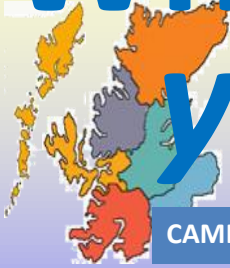


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CAMRA Highlands & Western Isles | FREE Magazine | Winter 2014/15

We did it - landmark victory for pub goers and beer drinkers!



Government defeated on a vote which gives licensees tied to big pub companies a fairer deal.

- Local Autumn festival reports
- POTY Presentations



- Torridon & Plockton Trip
- Breweries News
- Pubs news



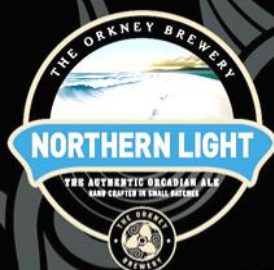
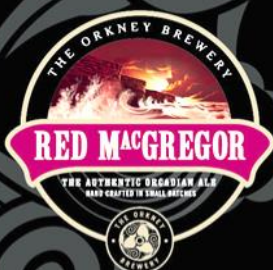
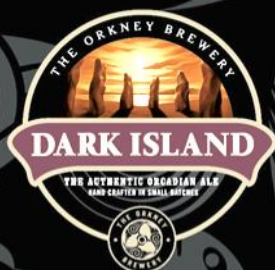
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Welcome... to the Winter issue of our quarterly magazine. In this edition:

not only, but also:

- > Bandstand Autumn Festival
- > POTY presentations
- > Torridon Inn & Plockton Beer trip
- > Brewery and Beers news and pubs news
- > How GBG premises are chosen
- > Updated Real Ale pubs list
- > emails
- > Focus on... Guy Daynes
- > Loch Ness Autumn Festival
- > Updated branch diary

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An average of 4500+ copies are distributed to CAMRA branch members, to Highlands & Islands brewers, to Good Beer Guide listed and Real Ale pubs; plus extra copies to advertisers.

We welcome your letters, news, views and opinions. Let us know what is happening at your local, or tell us about pubs you have visited.

Thanks to all who have taken trouble to send in pub and beer reports, or articles, keeping us up-to-date with brews and what is happening in local pubs.

Please note that the editor reserves the right to edit contributions sent for publication.

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Spring edition **deadline** is Sunday 1st March, for publication by mid March.

Winter is here after a mostly mild Autumn. That was the weather summary, now onto Real Ale stuff!

CAMRA has achieved a 2nd major campaign victory this year. After the scrapping of the beer price escalator in the Spring budget, in mid-November, an amendment to a government bill was passed by MPs of all parties which is designed to give licensees of premises owned by big pub companies the freedom to buy their beers on the open market, rather than only through the pub company, usually at hugely inflated prices and it will also give them the right to pay market level rents rather than a rent that the pub company sets as well as rent reviews if circumstances change markedly. If this becomes law, the price of a pint in a pub should decrease noticeably and the choice of ales should widen. As the cover strapline says; "victory for pub goers and beer drinkers".

In this issue, which is a very packed 56 pages—reports on 2 great beer festivals by 2 of our best pubs, Focus on the co-owner of one of our "new" branch pubs, lots more from the "Hillman Imp", some serious pieces on GBG pubs and the new Drink Drive alcohol limit.

Enjoy!

Cheers,

Ed.

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Bandstand Autumn Festival

For the 2nd year, Gordon and Morag ran their “small” Autumn beer festival at the end of September. Featuring “only” thirty something ales over 4 days it included live music from top local acts. Our Nairn correspondent has been unable to furnish us with a report on the whole thing, so I will have to tell you about the Friday evening when myself, and Arnie our Social Secretary, caught the Inverness train through to Nairn. We met up there with branch member Neil, who



Gordon and Morag Holding with some of their staff when **The Bandstand** at The Braeval Hotel, was presented with their CAMRA Scottish & Northern Ireland Region POTY Finalist 2014 certificate.

was staying in Nairn that weekend. The latest changes to the Bandstand bar and lounge are well settled in now and the place had a great buzz of people socializing—chatting and enjoying their food and drink. The restaurant was busy and Gordon told us that over the tea-time period, the place

had been packed! This was echoed by other ale drinkers we chatted with. There were 12 handpumps in operation on the bar and the 2 or 3 that we tried were all in top form. I didn’t take any notes so can’t tell you what they were (my bad).

The music act for the Friday evening arrived and began making some space to set up their substantial amount of equipment. They turned out to be 2 members of Schiehallion - a band who are often on in The Gellions here in Inverness. Once they got going, the two of them were impressive, playing a mixture of contemporary

and traditional Scottish numbers among which was a wonderful version of “The Green Fields of France”—a thoughtful, anti-war song.

One of the other music highlights of the weekend were a get-together of very experienced band/session musicians—some of whom live locally.

We had to leave to get the train back to Inver-

ness but it was good to see one of our top places continuing the encouragement of real ale so successfully. As you can see from the photo, the Bandstand is right up there with the best CAMRA appreciated places in Scotland.

BANDSTAND BEER & MUSIC FESTIVAL

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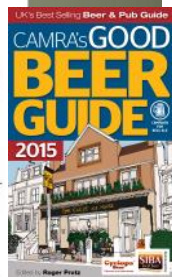


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Logos visible in the central image: Braid, Cairngorm, Speyside, Windy, Loch Ness, Inverlorn, Cairngorm, The Grange, Isle of Skye, Thornbridge, Tryst, Inverlorn, The Grange, Isle of Skye, Thornbridge, Tryst, Inverlorn, The Grange, Isle of Skye, Thornbridge, Tryst.



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Highlands & Islands

Brewers' Awards

In the Scottish Region of the Society of Independent Brewers Association, the competition, held at Drygate Brewing Company on the 6th November, quite a few awards were gained by some of "our" and A&Nl's breweries.

Overall Scottish Champion Gold was Highland **Island Hopping**. Silver was Highland **Pale Ale** and Bronze

was Loch Ness **HoppyNESS**.

In Standard Milds, Loch Ness **Mild-NESS** gar-

nered the Gold.

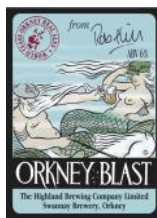
Standard Bitters gave Highland another Gold for **Island Hopping**.

Best Bitter category had Orkney getting a Silver for **Red MacGregor**. Premium Bitters got another Gold for Highland

for **Pale Ale**.

Loch Ness gained another Gold in the Strong Bitters category for **HoppyNESS** with Highland getting Silver for **Duke IPA**.

In Premium Strong Beers, Highland got a Bronze for



Orkney Blast.

The Porters, Stouts and Old Ales category gained Cairngorm the Gold for **Black**

Gold with Loch Ness



gaining Bronze for **Dark-NESS**.

Lastly, in Speciality Beers category,

Windswept won Silver for **Weizen**.

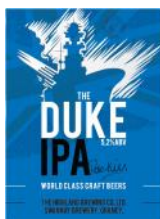
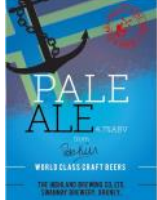
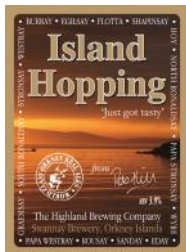
Well done and congratulations to them and the other award winning breweries.

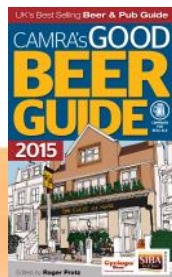


Scottish CAMRA Ale Award

Champion Bitter of Scotland was judged at the CAMRA Alloa Beer Festival which is organised by Forth Valley branch in conjunction with Clackmannanshire Council. The winner was Houston **APA**, second was Scottish Borders **Game Bird** and third was "our own" Isle of Skye **Young Pretender**.

Other ale categories are judged at various Scottish CAMRA Beer Festivals.





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The 13th Loch Ness Beer Festival

In September, The Benleva Hotel in Drumnadrochit held its 13th Loch Ness Beer festival. This year there were 8 beers on in the bar and another 8 on in an



outside marquee and as one beer finished it was replaced with another. New this

year, the marquee, had hay bales to sit on



and beer lines run out from the shop building to a temporary bar. All the Loch Ness beers were available in rotation from their 3.9% **LightNESS** (refreshing yellow citrus hoppy brew) through their seasonal 4.3% **SpookyNESS** (with spices), their award winning 5% **HoppyNESS** (smooth slightly citrus hoppy brew) to the 10% **Prince of DarkNESS** (dark, strong, fruity and mysterious). There was also a mature 7% **NESS Club 7** which still tasted good from the initial brew in April 2013 – they tell me it was a trial to see if it did keep, however they have just been re-arranging the brewery to take more fermenting containers, so did they find a cask left in a corner? Other Scottish beers came from Loch Lomond, Highland, Isle of

Skye, Windswept, Fyne, Orkney, Alechemy, Valhalla, Cromarty and Harviestoun. Ales from south of the border included a large selection from Thornbridge and Dark Star plus some from Atom, Brass Castle, Rudgate, St Austell and Wychwood. For those with a craft keg liking there were Lager, Amber and 80/- from Loch Ness and Wanderlust Wheat and Four Seasons from 6 Degrees North in Stonehaven. A selection of Cider and Perry in a box came from Cornish Orchards and bottles were available from Thatcher's, Hogs Back and the local Loch Ness Cider Company (who have now sourced more apples for next year, so there will be more of it around).

Another change from previous years was that there was music every night except for Tuesday when Steve held his famous,



The Scone Fairies



Traditional Music Session

(Continued on page 10)

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Penny Dogs

entertaining quiz night. Again the questions were very hard, well not really but don't tell Steve as he will make them harder next time, you just needed to find the answers from the recesses of your brain, which is getting harder as you get older. There was a large pot of money available if any team knew how many

votes Tommy Sheridan had in the last election. No one knew but the closest received some beer spending money and the rest of the money goes through to the next quiz.

There was a good range of music from pop covers to folk to their own compositions with the very popular Penny Dogs closing the Festival.

Their excellent food was available during the festival and tables were booked up early. The hotel's accommodation was full and next years event (18th to 26th September, so add it to your diaries now) is already filling up as some people seem to have a permanent rolling booking. The Beer of the Festival, voted for by the drinkers, was Loch Ness **LightNESS** and I am told "it-was-not-fixed" and I must agree, it was on very good form.



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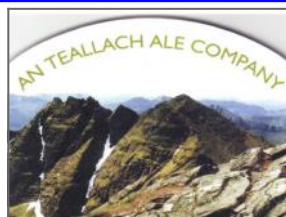
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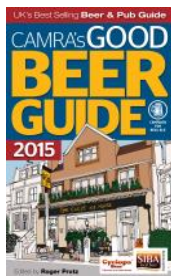


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Last Branch Beer Bus Trip of the year to Torridon and Plockton

12 happy campers took off from the Townhouse in the Fraser's minibus to enjoy a day being driven out West trying ales at various establishments.

The 2 main "targets" were again attending the Torridon Inn's October beer festival which is well established now and visiting Plockton which the branch hasn't done for several years.

First stop was the Ledgowan Lodge Hotel at Achnasheen. This is a place we haven't



been before and we were not disappointed. A lovely, impressive lodge house in a beautiful setting with the October sun shining through the windows. The small lounge bar has 1 handpump with a rotation of An Teallach ales. That Saturday **An Teallach Ale** was on and despite it being early (just about 11), it scored 3.5.

On to the Kinlochewe Hotel where we



roused Andrew and Gail and were made very welcome as always. They had read the magazine and were expecting us to possibly appear later in the day! This lovely pub has 5 ale pumps and a cider pump and usually features An Teallach and Ork-

ney. We stretched our scheduled stay to have 3 halves and the scores were;

An Teallach **The Hector**; 4

An Teallach **Bealach Na Ba**; 4

Orkney **Orkney No 1**; 3.5

Orkney Atlas **Three Sisters**; 2.5

Orkney **Corncrake**; 2.5.

Having left Inverness in the rain, by the time we arrived at the lovely Torridon Inn, the sky was splitting with bright sunshine.



This was our 3rd outing at the annual Torridon beer festival where this year the offering was 18 beers, including 2 blends especially created for the festival by Isle of Skye brewery (**Heilan Coo**) and **Monadh Agus Muir** by An Teallach. We had time to settle, have food and enjoy several of the beers that day and in typical Scotland style, half an hour after arriving in the sun, the rain was 'stotting' for 10 minutes!

Out of the 18, the beers on the bar were;

An Teallach **Monadh Agus Muir**; 3.5

Cairngorm **Caillie**; 3.5

Loch Ness **HoppyNESS**; 3.5

An Teallach **Suilven**; 3.5

Orkney **Skull Splitter**; 4.5

Orkney **Dark Island**; 4

An Teallach **An Teallach Ale**; (not tried)

We always enjoy our visits here and are impressed with the Torridon's efforts to promote ale in what is a remote location. Unfortunately, they confirmed to us that some of the ales are kept on top pressure. A short drive to the Lochcarron Hotel on our way to Plockton where Nigel had his standard ales—Cairngorm **Sheepshagger's Gold** (3), Isle Of Skye **Hebridean Gold** (3) and for his English regulars, Morland **Old Speckled Hen** (not tried).

Finally arriving in Plockton, after a bit of a drive when our very own 'Sat Nav' was

(Continued on page 15)



Atlas range

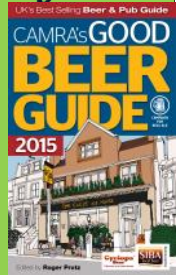
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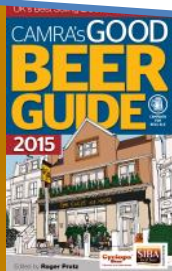
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(Continued from page 12)

convinced there were roadworks on the better road, which meant that we took a detour through Kyle of Lochalsh. One thing is for sure, the scenery on the way from Torridon to Plockton is surely among some of the most breathtaking in the world with some of the most impressive Munros on display.

We split up—some heading to the Plockton Hotel, a few going for a look at the little Plockton Brewery and some heading in to the Plockton Inn. The brewery is a wonderful collection of sheds and Andy does a great job turning out good ales. We didn't get to meet him as he was indisposed but he had left the place open for us to have a look round. In the Inn we tried Plockton **Hitched** (3.5) which was on beside Thwaites **Lancaster Bomber**. Joining the rest of our party in the Plockton Hotel, we had time for Loch Ness **Inver-**



NESS (4), Highland **Scapa Special** (4), Cromarty **Kowabunga** (4) and Cromarty **Happy Chappy** (4).

It was time to get back on the bus and start heading back towards Inverness. We made a quick stop in Dornie at the



Dornie Hotel, which again, was a new place for most of us and enjoyed Isle of Skye **Red Cuillin** (3). Our dedicated chairman added in a very quick visit to the Clachan Bar nearby and tried the Isle of Skye **'Ale An Donan'** (2). (Eilean Donnan castle is beside Dornie)

We couldn't pass by the Cluanie Inn, so a



couple of rounds of Loch Ness **MadNESS** (4) and Loch Ness **HoppyNESS** (4), although by this time the combination of time, travelling and oh yes! - ales was taking it's toll and things were getting a bit blurry.

Gordon our driver, manfully drove us up by Loch Ness during which the conversation among those of us not dozing became quite scatological and hilarious—as it usually does after a few ales!

It didn't take much persuasion to add a stop at The Benleiva Hotel in Drumnadrochit where we were dropping off chairman Eric and we made the time to try a quick couple of the 10 ales available on the bar which were in enviable condition. Unfortunately, your reporter is unable to remember!

Back on the bus for the short drive back to the centre of Inverness where most of us decanted—some heading to the Phoenix and Blackfriars to relax with 1 or 2 more beers before heading home for a well earned rest.

Another good trip when we were lucky with the weather, enjoyed wonderful scenery along some different roads and enjoyed safely being driven by Gordon who we thank, as usual, as well as Fraser's Coaches of Munlochry.

(photos from Whatpub.com—Ed.)

Emails

Highland Bikers:

We took our bikes for a ride around and visited two excellent places to drink; Sutherland Hotel in Brora which had **Skye Gold**, in fine form 4. Kylesku Hotel had **Skye Red** 4 and also on were **Skye IPA**, **Skye Gold**, An Teallach **Beallach Na Ba**, plus **An Teallach Ale**. All in good demand which is good to see in an out-of-the-way place. AM and DT

More from our Regular Aberdeen correspondent:

Sir,
the Autumn 2014 issue of Wyt? was another excellent newsletter. However I would like to point out that the report on the Aberdeen & North East Beer Festival (p21) had an error; namely that whilst Cromarty Brewery had indeed won the previous two Beer of the Festival awards, it was not with the same beer. It had won with **Happy Chappy** in 2012 and **Rogue Wave** in 2013. Only 1 beer has ever won the coveted Beer of the Festival award twice and that was your very own Isle of Skye Brewery's **Cuillin Beast** back in 2002 and 2003. Some of my colleagues and I have tried to date the "library" photograph of the stillage used to accompany the article and we are convinced it is 2008, the last time Brew Dog deigned to sell us any beer.

Cheers,

Richard A. Jones

Aberdeen & North East Beer Festival
Organiser.

Thanks as usual Richard. Always happy to hold our hands up when we make mistakes. Don't think we have anything pertinent to Aberdeen & Northern Isles branch

in this issue to cause you to email a correction but if you have anything suitable for us to use, don't hesitate. The more "voices" we have in the magazine, the better. - Ed.

Weekend Pub Crawl

Sampled some excellent ales at the w/e Castle - Speyside Craft **Bottlenose** (4) Cairngorm **White Lady** (3.5). Also on but not tried – Edinburgh **Rare Red Rye**, Belhaven **IPA**, St. Austell **Dartmoor**. **Happy Chappy** and **Hit the Lip** had been on but had finished (some football match had been on Friday).

No. 27 – Windswept **Wolf** (3.5) and **APA** (3) also Speyside Craft **Bottlenose** and **Bowfiddle Blonde**—not tried.

Corriegarth – Cromarty **Happy Chappy** (3). All other ales finished – you must have drunk them dry at your AGM!

Phoenix - Fine selection of ales on offer – quite busy but not enough bar staff so gave up.

Blackfriars – Friendly welcome, served straightaway – mind you it wasn't busy then. Ales were; Strathaven **Old Mortality** (3.5) Orkney **Dragonhead Stout** (3) & **Corncrake** (3). Also on, Adnams **Ghost Ship** (not tried).

Of the ones visited, we returned to No 27 and The Castle for a second time as they had the best atmosphere and ales on. Also called in at Tomlinson's Beer Shop on Sat. am. Chatted with Sean and he said that it was a challenge to shift cask at the shop even though it was £2 a pint to take away—not many takers apparently.

Autumn Nuts was on by the way.

Also called in at Dores Inn – Cromarty **Kowabunga** (3.5). Also on but not tried – **Happy Chappy**, **Wildcat** and **Old Speckled Hen**.

Cheers, Steve

Scottish Real Ale Festival Dates

Next years' SRAF is well into the planning stages and will be held again at The Corn Exchange in Edinburgh.



Photo from Google Street View.

The pencilled in dates are 9th to 12th July with set up starting on the 6th. If you are available to help either in set up and/or during opening hours please contact Volunteer Organiser Ruth Addinall on srafstaffing@gmail.com. There is more to the event than just serving beer with other jobs such as entrance, cloakroom etc. The social aspect is very good with a few pub visits during set up. If you wanted to get more involved by joining the Committee, again please contact Ruth. Meetings are held monthly, usually around the Central belt.

North Hop

After last year's inaugural event, the 2015 event is being planned with a slightly different schedule, more craft

beers and more food offerings.

Eden Court is showing it to be on Fri 21st and Sat 22nd August 2015.



H&WI GBG Deletion

For the first time in the branch's history, we had to inform CAMRA HQ to delete one of our Good Beer Guide entered pubs. As you can read in the information article elsewhere in this issue, the deleted pub is one of our best which we happily support but we had no choice. This unfortunate occurrence has come about because some of their beers from two breweries are now on top pressure. They have recently starting doing this to keep up a selection of beers for their customers. This addition of CO2 gas slightly helps to push the ale out to the handpump but mostly keeps air out of the keg/cask pro-longing the "life" of the ale but, as you can read in the **GBG 2016** article, that makes the ale no longer "real".

the Old Bridge Inn ~ Aviemore



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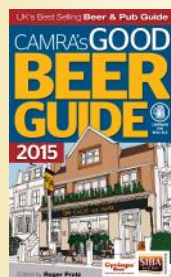
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Refurb at Clachnaharry

The back “lounge bar” at Clachnaharry Inn has, after many years of needing it, been comprehensively refurbished into a pleasant, welcoming, dining room. The unused bar has been removed giving more space for diners and enabling a larger kitchen.

The front of the building has also been improved with flood-lit signage. The work has reportedly been paid for by the owners, Belhaven (Greene King) who have stamped their ownership on the place by emphasising “Belhaven” on the signage. Our reporter recommends visiting to admire the improvements and enjoy some good real ale which is usually from Inveralmond, Fyne and other breweries on the Belhaven/Greene King list.



THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY PUB CRAWL, - EVEN LONGER THAN THE GREAT GLEN WAY!

I must have had a very sheltered upbringing. Two years ago I had never heard of The Great Glen Way until I watched Julia Bradbury walking part of the Caledonian Canal. Sounded fun, I thought. A few months later my wife, Sue, and I headed north to Fort William. While on the lookout for The Grog and Gruel we came across the end of The West Highland Way. That sounded fun too, I thought. So this September I headed north again, only this time with my neighbour, Ken, (another real ale fanatic) as Sue thought The West Highland Way sounded rather hilly.

We had found good real ale at every stop along The Great Glen Way. Could we possibly manage such luck along The West Highland Way? I looked for clues on internet blogs but, as far as I could see, no one had done any in depth research since 2011 and real ale availability can change in some Scottish pubs almost as quickly as the Highland weather.

Like two years ago, our first port of call was The Bon Accord in Glasgow and the ale was just as good as before. We both warmed up on the tasty St Andrew's **Blond** and Atlas **Wayfarer**, before discovering the fantastic Kelburn **Jaguar**. It was so good that I just had to try another in the Sir John Moore Wetherspoons by Glasgow Central.

As the West Highland Way started in Milngavie, we decided to try the GBG listed Talbot Arms there. Unfortunately they had no Scottish real ales and we had to settle for Brains **Across the Pond**, promoted as a Scottish style ale, but, although in fair condition, tasted rather bland.

The first day's walk ended in Drymen and we were soon in the GBG listed Clachan Inn. When we saw that they only had Greene King ales on, we were soon out the door again. Across the road in The Drymen Inn we discovered the full flavoured Fallon's **Odyssey**,

(Continued on page 53)

Good Beer Guide 2016

(How do you get your place in to the Guide?)

A total of 4,500 entries go into the Good Beer Guide (GBG) each year. An objective system in full consultation with branches is used for allocation of entries into the GBG based on the total number of pubs in each area with various weighing factors. Selection for the GBG is for one year only and each year the local branch starts the selection process. To get considered for the GBG, a place needs to satisfy CAMRA on the following criteria;

- Consistently serve excellent quality real ale at all times on all beers, whether they have one hand pump or 6. Serving just one beer consistently well will get you considered. Real ale should be served at a temperature between 12 -14 deg C – the modern golden ones usually at the colder end and the milds and stouts at the higher end. The pint should not be flat, should have a head and conditioning (bubbles). The pint should not be cloudy, unless it is a wheat beer – although there are some breweries not using finings and their beers may initially have a slight haze. Short measures are not accepted, so if you get one please ask for a top up.
- All real ales are to be cask conditioned, that is, being settled and going through a second fermentation in the cellar, vented, served with just air entering the cask as the beer leaves

and served either on hand pump or by gravity. If a cask is dispensed with the traditional Scottish air pressure system then it is allowed to be entered.

- If the cask has any CO2, nitrogen or any other gas entering then it is top pressure (or maybe even keg) which is not accepted by CAMRA. The entry of gas mixes with the beer and does keep it longer but it is no longer real ale. If the brewery sends out brewery conditioned beer to go straight on at the place on a permanent basis, then they will not be entered. Beers served with a cask breather are not to be listed. If a pub serves any beer(s) by swan neck dispense or with a tight sparkler, where the dispense system changes the traditional character of the beer(s), they should be excluded from the beer list for the places entry.
- CAMRA deplores the practice of places advertising beers as 'house brands' when the beers are not produced by or exclusively for the place. This could affect your GBG entry.
- Places that restrict entry on the grounds of dress, shape, size, gender, colour, ethnic origin, or religion should not be entered. Members only establishments are not allowed entry unless like some clubs, they do allow CAMRA members to gain entry on their membership cards.

The Highlands and Western Isles Branch is the largest CAMRA Branch by geographical area in

the UK and has 35 entries for the GBG 2016 which will be out in September 2015. (We currently have over 200 real ale serving premises across our huge branch area - as you can see in the pubs list in the centre pages.) The branch committee are all volunteers and we spend a lot of our own time and money trying to do our best to encourage and inform premises staff and drinkers but we do need help.

Work on our selection started at our meeting in December 2014. Our initial list is usually more than the number required.

Once we have taken in to account a combination of all the places we have visited, reports from some very active members (*which we need more of—Ed.*) and using the WhatPub reports, we end up with our final 35. Obviously those places that are visited the most get more reports and these are in the more built up areas, however we do give some weighting to pubs out in the more remote areas. It is unfortunate that some very good places can not go in, but we only have 35 places.

Once selected, the Committee have to fill in forms (easier now on the computer) collecting all the information that goes into the GBG on each place. Once complete, our entries are sent off to regional coordinators.

Around April/May we get the proofs back for checking. At this time amendments can be made but we can not change any entries although we can delete any. Then they go off to the Editor.

Following the publication of the GBG, branches have the right to withdraw places which do not maintain the standards which gained them entry, if they change dispense, change ownership/tenant/manager or if they close or if they stop real ale.

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Good Beer Guide since 2005



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CAMRA Member **subscription rates are up**

As you should know, the annual subscription cost has gone up. For a single member, it is by a whole £1 per year! The membership form is on page 52 for any one who wants to join us and the 167,000 other like-minded, ale loving folk.

Next year's Members **weekend and AGM**

will take place in Nottingham on the 17th—19th of April. If you read your What's Brewing, you'll know that this is CAMRA's big meeting where policies are debated and argued over by committed members. There are smaller, item specific meetings on too. The social side is also well catered for with pub crawls and brewery visits laid on. If you

enjoy attending meetings and/or have a special interest in some aspect of our Campaign, this is the meeting for you!

CAMRA members can sign up to go at;
www.camraagm.org.uk



KeyKegs — the solution to the Cask v Craft Keg debate/disagreement/war?

Jim Anderson is the Owner, Manager, and all round "good chap" at the award winning and GBG listed Anderson in Fortrose.

He sends out emails once or twice a month to tell everyone on his mailing list what is coming up on handpump and font over the next week.

He often adds a jolly, light hearted piece with his mailings which are always interesting.

One of his recent "infomercials" included the following:-

Could it be that the Dutch have unwittingly ended the war between cask and keg forever?

Thanks to the popularity of the KeyKeg system from the Netherlands, we now have hundreds of kegged beers on the market in the UK containing live yeast, separated from traditional real ale by just two fine points, neither of which is frowned upon by self-elected cask ale watchdog, Cask Marque:

1) No air interacts with the beer once the keg's been broached, thereby keeping the beer effectively beneath a CO2 blanket as with a Cask Marque-permitted cask breather (or CAMRA-approved overnight hard spile, or RAIB...

[The design of the KeyKeg is such that although the beer is driven by gas pressure, the driving gas has no contact with the beer as it would in a conventional keg, resulting in conditioning that is purely the natural result of fermentation when live yeast is incorporated in the kegging. (*any secondary fermentation in the cask or keykeg would produce natural CO2—Ed.*) This is as opposed to the potential absorption of additional CO2 in a steel keg, EcoKeg, PET keg etc.]

2) The beer is generally delivered chilled, as with a cask cooling jacket or glycol-bundled beer line (or many British beer cellars between the months of November and March...

SO what's the difference, really? At The Anderson, we insist upon an analogue approach to real ale, pouring it from stillage with wooden spiles at ambient temperature from our stone cellar through un-insulated lines to handpumps without

sparklers. If you're going to subscribe to an ancient practice, then do things the way Grandpa did. Tradition without innovation is what keeps Britain British, we say. Just watch us try to scoop ice out of a bucket using a soup spoon!

But we'd be lying if we denied that we feel a particular pain every time we pour cask ale down the drain when it doesn't sell through. We also wish (secretly, of course) that we had all the hours back that we've spent fiddling about with casks for the satisfaction of a small percentage of our customers. And, yes, we do feel a tinge of resentment toward organisations who support (and award) pubs who artificially extend the life of their cask ale by means that were unthinkable to CAMRA before turning down their bedsheets to Cask Marque.

The drawbacks of serving real ale are what inspired British brewers to use kegs in the first place. And now that we have new kegs that deliver live beer without the drawbacks of conventional kegs, isn't it about time CAMRA got with the program and embrace keg-conditioned beer the same way (but for different reasons) that they condone RAIB (real ale in a bottle)?

Perhaps they would lose the facility of the argument that kick-started their amazing popularity, but surely that's better than to uphold a double standard based on "cask vs keg" dogma whilst accepted practice nudges cask ale ever closer to Watney's Red Barrel and further from the very characteristics that make it unique and worth seeking out.

The point is to preserve the dispense of live beer, and it makes no sense to deem that slapping a bit of technology on a cask is any more acceptable than devolving the science of kegs to deliver the same product in a marginally-different way. Anyhow, if anyone needs me I'll be at the bar. See you there!

Yur pal,

Jim Anderson

OK, nothing like kick starting a debate, and Jim makes several good points, much of which we may secretly agree with. We leave you, the reader, to consider the points he has made and make your own mind up.

Breweries News

As part of CAMRA's support for real ale and real ale breweries, volunteers from among the branch membership can be Brewery Liaison Officers. BLOs keep in contact with "their" brewery, encouraging and if appropriate, advising.

BLOs are asked to make a progress report to CAMRA every 3 months, via the CAMRA website.

In Highlands & Western Isles branch, we now have 11 or 12 breweries. Our magazine is also quarterly so what follows is the news we have over the past 3 months.

Other CAMRA branch magazines publish news from their breweries written by the breweries themselves. This is free publicity to the very customer base that you want to appeal to. Some of our breweries don't even have a CAMRA member on their staff but we would be happy to take any news you care to pass on to us—see the contact info on the diary page.

Cromarty Brewing Co:

After the success of Kowabunga bottles at Aldi, Happy Chappy bottlers will be in Aldi



stores in January. The shop at the brewery is stocked for Xmas pressies. Craig continues to experiment and has tried his hand at a "brown beer". This brew wasn't finished before publication so no details were available—not even a name! Another experiment was Ghost Town aged in a bourbon barrel and some in a Speyside whisky barrel with Scottish bramble berries. They were then blended together and bottled. The bottles of 'barrel aged, bramble berry Ghost Town' sold like hot cakes.

Black Isle Brewing Company:

Their focus continues to be keg, nitro keg, key casks, bottles and some cask which is mainly seen



in the central belt. Export markets continue to expand both in volumes and countries. In October, four 10,000 litre fermenting/conditioning tanks were added to keep up with demand. Innovation on the beer front has consisted of some whisky barrel conditioned ones and a Belgian style beer brewed in association with Pluscarden Abbey near Elgin. The annual Jocktoberfest of music and beer attracted a good crowd. Their bar at Belladrum next to the stage that they sponsor was busy as usual and they had Yellowhammer and Red Kite on cask.

Loch Ness Brewery:

We recently heard that the pop group S Club 7 were making a comeback, well NESS Club 7 is also coming back! They found that this beer fermented well in whisky barrels and the bottles were very popular in their expanding overseas market. There will be some in cask as well. Another beer to make an appearance was LochNESS (berry). This was their normal 4.4% LochNESS with the addition of the Loch Ness variety of Blackberry which gave it a very pleasant more fruity flavour - so you could say this is Loch Ness, LochNESS, Loch Ness.



There are now 4 new 20 barrel fermenters, a cold liquor tank and a second hot liquor tank fitted in the brewery as their expansion continues. The overseas sales team has been to the USA and Canada to secure orders and their next trip is to Monaco. Regular orders are still going out to Italy and Russia. A bit closer to home, they now have a regular delivery to the Aberdeen area

Cairngorm Brewery:

The brewery continues to perform well with plans still in place to double the brew length to 40 barrels to avoid double brew days. Brewing Director Sean Tomlinson left in May but has continued to advise as a consultant and the quality of the ales has been maintained highlighted by



Black Gold winning a Gold award for Stouts at Scottish SIBA. The bottling line continues to run at capacity and contract bottling for other breweries is generally having to be booked six weeks in advance. The Cairngorm Pub Company has taken on the lease of the Winking Owl in Aviemore to showcase the brewery's ales in their home town. Still no progress with Deeno's here in Academy Street as the complicated building regulations on the listed building are worked on. It is now hoped that work will start in the next six months. Once the new pub is open it will be suitably called "The Foundry".

Cuillin Brewery;



Keeping to their new schedule of brewing and bottling in the early and late parts of the year, closing for 2 or 3 months during Winter and brewing each of the 5 ales, mostly for consumption in Seumas's Bar in the Sligachan Hotel during the high tourist season.

Hebridean Brewing Company Ltd;

No progress to report since last issue from our new BLO.



An Teallach Ale Company;

The new Bealach Na Ba continues



to sell well and is gaining more favourable comments. It would be good to get more information from this successful brewery.

Isle of Skye Brewing Co;

All the rebranding has been completed (*as you can see by the new logo—Ed.*) It was reported in the West Highland Free Press at the end of October that the brewery had secured a grant from HIE. This means they hope to be able to



build their temporary storage facility soon and then move equipment out of the brewery making room for the new fermenters and conditioners. They have a new, faster bottling machine and are busy bottling. Tiny Angels in time for Christmas.

Plockton Brewery;

Andy has been experimenting with Bog Myrtle by request of a client. Some of us popped in to the tiny brewery when we were in Plockton on our trip. "Ticking over" is a fair description. Bottled beers are sold in the local shop in Plockton.



Old Inn Brewhouse;

No News. The 100 litre, micro brewery which is housed behind the Old Inn at Gairloch. No BLO yet—any takers?



Glenfinnan Brewery;

No News. Another of our small, remote, Highland breweries. We are hoping to recruit a BLO for this simple job soon.



River Leven Brewery

We have a volunteer!

One of our active branch members has agreed to be the BLO so we should have news in the Spring issue.



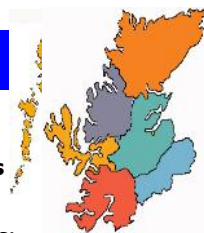
AND.....

Another 2 possible breweries;

A couple in Nairn are well into the planning stages for a small brewery in the Balmakeith industrial estate. They are thinking of calling it the "Wooha" brewery;

And another couple, this time out on the Knoydart peninsula are in the early planning stages for a brewery in a building that was a chapel. Hopefully, we will hear more for the next What's yours then? in the Spring.

Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2014



Isle of Skye Brewery - Based at Uig, by the Western Isles ferry terminal, brewing since December 1995. Started major expansion and re-branding in 2013. (see advert)

Valhalla Brewery - Most northerly brewery in the UK, brewing on Unst since December 1997. Ales include White Wife and Auld Rock.

Black Isle Brewery - Started brewing in December 1998 in converted farm buildings. Ales include Red Kite and Yellowhammer. Organic ales are a speciality. Much enlarged, new brewery opened 2011. Concentrates on large scale bottling.

Isle of Arran Brewery - Located close to Brodick Castle. Opened in late March 2000. Ales include Blonde, Dark, and Sunset. Expansion and re-branding started in 2013.

Fyne Ales Brewery - Based in Argyll, at the head of Loch Fyne, brewing started on St Andrew's Day 2001. Ales include Jarl and Maverick. Brewery refocused and expanded in 2012. Further expansion underway.

Cairngorm Brewery Company - Set up in late 2001. Ales include Trade Winds, Wildcat, Stag, Highland IPA, and Black Gold. Seasonal ales are regularly brewed. Expanded in 2011 and still expanding in 2013. Much expanded and improved brewery shop opened in late 2013. (see advert)

Hebridean Brewing Company - Based at Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides. Brewing since January 2002. Beers include Islander Strong Ale, Berserker Export Pale Ale, and Clansman Ale (first ale ever brewed in Stornoway) and now Seaforth. 2014—Not currently Brewing—moving.

River Leven—Brewing in one of the old Alcan smelter buildings in Kinlochleven since 2011.

An Teallach Brewery - Moved to the family's croft, near Dundonnell, in March 2001. Ales include An Teallach Ale, Beinn Dearg Ale, and Crofter's Pale Ale among others. Greatly expanded in 2012.

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

Cuillin Brewery - The brewery was born on 10th September 2004, in the old public bar of the Sligachan Hotel. Skye, Eagle, Pinnacle, Black Face, and Glamaig Ales are brewed. Started offering bottled beer in 2013.

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

Sinclair Breweries Ltd - Formed in 2006 by local hotelier and restaurateur Norman Sinclair, who purchased the **Orkney** - which originally com-

menced brewing in 1988 at the Old Schoolhouse in Sandwick on Orkney mainland—and **Atlas Breweries**. Ales regularly brewed include Three Sisters, Latitude, and Nimbus from Atlas; plus Raven Ale, Dark Island, Red MacGregor, and Skull Splitter from Orkney. Much expanded in 2011—12. (see advert)

Glenfinnan Brewery - irregularly brewing on a 4 bbl plant since October 2006 - Regular brews are Glenfinnan Gold, The Standard Ale, and Glenfinnan Dark (for the Winter).

Colonsay Brewery - First brews in March 2007. IPA, 80/- and Lager (Limited real ales).

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

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

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

Loch Ness Brewery - First brews in September 2011. RedNess, HoppyNess, Dark..... Etc. New, bigger brewery in 2012. Expanding again in 2014/15. (see advert)

Cromarty Brewery - First brews in December 2011. Ales include Happy Chappy, Brewed Awakening, Red Rocker, Hit The Lip, AKA and a growing portfolio. Increased brewing kit in early 2013. Brewery shop now open. (see advert)

Spey Valley Brewery—a "nano brewery" started in 2012 producing 5 cask conditioned real ales—found round and about the Keith area.

Windswept Brewery—started commercial brewing in 2012 in the Lossiemouth area. Blonde, APA and Wolf are proving popular along with Tornado and Weizen.

Speyside Craft Brewery—started commercial brewing at Forbes in 2012. Bottlenose Bitter, Randolph's Leap, Moray IPA and Bow Fiddle Blond are the ale portfolio so far.

Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area: the Highland Brewing Co, Valhalla, Orkney, Spey Valley, Windswept and Speyside are all in the Grampian & Northern Isles area; the Arran Brewery falls in the Ayrshire & Galloway area; while Fyne, Islay, Colonsay & Oban Bay Breweries are covered by Glasgow & West Scotland.



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Real Ale Pubs List

These Pubs, Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale.

They are listed in geographical area and area lists are in an order that would allow a continuous pub crawl if you have safe transport.

Please let us know about the quality of real ales on offer, particularly if you think Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited.

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

(TP) - ale served using top pressure so not fully real ale.

Inverness

Blackfriars
Caledonian
Castle Tavern
Chieftan Hotel
Clachnaharry Inn
Corrigarth Hotel
Exchange
Fairways Loch Ness Golf Course
Gellions
Glen Mhor Hotel (Nicos Bar)
Heathmount Hotel
Hootananny
Innes Bar
Johnny Foxes (TP)
Kings Highway
Lauders
Mercure Hotel (TP)
Number 27
Palace Hotel
Phoenix Bar
Room
Snowgoose
Tomlinson's Beer Shop
Waterfront Bar

Badenoch & Strathspey (route from N to S)

Gun Lodge Hotel, Ardersier
Inverness Airport (D'Lish)
Braeval Hotel (Bandstand), Nairn
Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
Haugh Hotel, Cromdale
Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown on Spey
Seafeld Lodge Hotel, Grantown on Spey
Craig Bar, Grantown on Spey
Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge
Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten

Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge

Aviemore

Cairngorm Brewery
Dalfaber Country Club
Mackenzies Highland Inn
Winking Owl
Skiing Doo (Doo Below)
Cairngorm Hotel
Roos' Leap
Ben Macdui
Old Bridge Inn
Woodshed Bar at Hilton Cowlumbridge Hotel

Badenoch

Glenmore Lodge, Glenmore
Pine Marten Bar, Glenmore
Loch Inch Boathouse, Kincaig
Suie Hotel, Kincaig
Kingussie Golf Club
Topsy Laird, Kingussie
Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie
Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie
Glen Hotel, Newtonmore

Easter Ross

Black Isle

Royal Hotel, Cromarty
Cromarty Arms, Cromarty
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
The Anderson, Fortrose
Station Hotel, Avoch
Allangrange Arms, Munloch

Inverness to Dingwall

Bog Roy, Inchmore
Canon Bridge Hotel
Edderton Inn, Edderton
Inchbae Lodge Hotel, Garve
Aultguish Inn, Garve

Strathconon

Glen Affric Bar, Cannich
Slatters Arms, Cannich
Struy Inn, Struy

Loch Ness (c/w from INV)

Dores Inn, Dores
Craigdarroch Inn, Foyers
Whitebridge Hotel, Whitebridge
Stravaiger's Lodge, Fort Augustus
Bothy Bar, Fort Augustus
Caledonian Hotel, Fort Augustus (S)
Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
Lovat Arms Hotel, Fort Augustus (TP)
Glenmorriston Arms Hotel, Invermorriston
Loch Ness Inn, Lewiston
Benleiva Hotel, Drumnadrochit

Fort William

Fort William (North)

Invergarry Hotel
Great Glen Water Park, South Laggan
Eagle Barge, Laggan (S)
Old Station Restaurant, Spean Bridge
Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge
Corrour Station House
Restaurant, Corrour Estate

Fort William (town)

Moorings Hotel, Banavie
Alexandra Hotel (S)
Ben Nevis Bar
Ben Nevis Inn, Achintee
Cobbs @ Nevisport
Crofter Bar & Restaurant
Glen Nevis Restaurant
Grog & Gruel
Great Glen
Volunteer Arms
West End Hotel

Real Ale Pubs List

Fort William (South)

Four Seasons, Onich
Onich Hotel, Onich
Loch Leven Hotel, Ballachulish
Laroch Bar, Ballachulish
Clachaig Inn, Glencoe
King's House Hotel, Glencoe
Ice Factor, Kinlochleven
MacDonald Hotel, Kinlochleven

Fort William (West)

Glenfinnan House Hotel, Glenfinnan
Glenug Inn, Glenug
Glenug Village Hall, Glenug
Loch Shiel Hotel, Acharacle
Salen Hotel, Salen
Ariundle Centre, Strontian
Arisaig Hotel, Arisaig
Chlachain Inn, Mallaig
Steam Inn, Mallaig
West Highland Hotel, Mallaig
Old Forge, Inverie

Wester Ross Cluanie to Kyle of Lochalsh

Cluanie Inn, Cluanie
Glenelg Inn, Glenelg
Kintail Lodge Hotel, Glensheil Bridge
Jac-o-bite Restaurant, Glensheil
Dornie Hotel, Dornie
Clachan Bar, Dornie

Plockton to Gairloch

Plockton Inn, Plockton
Plockton Hotel, Plockton
Strathcarron Hotel
Lochcarron Hotel
Applecross Inn
The Potting Shed, Applecross
Tigh an Eilean Hotel, Shieldaig
Torridon Inn, by Annat (TP)
Kinlochewe Hotel
Ledgowan Lodge Hotel, Achnasheen
Loch Maree Hotel, Talladale
Badachro Inn, Badachro (TP)

Gairloch

Old Inn
Myrtle Bank Hotel (S)
Millcroft Hotel

Melvaig Inn

Gairloch to Ullapool

Poolewe Hotel, Poolewe
Aultbae Hotel, Aultbae
Drumchork Hotel, Aultbae (S)
Dundonnell Hotel, Dundonnell

Ullapool

Arch Inn
Argyll Hotel
Ceilidh Place
Ferry Boat Inn
Morefield Motel
Seaforth Bar & Restaurant

Ullapool North

Summer Isles Hotel,
Achiltibuie (S)

Caithness and Sutherland

West to East Coast (clockwise)

West Coast

Altnacealgach Inn, Ledmore Junction (S)
Inchnadamph Hotel, Assynt (S)
Caberfeidh, Lochinver
Kylesku Hotel, Kylesku
Scourie Hotel, Scourie

North Coast

Sango Sands Oasis, Durness (S)
Smoo Cave Hotel, Durness (S)
Ben Loyal Hotel, Tongue (S)
Tongue Hotel, Tongue (S)
Weigh Inn (Ashes Bar), Thurso
Commercial Hotel, Thurso
Central Hotel (Top Joes), Thurso
Holburn Bar, Thurso
Ulster Arms Hotel, Halkirk (S)
Castletown Hotel, Castletown (S)
Northern Sands Hotel, Dunnet
Seaview Hotel, John O'Groats

East Coast

Alexander Bain, Wick
Mackays Hotel, Wick
Norseman Hotel, Wick (S)
Bay Owl Restaurant, Dunbeath
Bannockburn Inn, Helmsdale (TP)
Belgrave Arms Hotel, Helmsdale
Sutherland Inn, Brora
Golspie Inn, Golspie
Trentham Hotel, Poles Nr Dornoch

Burghfield House Hotel, Dornoch
Eagle Hotel, Dornoch
Dornoch Castle Hotel, Dornoch
Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar Bridge
Invershin Hotel, Invershin
Achness Hotel, Lairg
Crask Inn, Lairg

Skye

Sligachan Hotel, Sligachan (S)
Old Inn, Carbost
Taigh Ailean Hotel, Portnalong
Old School Restaurant, Dunvegan (S)
Stein Inn, Watnish
Edinbane Inn, Edinbane
Lodge at Edinbane, Edinbane
Uig Hotel, Uig
Bakur Bar, Uig
Ferry Inn, Uig
Flodigarry Country House Hotel, Staffin
Bosville Hotel, Portree
Isles Inn, Portree
Royal Hotel, Portree
Sconser Lodge Hotel, Sconser
Broadford Hotel, Broadford
Dunollie Hotel (Redhills Lounge), Broadford
Claymore Restaurant, Broadford
Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
Saucy Marys Lodge, Kyleakin (S)
Isle Ornsay Hotel, Sleat
Ardvasar Hotel, Ardvasar

Western Isles, N to S

Carlton Lounge, Stornoway, Lewis
An Lanntair Arts Centre, (S) Stornoway, Lewis
Hotel Hebrides (Mote Bar), Tarbet, Harris (S)
Isle of Harris Inn, Tarbet, Harris (S)
Hamersay House (Lochmaddy), North Uist
Lochmaddy Hotel, Lochmaddy, N Uist
Langass Lodge, Loch Elport, N Uist (S)
Borrodale Hotel, Daliburgh, S Uist (S)
Polochar Inn, Lochboisdale, S Uist
Am Politician, Isle of Eriskay, S Uist

POTY Voting

CAMRA HIGHLANDS & WESTERN ISLES PUB OF THE YEAR TIME TO VOTE!!

Please vote for your favourite pub in each of seven areas across our Highlands & Western Isles branch. If you haven't got a favourite in all regions then just vote for the ones you have visited.

The pubs are listed in regions in the centre pages of "What's Yours Then?".

What's Yours Then can also be viewed at www.hIGHLANDCAMRA.org.uk

REGIONS: INVERNESS; BADENOCH & STRATHSPEY; EASTER ROSS & LOCH NESS; FORT WILLIAM; WESTER ROSS & GAIRLOCH; CAITHNESS & SUTHERLAND; SKYE & WESTERN ISLES.

Voting is open to all Highlands & Western Isles Branch members, so please include your membership number and votes must be received by 31st January 2015.

Your votes will be used to select the regional winners.

One of the regional winners will be voted by the committee in conjunction with CAMRA member beer scores from WhatPub to become the H&WI Pub of the Year 2015

Please take the time to vote. These awards are valued by the hardworking publicans and hotel owners across our area who bring us great pints of real ale.

Please e-mail your votes to:

secretary.hwi@gmail.com

or post to

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Presentations



Sandra Vallely, Maurice's (*see his Focus on.... feature from Autumn 2013 issue—Ed.*) wife and co-owner of **The Stronlossit Inn** proudly accepts their Fort William area POTY certificate.

Philip (*we're sure that is correct this year—Ed.*) of the **Dornoch Castle Hotel** accepts their latest POTY certificate for the Caithness and Sutherland area to add to their collection.



The Joint winners for the Aviemore and Badenoch area: **Suie Hotel**, **Old Bridge Inn**, and **Cairngorm Hotel**, were presented with their certificates in October but it wasn't possible to take photos that day. We will publish photos when we manage to get some.

Pubs news

Having announced its closure as a pub in the last edition, we are pleased to advise that on Friday 31st October, the **Station Hotel** in Avoch reopened the bar from 5 pm in the evenings. Richard and Lorraine still have the place on the market if you are interested!

After a 6 month closure, **The Culbokie Inn** has been sold to a local farmer from the Black Isle and will reopen for a few weeks around Xmas / New Year before closing for refurbishment and reopening just before Easter. Not sure about the return of previously seasonal real ale, but hopefully more (good) news in the next edition in the Spring.

It was with interest that we read in the

local press that as of 31st October, the Good Beer Guide listed **Dores Inn** has new owners, Adam and Tanya Da Silva, and Tanya's brother Ross Glendenning. Local girl Tanya worked there 30 years ago as a barmaid, and in 2010 she had her wedding reception there. A story with a happy ending, just as well it is the panto season – now, who has got that glass slipper!

STOP PRESS !!!! - The **Dores Inn** have bought a minibus and will be running into Inverness in the evening on a circular route and the same at the end of the evening. Currently the details of times, dates and pick-up points are being decided, but Ross is hoping that the service will be free!

Ever on the look out for places that have

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MYEETENDOUSLY MALTY PORTER
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CROMARTY BREWING CO.
HIT THE LIP
BITTY HOPPY HEAVEN
3.8%

CROMARTY BREWING CO.
ATLANTIC DRIFT
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3.5%

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RED RYE HOP EXTRAVAGANZA
5%

CROMARTY BREWING CO.
HAPPY CHAPPY
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4.3%

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started to take real ale, Eric Mills, our dedicated branch Chairman, has discovered real ale in The **Woodshed Bar** of The Hilton, Coylumbridge (nr Aviemore), and also The **Grant Arms Hotel**, Grantown-on-Spey.

At the end of October we were contacted by Katie Heron. With her husband, Johnny, they have taken on "**Taigh Ailean Hotel**" (Alans House) in Portnalong, Isle of Skye. "Where is that?" I hear you cry, another three miles along the road from the Talisker distillery is the answer.

Currently they are offering Gillean, a "house blend" from Isle of Skye Brewery, with a second handpump during the "season".

I was there about a year ago during the day, but it was closed before being taken over, however I can promise the views are well worth the trip. As a promotion, **Taigh Ailean Hotel** are offering card carrying CAMRA members:- stay 2 nights, get the second free up to 31 March 2015!

All of the 207 pubs (or hotels with a public bar) that we believe have real ale on a permanent or seasonal basis are listed in the centre pages of this

magazine. There are also one or two hotels and restaurants where you can enjoy a real ale but you have to be a resident or are having a meal and they are not listed in here.

Other than our list of 207 real ale places, additional details of all 280 pubs, hotels, restaurants, off licences and even a brewery in our branch area and nearly 36,000 places in the UK can be found at www.WhatPub.com. Not all of the places sell real ale, but may offer bottled real ale, or have yet to see the "real ale" light!

We like to hope that our real ale list is complete, but CAMRA members and the general public regularly contact us advising of a new outlet. If you know of one, or you think the entry is incorrect, please let us know.

Give www.WhatPub.com a go and check out your local! If YOUR local or favourite pub is not listed, let us know. There is a chance it is non real ale (a "fizz" pub), but we are working hard to add the estimated 250 places in the Highlands & Western Isles on to www.WhatPub.com.



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Focus on

Guy Daynes



Guy with his brother Ed have owned the **Clachaig Inn** in Glencoe since 1984.

Q. Why did you come to the Clachaig Inn?

Mum & Dad took over the Clachaig Inn, Glencoe, in '84, with myself joining in '88, and brother Ed shortly behind. The Grog & Gruel in Fort William opened a few years later in 1994. Clachaig has always been a champion of real ale, and the Grog has the distinction of never having keg ale, even from the off. A bold decision on the West Coast back then.

Q. Where are you originally from?

A. Grew up in and around York and Leeds, but been in the Highlands for most of my adult life – now approaching 3 decades.

Q. What is your background?

A. After studying Chemical Engineering at University, I worked for an engineering contractor for a couple of years. Various sites throughout the UK, the common link being they were ugly, dirty, and smelly. More un-

social hours than the licenced trade too. I forget why I didn't stick at it!

Q. How/when were you introduced to real ale?

I grew up in Yorkshire! Bottles o' Brown were soon replaced with pints of Theakston, Sam Smiths, and the like.

Q. What are your favourite real ales/

styles?

A. I try to keep an open mind, but keep coming back to IPA. I've just had my first harvest of hops from the vines at the back of my polytunnel, and will be home-brewing shortly. All Cascade, which I guess says it all.

Q. What is the best part of your work?

A. I like what I do. Most of the time.

Q. What is the worst part of your work?

A. It's much better these days, but for the first 20 years or so, the unsocial time off when everyone else was working. Week-ends off? Forget it. Summer holidays? Yeah, right.

Q. What are your interests/hobbies?

A. The usual outdoor pursuits (well, I am in Glencoe!), and the occasional home brewing. Current suppliers need not worry, mind!

Q. What is your favourite book?

A. Currently, my head's buried deep in "Marine Diesel Engines: Maintenance, trou-

bleshooting and repair". It's heavy going, and in a way takes me back to those college text books. Emphasis on "troubleshooting" and "repair". Favourite might not be the right word.

Q. What is your favourite song/group?

A. I'd like to think I've a fairly varied and eclectic music taste. But I keep coming back to a bit of Motorhead. Good for clearing the head. And sinuses.

Q. What is your favourite film?

A. No particular favourites – though I have a loathing of any films where the action or special effects are at the expense of a good story and dialogue. I've probably watched Monty Python & the Holy Grail more times than strictly necessary.

Q. What is your favourite part of Scotland?

A. Being totally unbiased as I am, then the West Coast. Towering peaks, clear rivers, unspoilt areas, rugged coastlines... What's not to like? Well, apart from the weather sometimes.

Q. Why should anyone go to The Clachaig?

A. So many reasons... the location, the atmosphere, the people... I could go on, but since this is a CAMRA publication, let's talk about beer.

The short answer is choice. Whatever your tittle, we aim to give you more choice than most folks are used to. Craft? Artisan? Local? I guess it depends on your definition of these terms, but this is what we aim to offer, be it through the handpulls, keg lines, or on the shelf in a bottle. Up to 15 handpulls, 7 keg lines, and some 300 malts. And if that's not enough, we see an increasing number of artisan Scottish alternatives for the gin, vodka and rum drinkers.

Cask beer. Anything up to 15 at any one time. Many from the Highlands and Islands, and always Scottish. Why? Because these days, we can! The choice is bewildering, and increasing all the time. And like the weather,

if you don't like the selection, wait five minutes. It could change. Some of these guys we've "grown up with". We used to joke with the Williams Bros that we were the second biggest seller of Fraoch Heather Ale. Just behind the USA. But we took some of the very first commercial batch, and it's still one of the biggest selling ales we have today. Keg beer. I think we can call this craft.

Again, all Scottish, and increasingly a changing selection as more choice become available. The ubiquitous national and international brands again absent. Fancy a lager? Sorry, you'll need to be more specific. Right now we've a choice of 5, including brews from Cairngorm (launched right here), and Loch Ness (okay, we missed the launch, but I think we're the 3rd outlet to take this brand new product). Stout? Sorry, no Guinness. But again launched right here, we have Cairngorm Black Gold. (*this is the keg version of the excellent, award winning stout which unfortunately and rather confusingly, Cairngorm also call Black Gold—Ed.*) Fans of the cask version may throw their arms up in horror to see it dispensed as you would a Guinness, but it works "rather well". Sorry! Even the cider is now produced in Scotland, thanks to the guys over at Thistly Cross. And in addition to all this, you might occasionally see a ginger beer, another stout, a farmhouse saison, or even a funky collaboration brew.

Keg beer in a CAMRA publication? Blasphemy? At the risk of inciting the wrath of the beer gods, I'd argue that the move into kegging as well as casking is finally allowing our wee independent brewers the chance to compete head-to-head with the big boys. The ever-increasing numbers of breweries in Scotland, the ever-increasing range of beers available, and of course the quality, speaks volumes. Long may it continue. To me, CAMRA was as much about choice, as it was cask/real ale. I think they have succeeded in making that happen. Thanks!

Guy, Thank You.

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The Travels of the Hillman Imp Part 2

This time we were off on a trip round the north west to climb a few hills but, before I start, I forgot to mention that on our way home from Cannich in May (Travels Part 1), we popped into The Cairn Hotel in Carrbridge



for our tea. Fish and chips washed down with a very nice pint of Cairngorm Gold 4.5% which the four of us who tried it all rated 4. This is a nice friendly wee place. I really like it and both the grub and the beer are consistently good.

I mentioned at the start of "Travels Part 1" that one of the reasons for writing this tale, was to help us remember the beers we had

tasted, as we couldn't remember any of the ales we had sampled at the Arrochar Beer Festival. Well, since writing, Mrs Imp has remembered that the name of her favourite beer at the Arrochar Beer Festival was **Tiny Angels** 4.0% from the Isle of Skye Brewing Company, so well done to them.

On our journey north this time our first port of call was The Clachaig Inn, Glencoe. It was



mid-week in early July and eight of the fourteen hand pumps were on (plus one for cider – but as we don't often drink "fruit juice" we tend not to count this). A good number of the beers on were from Houston Brewery and we had a very nice Houston, **Killellan** 3.7%

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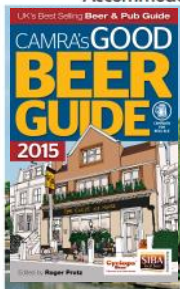
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Real Ale in the Real Highlands



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which we rated 4. This place is just a classic. It's been a regular haunt of ours for years. After all it's next to such amazing mountains and the beer and the grub are just what you want after a day on the hill. We then moved on to Arisaig for a few days where we frequented the Arisaig Hotel . It



has 2 handpumps and was serving Cromarty and Loch Ness beers. Cromarty Ales **Kowabunga** 4.6% was a cracker – 4.5! It was replaced later the following day by **Red Rocker** 5% which was also excellent – 4.5. The Ness beer was **RedNESS** 4.2%. We rated this a 4. Really good beer from two brewing companies that appear to be consistently good. So my advice is if you're heading to or from Mallaig for a ferry, you may want to leave enough time to pop in here was a wee visit. Then we visited Mallaig. The Steam Inn was



our next port of call. It advertised real ale, which I didn't think it had before (though I may well be mistaken), so we were in. This place has had a very major makeover in the past 6 months or so. It has changed from a typical pub into quite a nice restaurant which came as a bit of a surprise. Anyway, we were hungry and when we saw a huge plate of langoustine pass us we couldn't say no especially when nicely washed down by a

really nice pint of Isle of Skye, **IPA** 4.5% - 4. I know this is not a food guide but man cannot live by beer alone, at least not without shortening one's life expectancy considerably! Further up the hill in Mallaig is the Chlachain Inn which was actually where we were head-



ing for something to eat in the first place. It had Isle of Skye, **Red** and **IoS**, **IPA** plus Orkney, **Corncrake**. We sampled the Skye **Red** 4.2% - 4 and the **Corncrake** 4.1% - 3.5 (The grub looked good here as well.). Mid July saw us back at the Glenelg Inn. (see last issue—Ed.) Now this is a really friendly wee place and the food is always good. Caledonian, **Deuchars** 3.8% was on - 3, as was Cuillin Brewery, **Skye Ale** 4.1%. The latter was only a 2. I must confess this beer is not a personal favourite of mine but I thought it was a bit poorer than usual. Shortly after it went off, so I assume we caught the end of the barrel. It was replaced by Caledonian, **Golden XPA** 4.3% which we rated 4. Then it was on to Skye itself and to Saucy Mary's in Kyleakin . Two Isle of Skye pumps



but unfortunately the ale just went off before we got there - confirmed by the bloke served after us who was looking for a second pint. (We didn't eat but mouthwateringly big platefuls were carried past us.)

Isle Oronsay Hotel has one handpump which



was serving **IoS, Red Cuillin 4.2%. Red Cuillin** as it should be - 4.5. A beautifully crisp clean pint (Again didn't eat but the food looked great.).

Next stop was Seamas' Bar at the Sligachan



Hotel, the home of The Cuillin Brewery. Four Pumps on **Blackface 4.1%, Glamaig 5%, Pinnacle 4.7% & Skye Ale 4.1%**. We tried **Pinnacle** and **Skye Ale**, the latter just to see if maybe I was wrong about it. Despite being straight from the brewhouse I can still only give Cuillin Brewery, **Skye Ale** a 3. I'm sorry, but for me, it's just a shame that a beer with such a great name and therefore one which promises so much to folk that think the whole island is a fantastic place, this beer is just a wee bit of a let-down. It was again just a bit too yeasty. The **Pinnacle** was certainly a bit better -3.5 and again the food looked good.

Back to the mainland and on to the Plockton

Inn which had **Plockton Playgroup 3.9%** from the Plockton Brewery across the road. A malty ale with a touch of bitterness - 3.5. It was just a bit too complex for me but perhaps it might grow on you. The guest ale was Young's **Special 4.5%** which was a 4 (We sat outside in the sun, so you will be pleased to know we didn't see any food this time). The Lochcarron Hotel was our next stop.



Three pumps all pure dead brilliant. Our first pint was Timothy Taylor's **Landlord 4.3%**, which was a superb - 4.5. It didn't last long after our arrival and was replaced by Green King **IPA 3.6%**. Now this wouldn't normally be my first choice but it was a 4. Isle of Skye, **Hebridean Gold 4.3%** was also great - 4.5 and Cairngorm **Sheepshagger 4.5%** a 4. The owner, Nigel, keeps his beer in really great condition and the scoring clearly reflects the quality of the beer here which was excellent. The food was great as well.

Off we went again, further up the west coast to Poolewe. The Poolewe Hotel has two



pumps and they were serving two beers from the An Teallach Ale Company, just "round the corner" in Dundonnell. **An Teallach Ale 4.5%** we rated 3.5 and **Bealach na Ba 3.8%** which

(Continued on page 43)



Traditional Cider Matters



Real Cider and/or **Real Perry** is sold (or has recently been sold) in the following inns & hotels.

(Please note that some may be seasonal outlets).

Please let us know if you find additional outlets selling real cider or perry.

The Anderson, Fortrose - Thatchers Heritage Cider

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

Stronlossit Inn, Roy Bridge - Thatchers Cheddar Valley Cider

Strathcarron Hotel - Thatchers Cider (rotated with cask ales)

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

Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit - Thatcher's Heritage Cider all year round, plus bottled ciders, including Loch Ness Cider and selection of real ciders for festivals

Scourie Hotel - Two Westons Ciders on handpump

King's Highway, Inverness - Real Cider will be on draft during their 2 beer festivals each year

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

Badachro Inn - Westons Cider is served here

Argyll Hotel, Ullapool - Westons ciders from the box

Torridon Inn - Westons Ciders are served in the bar.

Kinlochewe Hotel, at the foot of Beinn Eighe, is serving Westons Family Reserve Draft Cider

Clachaig Inn, Glencoe - Westons cider on hand pump.

Bandstand Bar, Nairn - Westons ciders on handpump plus wider selections at their festivals.

Grog & Gruel, Fort William - Thatchers Heritage cask cider. On tap for as long as sales make it viable - could be all year round but unfortunately sales usually drop dramatically during winter months.

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(Continued from page 40)

was initially only a 3 but rose to 3.5 for the next pint and clearly, just needed poured (and since you are now asking, we didn't eat here, but there were smiling faces around us who looked reasonably well fed). After a brilliant day on the hill, we popped into the Dundonnell Hotel. Two pumps both



with Isle of Skye beers. We sampled them both. The **Young Pretender** 4.0% and **Black Cuillin** 4.5% both went down a treat - 4. We didn't linger here though (not even time to eat!), but travelled on to Ullapool hoping to stay a couple of days in the Morefield Motel, having seen the advert a few times in this here Camra Newsletter. Alas there was no room at the Inn – you win some you lose some, so instead of going back into Ullapool, we decided just to keep heading north.

Kylesku Hotel was the next stop. All four



pumps were on, two with Isle of Skye Ales and two An Teallach ales. We tried the **Skye Red** which we rated 4 and **Bealach na Ba** which we gave 3.5. When I was here a couple of years ago I was more than a bit disappointed by the beer, however, absolutely no complaints at all this time. Significant improvement - well done! (Really good seafood as well.)

The Scourie Hotel has three handpumps. Two are in the Public Bar (plus one more for cider) and one in the Hotel Bar. Two ales were on, Cairngorm, Highland IPA 5.0% which was a 4



and An Teallach, Beinn Dearg 3.8% which was very cloudy and more or less undrinkable -1. The cloudy pint was immediately replaced with both a Highland IPA and sincere (Highland) apologies. It was suggested that the pump probably hadn't been pulled through all day. The outside ambient temperature that day was boiling to roasting which may also offer some excuse. I would also add that on the last two occasions we have been here the beer has been good. The pump was worked on and at least a couple of pints pulled through. When the barmaid thought it might be better, a sample was kindly brought over to our table and I was offered a taste. It had clearly improved so I tried a ½ pint and our rating rose from a 1 to a drinkable 3.5. (The venison sausages were brilliant.) The Drumbeg Hotel was our next stop. It's a



bit off the beaten track and doesn't get much passing trade (going north, turn left, just before Kylesku). It has one pump and as it is in the middle of nowhere, it would be completely unfair to expect more. However the landlord here, Robin, is a man who clearly looks after his ale with love and care. Jennings **Cocky Blonde** 4% was on. What can I say? Simply a great pint. Cool fresh and crisp on a blistering

(Continued on page 45)

Play Pieces



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March

6 & 7 - The Gamekeeper by Gunshow Theatre Company

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The Drouthy Cobbler or The Phoenix Ale House**



(Continued from page 43)

hot July day (or three!! – for we were lucky with both the weather and the midges). This beer was easily a 4.5 at least. In fact it really was so good I have to give it a 5. We drank it 3 nights in a row and it was magic, especially when it washed down the most superb Cumberland sausage I've ever tasted! (Yes, I know this is a beer review but a starvin man aff the hill jist hus tae eat!!!) We visited the Caberfeidh Bar & Restaurant, Loch-



inver for a quick drink. Two pumps Isle of Syke, **Red** 4.2% was a 4. Isle of Syke, **Gold** 4.3% got a 3.5. We went in late afternoon and didn't see any food so at least that will stop you all moaning about me going on about it.

The Old Inn, Gairloch has changed since I was last



here a few years ago. It has six handpumps. Three were on, **AnTeallach Ale** which we didn't try, Orkney, **Corncrake** 4.1% was a 3.5 and Cairngorm, **Trade Winds** 4.3% which was a 4. Again we were on the move and not eating. The Kinlochewe Hotel was our next stop. It has five handpumps (including one for Cider). Two An Teallach Ales were on, **Beinn Dearg** 3.8% and **Kildonan** 4.4%, as were two Orkney Ales, **Atlas Wayfarer IPA** 4.4% and **Nothern Light** 4.0% which was later replaced by the **Corncrake**. We sampled the **Beinn Dearg** and the **Kildonan** and gave



both of them 3.5. The **Wayfarer IPA** and **Northern Light** we rated 4, with the **Wayfarer** being the best of them all. The grub here was really good as well and went down just a treat with the beer! Overall the quality of everything in the Highlands has definitely improved over the last 10 years and continues to do so, even the weather! Only joking, but it was great - 5 days with rain in 3 weeks. We only had two complete soakings but both of them were spent mainly in cloud over 2,500 feet and some days were just too hot to go up a hill! The grub is so much better with most places now serving till at least 8pm, if not 9pm. The number of places serving good beer continues to grow which is great and everywhere we went the service and willingness to please were commendable. The beer highlights of this trip were the Lochcarron Hotel and the Drumbeg Hotel, with the Arisaig Hotel a close 3rd. The best beer, for our taste, was Jennings Cocky Blonde which takes the overall prize but was very closely followed by Cromarty, Kowabunga and Redrocker. In addition it was very nice to taste so many excellent pints from the Isle of Skye Brewery which we don't get to see very often at home. In addition the Cairngorm and Orkney Beers were consistently good and it was great to see pubs and hotels supporting their local breweries.

You may think we tend to rate the beer we taste a bit on the high side, as unlike a lot of people we don't rate most beers as a 3. Personally, I feel it is far too easy to criticise and grumble and would far rather commend good beer for being good than mark everything down as average. Furthermore, coming for a drink after a long day on the hill I would probably rate a pint of water straight of the hill as a 2!

Next trip north we will try and visit the pubs in between which we missed.

The Hillman Imp.

(Photos from Whatpub and Google street view. Ed)

TogetherNESS, the joining of Loch Ness Real Ale and Cider

On the 8th November at The Bunchrew House Hotel, Loch Ness Cider owner Karen

bottled Loch Ness cider were available for the friends and family to celebrate this happy occasion.

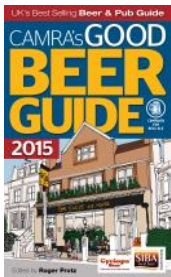


After the ceremony and meal, popular local group Penny Dogs played into the early hours.

The branch wish the happy couple all the very best for the future.

Keane and Loch Ness Brewery's George Wotherspoon were married.

Four pins of Loch Ness beer and a selection of



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Change to the Drink Drive Limits

In light of the introduction of the reduction in the drink driving limits we have put together comments received from our membership.

In case you did not already know, on 5 December 2014 the Drink Drive limits in Scotland were reduced from:-

35 to 22 mcg in 100 ml of breath

80 to 50 mg / 100 ml of blood

107 to 67 mg / 100 ml of urine

Firstly, it is beyond any doubt that alcohol does have an adverse effect on reaction time etc, and irresponsible drinking is a danger to society.

Whilst this is a positive road safety move, it will “criminalise” many who will be one or two percentage points over the new limit, but well below the old one.

Someone going out for a Sunday lunch and having just one glass of wine, or a pint of beer, if stopped and breathalysed may well be marginally over the limit. They will be fined and could lose their licence.

Unfortunately, the threat of detection, even at this lower limit, will never deter the “hardened drinker” and regrettably “sensational” cases reported in the press, tend to suggest that people involved in incidents are three or four times over the existing limit, not just marginally so.

Sadly, accidents are also caused by plain old bad driving. I am sure we all know of someone who is a danger on the road to themselves or others - stone cold sober!

People have been injured falling down stairs, or tripping in the street, but we have not banned stairs or pavements!

Honest, law abiding people who still want to have a beer, or a quick drink on the way home from work, might nurse a pint for two hours, or stay at home. Mind you, even a 4.5% abv pint of beer could put you over the limit depending on your body weight, state of health, any food you might have consumed and when.

Alcohol affects everyone differently and whilst most people know their limit, the law identifies a level above which it is deemed illegal.

We are concerned that whilst the motivation for this has the best interests of society at heart, are we not turning into a “nanny state”?

Some would say “just make it zero tolerance” — a zero limit - but this would mean that anyone who had a few drinks the day before might still have a small amount in their system. Also, anyone who took a liquid cold medicine to combat a cold, would then have alcohol in their system.

Although city and town pubs serve a more concentrated community often with a comprehensive transport network, there are more pubs “in the middle of nowhere”, which serve a small

community or rely on a widespread community for their viability and they have little or no public transport nearby. Those same pubs also cater for “townies” who like a trip out to the countryside to “that nice pub”.

Alas, that pub may not be able to survive, and might close!

OK, enough of the doom, gloom and despondency.

As with fish and chips, a Chinese or Indian take away meal, if you did fancy a few beers, you could drive down to your local, have a half, fill up a carry out 2 or 4 pint jug, and take it home to enjoy there - but without all your mates.

And where is the pool table and dart board at home— anyone for one man dominoes?

So your mates could come back to yours, but then how do they get home?

It might be possible for rural communities to organise a subsidised “community taxi” that would be on call.

The Dore Inn have bought a mini bus, and are going to collect people, take them to the pub, and then return them home. Details about from where, when and how often and for how much (free was mentioned!) are still to be decided but it is an initiative which will hopefully be copied in other places. (*see the Inverness Courier*

28/11/2014.—Ed.) We have also heard that some licensed premises are going to offer free soft drinks to the driver of a party of pub goers. These sort of moves are likely to have a positive effect on pub going, and can only help to make the pub “the hub of the community” once again. Without some fresh thinking, and staying inside of the law, the once cherished institution of the pub in our rural communities is likely to become a thing we lament when it is gone - maybe we did not make as much effort to use it when it was there?

The branch publishes articles in good faith without judgement. For balance, we would invite comment from those who have to deal with the fall out of drunk drivers, the police, A&E doctors, etc. We would also like to hear from publicans about what they are going to do to protect their livelihoods and keeping their customers safe and within the law.

CAMRA has NEVER endorsed drinking and then driving, it is a lethal combination.

We always encourage those going out for a night out, or at the office party, particularly over the festive season, not to drive and to use public transport or make other arrangements to get home safely.



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Branch Diary (meetings start at 7.30 pm) (all welcome)

All these events are open to CAMRA members and non-members, including committee meetings. * Not all events are necessarily organised by CAMRA. This diary is as much about the local real ale scene as it is about CAMRA branch activities.

December

Tuesday 16th at 19:00
Inverness Xmas Walkabout
Start at Blackfriars

January

Tuesday 13th
Committee Meeting
No. 27, Castle Street

February

Tuesday 10th
Committee Meeting
Snowgoose

19th to 22nd
Cromarty Brewery Bar Takeover *
Blackfriars, Academy Street

March

Friday 6th at 18:00
Tasting Social
Castle Tavern

Tuesday 10th
Committee Meeting
Blackfriars, Academy Street

April

3rd to 12th
Bandstand Beer Festival *
Bandstand Bar,
Braeval Hotel, Nairn

Saturday 4th at 14:00
Branch Social
Bandstand

Your local CAMRA branch

Protect your pleasure! Become actively involved with your local branch.

We need your help! Not a massive time commitment, just an hour or two a month will help our small committee in supporting the local publicans and brewers who together provide us with such a wonderful range of real ales to enjoy.

Branch activities might have to be changed—Please check the branch website to confirm the dates, times and places of meetings and socials—
www.highlandcamra.org.uk

Contact Details

Gareth Hardman (Secretary & Branch Contact) - 01463 238462
18, Scorguie Gardens, Inverness, IV3 8SS
contact@highlandcamra.org.uk or
secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk

Eric Mills - 01456 459343
chair@highlandcamra.org.uk
Arnold Stout (social secretary)
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Gordon Streets (editor)
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[EVENINGS]

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2015

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When: Open from Wednesday 11th – Saturday 14th February 2015

The National Winter Ales Festival is home to CAMRA's prestigious Champion Winter Beer of Britain Competition which sees the 4 winter styles of beer (porters, stouts, old ales/strong milds and barley wine/strong old ales) being gathered from across the UK to be judged and a winner declared. Though the festival itself has lots of pale beers and golden ales to choose from too.

The website www.nwaf.org.uk will be updated regularly with details of admission prices, live entertainment, tutored tastings and special hotel rates thanks to our partners at www.visitderby.co.uk. There are no advance tickets as this is a pay on the door event.

(Continued from page 19)

(a new brewery and beer to me).

The second day's walk included climbing steep Conic Hill and we were naturally ready for a lunchtime pint in the Oak Tree Inn, home of the Balmaha Brewery. They only sell their beer in bottles but we were more than compensated by the two draft Orkney beers on, **Red McGregor** and **Northern Light**. We settled for just a single pint of the latter as we still had seven and a half miles to walk along the banks of Loch Lomond to our next stop at Rowardennan. Thank goodness we had that beer as there was no real ale on in Rowardennan.

Day Three was the toughest walk of the week up, down and over rocks and tree roots around Rob Roy's Cave so we certainly earned our well-kept **Deuchars IPA** in The Drovers' Inn, Inveraran.

If the third day was the worst walk, the next day was one of the best. It was the kind of day we felt we could walk forever but were still pleased to reach Tyndrum in time for the Saturday football results and two good ales, **Deuchars** again and Caledonian **Flying Scotsman** in the Tyndrum Inn. By now we had befriended a number of fellow walkers including two American couples and a very fit Swedish pensioner. We managed to convert almost all to real ale and they loved it!

The fifth day was only a mere seven miles and our destination was the Bridge of Orchy Hotel. We were there in time for two lunchtime and three evening pints of two tasty ales from Harviestoun, **Sandtrap** and **Bitter and Twisted**.

The following day we headed for Kings House across part of the bleak but magical Rannoch Moor. At Kings House Hotel, we enjoyed the two ales on, Cairngorm **Tradewinds** and Box Steam **Tunnel Vision**, our

only English ale of the week. With our American friends drinking so much of the **Tradewinds**, I was surprised there was any left by the end of the evening!

Our penultimate day brought us to Kinlochleven and we were on the fine River Leven **IPA** in the Ice Factor, next door to the brewery. Unfortunately our overnight stay, The Tailrace Inn, served no real ale. We had planned to make an excursion to the famous Clachaig Inn near Glencoe but as the bus could drop us no nearer than two miles away and it was getting dark and raining somewhat heavily we chickened out.

The last day we completed the ninety-six mile walk with some celebratory beers in the Grog and Gruel in Fort William. Although there were four ales on tap, we spent most of our drinking time with fellow Belgian and German walkers/ beer drinkers on the tasty An Teallach **Bealach Na Ba** and ended on a Cairngorm **Stag**; with some regret that, unlike some of our companions, we never made it on to Cairngorm **Wildcat** and Loch Lomond **Silkie Stout**. We were naturally pleased to have completed the walk without many blisters and even more elated to have found plenty of cracking ale along the Way each day.

Harry Irvine



Ken and Harry propping up the bar in the Kings House

Drink in a Real Ale Pub? - Rate the Beer!

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA needs your help in surveying the pubs in our massive Branch area. To tell us which pubs are worth considering for the Good Beer Guide, use CAMRA's 6-point NBSS (National Beer Scoring Scheme) to record Beer Quality. The info you give us helps us judge which outlets could go in to The Good Beer Guide, which outlets merit an award of area POTY and Branch POTY and which of our local beers merits the award of BOTY. It's easy! (if you are not sure about your score for a beer—half scores are fine—i.e. $1\frac{1}{2}$ for an OK beer but you wouldn't have another pint)

What do the scores mean?

0 - No cask ale available.

$\frac{1}{2}$ - **Undrinkable.** Beer so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.

1 - **Poor.** Beer that is between barely drinkable and drinkable with considerable resentment.

2 - **Average.** Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.

3 - **Good.** Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

4 - **Very Good.** Excellent beer in excellent condition.

5 - **Excellent.** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Simply email us which bar, the beer(s) and your scores plus any real ale and real cider news to our Branch Contacts (see Diary page).

CAMRA members can use the new website: **whatpub.com**

Log in to it using your normal CAMRA login details, search for the pub and then click on "Submit Beer Scores" - fill in the boxes on the form, scrolling down and then click "Submit Beer Score". You can do this for any pub in the country. Thanks!



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



*We hope you have enjoyed reading our Winter magazine. Unless you intend to keep it, please **DO NOT** throw it away.*

*Why not pass it on to a friend, or just leave it in a pub somewhere for others to read? Our magazines are often found many miles from source! The next, Spring, edition will be out by **end of March.***

Thanks to our advertisers for making publication of this newsletter possible and our wonderfully helpful local breweries and branch members that help distribute it.



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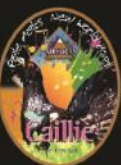
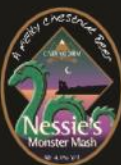
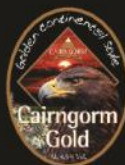
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