pubs not to switch to air pressure dispense decades earlier, used gravity handpulls to serve its Belhaven beer but all the others in the guide used air, most in conjunction with Gaskell & Chambers tall fonts. No fewer than twelve red examples of this type of font - plus a solitary interloper of different design - provided an almost constant flow of McEwan's 80/- in the Athletic Arms (aka the Gravediggers) giving it near legendary renown, though others of the tiny band which never stopped selling cask beer deserved recognition of their own, such as both Bennet's Bars, Clark's of Dundas Street, Leith's Central Bar and Black Swan and, of course, the Oxford Bar.

In the ensuing years, as cask beer started to become more widely available, Maclay's of Alloa usually supplied McGlashan fonts, while Aitken of Edinburgh which had made its own fonts in the 1950s and 60s and which had continued to carry out servicing and repairs launched a new font, based on the design of the McGlashan column, but with the lever mounted at the top, rather than at the base. This new font became highly popular throughout the 1980s and early 90s. Meanwhile, the electric compressor was gradually replacing the last of the water engines, some of which were still in use in the late 1970s but are likely not to have lasted much longer. While Maclay's remained loyal to air pressure dispense with tall fonts, as did some publicans, new designs of handpump were appearing which were capable of being clamped to the bar thereby avoiding the drilling into the counter which was needed to install tall fonts. This led to a cheaper installation and, in some eyes, created a more visually prominent indicator of 'real ale'.

In Edinburgh, one publican in particular was a stalwart supporter of tall fonts. When Ian Whyte reinvented the Blue Blazer, he installed tall fonts for cask beer, as he did in all his subsequent ventures, most notably in the Bow Bar, the Cumberland and Thomson's.

Although some traditional fonts have been modified with simple keg-style taps akin to those of the Cornelius in place of the original lever mechanisms, and modern columns bearing some resemblance to original tall fonts but with keg-style taps can be found and are sometimes used in conjunction with air pressure for serving cask beer, a combination of cost of installation and difficulty in finding repairers has reduced the number of genuine fonts to a mere handful. Reminding us of a Scottish tradition dating back over more than a century, the Athletic Arms (the Diggers) still has four Aitken's fonts in use, the Bow Bar takes pride of place with eight fonts (Aitkens and Mackie & Carnegies, for the aficionados), the Abbotsford has five and one of the four in Bennet's at Tollcross remains in use. Four in Thomson's are currently out of use. Of a dispense system which was all but universal in Scotland as a whole, these may well be the only active survivors.

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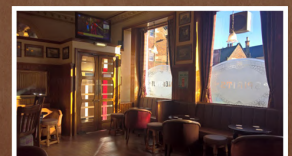


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# City Ale Tales

## Pub News

In terms of awards **The Jolly Judge** – already our branch Pub Of The Year – went on to become the Scottish and Northern Ireland Cider Pub Of The Year. There are three winners in the Scottish Licensed Trade News awards: **The Hanging Bat** for Craft beer (up to 4 Real Ales), **Charwood Restaurant and Bar** for family outlet (has one Real Ale, Caledonian Deuchars) and **Winstons** (3 Real Ales) in Corstorphine, for beer quality.

So, looking good for a trip to Corstorphine – there is also the Wetherspoons pub **The White Lady, The Corstorphine Inn** and, we hear, Real Ale back on in **The Toby Carvery**.

In the West End **Bar 13** has recently introduced one changing Real Ale from Stewart on handpump – very good when we were in. In the last decade this bar has been The Boozy Beaver, Brunch Club, Baobab, First Fleet, 52 Canoes Tikki Den, Slainte Mhath and Scruffy Murphy's. Surely a record, if not for turnover, for dodgy names. Let's hope this is lucky 13 for them. On the minus side, **Foundry 39** and **Vesta Bar and Kitchen** are now closed.

While you are in the West End check out **H.P. Mathers Bar, The Grosvenor** and **Teuchters Bar and Bunker**.

Sadly, the **Auld Hoose** in St. Leonards' Street announced its closure immediately after Christmas, citing the current financial climate facing the hospitality industry in Scotland.

The Taproom at **Campervan Brewery** in Jane St has been closed temporarily due to renovation and expansion of the brewery, due to be completed in March.

In Stockbridge, Good Brothers Wine Bar briefly became the 18 Weeks Bar and Kitchen (but didn't even last that long) before closing. It's now been taken over by Matt from **Clarks Bar** and is due to re-open as **The Rag Doll** (a previous name). Real ale is anticipated but we wait to see.



Bar 13, Melville Place

## THE DIGGERS



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Other bits of good news:

- The new assistant manager at the **The Merlin**, in Morningside is keen on Real Ale and planning to introduce a couple of local brews alongside the Belhaven staples
- **The Caley Sample Room** is back up to 4 handpumps with more promised
- Caledonian Heritable have purchased and started work on **The Filmhouse** in Lothian Road. Hopefully good beer and good films returning in 2024.
- **The Keller Tap room** has had its own Dunkel Beer available in cask
- **The Wally Dug** has two Mor Real Ales on as regulars.
- Real Ale is back on at the **Port O' Leith**. Two founts – Jarl on one for now, the other expected in the summer
- **Clarks Bar** is now selling a Winton Brewery beer, with a specially brewed 4% abv Peely Wally on tap
- The former Lord Nelson has re-opened as **The Trafalgar Tap** with two handpumps
- The **Mash Tun** in Easter Road has Real Ale back on

And finally, a closure that is good news. The Festival Village on top of Waverley Mall has, after five years of "temporary" planning consent, been told to close, which will be good news for other licensed premises that need the trade!

Rose Burn



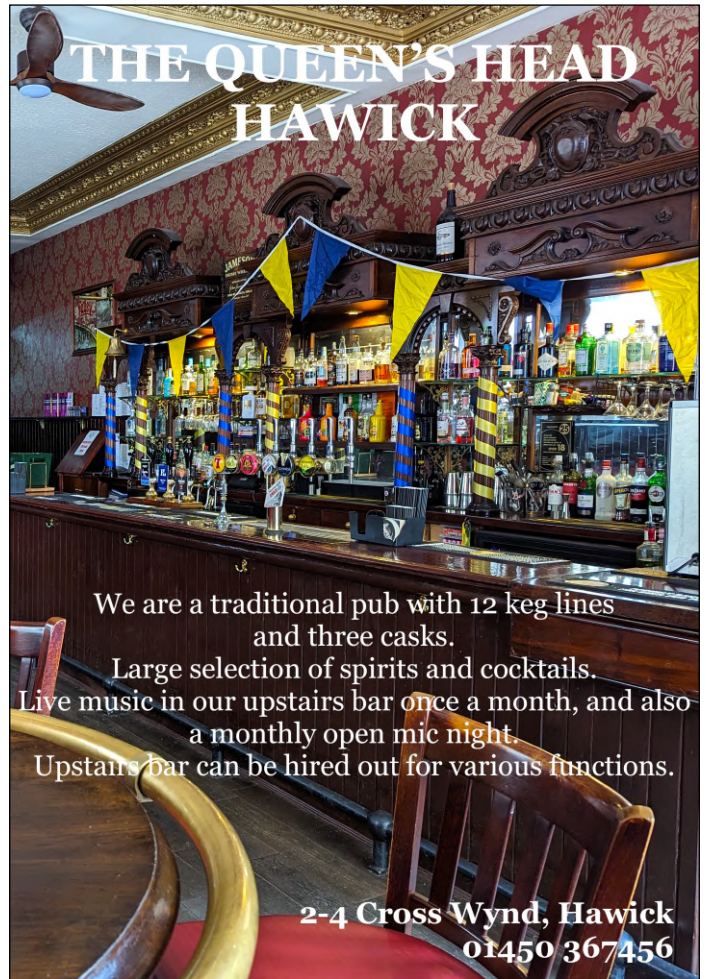
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# Heritage Pubs of the Future in Edinburgh

## Part 1: Persevere, Leith

by Mick Slaughter

In 2018 to 2020, I wrote a series of articles entitled 'Tiled Paintings in Edinburgh Pubs'. It featured the **Cafe Royal** in *Pints of View* 71 & 72; **Bennets Bar** in *PoV* 73; **Barony Bar** in *PoV* 74; and finally the **Central Bar** in *PoV* 75. The tiled paintings featured are from the late-Victorian era and there is just one more pub to bring to your attention. But what look like 'tiled paintings' in this pub are nothing of the sort!

This is the first article in a new series which will feature pubs converted from other buildings as well as pub interiors recreated to make them look 'historic'. The title of 'Heritage Pubs of The Future' comes from a feature in the *Scotland's True Heritage Pubs* book.\* The pubs in the book are those still with historic interiors. The reason for including a feature about converted pubs and recreated ones in a book all about genuine historic interiors is that I thought people who love the latter would also like to visit pubs with stunning interiors which may derive from the original use of the building or a quality created interior that makes them look old.

The first pub we feature in this new series is the **Persevere**, 398 Easter Road, Leith.

Formerly a Co-op store and butchers shop it was made into a pub in 1974. Then in 1992/3 owner Kevin Doyle carried out an elaborate refit. He recreated a quality Victorian island bar interior split into two by an elaborate screen across the centre of the pub. This has three sections with the middle one over the servery containing a clock. There is an island gantry,

vestibule entrances, and banquette seating bays all around the two rooms. The only genuine old feature is the ceiling cornice!

What makes this pub unique is the commissioning of local artist Kenny Skeel for five paintings of Leith-related scenes of the past but to look like they are pictorial paintings on tiles as seen in the late-Victorian times. Inside are three paintings - "Mary Queen of Scots Landing at Leith Pier 1561"; "King George IV Landing at Leith Pier 1822"; on the left, and on the right "The Peoples Purse Racing at Leith Sands 1852". On the exterior in Academy Park are another two - "The Silver Golf Club St John's Place, Leith Links 1830", and "The Preceptory of Saint Anthony Port of Leith 1490".



The Persevere opens from 12 to 11 (Midnight Friday/Saturday); food is sold in the bar from 12 to 8 and on the left is there is a Polish restaurant called Percy open Tue to Sun 12 to 8. It usually has two or three Real Ales on sale.

In future articles we will feature fantastic pubs in Edinburgh that were not built as pubs but have been converted from banks and other buildings with ornate interiors; also, some impressive creations that look like they have been in existence for many years; even one with an interior that is a copy of another Edinburgh pub interior!

There is a CAMRA website all about these pubs 'Outstanding Conversions & Restorations'. More information can be found at [camra.org.uk/pubs-and-clubs/learn-more/outstanding-pub-conversions-and-restorations](http://camra.org.uk/pubs-and-clubs/learn-more/outstanding-pub-conversions-and-restorations) including the list of pubs identified so far. If you want to suggest more possible candidates for inclusion there is an email address you can use.

\* A totally revised second edition called *Scotland's Real Heritage Pubs* is planned to be available in 2024. The words 'True' / 'Real' are used to differentiate the included pubs with surviving historical interiors from other 'historic' pubs which are old but have modern interiors.

All photographs by Michael Slaughter LRPS





**Above left:** King George IV  
Landing at Leith Pier 1822

**Above right:** Mary Queen of  
Scots Landing at Leith Pier 1561



**Below left:** The Silver Golf Club  
Club St John's Place, Leith Links  
1830

**Below right:** The Preceptory  
of Saint Anthony Port of Leith  
1490

**Above:**The Peoples Purse Racing at Leith Sands 1852



# PUB COMPANIES

## WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO

### PART 4

## HOW THEY MAKE MONEY

by Paul Ainsworth

### Introduction

It goes without saying that pub companies are first and foremost businesses whose main objective is to make money. There is no reason, though, why companies cannot both be profitable and own pubs that offer customers great pub experiences, either directly or via their tenants/lessees. Also, pubs are not just businesses; they are an integral part of our social network so community responsibilities are attached to their ownership (and hence the protections afforded to pubs by the planning system). Some companies have been accused of putting short-term profit ahead of long-term commitment to their pub estates – and we'll return to this in a later article.

### Managed Pubs

We saw in the previous article that pub companies are increasing the number of pubs they manage, either directly or through retail agreements. The advantage for them is control over every aspect of the pub operation – stock, pricing, staffing, opening hours, décor and so on. The bigger companies can use their buying power to command significant discounts from suppliers, including brewers. They can standardise elements of the customer offer, like menus, which also bring economies of scale. Efficient practices can be identified and then applied across every outlet.

The danger, of course, is that pubs become identikit and certainly some branded operations are pretty much the same wherever in the country you find them with choice and character being sacrificed to conformity. Other companies, though, take great care to ensure the individuality of their pubs, notably by the way they are designed and fitted out – so a balance can be achieved. It must also be said that many customers value consistency and like to know in advance what they can expect to get.

### Tenanted/Leased Pubs

Companies derive income from their tenants/lessees in two main ways – 'dry' rent and 'wet' rent.

The dry rent is what you pay to occupy the building. Typically, there will be an initial deposit then a monthly rent, agreed for a three to five year term. Pub companies claim that their rent levels will generally be lower than the market rent for an equivalent property and so represent a relatively low-cost entry to a business that also provides a roof over your head. In fact, surveys by the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers show that rent as a proportion of turnover (the key figure) is on average higher for tied pubs than free-of-tie leased pubs. The

rent will be reviewed at the end of the term; we'll come back to the issues that can arise in a future article.

The wet rent is what you pay the company for beer and other supplies. As a tenant, you'll normally be 'tied' to the company and obliged to buy the products they offer at the prices they ask. With beer, for instance, that price will usually be 50%-100% higher than the free trade price. The company, because of its bulk buying powers, will pay less than that price anyway so the profit for them from this income source is considerable – a minimum of £210 per barrel. Some companies offer free-of-tie tenancies and tenants can also try to use the Pubs Code (more later) to obtain freedom from the tie – but in both cases, the quid pro quo will often be a significant increase in the dry rent.

There are other ways in which companies can extract money from tenants/lessees but, again, we'll get onto these later.

### Pub Disposals

Pubs often occupy attractive, well-located buildings. In many cases, particularly in villages, they are worth hugely more as houses than as pubs. Others are on large plots of land which make them attractive to developers. A little while ago, over a hundred pubs a year were being lost in conversions to convenience stores, mainly in suburban areas. The temptation for pub companies, therefore, has been to capitalise on their assets and flog off pubs to make a quick profit.

Fortunately, and thanks to campaigning by CAMRA and others, it's now more difficult to do this, in England at least (the planning laws are less helpful in the rest of the UK). Before 2017, planning permission wasn't needed to demolish a pub or convert it to a restaurant, a shop or most kinds of office. A change in the law means that consent is now required for **any** change of use or demolition. Pub losses have fallen greatly since then despite all the recent difficulties for the trade. Where a pub is clearly valued by the local community, CAMRA will always support objections to unwanted planning applications. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that some pubs find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, because the previous clientele is no longer there or because of demographic changes in the area, and change of use in these circumstances would be reasonable and even welcome.

### The Pandemic

The pandemic has, of course, hit both pub companies and their tenants/lessees hard. Stonegate, for instance, reported a loss of £746m for the year ending 27/9/20.

Some pub companies have been criticised for their attitude to rent reductions or payment holidays for their tenants. Others, like Admiral Taverns, behaved better, cancelling rents for three months during the crisis.

Running pubs can (and should) be a profitable business but, as campaigners, we want all pub companies to appreciate that they are custodians of a much-loved British institution and to behave accordingly.



# BEER AND LOTHIAN

## Pub News

Firstly, congratulations go to the overall winner of the branch Real Ale Quality Award 2023, the **Old Clubhouse** in Gullane. Timothy Taylor Landlord is a regular favourite and one of our members voted a recent pint to be the best he had enjoyed this year, scoring it a perfect 5 out of 5 in CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System which is used in the selection process for pub entries into the *Good Beer Guide*. The Old Clubhouse has been a consistent entry for many years.

*The Old Clubhouse, Gullane*



Cross Borders brewery continues to go from strength to strength. Their brewery tap introduced a handpump over the summer but is now closed for the winter for repairs and improvements. It is due to re-open in April 2024. Not long now. Meanwhile they have opened **The Fisherrow Tap** in Musselburgh with two Cross Borders beers on cask. (It's a sister pub to **The Old Eastway Tap** in Easter Road and **The Portobello Tap**.)



This means you can now do a mini pub crawl in Musselburgh. Visit **Staggs**, our branch's Lothian Pub Of The Year numerous times, Wetherspoons **David Macbeth Moir**, and **The Levenhall Arms** at the far end of the racecourse (which could allow you to get some exercise in too, as it's a fair hike).

**The Dean Tavern** in Newtongrange now has a second handpump. If you haven't been there you should go. It has an interesting historic interior and is a community pub run on Gothenburg principles.

At the **Tower Inn**, Tranent, Dominic and partner Nikki and their staff continue to offer a friendly and inviting welcome. Born ales are popular but beers from local brewery Winton and Greene King/Belhaven will soon be rotated on the single hand pump.

Across the town, Jarl is proving popular along with other rotating ales at the **Ross High Rugby Club's** bar which is open only at weekends.



**Haddy Tap** at the Winton Brewery in Haddington, continues to be open on Fridays and Saturdays from 4pm until 10pm and also on Sundays from 2pm until 8pm. In addition to a good selection of keg beers, a single hand pump will now offer a cask ale on a rotating basis. Popular Peely Wally has been on as well as the excellent Och Aye Dark Mild, and others to follow.

Finally, **Ducks** in Aberlady is closed and undergoing extensive renovation into a new hotel. The owners tell us they intend to preserve its historic value and links to the local area as well as supporting local suppliers and producers. Fingers crossed that includes some of our favourite Lothian based brewers. There are plenty to choose from.

*Kay S. Bar*

*Please note: our Pub News columns sadly cannot mention every real ale pub in the branch area in every issue. If you have some news about your pub you'd like us to share in the next issue, please get in touch (contact details on p2).*

*For more up-to-date information on all real ales pubs in the branch area and beyond, please see [WhatPub.com](http://WhatPub.com).*

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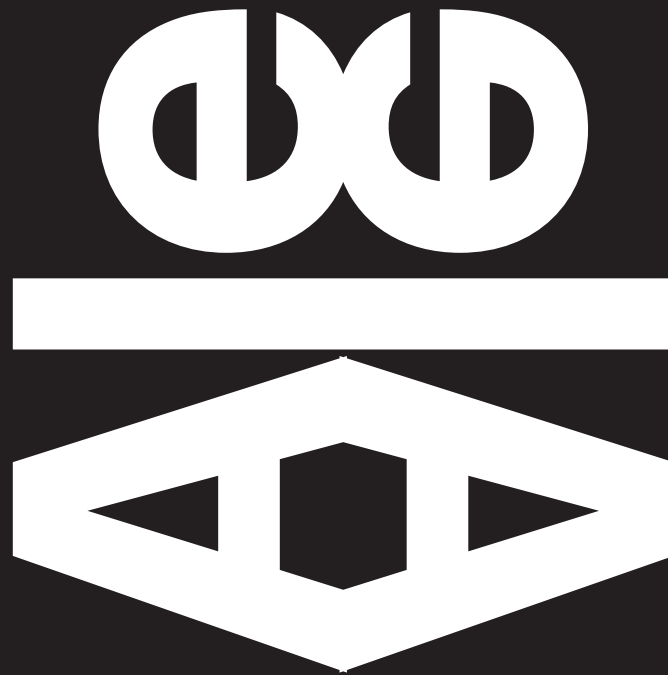
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# A Visit to the Kent Green Hop Beer Festival

by Glenn Moulding

Have you ever tried a Green Hop Beer? Probably not in Scotland! But should you come across one, I'd certainly recommend trying it.

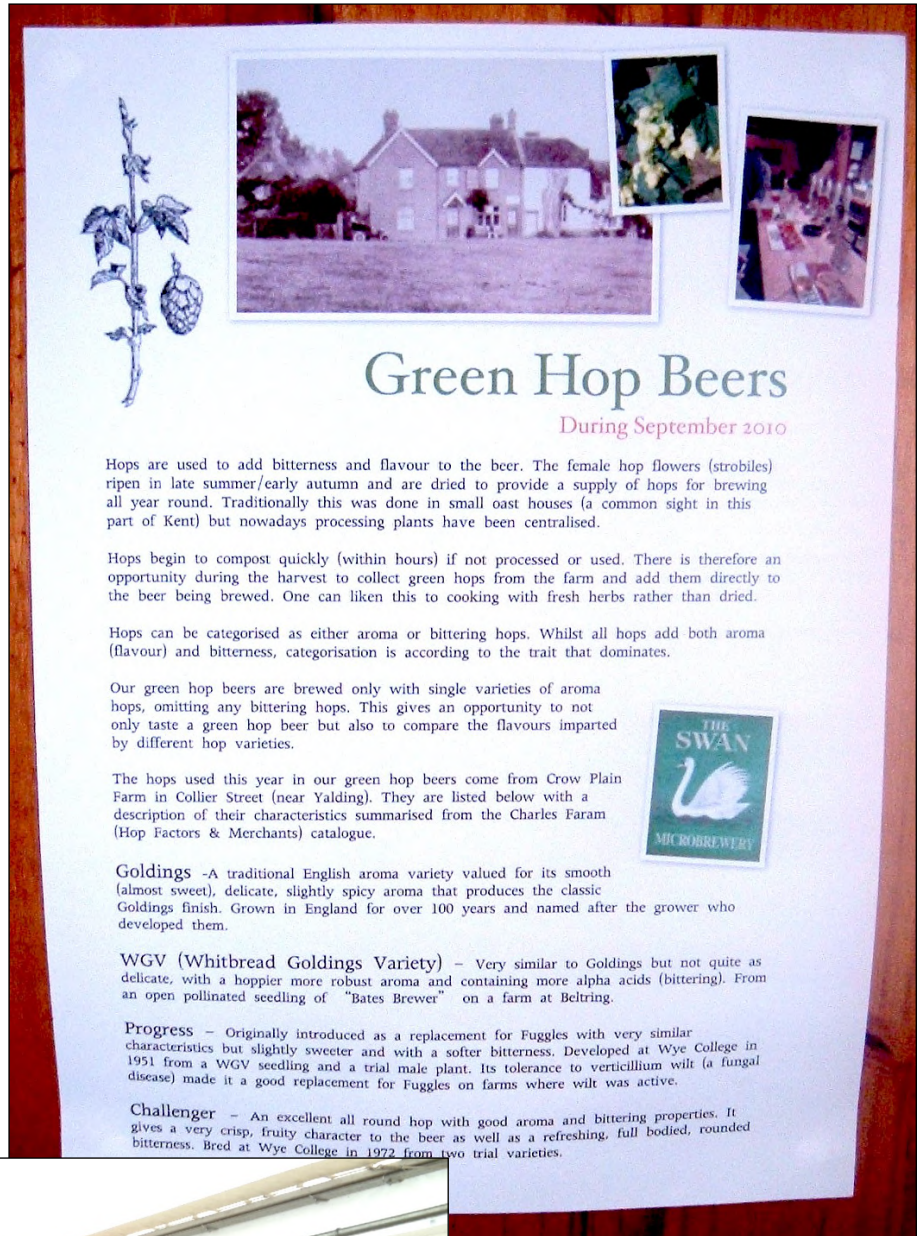
I have been visiting Kent each year for about 30 years, staying for a week each time. My visits are always around late September/early October, which (by coincidence!) happens to be the ideal time to sample GHBs.

Green Hop Beers, made with freshly gathered hops from the field and brewed immediately, by their nature are only available for a few weeks each year, and the timing can be variable depending on the weather.

I first sampled one in 2010 at a *Good Beer Guide*-listed brewpub, The Swan on the Green in West Peckham, Kent. It was a memorable pint; at the time I knew nothing of GHBs, but a helpful notice in the pub quickly educated me. Since that time, I've made a point of seeking them out each visit.

In 2010, The Swan on the Green was one of the few pubs which brewed GHBs. It became one of the main instigators of what became the annual Kent Green Hop Beer Festival, which officially lasts for a fortnight around late September and early October; though GHBs themselves are often available for at least a week or two after that - if you can find them! Nowadays, the festival is a regular event with many Kent breweries and pubs participating.

This year, for the first time, I managed to attend the opening event of the festival, in Dane John Park, Canterbury. It featured a large marquee which was part of a wider Canterbury Food Festival. About 10-12 breweries were represented, and about 20-30 GHBs (of which I only managed to sample six or seven!). A very enjoyable and relaxing outdoor event in typical hot Kentish weather.



**Green Hop Beers**  
During September 2010

Hops are used to add bitterness and flavour to the beer. The female hop flowers (strobiles) ripen in late summer/early autumn and are dried to provide a supply of hops for brewing all year round. Traditionally this was done in small oast houses (a common sight in this part of Kent) but nowadays processing plants have been centralised.

Hops begin to compost quickly (within hours) if not processed or used. There is therefore an opportunity during the harvest to collect green hops from the farm and add them directly to the beer being brewed. One can liken this to cooking with fresh herbs rather than dried.

Hops can be categorised as either aroma or bittering hops. Whilst all hops add both aroma (flavour) and bitterness, categorisation is according to the trait that dominates.

Our green hop beers are brewed only with single varieties of aroma hops, omitting any bittering hops. This gives an opportunity to not only taste a green hop beer but also to compare the flavours imparted by different hop varieties.

The hops used this year in our green hop beers come from Crow Plain Farm in Collier Street (near Yalding). They are listed below with a description of their characteristics summarised from the Charles Faram (Hop Factors & Merchants) catalogue.

**Goldings** - A traditional English aroma variety valued for its smooth (almost sweet), delicate, slightly spicy aroma that produces the classic Goldings finish. Grown in England for over 100 years and named after the grower who developed them.

**WGV (Whitbread Goldings Variety)** - Very similar to Goldings but not quite as delicate, with a hopper more robust aroma and containing more alpha acids (bittering). From an open pollinated seedling of "Bates Brewer" on a farm at Beltring.

**Progress** - Originally introduced as a replacement for Fuggles with very similar characteristics but slightly sweeter and with a softer bitterness. Developed at Wye College in 1951 from a WGV seedling and a trial male plant. Its tolerance to verticillium wilt (a fungal disease) made it a good replacement for Fuggles on farms where wilt was active.

**Challenger** - An excellent all round hop with good aroma and bittering properties. It gives a very crisp, fruity character to the beer as well as a refreshing, full bodied, rounded bitterness. Bred at Wye College in 1972 from two trial varieties.



Although GHBs have largely been confined to Kent, other parts of Britain are nowadays becoming involved, and GHBs sometimes appear at CAMRA beer festivals (Glasgow has apparently had some).

If anyone wants to learn more, try the official Kent GHB Festival website for more information:  
[kentgreenhopbeer.com](http://kentgreenhopbeer.com).

# INN the BORDERS

## Pub News

Lots happening in Peebles. The Wetherspoons owned **Cross Keys** remains up for sale, but also remains open meanwhile as normal. Elsewhere in town the **Tontine Hotel** is relocating their bar from the dark space behind reception to a nice room with a garden view. Providing cask ale continues that should be an improvement we think.

Peebles is arguably the best cask beer town in the Borders with **The Cross Keys, The County Hotel, The Crown Hotel, The Bridge Inn** and **Neidpath Inn** in addition to the Tontine. Worth a visit. Melrose and Kelso are not far behind – more of that in another edition.

In Innerleithen **Durty Brewing Tap Room** is now open and a welcome addition to **The St Ronans Hotel** and **The Traquair Arms Hotel**. It generally has two Real Ales and they are now using their own brewery located behind the tap room.



Durty Brewing, Innerleithen

**Tempest** will be moving from their current base in the Tweedbank Industrial Estate to nearby Tweedside Park with the new brewery and tap room due to open in the spring of 2024. So, two new tap rooms to look forward to (see also *Beer and Lothian* in this issue).

The **Crook Inn** near Tweedsmuir has opened “Wee Crook” as a cafe. This is phase one, with phases two and three to follow. Phase three being the main building itself. This is one of a number of pubs claiming to be the oldest in Scotland, with evidence of a licence back in 1604. Not a bad pedigree – we wish them well.

Elsewhere, both **The Waterloo Arms** at Chirnside and **The Horse and Hound** at Bonchester Bridge are under new management but continue to keep two Real Ales on offer.

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Fisherman's Arms, Birgham

**The Fisherman's Arms** at Birgham also has new tenants, Chris and Jacqui, who have introduced Abbot and Old Speckled Hen and are looking to feature local brews soon. They also recently achieved Cask Marque accreditation. And finally congratulations to **The Cross Keys Inn** at Ettrickbridge (up to 3 Real Ales) for winning “Best Pub” in the national Thistle Awards.

Ken Ilworth

# Full Measures?

by Ron Elder

As the norm for a pint of cask beer in our area reaches £5, and exceeds £6 in some pubs, the need for full value becomes even more important.

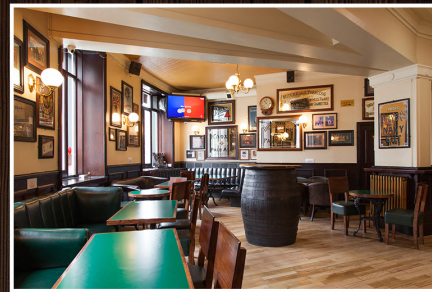
We pay for a full pint and, legally, we are entitled to receive a full pint for our money. Unfortunately, the vast majority of pubs on our patch use brim measure pint glasses which results in less than a pint of liquid in the glass when the head on the beer is taken into account. Guidance to the licensed trade states that the customer should receive at least 95% liquid, and that any requested top-up should be given with good grace.

However, in recent months brim measure branded glasses have appeared with a large black band around the upper part of the glass. This band is being interpreted by some publicans and their staff as a glass with a pint line. The photos below of glasses in question show a glass presented to a customer with the liquid even below the broad band, and a glass used as intended - incidentally, without any request for a top-up.

So, be warned. If you are unhappy with the amount of liquid in your 'pint', politely ask for a top-up!"



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# NEWS OF THE BREWS

## Brewery Update

### Alechemy Brewing

Alechemy's RumDMC, an 80/- Rum Cask finished beer at 4.8% abv, a collaboration with Livingston-based Matugga Rum, was awarded Bronze at the SIBA Scotland awards 2023 in the cask speciality amber to dark beer category.

### Barney's Beer

Andrew and his team launched two new cask ales in the second half of 2023, a 5% abv Vintage Porter which can be found in many outlets around the city and a 4.2% abv Vienna Pale which was exclusively available for the duration of The Edinburgh Fringe in their unofficial taproom, the **Royal Dick** at Summerhall. They also continued their collaboration projects, resulting in a 5.5% abv Continental Rye Blonde with McColl's Brewery (Bishop Auckland) and a couple of ales brewed using New Zealand hops, Nectaron and Superdelic with Rock Leopard Brewing Co (London).

The brewery had more success at the 2023 Scottish Beer Awards with their 11% abv barrel aged Imperial Stout, Post Mortem #6: Bourbon, winning a Gold medal, along with their Stone's Throw lager 4.5% abv getting a Bronze. There were also further Bronze medals at the SIBA Scotland awards 2023 for their Loop 3.9% abv in the cask session pale category, and Nebulous 4.7% abv in the keg pale ale category. In September they sponsored the World Stone Skimming Championship on Easdale Island and held their first Beer Festival, Gravity, featuring over 60 beers from 15 Breweries from across the UK.

### Belhaven Brewery

Another success at the Scottish Beer Awards, with Belhaven Scottish Ale 5.2% abv receiving Silver in the Best British Style Ale category.

### Bellfield Brewery

Bellfield continue to forge ahead with almost a new cask ale every month. The latest is the 6% abv Full Moon Stout, a jet black beer with the addition of dates. Like many of their gluten free ales it is also available in mini-cask. Brewery tours with tastings can again be booked via the website. Business is so successful that it may well be that new additional brewing facilities will be needed.

Plaudits abound for the Scottish Beer Awards Scottish Brewery of the year, with Gold in Best Amber or Dark for Old Town Altbier 5.3% abv, Bronze in Best Session Beer for Wild Shore Saison 5.0% abv, and Silver in Best Lager for Craft Lager 5.2% abv. They had further success at the SIBA Scotland awards 2023 with Gold in Keg Session lager for Vienna Secession lager 4.3% abv (also Silver overall champion of keg), Gold in Cask Session Pale Ale for Lucky Spence IPA 3.5% abv (also Bronze overall champion of cask), and Gold in Keg session pale ale also for Lucky Spence IPA.

## GOLDEN RULE



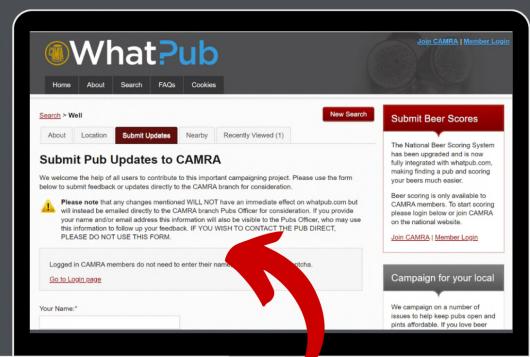
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**Born Brewery**

With many pubs still suffering from post-Covid depression and huge energy costs, Born has continued to brew their core beers – Blonde 3.8% abv, Amber 4.0% abv, Best Bitter 4.5% abv and IPA 4.8% abv available in regular 9 gallon casks and smaller 4.5 gallon pins, as well as their successful bottling operation. Whilst the on-site visitor centre remains closed, the brewery's **Ancrum Cross Keys** pub is not far away, whilst Born's retail outlets all over the central belt, continue to perform well.

**Broughton Brewery**

More success at the SIBA Scotland awards 2023 with a Bronze in Cask British bitter for Wee Jock 80 shilling 4.4% abv, and Gold in Cask imperial and strong beer for Old Jock Scotch Ale 6.7% abv, which has also been judged CAMRA's Champion Strong Ale of Scotland.

**Campervan Brewery**

Campervan Brewery is expanding! A new state-of-the-art brewhouse is being installed as well as a new floor at the brewery, increasing fermenting capacity by 50%, whilst a new brewery is being built elsewhere. The new set up is expected to be up and running in March 2024. The brewery recently became completely gluten free.

A small batch project was also launched with experimental batches of 5-6 kegs available at the **Campervan Taproom / Lost in Leith**. The brewery were winners of the Scottish Beer Awards Small Brewery of the Year, with Gold for Best Pale Ale for Northern Switch 5.5% abv (Blackjack Brewery Collaboration), and Silver in Best Pilsner for Leith Pils 4.8% abv. There were further awards with Gold for Extra Black 4.5% abv nitro porter at the International Beer Challenge, and Bronze for the same beer in the Keg stout and porter category at the SIBA Scotland awards 2023.

**Cross Borders**

The brewery taproom has closed down for the winter months to allow them to carry out essential maintenance and will re-open in April 2024. There were multiple successes at the SIBA Scotland awards 2023 with Silver in Cask British dark beer for Heavy 4.1% abv and four Bronze medals for Session pale 4.2% abv, India Pale Ale 6.0% abv, Pilsner 4.3% abv, and Wee Braw 4.0% abv in the Cask session pale ale, Cask IPA, Keg session lager, and Keg session pale ale categories respectively.

**Donzoko Brewing Co.**

Donzoko have announced a new 6000 sq ft brewery and taproom for March 2024, having been brewing at Newbarns in Leith. Based on the crowdfunding page this will be in the Ouseburn area of Newcastle upon Tyne. So it looks like we'll be waving them goodbye. They noted they intend to serve traditional Teesside-style "banked" beer after the move.

**Durty Brewing**

The now fully functioning Brewery with Taproom and Snug officially opened to the public on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023. We



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understand they mashed in on their new brewkit for the first time in October. The first beer available in the taproom was to be First Climb 4% abv single hop American pale ale.

**The Hanging Bat**

The incumbent brewer Will is understood to have left recently for pastures new. It is not clear if anyone is taking over brewing on the in-house brewkit.

**Hybrid Brewing**

We understand this brewery closed in August, though this is awaiting confirmation.

**Jump Ship Brewing**

The low alcohol brewery have been moving in to their new premises at Rosemains Steading and should be brewing on site by December 2023. Their canned beers continue to be available at selected shops around Edinburgh and the local area.

**Keller Brewing**

The in house brewery is in use and Real Ale was confirmed at Keller in August with their own Dunkel 5% abv. Beer has also been spotted at other pubs around Edinburgh.



# NEWS OF THE BREWS

(continued)

## Moonwake Beer Co.

Scottish Beer Awards Best Beer Destination, and also given Bronze in the Best Stout or Porter category for Dry-hopped Stout 5.0% abv. They also had prizes at the SIBA Scotland awards 2023 with Gold in Keg premium lager, Bronze in Keg pale ale, Bronze in Keg IPA for West coast IPA 6.0% abv, and Gold in Keg continental style beer for Weissbier 5.0% abv.

## Newbarns Brewery

Two new cask beers were recently released with Kynoch 5.0% abv West coast IPA, and Dynamite 5.0% abv. There was also a collaboration with Yokefellow called Eat Yer Bread 5.2% abv pale ale spotted at the **Blue Blazer**. The brewery hosted a Tap Takeover at the **Jolly Judge** in August 2023.

## Newt Brew

Mike continues to brew part time with all product going into casks to be sold locally. A new beer, Dark Heavy 4.2% abv, was released and available at **Teuchters Landing** in June, amongst other establishments.

## Otherworld Brewing

A single 4.5 gallon pin of the rum cask aged version of their 90/- 7.9% abv appeared at the **Jolly Judge** for the launch of this version of the beer which has been available elsewhere in keg and canned formats. Whilst the majority of their output is keg/can, further occasional cask releases have been touted so watch out for them early in 2024.

## Pilot Beer

The brewery continues to have involvement with the community, by sponsoring the Hibernian Ladies football team. They have also brewed a lager for them, "Home 23/24". We believe the men are occasionally allowed a drop, and supporters also, if they're lucky. Pilot recently reached their 10th anniversary, and celebrated with cask editions of Blønd and Moccachino Stout which were released in selected bars in Leith and Edinburgh on the 17th of November (which were excellent when tasted by our correspondent), followed by a party on the 18th at the Biscuit Factory.

## Sinnister Brew

Continues to brew one-off, often high abv and barrel aged beers, for release in cans and bottles (not bottle conditioned). Recent offerings have included Stolen Art 11.2% abv whisky barrel aged Cherry Ripe (coconut, black cherry, chocolate), Bog Monster 12.1% abv, a peated sherry barrel aged imperial stout aged with charred Manuka wood, and Robot Hive 12% abv imperial black braggot (a beer/mead hybrid).

## Stewart Brewing

Over the past quarter, Stewart have released a range of cask specials including: Mosaic 4.4% abv, a single-hopped hazy IPA featuring the refreshing and intense citrus and tropical flavours of the American Mosaic hop; The White Affogato Milk Stout 6.0% abv, a fusion of two previous beers, White Russian, and Affogato Stout, presenting a smooth, full-bodied white stout with coffee notes supplied by local roasters Common Coffee;

and the return of the robust Superior Stout Cauld Reekie 6.2% abv, with its rich roasted malt flavours.

Recently spotted on cask in pubs, Crossfire, Kai Pai, and St. Giles were introduced as cask specials. These brews are not yet regular additions to the line-up but they'll continue to make occasional appearances. Other cask specials are Winter Escape, Ale Lang Syne Celebration Ale, Backing Blue Session IPA (making a comeback for the Six Nations in February), and Moa Mountain a 4.7% abv IPA showcasing New Zealand hops.

Plenty of medals to show for their efforts too, with Silver for Best Juicy or Hazy Beer with Clara Rosa 6.7% abv at the Scottish Beer Awards, and Gold in Keg IPA for Radical Road 6.4% abv, Silver in Keg sour and wild ale for Key Lime Pie 3.4% abv and two Bronze medals for Stewart's Lager and Nitro 80/- at the SIBA Scotland awards 2023. Stewart Session IPA 3.7% abv (Jack Back in a bottle) took second place in the Session Bottled Live Beer Champion Beer of Britain heat hosted by CAMRA's Renfrewshire Branch, and Stewart 80/- 4.4% abv was also judged runner up in the Brown and Red Ales, Old Ales and Strong Milds Champion Beer of Britain heat held at CAMRA's Alloa Real Ale & Cider Festival.

## Suspect Brewing

This Jane Street, Leith brewery closed in August 2023.

## Tartan Shark Brewing

Now understood to be brewing part-time but supplying a range of keg and canned beers mostly for specific venues or events.

## Tempest Brewing Co.

The big news here is that the brewery is both moving and expanding from their current base in Tweedbank Industrial Estate to nearby Tweedside Park in the Spring, so still close to Tweedbank Station and will include a new tap room which will be open longer than at present. On the brewing side, new beers are constantly evolving and, while the cask range is less than cans and bottles, a wide choice is available to suit all tastes.

## Tin Robot

Their first beer, Cheat Code AIPA 4.8% abv was found at **St Vincent Bar** and Nightcap in June and, also spotted on keg at **Bullfinch**. Cans and kegs may be available at other Edinburgh venues and off licences.

## Walkie Talky Brewing Co.

Walkie Talky held their second birthday party at the Biscuit Factory, Leith in August.

## Winton Brewery

The **Bow Bar** IPA blind tasting was won by Winton's Mon Then! 5.0% abv and was to be on tap for a month. They also hosted a tap takeover at the end of August. Winton are supplying a special 4% version of Peely Wally to **Clarks Bar** as their house beer. Taps Aff received Bronze in the Best Lager category at the Scottish Beer Awards.

## Yikes Brew Co.

Understood to be looking for new premises having moved out of their previous home in Granton and a share in Leith didn't work out. Yikes are now occasionally brewing at Otherworld. Their first new beer Granton Bay IPA 5.8% abv has been available in cans and was seen on keg at the **Dreadnought**.

M.Ashtun

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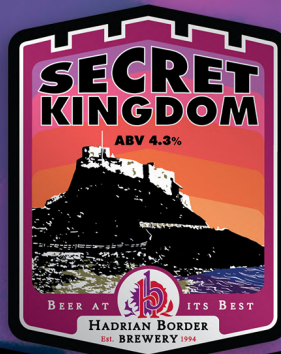
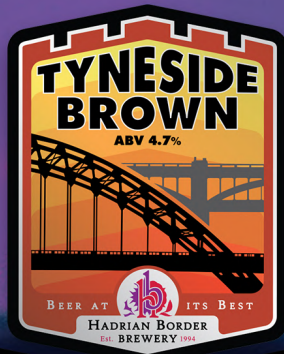
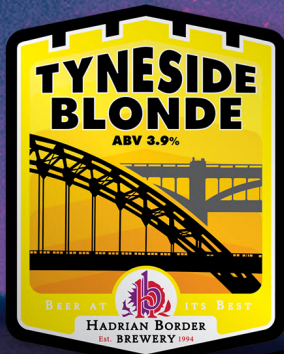
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