

What's Yours Then?

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA

Free Newsletter



Contains Full List of Highlands & Western Isles Real Ale Outlets

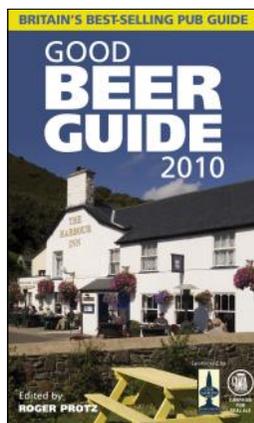


Out Now - GBG 2010

***Historic Double for
the Orkney Brewery***

***Highland Autumn
Beer Festival Season
in Full Swing:***

- ***Castle Tavern***
11th - 20th September
- ***Loch Ness***
16th - 26th September
- ***Clachaig Inn***
16th - 31st October
- ***Morefield Motel***
22nd - 26th October



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Autumn 2009

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

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

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

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

Winter edition **deadline** is 27th November, with publication in time for Christmas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAMRA Membership reaches 100,000 Member Milestone!

On 4th August the Campaign for Real Ale was thrilled to announce a landmark moment in their 38 year history as their numbers swelled to 100,000 members. The beer consumer group was delighted to be able to confirm this milestone on the opening day of the Great British Beer Festival, at Earls Court, in London. CAMRA was formed in 1971 by Michael Hardman, Jim Makin, Graham Lees and Bill Mellor, when the idea of a campaign arose whilst they were demoing the state of British beer and pubs during a holiday in Ireland.

Champion Beer of Britain

Highland Brewing Company's 4% ABV Dark Munro, awarded Bronze in the Milds category, the only Scottish beer to receive an award.

Rudgate's 4.4% Ruby Mild, from York, was voted Champion Beer of Britain.

WANTED Newsletter Editor

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

~~REWARD~~

*Please contact
Gareth Hardman
(see page 6)*

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

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



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



"Some things are clear . . ."

A crisp golden ale with a citrus finish . . .

"Sweet FA"



BREWERY AND SHOP

Opening hours:

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

Just off the A83 at the top of Loch Fyne

Tours by appointment - www.fyneales.com

News of Brews

Look out for Autumn seasonal brews -

Isle of Skye Brewery: Cuillin Gorm (made using blueberries); **Atlas Brewery:** Tempest Wheat Beer; **Cairngorm Brewery:** Blessed Thistle, Autumn Nuts and Witches Caldron.

Plockton Brewery have increased the size of their plant to a 2.5BBL plant. The 1BBL plant, affectionately referred to as "the wee plant", is now producing bottle conditioned beer at Tryst Brewery in Larbert.

(1BBL = 1 British Brewers Barrel = 288 pints)

In an e-mail update to Secretary Gareth Hardman brewery owner Andy Will has noted 'Whilst production of good beer is more a function of the brewer than the equipment he uses, I have been pleasantly surprised with the improved quality and consistency I have achieved with the new plant despite not changing the method of brewing. As a consequence production and sales have risen significantly, though I still deliver only to the Plockton Inn and Plockton Hotel (with occasional forays to the Applecross Inn and some beer

festivals). However, such has been demand for the cask versions of my beers that I have had insufficient capacity to bottle as well.

This I hope to rectify over the winter when, by bottling exclusively during the quiet period in the pubs, I should be able to get a head start on next year's trade.

I have produced one new beer during the year, Plockton Bay, a 4.6% ABV bitter with more malt and hop flavour than in Craggs Ale, and I still hope to produce one more beer, a darker and lower ABV version of Starboard!.

Champion Beers - Orkney Brewery has secured a historic double, taking both first and second place in the prestigious Champion Beer of Scotland competition.

The final results were -

- 1st Sinclair's Orkney Raven Ale
- 2nd Sinclair's Orkney Red MacGregor
- 3rd Caledonian XPA

Raven Ale is described as 'a well-balanced, quaffable bitter. Malty fruitiness and bitter hops last through to the long, dry aftertaste.'



the finest steaks in town!

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

Open every night: 5.30pm - 9.30pm

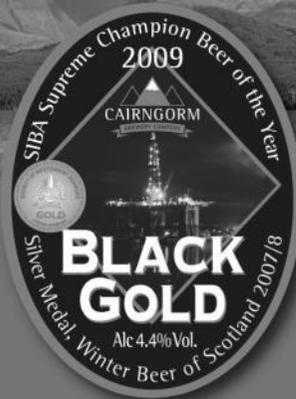
The Steakhouse Restaurant,
Dalfaber Golf & Country Club, Aviemore



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



Good things brewing in the Highlands



2009 SPECIALS

Available
Apr/May



Available
May



Available
Jun/
Jul/Aug



Available
Sept

Available
Sept/Oct



PERMANENT BEERS



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

tel: 01479 812 222

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

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

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

Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

Tue 29 th Sept	Tasting Panel	Black Isle East
Tue 6 th Oct	Committee Meeting	Blackfriars, Inverness
16 th - 31 st Oct	* OctoberFest	Clachraig Inn, Glencoe
22 nd - 25 th Oct	* 5 th Ullapool Beer Festival	Morefield Motel, Ullapool

Sat 24th Oct



Social/Outing/Tasting to the
5th Ullapool Beer Festival

(Depart Inverness Town House at 10:00 am, leaving Ullapool for return journey @ 18:00)

Tues 27 th Oct	Tasting Panel	Inverness - meet at Castle Tavern
Tues 3 rd Nov	AGM	Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

CAMRA Needs YOU!

Protect your pleasure!

Become actively involved with your local branch.

We need your help! Not a massive time commitment, just an hour or two 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. See you at the AGM?

Tues 24 th Nov	Tasting Panel Meet	Nairn - meet at Claymore Hotel
Tuesday 1 st Dec	Committee Meeting	Snowgoose, Inverness
Tuesday 15 th Dec	Annual Inverness Walkabout	(7pm meet at Castle Tavern)

* Not all events listed are necessarily organised by CAMRA.

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

Please see the regularly updated on-line diary at www.highlandcamra.org.uk

Contact

Gareth Hardman (Secretary & Branch Contact) - 01463 238462

Details

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

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



Eric Mills - Phone No. pending
chair@highlandcamra.org.uk

Mike Whittall - 01463 831259
news@highlandcamra.org.uk

An Teallach Brewery - Corrections to Tasting Notes Published in GBG 2010

Beinn Dearg Ale (ABV 3.8%) - A nicely balanced sweetish beer with a long, malty aftertaste.

An Teallach Ale (ABV 4.2%) - A classic pint in the Scottish 80/- tradition. Malt and blackcurrant feature in the taste.

Crofters Pale Ale (ABV 4.2%) - A good quaffing golden ale, drinking much lighter than its ABV.

Suilven (ABV 4.3%) - A refreshing, golden, fruity ale.

Brew House Special (ABV 4.4%) - A golden ale with a nutty, malty taste and some hoppy bitterness balancing the pleasant sulphur background.

Kildonan (ABV 4.4%) - Golden ale with plenty of fruit and a good smack of bitterness.

Clachnaharry Innbiting You

Up to 6 Real Ales on tap, and with food served all day,
this award winning pub will always make you welcome..



*Inverness
& Highland
Real Ale Town
Pub of the Year
2000, 2001, 2002,
2005, 2006 & 2007*

**KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH
OUR MEAL DEALS at**

The Clachnaharry Inn

*Highlands & Western Isles
Pub-of-the-Year 2006 & 2007*

17-19 High Street
Clachnaharry
Inverness, IV3 8RB
Tel : 01463 239806
FAX: 01463 226986



Good Beer Guide 2010

Edited by Roger Protz

Britain's Best-Selling, Independent Guide to Good Beer and Good Pubs. With the Good Beer Guide to hand, you're never far from a decent pint! Now in its 37th year, the Good Beer Guide (GBG) is fully revised and updated, with details of more than 4,500 pubs across the country serving the best real ale.

From country inns to urban style bars and backstreet boozers, all selected and reviewed by CAMRA's 100,000 members, this is your definitive guide to finding the perfect pint.



Complete entries for over 4,500 urban and rural pubs, giving details of food, opening hours, beer gardens, accommodation, transport links, pub history, disabled access and facilities for families.

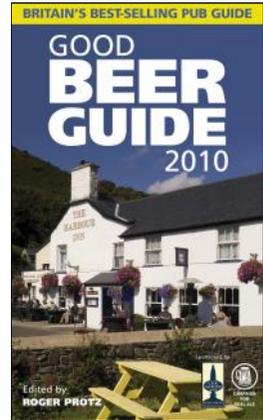


Informative features section, with articles on pubs, beer and brewing, as well as beer festival listings from around the country.

Fully revised and updated every year by 100,000 CAMRA members across the country.



Unique brewery section listing all the breweries in the UK - micro, regional and national - that brew real ale, with tasting notes for hundreds of their beers written by a trained CAMRA tasting panel.



Highlands & Western Isles GBG Entries

This year we have nominated a total of **34 Highlands & Western Isles pubs**, our full GBG allocation, including four new entries -

Plockton Inn - Popular village inn which has been owned and run by a local family for many years. Locally caught fish & shellfish take pride of place on the menu, and the seafood platter includes fish smoked on the premises. Lively sessions often feature young musicians from the National Centre of Excellence for Traditional Music. Plockton Brewery and national ales.

Bakur Bar, Uig - Located on the Pier at Uig adjacent to the Western Isles Ferry Terminal and a stone's throw from the Isle of Skye Brewery who supply most of the pub's ales. Three ales on tap in Summer, in this traditional West Coast bar, with a more limited range in the quieter Winter season. The Bakur also has a pool table and is popular with the locals.

Royal Hotel, Portree - In an enviable location overlooking Portree's picturesque harbour; boasting 21 bedrooms, two bars, a separate restaurant and even a fitness centre. The three handpumps dispense mainly Isle of Skye Brewery beers, including house special MacNab's Ale. Live traditional music is featured in the bars, and excellent food is served all year round.

Suie Hotel, Kincaig - This cosy wooden floored bar features a large stove/open fire and has an alcove with pool table and jukebox. Situated between the Cairngorms and Monadhliath mountains, and close to the Spey and Loch Insh, it is popular with outdoor enthusiasts. Two handpumps dispense mostly local Cairngorm Brewery ales. Very good food is served.

Congratulations to all, not just new entries, but also to the great pubs which continue to feature on the pages of this indispensable guide. Publicans should note that if you are listed in the *Good Beer Guide* you may use GBG artwork in adverts and on your website.

GOOD BEER GUIDE GOES MOBILE!

Good Beer Guide Mobile makes an ideal companion to the printed Good Beer Guide. Wherever you are - information on local *Good Beer Guide* pubs and beers sent direct to your mobile phone. This indispensable service is **free to trial for 3 days** and costs just **£10 for a year's subscription** (plus your standard network Internet charges).



BANDSTAND BAR, NAIRN
CAMRA Highlands & Western Isles
PUB OF THE YEAR 2009

6 REAL ALE PUMPS

Selection of our Regular Ales



Youngs Special
Adnams Bitter
St Austell Tribute
Kelham Island Pale Rider
Timothy Taylor's Golden Best & Ram Tam
Isle of Skye Hebridean Gold & Red Cuillin
Highland Brewery Scapa Special & Best
Houston Brewery Killellan
Cairngorm Tradewinds
Arran Ale

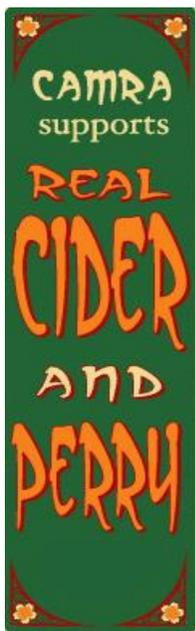


Bar Meals, Sea Food & Steaks
OUR NEW 60 SEAT
SEA VIEW RESTAURANT
OPENS EARLY JULY

Open to Non-Residents.



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



Traditional Cider Matters

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

The Anderson, Fortrose - Thatchers Heritage Cider

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

Stronlossit Inn, Roy Bridge - Thatchers Cheddar Valley Cider

Strathcarron Hotel - Thatchers Cider (rotated with cask ales)

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

Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit - Westons 1st Quality Cider

Scourie Hotel - Two Westons Ciders on handpump

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

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

Badachro Inn - Westons Cider is served here

Argyll Hotel, Ullapool - Westons ciders from the box

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

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

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

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

Bandstand Bar, Nairn - Westons ciders (varying selection) from the box. We understand that long term plans are to install a handpump for real cider.

Sad to note that Dundonnell Hotel has been removed from this list. When one of our real cider correspondents stopped by in July the barman could only offer Magners or Strongbow, and very clearly had absolutely no idea what real cider is.



October is Cider & Perry Month!

October is a very active time for producers, especially for those who make only a small amount of cider. Harvest time for cider fruit is roughly from September to November and by October production is in full flow.

CAMRA already have the month of May set aside as Mild Month and so, following on the success of the Mild campaign, CAMRA has set October aside as Cider & Perry Month



At Last a Scottish Cider - Thistly Cross

In their Autumn newsletter The Scottish Real Ale Shop @ the Lade Inn advertised Thistly Cross Cider @ £2.99, considerably cheaper than your cider reporter found it in the Bow Bar in Edinburgh, where it was on offer at the princely sum of £4.25! The Thistly Cross Cider website is under construction, so hopefully there will be some detailed information on-line soon, but we understand that Thistly Cross Cider is produced using traditional farmhouse methods at Belhaven Fruit Farm, Dunbar, and is the only commercial Scottish cider on the market. As we went to press we heard that Thistly Cross Cider would be on offer at the Loch Ness Beer Festival.

Real Ales
Real Cider
50+ Malt whiskies



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

We don't do fast food here!

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

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

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

Tel: 01445 760253
www.kinlochewehotel.co.uk



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

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

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

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

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

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

E-Ale

Hi Gareth, It may have been you I had a long conversation with in the Castle Tavern, when you fielded my enquiry to the bar staff about their An Teallach ales. We also discussed Black Isle beers amongst many others.

This is to provide feedback from the **Summer Isles Hotel** which my wife and I visited last week. They had three An Teallach ales on, which were in good to excellent condition, especially the Kildonnán. The others were An Teallach and Crofters' Pale. Graham Arthur.

Hi there, Alas the **Castlebay Bar** no longer does cask ale. :>(Advising you so that you can change your list. Best wishes, Greg.

Highland pubs update: Sorry I didn't get this in time for the summer WYT.

I was up in Glen Shiel a couple of weeks ago and have to sadly report that there is no real ale or hand pump at the Kintail Lodge Hotel. The Cluanie Inn has Red Cuillin (3) and Black Cuillin (1) but are charging £3.20 for "the Wilderness Experience"!

On the upside, although it's not in this area, I

was gratified to find Deuchars IPA on tap at the Inverarnen (a Loch Lomond pub with a long history of keg only) this week, albeit again at over £3 a pint.

Cheers, Jim Hall, Newtonmore

We checked this out and discovered that there was a problem with the handpump which took a couple of days to fix. We understand that Isle of Skye Red Cuillin is regularly on tap. Ed.

Dear Ed, You really do need to check out the **Kinlochewe Hotel** – A super bar since their very stylish refurbishment, and great service.

I was offered a taster of Ben Eighe, their Isle of Skye Brewery house beer, which I thought tasted 'tangy'. The landlord was summonsed at once, agreed with me, and put things to rights immediately. There were four hand-pumps in service – Red Cuillin (4), Ben Eighe (4), SkyeLight, and Weston's 1st Quality Cider. Very impressed. Definitely a GBG contender.

This is the second time we have stopped here for a couple of swift halves, and we really need to plan for an overnight at the nearby campsite. Cheers, Campervan Man.

The Riverside Tavern

Regular Live Entertainment *(Phone for Info)*

25th Sept - Frayed Edges

1st Oct - The Revvz

23rd Oct - Andy Murray

31st Oct - Sharp Exit

14th Nov - Sharp Exit

7th Nov - Frayed Edges

27th Sept - The Time Beings

9th Oct - Martin Stephenson

25th Sept - Face The West

13th Nov - Scott MacDonald

20th Nov - The Revvz

4th Dec - Andy Murray

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

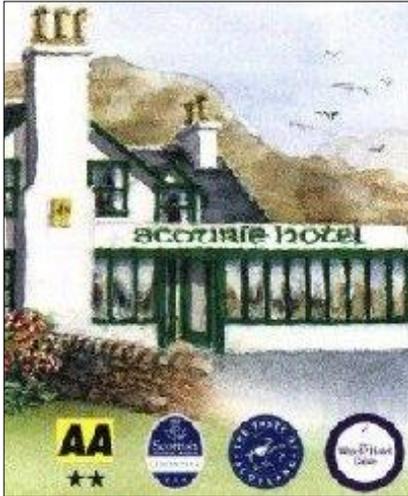


Highlands & Islands Real Ales On Tap

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

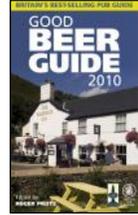
Tel. 01349 866922

(formerly The Drouthy Duck), Conon Bridge



Scourie Hotel

Scourie, Sutherland, IV27 4SX
 Tel: 01971 502396
 FAX: 01971 502423
 patrick@scourie-hotel.co.uk
 www.scourie-hotel.co.uk



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

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



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



Iain Campbell

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death recently of Iain Campbell, of the Sligachan Hotel on the Isle of Skye.

Iain had battled with cancer for several years and during this time he received excellent care not just from his family and friends but also from the Highland Hospice. Whilst fighting his illness Iain also found the time and strength to raise tens of thousands of pounds for the Highland Hospice.

Iain made a lasting contribution to the Real Ale scene in the Highlands, firstly by being instrumental in selling ale from the Isle of Skye Brewery in it's early days, making the Slig one of the finest real ale hostelries in the Highlands and Islands, and later helping to establish the Cuillin Brewery at the Sligachan Hotel. The Sligachan Hotel continues to be run by Iain's sister Catriona and her husband Sandy

Coghill, where Iain will be missed by all his many friends, colleagues and customers.

A Better Class of Trainspotting

One of our more unusual outlets for real ale, the Corrou Station House Restaurant and B&B is going to have a better outlook.

This Highland train station, which was made famous by featuring in the film Trainspotting, is having around £400,000 invested in it by Network Rail. The platform will be rebuilt, with the difficult to negotiate gravel surface being replaced with a hard standing one.



The busy station, which is mainly used by keen hill walkers and those who visit because of the film, is sure to benefit from the investment. The team involved with the upgrade will have no easy task trying to shift upwards of 4000 wooden rail sleepers to the UK's highest rail station, so I would guess a refreshing pint of ale, usually from Cairngorm Brewery, will go down well after a hard days work.

The Old Inn

Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BD

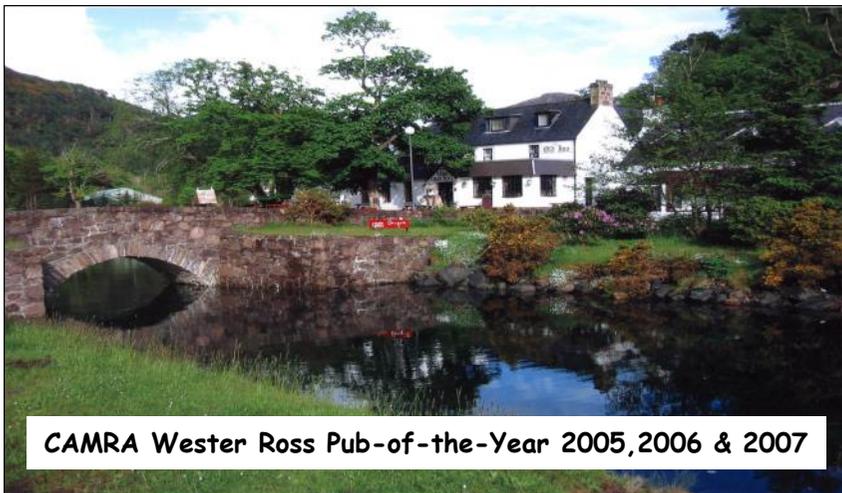
Telephone: 01445 712006 Enquiries - *Call Free* - 0800 542 5444

Scottish Tourist Board 3 Star Inn

AA Best Seafood Pub for Scotland 2005/06

Abbot Ale Perfect Pub for Scotland 2005/06

AA Pub of the Year for Scotland & Northern Ireland 2003



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

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



Up to eight Real Ales

Beer Garden

Food served all day

Website: www.theoldinn.net

E-mail: enquiries@theoldinn.net



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

Focus on Gordon Holding

Gordon, along with his wife Morag and son Jordon, own the Bandstand Bar at the Braeval Hotel in Nairn, this years Branch Pub of the Year. They live in the flat above looking out over the Moray Firth. In March they ran their first Beer Festival which they intend to be an annual event. They also own the Claymore House Hotel, also in Nairn.

Q. Where were you born?

A. I'm Nairn born and bred.

Q. What is your background?

A. I was a self-employed electrical contractor from the age of twenty-one. I had a wholesale lighting business, and a lighting shop in Inverness for several years. Then I was Head of Property and Maintenance for North British Trust Hotels and Crerar Hotels for five years. This is where I learned about the hotel trade.

Q. Why buy two hotels in Nairn?

A. My wife and I had very demanding careers which involved a lot of travelling and we seldom saw each other. So, we decided to take early retirement and move back to Nairn to work together. We had originally intended to buy a small B&B business but the opportunity to buy the Braeval Hotel came along and it grew from there. After two years we had the opportunity to buy the lovely Claymore House Hotel, where we had our wedding reception 15 years earlier

Q. When were you introduced to real ale?

A. About 3 years ago when local customers started to ask about ales.

Q. What real ales/styles do you like?

A. I like to try different ales but prefer light golden ales.

Q. What is the best part of your work?

A. Meeting people from different age groups, backgrounds and countries. And it is always great when we get positive comments about the hotel.

Q. What is the worse part of your work?

A. Getting to bed at 1am and then getting up at 7am, seven days a week, to do the hotel breakfasts.

Q. What are your hobbies/interests?

A. Sleeping when I get the chance and an annual holiday in October - anywhere we can get a rest and a good ale!

Q. Has the credit crunch had any effect?

A. Wet sales are slightly down, but real ale sales are rising and food trade is strong. Accommodation was slower than normal in early July, with fewer foreign visitors, but we've noticed an increase in UK customers holidaying at home.



Q. What are your plans for the future?

A. We're always looking at ways to improve the business and have made a lot of changes this year. We've built a new cellar solely for real ales and introduced real cider.

We've built a new decked beer garden and a new 60 seat Sea View Restaurant. In the winter we'll convert our old restaurant into a snug with open fire for customers who want a quiet room to enjoy their ale.

We have plans for further development in 2010 but we won't be saying much until planning is secured.

In August it was the turn of the local Branch of CAMRA to host the quarterly Scotland & Northern Ireland Branches meeting, which was held at the Braeval. These meetings are attended by representatives from each Branch who convene to discuss local and national CAMRA issues. The six real ales were enjoyed by all present, including former CAMRA Vice Chairman Colin Valentine from the National Executive, as was the excellent buffet.

Thanks to Gordon and Morag for hosting the meeting, and for their generous hospitality.



Blackfriars Highland Pub

Great Beer

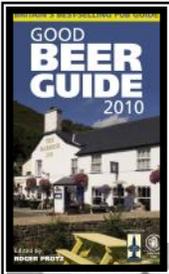


Traditional Highland Food (New Menu)
*All meals are cooked to order using
freshly prepared local produce*

Real Ales and Real Cider On Tap

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

**Open all day, every day
Food served every day
from 11am until 9pm**



*Regular Live Entertainment
Featuring Local Bands*

*93-95 Academy Street
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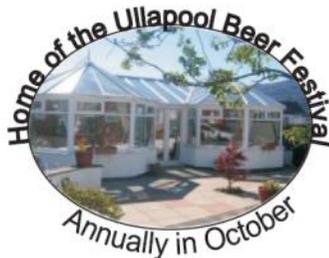
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Real Ale in the Real Highlands



Plockton Visit

Hi Eric, I just missed you yesterday, by half an hour, at the Benleva. Called in on the way back from a long weekend in Plockton. Had plenty of the local brew there – Starboard 5.1% was on at both Inn and Hotel, as was the new brew Plockton Bay 4.6% (so new Andy the brewer had not tried it!).

Starboard was an excellent thirst quencher (score 4) – sherbet lemon taste (dangerously drinkable!). Plockton Bay was completely different (3) – very bitter but pleasant all the same. I visited the Plockton Brewery on the Saturday and had a tour – didn't take long! I also visited the Stein Inn where they had Orkney Northern Light (3) and Deuchars (not tried). Unfortunately the house beer from Skye had finished.

Plockton Hotel had Skye Young Pretender (2) which was a bit disappointing, but the local Plockton ales were on good form. One thing to note for a regional Pub-of-the-Year was the bar staff being unaware that the Plockton Bay had reverted back to Starboard. It had changed at lunchtime and nobody noticed

until I informed them at 7.00 that evening, so you may get reports of Plockton Bay being a Straw coloured refreshing pint that is stronger than it says.

Plockton Inn had the usual suspects of Youngs Bitter (3) and London Pride (not tried), but also both Plockton beers at different times; Starboard (4), Plockton Bay (3).

Both pubs stock the local beer permanently now (supplies permitting). Andy was even brewing on Sunday which he doesn't normally do to keep up with demand!

One other note – The Haven Hotel had no ale for the three nights we were in Plockton, and the bar was hardly ever open, not even on Saturday night at 10pm!

p.s. Thursday night we stayed in Nairn, and visited the Bandstand Bar: Youngs Bitter (3) Skye Blaven (1) Sour! Returned to bar and exchanged for Highland St. Magnus ale (4) excellent. Also on - Fuller's Summer Ale (3) and a Thwaites brew (can't remember which one - not tried)

Cheers, Steve Armstrong.

Haven Hotel taken off our lists. Thanks, Ed.

Real Ale Pubs

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



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

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

Inverness & District North

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

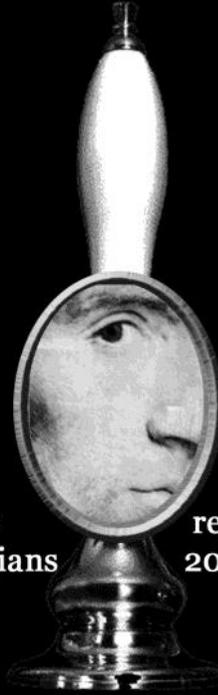
TP - Served using top pressure

Inverness & District South

Blackfriars, Inverness
The Caledonian, Inverness
Castle Tavern, Inverness
The Corner Grill, Inverness
Nico's Bar, Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness
Heathmount Hotel, Inverness
Hootananny, Inverness
Johnny Foxes, Inverness (TP)
Kings Highway, Inverness (*Wetherspoons*)
Number 27, Inverness

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mecca”**

Good Beer Guide 2005-2007



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real cider
200 malts

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

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Phoenix Bar, Inverness
 Snowgoose, Inverness
 Tomatin Country Inn (S)
 Dores Inn
 Whitebridge Hotel, Loch Ness South
 Bothy, Fort Augustus
 Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
 Caledonian Hotel, Fort Augustus (S)
 Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
 George Inn, Ardersier
 Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel, Nairn
 Claymore Hotel, Nairn
 Golf View Hotel, Nairn (TP)

Glenmore Lodge, Nr Aviemore
 Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore
 Winking Owl, Aviemore
 Suie Hotel, Kinbraig
 Glen Hotel, Newtonmore
 Lodge Hotel, Newtonmore
 Kingussie Golf Club
 Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie
 Topsy Laird, Kingussie
 Mash Tun, Charlestown of Aberlour (A&NI)
 Highlander Inn, Craigellachie (A&NI)
 Croft Inn, Glenlivet (A&NI)
 Glen Avon Hotel, Tomintoul (A&NI)

Please check www.highlandcamra.org.uk for latest real ale pubs list

Invernairne Hotel, Nairn (S)
 Seaforth Club, Nairn (Members only) (TP)
 Old Mill Inn, Brodie (A&NI)

Aviemore & Cairngorms

Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
 Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge
 Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore
 Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore

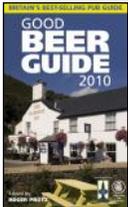
Fort William & Lochaber

Alexandria Hotel, Fort William
 Grog & Gruel, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Bar, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William
 Ben Nevis Inn, Fort William
 Cobbs at Nevisport, Fort William
 West End Hotel, Fort William

Stein Inn

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 Isle of Skye, IV55 8GA
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angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk

Glen Nevis Restaurant & Bar
 Invergarry Hotel
 The Eagle, Laggan Locks
(An Inn on a boat on the water)
 Loch Oich Restaurant/Bar, South Laggan
 Old Station Restaurant, Spean Bridge
 Spean Bridge Hotel (S)
 Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge
 Corour Halt Tea Rooms (01397 732236)
 Tomdoun Sporting Lodge
 Moorings Hotel, Banavie
 Glenfinnan House Hotel
 Glenuig Inn, Lochailort
 Loch Shiel Hotel, Acharacle
 Old Forge, Inverie
 Four Seasons, Onich
 Inn at Ardgour
 Ice Factor, Kinlochleven
 MacDonald Hotel, Kinlochleven
 Mamore Lodge, Kinlochleven (S)
 Laroch Bar, Ballachulish (G&WS)
 Clachaig Inn, Glencoe (G&WS)
 Kings House Hotel, Glencoe (G&WS)

Wester Ross

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



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Outer Hebrides
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Isle of Skye ales and beer
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Caithness & Sutherland

Inchnadamph Hotel
 The Caberfeidh, Lochinver
 Scourie Hotel, Scourie
 Altnacealgach Inn, nr Ledmore Junction
 Burghfield House Hotel, Dornoch
 Castle Hotel, Dornoch
 Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar Bridge
 Invershin Hotel
 Sutherland Arms Hotel, Golspie (S)
 Sutherland Inn, Brora
 Belgrave Hotel, Helmsdale
 Tongue Hotel
 MacKay's Hotel, Wick
 Alexander Bain, Wick (*Wetherspoons*)
 Central Hotel, Thurso
 Commercial Hotel, Thurso

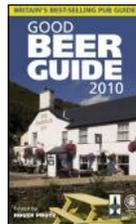
South Skye & Lochalsh

Cluanie Inn
 Kintail Lodge Hotel
 Jac-o-bite Restaurant, Kintail
 Clachan Bar, Dornie
 Dornie Hotel
 Loch Duich Hotel, Dornie



Balmacara Hotel
 Plockton Hotel, Plockton
 Plockton Inn, Plockton
 Tingle Creek Hotel, Erbusaig
 Kyle Hotel, Kyle of Lochalsh
 Saucy Mary's Lodge, Kyleakin (S)
 Duisdale Hotel (S)
 Isle Ornsay Hotel
 Ardvasar Hotel
 Stables Restaurant, Armadale
 Claymore, Broadford
 Dunollie Hotel, Broadford
 Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
 Sconser Lodge Hotel
 Sligachan Hotel (S)
 Old Inn, Carbost
 Taigh Ailean Hotel, Portnalong

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



North Skye & Hebrides

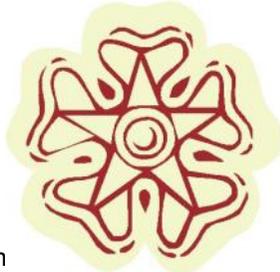
Isle of Raasay Hotel
 JJ's Bistro at Struan
 Dunvegan Hotel
 Stein Inn, Watrnish
 Edinbane Hotel
 The Lodge at Edinbane

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

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Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2009

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

Seasonal ales are regularly brewed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Oyster Brewery - First brews in early 2005. Originally on the Isle of Seil, moved to South Ballachullish in 2007. **Now Closed?** Yes, and the brewing kit gone to Yorkshire.

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



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



Dark Island, Red MacGregor, and Skull Splitter from Orkney.

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

Colonsay Brewery - First brews in March 2007. IPA, 80/- and Lager (all bottled)

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.

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

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CAMRA Pub-of-the-Year Awards

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

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

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

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Rate our Beer

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

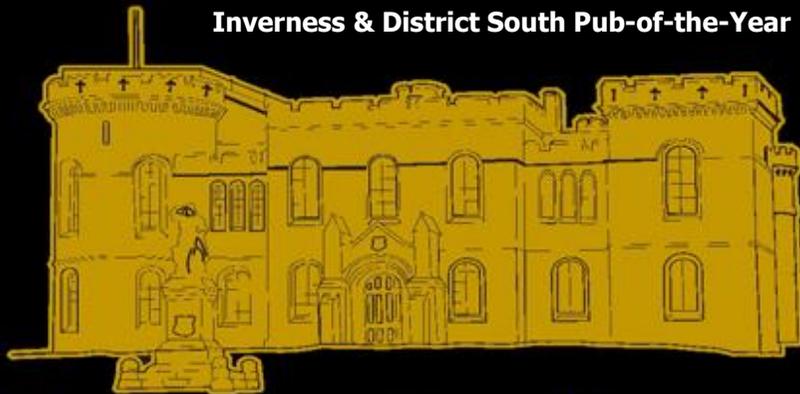
What do the scores mean?

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



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

Inverness & District South Pub-of-the-Year 2008



The Castle Tavern

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Scotland Holiday

Hello Gareth,

Just thought that I should send you a mini report on our trip to Scotland. On a scale of 1 (poorest) to 10 (best).

All in all a pretty successful and most enjoyable break for me and my wife. The only unfortunate experience was the Eagle, where both the Landlord and the Landlady

were rather curt in their manner. Two of the three hand-pulled ales were barely fit for serving. Also the request to top up the $\frac{3}{4}$ pints was addressed with undisguised annoyance.

On the plus side our party [3 men + 2 women] were served excellent meals [trebling their food turnover] by the sarcastic [ex-Essex policeman] landlord. Unfortunately, being yacht bound, we were not able to access any other hostelry.

The best tasting beer was Ossian from Inveralmond Brewery, which we could not keep away from in the Clachnaharry inn.

Anyway, thanks for your information, which saved a lot of time and helped the holiday along. I made the mistake of not updating my GBG and duly arrived both dry and breathless at the Old Dock Bar in Leith. Fortunately the Malt and Hops was nearby.

Cheers, Richard.

Hostelry

Beers - Staff - Ambience

Thomson's Haymarket, Edinburgh	8	8	8
Halfway House, Fleshmarket	7	6	6
Malt & Hops, Leith	8	5	5
Cafe Royal	8	5	8
Standing Order 'spoons	8	7	7
Eagle Barge, Laggan Locks	5	4	4
Castle Tavern, Inverness	8	9	7
The Kings 'spoons, Inverness	7	6	6
Blackfriars, Inverness	8	8	7
Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness	9	9	7



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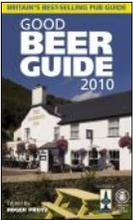
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Roaring log fire, cheerful atmosphere, excellent food and fine selection of wines, cask ales and malt whiskies.

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New Real Ale (ONLY!!!) Pub at Glen Uig on Moidart

Dear Highlands and Islands and all (I hope) my other real ale loving friends,

I had three fabulous pints of real ale last night at the Glenuig Inn, Moidart. I was camping nearby and had seen on their website that they do real ale, so I wandered along, wondering which one they would have on....

Ohmigawd!!! 5 pumps and 4 serving!!

Unfortunately the Stag was off, but I enjoyed Red Cullin, Tradewinds and Black Gold to whatever your Highlands and Islands beer rating of 'change my plans and stay all night' is !?! Apparently they've only been doing real ale for the last three weeks since opening their new bar and restaurant.

From what I saw of the bar/restaurant room it's been beautifully renovated and the food (mainly local fish) looked excellent too. The adjoining bunkhouse was full, a sea-kayaking group from Aberdeen (maybe one of them is doing a similar report) - the inn promotes its support for the kayakers, but everyone was

welcome, and I think about a third of the clientele were locals. On about my third visit to the bar, I noticed, Ohmigawd again!! That actually they **ONLY** do real ale:

NO other pumps, cans or bottles, except Magners (yes, Alister, send someone out there quick, as Steve the landlord wants to get a real cider on too). Is there a normal, open to the public bar like this anywhere ???

Hope you can get out there soon - check out their website www.glenuig.com.

I'll be there again in the 2nd week of August when I'm working near Arisaig for a week and am thinking of organising a hash/bash weekend up there sometime before the end of the year (er, for those of you who don't know, this refers to the Hash House Harriers, often known as a drinking club with a running problem, generally fond of real ale pubs too). Slainte, Annabel, Glasgow CAMRA. *Unbridled enthusiasm!* Ed.

There is more positive feedback about the Glenuig Inn on the CAMRA website under Good Beer Guide Reviews and Comments.

Inns & Things

A warm welcome to Karen and Neil who are the new tenants at the popular GBG listed **Snowgoose** just outside Inverness on the A96. Farewell and best wishes to Steve Throup and his family, have moved down to the South West of England. The Snowgoose is as busy as ever with food, the main change being on the ale front where all three of the new hand pumps are in operation. Caley Deuchars IPA is still the regular ale with the other two pumps now dispensing changing guest beers. To date we have seen Taylor's Landlord, Brains, Everards Sunchaser, and Black Sheep Golden Sheep. Local real ale fans reckon the Snowgoose serves one of the best pints of Deuchars IPA to be had in Inverness. The long running saga of the **Caley Inn** at Muirtown locks seems finally to be coming to an end. What threatened to be a licensed restaurant according to signs seen on the development during early stages of conversion does now not seem likely, as they have been changed to for sale signs offering one two and one three bedroom flats.

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Cawdor Tavern



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

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



Up to 4 ales on!



Half way from Inverness to Nairn, take B9090 to Cawdor village

t: 01667 404 777 e: enquiries@cawdortavern.info

Western Isles Ale

I picked up a copy of your excellent newsletter (What's Yours Then?) en route to a fortnight's holiday in the Western Isles. It was a good read and provided some useful pointers to finding cask ale. The first five nights we stayed in a B&B in Stornoway.

First we went to the Clachan which you list as having cask ale. Sure enough there is a hand pump, but no clip and the charity box is wrapped around it. What is the cask ale I say innocently. What? says the barmaid. I point at the hand pump. Oh we don't use that one she says. Next the Caladh Inn which is also on your list. The barman looks bemused. No - we don't have that!

Dinner is taken in the Crown. I know there is no real ale here but for devilment I ask the manager. Yes we have cask ale in bottles, he says. I think I might just get one of those handpumps, he adds.

We look in the Carlton. There is a Deuchars handpump but it's a place not designed to attract women and my wife refuses to enter.

I would never have looked in the Arts Centre for real ale without having looked in the newsletter. Sure enough there was a hand pump but the drip tray is dry, there is no clip on it, and it's 9 o'clock! Does that work I ask. Yes he says - do you want to try it? A quick nod and a third of a pint is passed over as a sampler! What is it? I don't know, I think it's Tattuo. We went back a couple of more times and were told that the beer was Clansman. The staff seemed to agree that it was from Hebridean Brewery. Good? Excellent - in the context of Lewis and Harris a definite 5 (there's no competition!) In a normal area it was a 3 or 4. So if you are in Stornoway look for the modern glass building called An Lanntair. And the food is good too!

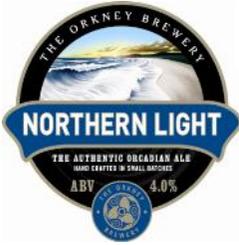
I failed to find any real ale elsewhere in Lewis. In Harris the oasis proved to be the Harris Inn at Tarbert. One Hebridean ale. In the context of Lewis and Harris another 5 but in reality a very acceptable pint - 3.

I appreciated the two places where I drank decent cask ale but there is obviously an uphill battle to change perceptions. Much 



The Orkney Brewery

ORCADIAN OWNED & OPERATED



ORKNEY DARK ISLAND
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of the Western Isles suffer from the limited market but there is clearly potential in Stornoway. Keep up the good fight.

P. Holford, Saddleworth, Greater Manchester.

Summer Outing

On a July day, seemingly set fair weather wise, I took the opportunity to make the first use of my newly acquired free Bus Pass. With my son-in-law Nino in tow I headed from Nairn through to Inverness to meet up with Gareth, our local CAMRA Secretary.

Our first port of call was Blackfriars, where we had an excellent pint of Rob Hill's Light Munro (score 4). This was an initial fleeting visit, but we promised to call back later in the day. We passed by No27, as Gareth said the ales were still the same as a few days previously, and headed up the hill to the Castle Tavern.

Gareth suggested that the Houston Mighty Midge (score 4) would be ideal for me, and boy was he correct. Lovely and hoppy, we enjoyed it sat outside on the terrace. This was followed by a pint of Hook Norton bitter, which frankly was a huge disappointment (score 2).

Time was now of the essence, and we raced off to catch a bus to Rosemarkie. It had been some time since I had been on the Black Isle and I had never been in the Plough Inn. On tap were Cairngorm Trade Winds and Nessies. Not being fans of Trade Winds we settled for the excellent Nessies (score 4). I thoroughly enjoyed the old basic pub and bar, and again we were able to enjoy our pint al fresco.

Then the fates intervened. Nino decided it would be a great idea to walk to Fortrose, by way of the coastal route. About two thirds of the way there the heavens opened, such that when we arrived at the Anderson in Fortrose we were giving drowned rats a good run for their money. In the bar, the initial omens were not good, as all three taps boasted a "golden" ale. There was Kelburn Goldihops, and golden ales from Phoenix (Arizona?) and Wold Top Gold. The Phoenix was tried and was OK (score 3). As I did not wish to drink any more golden ale, I plumped for a bottled German Rauchbier. Nino and I then went for a visit to Fortrose Cathedral, while Gareth enjoyed a half pint of Black Isle Red Kite which had

replaced the Wold Top. We went through to the back bar for some excellent food, before time caught up with us and we again jumped



on the bus, this time back to Inverness.

Not wishing to stray far from the Bus station, it was inevitably back to Blackfriars. This time we had pints of Highland Orkney Best (score 4) and Everards Beacon (score 3). Time had raced on and Nino and I left Gareth to enjoy the rest of the evening, while we caught the slow bus to Nairn, rounding off what had been an excellent and informative day out.

(The scores are the sole opinion of the author of this piece, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Gareth and Nino).

Cheers, Des Murray

Summer Pub

The Stein Inn featured in the Guardian and Observer Guides to Summer Pubs published in June this year. Stein Inn was one of only four Scottish country pubs featured in their listing of 100 Summer Country Pubs.

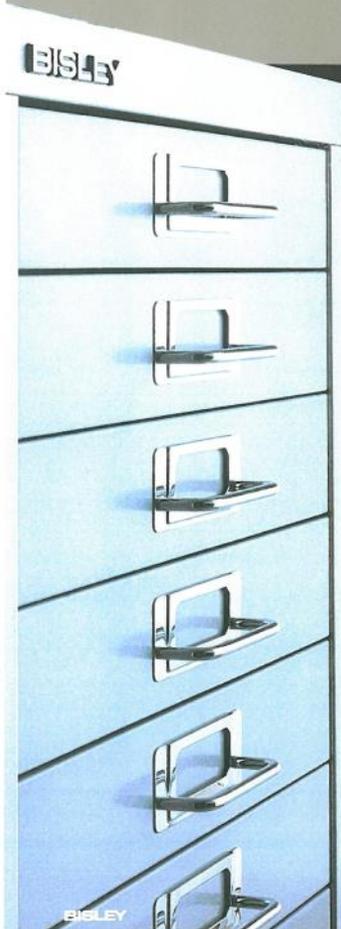
David Hancock wrote "Skye's oldest inn stands on the shores of a quiet sea loch with stunning views over the water to the Hebrides.

Combine this peaceful location with the charm of a traditional flagstone bar, hearty food prepared from fresh local produce (try the Highland venison pie), refurbished bedrooms, and glorious, never ending sunsets, and you have the perfect place to stay if touring this beautiful island. After a day's walking or exploring the island by car, there's nothing better than to sup a pint of Cuillin Red by the shore on a balmy summer's evening."

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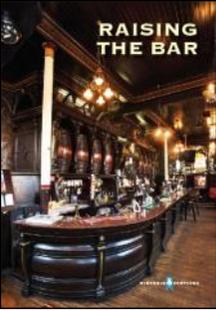
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Raising the Bar



Scotland's drinking dens are being celebrated in a new book charting the different styles and types of traditional pubs. Historic Scotland, working alongside CAMRA, has looked at how some of the most historic public houses in Scotland have survived and developed over the

years, the interior quality often outshining an anonymous exterior, to create *Raising the Bar, An Introduction to Scotland's Historic Pubs*.

The listing team in Historic Scotland's Inspectorate has recently completed a thematic survey of Scotland's public houses in response to the publication in 2007 of CAMRA's booklet *Scotland's True Heritage Pubs: Pub Interiors of Special Historic Interest*. While visiting pubs for inclusion in their book, CAMRA had become concerned about the rapid loss of fine interiors. Historic Scotland's survey therefore focused on pubs identified by CAMRA as having particularly noteworthy interiors, a number of which were not already listed. We are grateful to the group for alerting us to the timely need for this overview. The survey covered the whole of Scotland with pubs as far apart as the Outer Isles and the Scottish Borders. A wide range of types of pub were visited, from the highly elaborate 'palace pubs' in the cities to the small simple pubs in rural areas.



The book includes the picture (left) of the 'Terrazzo spittoon at the Phoenix Bar in Inverness'. The text notes 'Occasionally spittoons can still be

found. The Horseshoe (Drury Street, Glasgow) retains its original terrazzo spittoon at the foot of the counter which was placed there for the convenience of those smokers and drinkers with phlegm in their throats. Spittoons are

becoming increasingly rare.'

Raising the Bar, a 56-page booklet with full colour pictures of many of our famous Scottish hostelrys, may be freely downloaded from the Historic Scotland website.

The Phoenix is a Category B listed building, details of which can be found on the Historic Scotland website. The following notes are included: This early burgh building retains an interesting and somewhat rare island bar to its ground floor interior. A once common feature in public houses 'the spartan public bar is of classic Scottish island bar-style'. The gantry was replaced in 1983 and the interior may have been divided into two as the floor pattern indicates the existence of a partition. A water engine, formerly used to raise beer from the cellar, has been converted to electric power and can be seen in an illuminated case high up on the rear wall of the bar. During the 1980s, the adjoining property facing Rose Street was incorporated into the public house.

Category B - buildings of regional or more than local importance, or major examples of some particular period, style or building type which may have been altered. Category B is currently the largest group with about 51% of the total listings.

Of more interest to local real ale drinkers will be the news that the Phoenix is under new management. A warm welcome to Richie and Andi, who are very enthusiastic about serving locally brewed real ale. Richie would like to be able to serve up to nine real ales at any one time, and we wish him well. It would be great to see the Phoenix, a Highland real ale mecca and GBG regular in the nineties, once again at the fore of the real ale scene in Inverness.

* Raising the Bar cover and Terrazzo Spittoon photograph are copyright © Historic Scotland.

The Plough Inn at Rosemarkie (pictured) and the Criterion Bar in Stornoway are the only other Highlands & Western Isles pubs which are included in CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors.



Full details may be found at www.heritagepubs.org.uk/pubs

the loch ness inn

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



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Tasting Panel Update

Just Bill and Gareth available for the June tasting session which started at the Dores Inn, the only pub on the shores of Loch Ness, just a few miles from Inverness. The new owners have decided to serve real ale and we were pleased to see three hand pumps in operation at this busy pub and restaurant - Deuchars IPA, Taylor's Landlord and **Atlas Three Sisters**, the one we chose to sample. This 4.2% ABV tawny coloured ale is a good example of a malty Scottish 80/- ale. Good malt in the aroma with some hop and fruit which lead to a well balanced malty taste with a hint of roast barley. More sweet than bitter, there is some fruit and hop evident in the taste which gives the beer its nicely balanced taste. We scored it 8 and 7 (out of 10).

Back into town and to Nico's bar at the Glen Mhor Hotel where two **Cairngorm** beers were on tap. We started with the 4.4% tawny coloured **Nessie's Monster Mash** which did not give much away in the aroma but was quite full on with malt and roast in the taste. Combined with some caramel, fruit and hops this was a well balanced best bitter throughout and gave plenty of value in the aftertaste, scoring an 8 & 9. On next to the **Trade Winds** and this 4.3% golden coloured ale could have been identified blindfold, with its usual dominant elderflower aroma. Intensely fruity in taste with passion fruit, elderflower and lychee to the fore, this speciality ale had a good lasting bitter bite - scoring an 8 & 9.

Finally we called into No 27 in Castle Street and tried **An Teallach Ale** from **An Teallach** brewery. A 4.3% tawny coloured ale, it is a classic example of an 80/- ale. It did not give away much in the aroma but had a good smack of malt, a hint of roast, faint hop with some fruit in the taste. More sweet than bitter the flavours carried on through into the aftertaste nicely. We both awarded it an 8.

July saw the tasting panel in the Aviemore area where we started at the Old Bridge Inn. Two Caley brews on offer, 80/- and Deuchars IPA, but we decided to go for **Reverend James** which is brewed by **Brains** in Wales. This was a good complex bitter which had something of everything across the malt, roast caramel, hop and fruit flavours. This 4.5% tawny best bitter almost had a fruitcake taste to it and was very moreish, scoring 8's all round.

Next stop was at the Glenmore Lodge where we found the 4.1% **Cairngorm Stag**. This dark brown best bitter was absolutely dominated by malts & roast both in the aroma and taste, and so tended to drown out the other flavours. Everyone agreed this was not as balanced as usual and gave scores of 6.

Stag was on the menu again at our next stop, the Cairngorm Hotel. Still carrying the malts and roast but not at quite the intense level as before; a more well balanced beer was enjoyed, scoring two 8's and a 7. **Cairngorm Gold** was on tap as well, and was a good contrast to the Stag with very little malt flavours but a good amount of hop and fruit. A 4.5% golden ale it was spoilt slightly by a syrupy thickness and scored 6's and a 5.

On to the Winking Owl where we had just missed a local Cairngorm brew so had to settle for **Theakstons XB**. It is supposed to be a an amber coloured best bitter at 4.5% but did not seem quite right. A fairly strong green apple flavour seemed to dominate, which can be a sign that a beer has not been conditioned enough at the brewery. There were only faint other beer flavours leaving it very unbalanced. It sadly scored 4's and a 3.

Next stop was at the Dalfaber Country Club at the MacDonald's Highland resort, where the regular **Trade Winds** was on offer. While it had it's unmistakable fruity and hoppy aroma and taste it was not quite as intense as it can be. A little sharp astringency knocked back the scores to 7's all round.

Our final stop was the Cairn Hotel at Carrbridge. The 3.6% **Atlas Latitude** was tried first. A straw coloured lightly malted Pilsner style "real ale" lager, it had a grapefruit sharpness which gave it a good bitter bite without being astringent, scoring well-deserved 8's. The recently crowned champion beer of Scotland, **Orkney Raven**, was also on tap. Some light malt 

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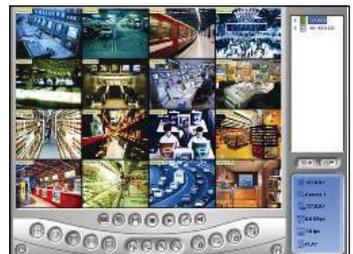
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Highlands & Western Isles Branch

(Continued from page 36)

and caramel flavours, it was the strong hopped bitterness which dominated making it a great value ale at 3.8%. Scoring 9's it was our beer of the evening, just edging out Reverend James. August saw us head out to Black Isle East, starting at the Conon Bridge Hotel. The **Cairngorm Trade Winds** was similar in taste to that sampled during our July outing, not as full on as it can be with elderflower. It had a good bitter bite and scored deserved 8's. Across the road to the Riverside Tavern where, sadly (for us), a busy weekend meant there was no real ale left.

We moved on to Dingwall, and the National Hotel, where **Isle of Skye Young Pretender** was on offer. Although served at the correct temperature this beer was not at it's best - very little in the aroma and a faint malt taste with little of underlying hop flavours usually evident in this normally excellent quaffing beer. Sharp astringency meant only a lowly 2 was scored.

Over to Strathpeffer and to the fine looking Ben Wyvis Hotel. Listed in the newsletter as having real ale, we were informed by the bar lady that the single hand pump had not seen real ale for many weeks - so one to remove from our list. Not having the best of evenings we then found the nearby Richmond Hotel in darkness, a note on the door stating apologies for being closed for the day. However on our way out we did spot two empty Cornelius five gallon containers that Isle of Skye Brewery use for ale, indicating that real ale is still served here.

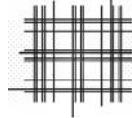
Heading back to Inverness we stopped off at the Culbokie Inn. This traditional village pub was another serving the popular **Trade Winds**. Tasting similar to the offering in the Conon Bridge Hotel, with a good bitter bite, it rounded off a rather disappointing outing on the tasting front - but a pleasant run out to visit some of the outlets we do not get to as often as we would like.

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

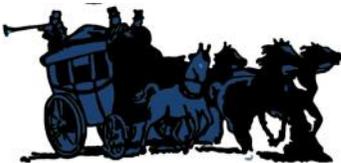




The *and restaurant*
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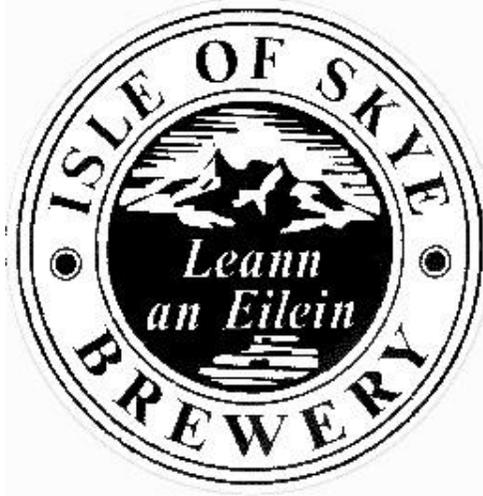


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