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Highlands
and
Western
Isles
No 53
Summer
2017

What's Yours Then?



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From the Editor



You are very welcome along to this summer edition of What's Yours Then. If you're a Highlands and Western Isles CAMRA member you'll already be much more

familiar with the history of the branch over the last few years than me, so I won't bother you with my reflections.

If you're one of our many thousands of seasonal visitors in the Highlands and Hebrides, "Ceud Mile Fàilte" or a "hundred thousand welcomes". It's set to be a glorious summer, so get out there and enjoy both the weather, and with the help of our pull-out real ale pubs and branch calendar, make sure to sample the beer offerings of the region.

Congratulations to Craig Middleton and the Cromarty Brewco team, on the cover and in feature towards the back of this issue, on going forward to the overall Champion Specialty Beer of Britain. Many of us will be familiar with Cromarty's products and despite living in a real ale desert in South Uist, it was only a couple of weeks ago that I was enjoying Red Rocker on draught in the Arisaig Hotel near Mallaig, while waiting for the ferry across the Sea of the Hebrides to Lochboisdale.

Also in this issue, our chairman Simon passes on his musings on a gin and ale trip to the beautiful village of Plockton, near the bridge to Skye.

Indeed this is the time of year when the West Highland lines are full to overflowing with enthusiasts trying to 'bag' a section of track or see some obscure engines and rolling stock.

Thanks go out to Dave Wilson of Coventry CAMRA for sharing with us his thoughts on a 'Wild West Beer Tour' together with some of the H&WI lackeys; if you have some thoughts to share about the pubs you have visited here on your holidays or, indeed, been to a noteworthy beer festival in the area, please drop us a report and a few digital images and we'll include it in a future issue.

Properly to introduce myself, I'm a Chelmsford and Mid-Essex branch member despite being born and raised in North Ayrshire (Saltcoats and later Ardrossan). I live in the Hebrides where my family used to spend at least every other summer holiday, only a few miles from where we used to camp at the southern tip of South Uist all those years ago.

In the day job I design and build mobile telecomms networks, mostly cellular, and have been busy of late in both France and Germany with their respective 4G rollouts. In my spare time I'm obviously a beer enthusiast, and edit the CME branch magazine 'Thirsty Times' as well as this.

Please take some time to read our branch chairman Simon's reflections overleaf. "To many great ales" or as they say in Rome,

Ad multas cereviasias

Tony Vernon
editor@highland.camra.org.uk

From the Chair

All Change!

Following the massive upheaval last year when the branch nearly failed completely, the Highlands & Western Isles branch has gone through many changes since November. Just as Dr Who “regenerates” every couple of years, so the branch has gone through a similar metamorphosis.

It is still early days and the process is still underway, but the decision to get “Area

Leaders” in place appears to be working. Currently they “look after” the area in which they live and are developing better relationships with pubs and breweries in their patch, and of course delivering the branch magazine and contributing to its content.



However, we are desperately after one, or preferably more, people to help carry out this important role on Skye. If you are interested, please come forward and take on what you are comfortable with.

What’s Yours Then?

This edition follows in the footsteps of the first H&WI magazine which hit the real ale bars during the Winter of 2003 / 4 and was edited by Mike Whittall, then the baton was passed over to Gordon Streets before Mike took it on for the last two editions.

Our new editor, Tony Vernon lives on South Uist and although a CAMRA member, but not of H&WI (yet) he already edits his (adopted) branch magazine for Chelmsford and Mid Essex, “Thirsty Times”.

Unfortunately, Tony was not familiar with the publishing software that H&WI used, and has opted for a different package which he is more familiar with. We have also set up dedicated email addresses to email the “Area Leaders”, or contact the editor directly. (see rear, inside cover)

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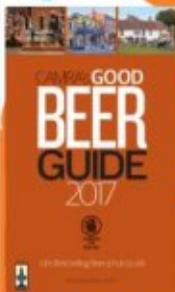
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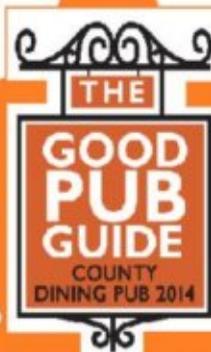
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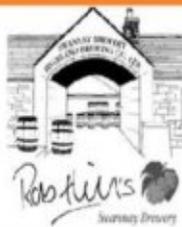
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Ale Guest

Alexander Wright, of CAMRA's National Executive, visited the branch for last month's SNIB meeting.

As a member of the National Executive, I spend a lot of weekends travelling around the country to various meetings. It's a lot less exciting than you might think, usually involving early starts and several changes of train.

I was, therefore, very happy to be invited to attend the Scottish and Northern Island regional meeting in Nairn, near Inverness. It also seemed silly to journey all the way from Buckinghamshire and not spend a few days exploring the Highlands, especially as branch chairman Simon Urry volunteered to show me the delights of Loch Ness and other local (and not so local) attractions.

Getting to Inverness seemed pretty straightforward: catch a Easyjet flight from Luton for a quick flight north. Of course, this being Easyjet, the flight was delayed with the plane being stuck deporting someone to Paris. C'est la vie, I guess! Sadly, Luton airport is not well known for it's real ale, not that I wanted to partake quite so early in the morning.

Travelling as I was at the beginning of March, I had a wonderful view of the snowy white Cairngorms from the window. The luck of the draw served up wonderful clear skies and the view was quite breathtaking! Simon met me outside the really tiny Inverness airport. Living near London, I'm used to Heathrow with its many gates, heavy

security checks and emphasis of parting you from your money. Three steps off the plane at Inverness, and you are outside the terminal. Really rather refreshing!

Not wanting to waste a moment it was straight off to Loch Ness while Simon explained that the agenda would be "tell me to stop if you want a picture" of which, over the next few days, I took full advantage. Our first stop was the lovely Dores Inn sat at the northernmost tip of the loch. Not being able to resist, I dabbled my boot -covered toes in the Loch before we visited the pub.



Serving some interesting local beers from Cromarty, Cairngorm and Swannay on the four handpumps and being peckish after an early start, some delicious food was in order. It was easy to see how the pub attracted tourists and locals alike.

We stopped at several other pubs as we made our way down the south-eastern side of the loch, including the Craigdarroch Inn with its stunning views, the Whitebridge Hotel and a couple of pubs in Fort Augustus. None sold the choice of the Dores Inn, and I was struck

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by how seasonal pubs must be in the Highlands. With little local trade, the beer choice was poor compared to the towns where I live. The reduced drink drive limit was obviously also a barrier to people going to their local for a pint.

Like most visitors here, I'd really not appreciated how big Loch Ness is. Driving round it, and an indulgent divert down to the Commando memorial at Spean Bridge, had taken the best part of a day! I was rather grateful to make it to the Braeval Hotel and to my bed.

Saturday was the day of the Regional



meeting, but before meeting Sarah Bellis from the airport, Simon found time to take me to the nearby Gun Lodge Hotel in Ardisier with its noticeboard offering "three legged locally caught haggis" on the menu. After collecting Sarah, a quick visit to Cawdor Tavern to meet Christine Sinclair and a swift half, and a bottle of the new Puffin Ale which Sarah managed to bag! (no "carry on" liquids on the plane for me).

For those of you that have not been to a

CAMRA regional meeting, they are an important part of CAMRA where all the region's branch chairs get together to discuss common problems and issues, and for information to be passed to them. It's customary for this to be chaired by the Regional Director, Sarah Bellis in the case of the SNIB region. I won't dwell on the meeting too much, it can seem somewhat bizarre to those not familiar with CAMRA's workings.

Afterwards there was much ale from our excellent hosts, Gordon and Morag of the Braeval Hotel. An excellent range of ales, none of which I'd heard of and an

amazing selection of whiskies, all of which contributed to the rather thick head I experienced the following morning.

Simon proved to be the best host, not only driving me round for a third day, and after picking up nibbles, called in at the Allangrange arms (too early for ale, even if I had felt up to it!) for a coffee and was shown round the excellent-looking guest rooms

that I may well return to with my wife.

On then to Simon's house for a superb (and essential) strong coffee and-freshly squeezed orange juice. After this much needed refreshment, we started an adventure that would take us from east coast to west and back. Down the A82 to Drumnadrochit where I was introduced to the local trade of Nessie merchandise, including a "tame" full sized floating nessie, OK it was a glass fibre plesiosaur, and not the result of the previous night!

From there it was up the A887 to the Cluanie Inn, an isolated hotel popular with travellers both on wheels and foot. A more remote pub would be hard to find, and often mentioned in weather reports as the wettest place in the UK, but not today with our route bathed in brilliant sunshine!

Other than a quick detour to Skye over the bridge, our main destination for the day was the beautiful village of Plockton, made famous by a favourite series of mine, Hamish Macbeth. I'd certainly struck it lucky with the weather yet again, and was gifted a series of rainbows, sun and dramatic skies to go with the picture postcard scenery. Tired from the day, and with a long way to go, we returned via the picturesque Loch Carron.

I certainly enjoyed my trip to the Highlands, my grandparents had lived here in the early fifties and my grandfather had designed the dam at Lairg, one of the many dams that help make the Highlands so pretty. It also gave me insight into how different campaigning for real ale and pubs is up here, where it might be a half hour's drive to the next pub, or indeed to the next house...

Serving a large selection of high quality ales is just not possible year round; we must content ourselves with a pub's existence and ales in the summer where tourist numbers can justify it. That said, there are many fine pubs in the Highlands, serving great beer and food. I will certainly return!

alexander.wright@camra.org.uk



Waulkmill Cider first ever Scottish winner at National Cider & Perry Awards

Although strictly H&WI's boundary, not within parish it's noteworthy that

Scotland has its first ever winner at the national Cider and Perry Championships.

Langholm-based Waulkmill Cider won Silver for Mooseheid Perry at the Reading Beer and Cider Festival at the end of April.

Ciders and perries are judged on their individual taste, aroma, flavour, after-taste and overall appeal, with 24 ciders and 24 perries being selected for the final at Reading after a year of local tasting panels and regional heats. This is CAMRA's 29th year of campaigning for real cider and perry.

Andrea Briers, CAMRA National Cider and Perry Committee Chairman, commented:

"I would like to congratulate Waulkmill Cider for becoming the first Scottish producer to win any award in CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Championship.

Waulkmill Cider took silver for its Mooseheid Perry, which has a sweet and sour aroma of pear and crab apple, and is a very refreshing drink.

"It's a huge achievement to win a national perry award outside of the traditional cider making regions and a testament to the growth of traditional cider in Scotland."



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Wild West Tour

Dave Wilson of Coventry CAMRA accompanied a group heading 'way out west'.

During my many visits to the Highlands I have often picked up a copy of WYT? and read about the bus tours that you guys (and girls) often go on. I said to the wife that, one day, we should forego a trip to Caley stadium and partake in one of these trips instead!. This opportunity arose on Sat 1st Apr 2017 when we joined the Wild West Tour.

We were duly informed by Simon that the trip involved some 17 pubs/hotels and a brewery! I had offered apologies to my liver in advance and decided that it could cope on this occasion and told it

the 52 (?) seat D&E Coach which came complete with possibly Scotland's best coach driver (!) Leaving Inverness we headed for the Kessock bridge bound for Ullapool, picking up another passenger en route at North Kessock; this swelled our number to nine. At the Torr roundabout we somehow headed



North towards Wick and Thurso and so encountered a slight diversion via Dingwall (with a distant view of the Global Energy stadium..yeh!..thanks for that) and Strathpeffer before getting back on course at Contin. (The best coach reference will manifest itself later by the way).



not to worry, this is the Highlands of Scotland for goodness sake and they're all responsible people up here!

Planned departure was 0940 and a crowd of eight scrambled for seats on

Now, the first rule about doing a report is to make a note of the real ales that were available at each establishment. This rule was broken from the off, when I failed to make notes and just concentrated on the ales I tasted – I hope this doesn't spoil the report though.

First port of call was the Inchbae Lodge where I believe there were two ales on tap. I tried the An Teallach Ale (4) which was priced at £2.20 per half pint. I liked this lodge a lot and manager Richard has a lot in common with myself as he rides a BMW motorcycle. His K1200R was sitting in the conservatory teasing me to take it for a spin around these fine(ish) roads.



Aultbea Hotel

Next port of call was the Aultguish Inn, a place I've ridden past many times

without calling in and this was to be the same again as we're only dropping off the WYT? mags.

Shortly after here we came across a broken-down coach that was conveying holidaymakers to Ullapool. Our coach wasn't particularly full, so we did our

good Samaritan bit and took them on board to Ullapool. Simon did his best to entice them to join CAMRA or join us on our pub crawl. We gave them about 30



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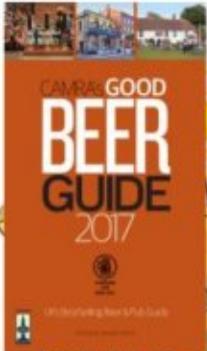
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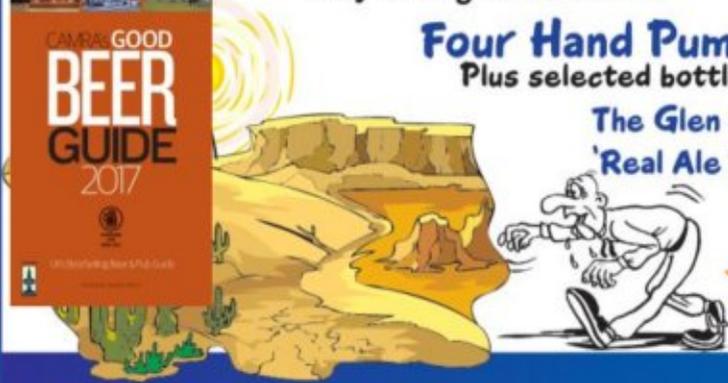


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minutes to read the Spring copy of WYT? before we started asking questions. They didn't seem too out of place on our bus as some did look like ageing drunkards. I don't think there were any takers to join CAMRA though.

There were six pubs on the itinerary for Ullapool but I only visited three. First off was the Morefield Motel, where I tried the Trade Winds (4). Two others were also available and the 'legendary' Feck Ale Left at 0.0%. They almost had me

fooled! The owner explained what the label was all about. The pump clip is placed on the empty casks at their beer festivals.

They say it's a small world we live in and this appeared to be so, as the owners here are relatives of the folk that live across the road from me in Coventry.

Back on the bus then for the short ride back into the town, where I visited the Argyle Hotel. Inveralmond's Tight Head Ale (3) was my choice here. The barman was so impressed with the new £1 coin I tendered he promptly swapped it with an old one in his pocket. How proud was I to give him his first ever new £1 coin? Smug! Shame it wasn't a note – I'd have signed it.

A short walk from here down to the shore and a quick walk up to the Arch Inn. I remember this pub from my first ever trip to Ullapool. The wife (g/f at the time) and I were touring on a Honda CB400T motorcycle and we stayed at a B&B a few doors down. No real ale back then though – probably McEwens keg or



Tartan. The Inn has changed a lot since those days. Only one ale was on offer here and that was Crofters Ale (4).

Back on the bus then with supplies of food from the local shop we headed back down the way and took a right turn towards Dundonnell and the hotel. We were only calling to drop off the magazines and then on to the An Teallach brewery. I was looking forward to the brewery visit but I was left disappointed as it was actually closed.

Continuing along the A832 and taking in the glorious views across Little Loch Broom we head for the Aultbea Hotel. An Teallach Kildonan (3) was my choice here and, considering it's only brewed down the road, a little expensive at £2.30 for a ½ pt I felt! Whilst in the hotel it was interesting to learn that the village has a NATO base and large ships can often be seen – but not today.

Yet more wonderful scenery feasts the eyes as we trundle down the road with views of Isle of Ewe and Loch Ewe before reaching Poolwe and the Poolwe Hotel (lot of Ewes in these parts!). At least the beer had nothing to

do with ewes though as I tried the An Teallach Benn Dearg (3) which was £1.75 per ½ pt.

Gairloch is our next destination and with eyes still in focus we feasted on the scenery passing Loch Tollaidh and the surrounding hills. In Gairloch there were three planned visits on the list. First was the Millcroft Hotel but after seeing the An Teallach ales on offer I decided to opt out on this one and settled for a coffee and bun in a small establishment across the way instead. Don't get me wrong here, I like the An Teallach ales but just fancied something different on this occasion.

Next we tried the Myrtle Bank Hotel which had a very lively bar at the rear. Timothy Taylor Landlord was available

but unfortunately it was way past its best and scored 0. The ale was changed without fuss for a Trade Winds (3).

I was looking forward to our visit to the Old Inn. I stayed here a while back (mid 90s) whilst doing a sponsored motorcycle ride and loved the place. I was very disappointed at the quality of ales. Some members in front of me had already purchased their ale called North Coast which tasted (and smelt) like vinegar. Mikes Mild, one of their own brews, was also off. The only other option was good ol' An Teallach again (which wasn't on form I'm told) so I opted out and decided to stretch my legs instead. Such a shame.

Leaving Gairloch behind us we continue South and take a right turn onto the

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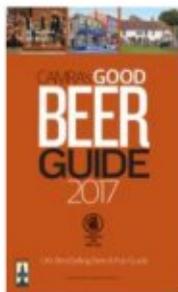
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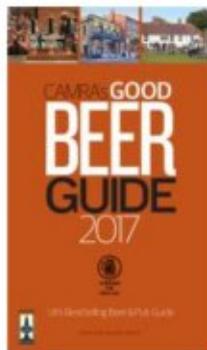
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B8056. Quite how our driver got us down this road and over the small bridge that crosses the River Kerry I'll never know, but he expertly negotiated this tight single track road without incident. We are heading for the Badachro Inn, a place I've never heard of or been too



before. The Inn itself is in a fine setting with wonderful views across the bay from the outdoor drinking area. It reminded me a lot of Plockton – for the view. I tried the An Teallach ale (3)

which was £2 per 1/2pt. The Inn seemed to be well frequented too.

So, back along the B8056 again we come to the A832 where we need to take a right turn but, because of the tight turn and length of the coach, we had to take a left and turn round at Kerrysdale to point in the

right direction.

Next on the list is the Kinlochewe Hotel but before reaching here I was taking an overdose of scenery as the ever-gorgeous Loch Maree and peak of Slioch

appeared to be ever present and had me licking windows and taking photos. I am so pleased with my self-control with the ale drinking that I (and the camera) remained in focus at this point.

The Kinlochewe Hotel is another of those locations that I have passed by and never visited. I will correct these errors next time. The Hotel had three ales available, An Teallach Ale, Rogue Wave and, the one I tried, Atlas Wayfarer (4). I was also honoured to present the licensee(s) with their well deserved CAMRA Highlands & Western Isles Pub of the Year certificate.

By now the sun is starting to go down on a fine but showery day as we head to our final port of call. The Leadgowan Lodge at Achnasheen sits just off the A890 and is a fine-looking former

Scottish shooting lodge. The main room having stags heads fitted to the walls depicting its shooting lodge roots. The An Teallach Beinn Dearg (4) at £2 per ½ pt was my final tipple for this adventure.

So, with a belly full of some fine ales, we trip back to Inverness calling in briefly at the Garve Hotel to drop off a bag that was left on the bus by one of the holidaymakers we rescued earlier. We were back in Inverness at 10.10 p.m which was about two hours later than planned. This was a wonderful day out and my thanks go to Simon Urry for organising this fine trip. Now, the big question, would I do it again? You can put your house on it that I will.

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My Beer Festival Travels

Our man in the north, Keith Morrell, reports on a trip to Doncaster

Doncaster on a grey May afternoon – turn right outside the railway station and walk for 15 minutes parallel to a very busy main road and through an underpass to reach an old looking commercial building with a canvas gazebo at the entrance and what do you find – BEER FESTIVAL.

This was the 26th Doncaster Beer Festival being held in a smaller new venue (Unity House) after problems arose preventing the normal venue being used. Entry was free for CAMRA members (£2 non members), a £2 fee being required for the (returnable) oversized half pint glass (with a third

measure). Inside there were three rooms serving beers and ciders – 52 cask, 3 keykeg, 13 cider, 3 perry and a variety of bottled and canned ales. The two downstairs bars were easily accessible (with a few steps) for anyone with walking disabilities but the upstairs bar was just that – stairs and no lift. A small number of seats were available upstairs and in one downstairs bar, two small marquees giving more seating outside (albeit with a few more steps).

Payment for drinks was by prepayment of a card with amounts crossed off as they were used, fully refundable for part-used cards or remainders could be donated to charity. Food was available in a downstairs bar, excellent Yorkshire fare with pies, burgers and other good ale-soaking food. This bar, without



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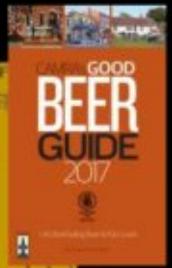
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at the start/finish of the Great Glen Way Tel: 01463 718178

seating, housed the first 23 ales on the tasting notes programme. The other lower bar had the keykeg taps and bottled/canned brews with an information and CAMRA desk and seats. Upstairs contained the rest of the ales and main toilets.

One noticeable difference for this beer festival was the number of darker beers, this pleased many and drew comment of it being a nice change from the usual lighter hoppy beers normally presented at a smaller venue. There were 25% darker cask ales, a higher percentage than is usual with 1 of the 3 keykegs being a stout. Cask strengths ranged from 3.4% (Golden Ducks' Tommo's Mild) to 7.5% (Doncaster Breweries Procrastinator) with ciders and bottled/canned reaching 12% (Nutcracker, an Imperial Stout). Prices started at £1.40 and increased with

alcohol strength.

What did I try, more than I should really but before giving in to the inevitable loss of ability to taste accurately I made notes on the first so many and my favourite lighter ale was Untapped Breweries Whoosh, a 4.2% Golden Ale (£1.50 half) with the dark side favourite in the previously mentioned Tommo's Mild (£1.40 half). I didn't try the ciders etc but took a bottle of Belgian Oud Beersal Gueze (6%) home to sample at leisure later.

This beer festival was definitely worth going to, excellent ales, good food and friendly company, all the ingredients needed to recommend it - it's a pity my bus pass doesn't work in England or it could become a regular visit.

northcoast.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Real Ale Pubs List

These Pubs, Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale. They are listed by geographical area and in an order that would allow a continuous pub crawl if you have safe transport. 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) or have only (bottles) available. Please let us know about the quality of real ales on offer, particularly if you think Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited. Please e-mail us or fill in What?ub scores (CAMRA members). (TP) = ale served using top pressure, i.e. not according to CAMRA guidelines for 'real ale'. Additional notes show last-known discounts for card-presenting CAMRA members.

INVERNESS

Black Isle Bar
Blackfriars
Caledonian
Castle Tavern
Clachnaharry Inn
Corrigarth Hotel
Encore Une Fois
Gelleons
Glen Mhor Hotel (Nicos Bar)
Heathmount Hotel
Hootananny
Inches Gate
Innes Bar
Johnny Foxes
Kingsmills Hotel
Kings Highway (JDW, 50p)
Lauders
Mercure Hotel (Arts Bar) (TP)
Number 27
Palace Hotel
Phoenix Bar
R&B
Snowgoose
Tomlinson's Beer Shop
Waterfront
White House (bottles)
SPEYSIDE (N TO S)
Nairn
Gun Lodge
Inverness Airport (D'Lish)
Golf View Hotel & Spa (TP)

Braeval Hotel (Bandstand) (rooms 10%)

Cawdor Tavern (20%)

Strathspey

Haugh Hotel, Cromdale

~~-Grantown on Spey-~~

Ben Mhor Hotel (Jacobean Bar)

Craig Bar

Garth Hotel and Restaurant

Grant Arms Hotel

Seaford Lodge Hotel (Lodge Bar)

High St Merchants

Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge

Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten

Cairn Hotel (Rowanlea Bar) Carrbridge 20p

Aviemore

Ben Macdui

Cairngorm Brewery

Cairngorm Hotel

Ptarmagan (top of funicular) (bottles)

Storehouse (bottom of funicular) (bottles)

Dalfaber Country Club

La Taverna, restaurant

Mackenzies Highland Inn

Old Bridge Inn

Roo's Leap

Skiing Doo (Doo Below)

Winking Owl 20p

Hilton Coylumbridge Hotel (Woodshed Bar)

Badenoch

Glenmore Lodge (Lochain Bar)

Pine Marten Bar

Loch Inch Boathouse (Quarter Deck Bar)

Suie Hotel

Tipsy Laird

Silver Fjord Hotel

Duke of Gordon Hotel (Ghillies Rest Bar)

Scot House Hotel

Glen Hotel

BADENOCH

Glenmore Lodge (Lochain Bar)

Pine Marten Bar, Glenmore

Loch Inch Boathouse (Quarter Deck Bar), Kinraig

Suie Hotel, Kinraig

~~-Kingussie-~~

Tipsy Laird

Silver Fjord Hotel

Duke of Gordon Hotel (Ghillies Rest Bar)

Scot House Hotel

Glen Hotel, Newtonmore 20p

EASTER ROSS

Black Isle

Royal Hotel, Cromarty
Cromarty Arms
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Crofters Bistro,
Rosemarkie (bottles)
Anderson, Fortrose
Station Hotel, Avoch
Allangrange Arms,
Munloch, 20p

Inverness to Dingwall

Bog Roy, Kirkhill
Richmond Hotel,
Strathpeffer (bottles)
Conon Bridge (hotel)
Mallard, Dingwall
Edderton Inn (hotel)
Inchbae Lodge Hotel,
Garve
Aultgish Inn, Garve

Strathconon

Slaters Arms, Cannich
Tomich Hotel
Struy Inn

Loch Ness (c/w from INV)

Dores Inn
Craigdarroch Inn (Am
Fuaran Bar), Foyers
Whitebridge Hotel
Stravaigers Lodge, Fort
Augustus
Bothy Bar, Fort Augustus
Caledonian Hotel (Corbie
Bar), Fort Augustus (S)
Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
Lovat Arms Hotel, Fort
Augustus
Glenmorrison Arms
Hotel, Invermorrison

Cobbs at Urquhart Castle,
Drumnadrochit
Loch Ness Inn (Brewery
Bar), Lewiston
Benleva Hotel,
Drumnadrochit

FORT WILLIAM Fort William (N)

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

Moor of Ranoch Hotel,
Rannoch Station
(hotel, bottles)

In Fort William

Moorings Hotel (Neptune
Bar/Mariners Lounge),
Banavie, nr Ft William
Ben Nevis Bar
Ben Nevis Hotel (bottles)
Ben Nevis Inn Achintee
Cobbs @ Nevisport
Crofter Bar & Restaurant
Glen Nevis Restaurant
Grog & Gruel
Great Glen (JDW 50p)
Loch Iall
Volunteer Arms
West End Hotel

Fort William (S)

Four Seasons, Onich 10p

Branch

Tasting Social
Fri 30th June 2017
Castle Tavern
Start 5.30pm

Branch Meeting
Sat 1st July 2017
Clachnaharry Inn
12.30 for 1pm

Branch Meeting
Sat 29th July 2017
Fort William
(venue TBA, check
website)
12.30 for 1pm

Branch Meeting
Sat 19th Aug 2017
Wick or Thurso
(venue TBA, check
website)
12.30 for 1pm

Tasting Social
Fri 25th Aug 2017
Number 27,
Inverness, 5.30pm

Scottish and
Northern Ireland
Branches Meeting
Sat 26th Aug 2017

Diary

Blackfriars, Glasgow
12.30 for 1pm
(organised by
Glasgow and WoS
Branch)

Branch Meeting
Sat 27th Sept 2017
(venue TBA, check
website)
12.30 for 1pm

Tasting Social
Sat 30th Sept 2017
Braeval Hotel, 12pm

Scottish and
Northern Ireland
Branches Meeting
Sat 18th Nov 2017
(venue TBA, check
website)

Branch AGM
Sat 20th Jan 2018
(venue TBA)

Scottish and
Northern Ireland
Branches Meeting
Sat 18th Nov 2017
(venue TBA)

Onich Hotel
Loch Leven Hotel,
Ballachulish (N)
Ballachulish Hotel,
Ballachulish (S)
Laroch Bar, Ballachulish
(S)
Glencoe Inn (Gathering)
Clachaig Inn, Glencoe
Kings House Hotel,
Glencoe
Ice Factor (Bothan Bar),
Kinlochleven
MacDonald Hotel (Bothy
Bar), Kinlochleven

Fort William (W)

Glenfinnan House Hotel
Lochailort Inn (bottles)
Glenuig Inn
Glenuig Village Hall
Loch Shiel Hotel,
Acharacle
Salen Hotel
Ariundle Centre, Strontian
Lochaline Hotel (bottles)
Arisaig Hotel (Crofters
Rest)
Chlachain Inn, Mallaig
Steam Inn, Mallaig
West Highland Hotel,
Mallaig (S)
Old Forge, Inverie

WESTER ROSS

Cluanie to Kyle of Lochalsh

Cluanie Inn
Glenelg Inn
Kintail Lodge Hotel (Kintail
Bar), Glenshiel Bridge
Jac-o-bite Restaurant
Glenshiel Bridge
Dornie Hotel

Clachan Bar, Dornie

Plockton to Gairloch

Plockton Inn
Plockton Hotel
Strathcarron Hotel
Lochcarron Hotel
Applecross Inn
The Potting Shed,
Applecross (bottles)
Tigh an Eilean Hotel,
Shieldaig
Torridon Inn, Annat, by
Torridon
Kinlochewe Hotel (Beinn
Eighe Bar)
Ledgowan Lodge Hotel,
Achnasheen
Loch Maree Hotel,
Talladale
Badachro Inn, (TP)
Glendale House, South
Erradale (bottles)

In Gairloch

Old Inn
Steading Restaurant
(bottles)
Myrtle Bank Hotel
Millcroft Hotel (Fish Box
Bar & Stags Head Lounge)

Gairloch to Ullapool

Poolewe Hotel
Aultbae Hotel (Jam Jar Bar)
Drumchork Hotel, Aultbae
(S)

In Ullapool

Arch Inn
Argyll Hotel 20p
Ceilidh Place
Ferry Boat Inn 20p

Morefield Motel
Seaforth Bar & Restaurant
Ullapool North
Summer Isles Hotel,
Achiltibuie
Am Fuaran Bar, Achiltibuie
(bottles)

CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND

West Coast

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

North Coast

Sango Sands Oasis,
Durness (S)
Smoo Cave Hotel, Durness
(S)
Ben Loyal Hotel, Tongue
(S)
Tongue Hotel (S)
Central Hotel (Top Joes),
Thurso
Commercial Hotel (Comm
Bar), Thurso
Holburn Hotel (Bar 16),
Thurso
Weigh Inn (Ashes Bar),
Thurso
Ulster Arms Hotel
(Anglers Nook), Halkirk
(S)
Castletown Hotel (bottles)
Northern Sands Hotel,
Dunnet
Seaview Hotel, John
O'Groats

Storehouse, John O'Groats
(bottles)

East Coast

Alexander Bain, Wick (JDW
50p)
Mackays Hotel (Cocktail
Bar), Wick
Bay Owl Restaurant,
Dunbeath
Bannockburn Inn,
Helmsdale (TP)
Belgrave Arms Hotel,
Helmsdale
Sutherland Inn, Brora
Golspie Inn (Sutherland
Hotel)
Trentham Hotel, Poles nr
Dornoch
Burghfield House Hotel,
Dornoch (hotel, bottles)
Eagle Hotel, Dornoch
Dornoch Castle Hotel
Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar
Bridge
Invershin Hotel
Achness Hotel, Rosehall
(SW of Lairg)
Crask Inn, N of Lairg

SKYE

Sligachan Hotel (Seumas'
Bar), Sligachan (S)
Old Inn, Carbost
Taigh Ailean Hotel
(Munros Bar), Portnalong
20p / B&B deal
Old School Restaurant
Dunvegan (S)
Stein Inn Waternish
Edinbane Inn
Lodge at Edinbane
Uig Hotel
Bakur Bar, Uig
Ferry Inn, Uig

Bosville Hotel (Merchant
Bar), Portree
Isles Inn, Portree
Royal Hotel (MacNab's
Inn), Portree
Sconser Lodge Hotel
Broadford Hotel (Gabbro
Bar)
Claymore Restaurant,
Broadford
Hebridean Hotel,
Broadford
Saucy Marys Lodge,
Kyleakin (S)
Isle Ornsay Hotel (Praban
Bar), Sleat
Ardvasar Hotel (Hideout
Bar)
Kinlock Castle, Isle of
Rhum (bottles)

EILEAN SIAR / WESTERN ISLES

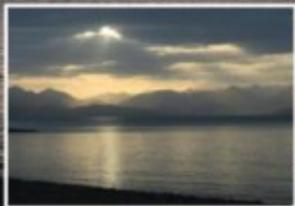
Carlton Lounge & Bar,
Stornoway, Lewis
Crown Inn (Harbour Bar),
Stornoway, Lewis
Edge O' the World,
Stornoway
Hotel Hebrides (Mote Bar),
Tarbet, Harris (S)
Isle of Harris Inn, Tarbet,
Harris(S)
Hamersay House,
Lochmaddy, N Uist
Lochmaddy Hotel, N Uist
Langass Lodge, Loch
Elport, N Uist (S)
Westford Inn, Claddach
Kirkibost, N Uist
Borrodale Hotel,
Daliburgh, S Uist (bottles)
Polochar Inn,
Lochboisdale, S Uist (S)

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Pub News

EASTER ROSS & LOCH NESS



Our Chairman Simon took a trip down to Dores Inn, on the shores of Loch Ness, to present publican Adam da Silva with this year's Easter Ross and Loch Ness Area Pub of the Year Award. Adam, wife Tanya and brother-in-law Ross Glendenning took over the Inn back in October 2014, so are already 'old hands'. With four handpumps on in the inside bar, and a second 'Outdores Inn' bar outside (pictured) serving the same selection via tee taps, the pub is very popular during the busy tourist months.

Eric Mills reports that the Benleva Hotel is now selling food from the new menu, and that the new rooms are finished and available. Up to five handpumps will be in use, with three serving English brews when he stopped by at the start of June. Locales 'Hit the Lip' and 'Sunshine on Keith' from Cromarty and Spey Valley respectively were waiting to come on in the cellar, with Henry Weston's Family Reserve being the real cider on offer. Benleva plan to have music available 'on a regular basis', which may or may not be a good thing for the real ale diehards.

CAITHNESS & SUTHERLAND

After a five month refurbishment, the Northern Sands Hotel at Dunnet has reopened under the general management of Keith Dreaves of Blargoans Ltd, previously at Ulbster Arms in Halkirk. It intends selling cask year-round, rather than seasonally as was the case before change of owner.



Currently Duncansby from John o' Groats Brewery is on and the hotel intends using them as its main supplier. Keith is looking to put a second handpump on for next year (later this year if possible) for 'guest' ales during the summer months, given the increasing popularity of Route 500.

Area Leader Keith Morrell recently made



Joint Area Pub of the Year presentations for the Caithness and Sutherland area to



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The Topsy is holding a Beer Festival on the 2nd, 3rd & 4th of June, with a range of draught & bottled ales available, as well as a BBQ, Beer Festival Themed Menu and Live Entertainment from Tweed Ceilidh Band, Ailsa Villegas & Keith Mair throughout the weekend.

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Stein Inn

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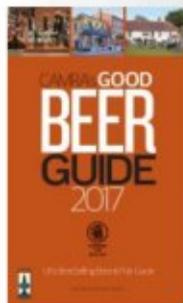


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angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk



the Alexander Bain in Wick and the Dornoch Castle Hotel. He is pictured



presenting the certificates to Deborah Robertson, manager of the Alexander Bain, and Dornoch Castle Hotel's joint owner Phil Thompson.

INVERNESS

The local press are reporting that Cairngorm Brewery has been successful in a planning application for The Foundry, a combined pub, restaurant and accommodation development on the site of the former Deeno's Sports Bar in Academy Street. The former AI Welders site is a B-listed building, so the Aviemore-based brewery will have to comply with a range of conservation measures that include preserving interior mosaics depicting the range of foundry tasks through the years. When contacted by WYT, a spokesman said that substantive work would begin in 2018.

A large, stylized graphic of a man's face with a wide, toothy grin. The face is rendered in white and red against a black background. The text 'THE ANDERSONS' is arched across the top of the head, 'REAL ALES' is across the forehead, 'WHISKY' is across the nose, and 'BELGIAN BEERS' and 'FINE WINES' are arched across the chin. A small badge in the bottom right corner of the graphic reads 'GOOD BEER GUIDE 2017'.

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Good beer Guide 2005-2017

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Although outside her local patch of Nairn, Liz Bligh reports that The Castle Tavern, Inverness was bought about five months ago by John Robertson (a local family). He is making lots of improvements in keeping with the Victorian decor.

New pump lines and a revamped cooking system have been installed. John is enjoying the challenge of a new career and intends to freshen up the upstairs restaurant and food prep area. He has a good range of beers available including Cromarty, Cairngorm, Adnams and Deuchars.



The Clachnaharry Inn were somewhat nonplussed to find themselves recently awarded Inverness Area Pub of the Year and being caught out, neither new General Manager Karen Stewart nor new licencee Sean Kennedy were on hand to receive the certificate. The honours fell to barmaid Abbi Henderson, pictured here with the certificate enjoying some sunshine outside the pub.

NAIRN

The Braeval Hotel's Morag Holding writes: "It was a busy five days at Nairn's Bandstand Beer & Music Festival. Our end-April to start-May event attracted visitors from all over the UK to the Bandstand Bar in Nairn.

"This year's event presented over a hundred beers and ciders from breweries all over Scotland and England. The choice included sixteen English breweries whose products had never before been available in Scotland; this was made possible because of help from Norman Sinclair at Orkney Brewery and also 8 Sail Brewery of Sleaford, Lincs., who had worked to co-ordinate deliveries from numerous English micro-breweries.

"Live music was provided by local bands EZRA and SCHIEHALLIAN, local artist Mia MacKintosh and Los Supremos, the band of professional session musicians who played the finale at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014. The event also raised over £500 for local charity, MFR Cash for Kids."

The Glen Hotel, Newtonmore, is Nairn Badenoch and Strathspey Area Pub of the Year. Pictured with the certificate is owner Chris Goodhill.





© Sligachan Hotel

SKYE & LOCHALSH

Area Leader Mike Godfrey reports: The Dunollie Hotel in Broadford sadly no longer serves Real Ale. The Flodigarry Hotel, north of Staffin closed for a major facelift over the winter. On re-opening, the hand pumps were gone and real ale is no longer available.

Seumas' Bar at the Sligachan Hotel also had a major facelift over the winter but happily retains four hand pumps, three of which usually serve beers from the Cuillin Brewery (about 20m away - very LocAle!) and the fourth serves varying guest ales. The fantastic 400+ whisky selection also remains!

The Plockton Hotel 'Real Ale & Gin Festival', held over the weekend of 19th-21st May, was another great success. Forty six real ales from Scottish breweries and forty seven Scottish gins were on offer over the three days - an impossible choice if you like both! Combined with live music from local

bands on Friday and Saturday evenings, this made for a great weekend. An idyllic setting for a beer festival, next year's is likely to be on the same weekend.



Outside bar, Plockton Hotel, Loch Carron in the distance

EILEAN SIAR / WESTERN ISLES

Don Catterall sent this from Stornoway: First the bad news; the Carlton Lounge & Bar, Stornoway isn't currently serving real ale. For the last two years they've taken it off during the winter as it wasn't selling and reintroduced it for the summer but this year they've decided



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not to.

The good news is that Edge O' the World Ale House (brewery tap), Stornoway has been a success, serving five of the Hebridean Brewery's beers on hand pump, two on "gas" plus two ciders on hand pump. Their membership scheme gives a significant discount on the price of a pint and "designated drivers" get free soft drinks, tea or coffee. The brewer, Andy Ribbens, intends arranging for guest beers in the future.

The Crown Inn, Stornoway continues to serve real ale from the Punch Taverns list.

Tony Vernon in Uist reports: in North Uist, The Westford Inn, Cladach Kirkibost added 'Best Pub in the Western Isles' to an ever-growing tally of gongs. Owners and licensees Colin and Eilidh Murray are pictured receiving their certificate at

the Pub & Bar Awards held at BAFTA at the end of May.



Brewery News

INVERNESS



As reported in the Pub News, Cairngorm Brewery has been successful in a planning application for a pub and restaurant in Academy Street, Inverness. A brewery spokesman told WYT that work would start in 2018.



Cromarty Brewing Company have won Champion Specialty Beer of Scotland 2017. Pictured are brewer Craig Middleton and Marion Graham, see the

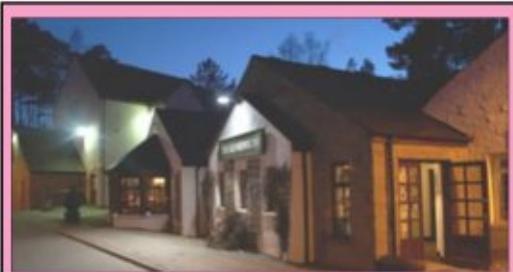


feature article elsewhere in this issue.

FORT WILLIAM

Andy Rogers spoke to West Highland Brewery's James Leggatt and reports: WHB are planning to start brewing in Spean Bridge towards the end of 2017. They have yet to receive confirmation that their planning application has been granted but are optimistic that this will come through shortly.

Once permission is granted, two or three months of building work will be required. WHB have purchased the ex-Glenfinnan brewing kit, which has been refurbished by Oban Ales. Extra cooling panels have been fitted to the 2 x 600



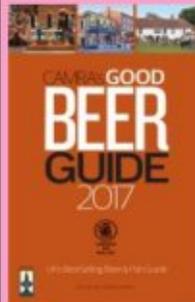
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www.cromartybrewing.co.uk

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litre fermentation tanks.

The plan is to start brewing two beers – a session IPA and a Blonde. Cask ales will be supplied into the local market and they have reached agreement with Cairngorm to bottle some of their output. They are currently researching the potential for using cans and/or key kegs.

James was keen to stress that WHB wish to minimise their carbon footprint and so are exploring a number of ways in which this can be done, recognising that consistency will be key to sustainability. James has been involved with beer and the licensed trade since he was a teenager and will be assisted in this venture by partner Lucy and Ian Peter Macdonald. John Fish, previously one of the founders of Glenfinnan, has been retained to offer assistance.

FORT AUGUSTUS



Nessie Brew have started what they call a 'nanobrewery' in Fort Augustus, initially with a 50l (quarter barrel) plant. Initially they are supplying local outlets with four beers, of which two are named on their Facebook page ("nessiebrewbeer") as 'Really Dumb Blonde' and 'King of the Loch'. This initially surprised your editor as he always thought Nessie was a girl, until observing that the figure at the foot of Nessie Brew's poster for 'Really Dumb Blonde' bears a remarkable

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resemblance to Donald Trump. What next for the brewery? Well maybe losing the 'e' from 'blonde', a less Alien-esque logo and a proper website?

SKYE AND LOCHALSH



Mike Godfrey reports: Plockton Brewery celebrates 10 years of Brewing this summer! Andy is planning to celebrate with a 10th Anniversary do outside the brewery on 15 July (tbc). The plan is for variety of special bottled beers (3 brewed already, planning 3 more), 2 or 3 casks beers, food and live music. Full details will be provided on the brewery website www.theplocktonbrewery.com if/when Andy can stop brewing for long enough to update it!



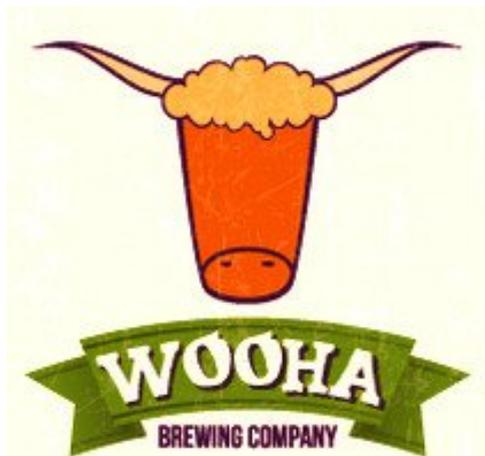
When last visited at the end of April, the guys at Strathcarron Brewery were back in full production after the winter lull.



ISLE OF SKYE BREWING CO.

Isle of Skye Brewing Company have added 'Skye YP' to their core range of bottled (sadly not 'bottle conditioned') beers. Previously only available in cask form, YP is the re-badged version of 'Young Pretender'. Now offering Brewery Tours for groups of up to 10 people. Advance booking essential – further details and booking available from sales@skyeale.com.

NAIRN



WooHa Brewing Company's Siobhan MacLeod writes: "We are busy brewing as the season begins to pick up for the summer. The brewery continues to export to the US with excellent feedback and repeat custom."

Kinlochewe Hotel is H&WI Pub of the year

The Kinlochewe Hotel is Highlands and Western Isles CAMRA Pub of the Year 2017. However due to the hotel's recent change of ownership, runner-up The Grog and Gruel, Fort William, goes forward to the regional heats as H&WI representative. Pictured with Karen, wife of co-owner David Twist, is cellarman Michael Morrison.



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Win for Cromarty's Red Rocker



We are pleased to confirm that Cromarty Brewery won the Specialty beer category at Paisley with Red Rocker, and Cairngorm were third with Tradewinds in the same category.

Cromarty also picked up a third in Paisley with Atlantic Drift in the Bitter category.

Over the year, and at different CAMRA organised Scottish beer festivals, there are judging heats for the various beer styles to select "Champion Beer of Scotland" CBoS, that go forward to the Championship Beer of Britain, CBoB.

The full results were: -

Bitter (Paisley)

- 1st Orkney Red MacGregor
- 2nd Loch Lomond Southern Summit
- 3rd Cromarty Atlantic Drift

Speciality Beers (Paisley)

- 1st Cromarty Red Rocker
- 2nd Williams Seven Giraffes
- 3rd Cairngorm Tradewinds

Old Ales/Strong Milds (Paisley)

- 1st Orkney Dark Island
- 2nd Windswept Wolf
- 3rd Kelburn Dark Moor

Real Ale in a Bottle (Dark) (Glenrothes)

- 1st Black Metal Blood Revenge

Congratulations also to Orkney, whose offices are in Cawdor, and Windswept, just outside the H&WI branch area.

Since beer has no "borders", irrespective of branch boundaries, at least we can all enjoy these award-winning ales when we are lucky enough to find them.

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The Journey to Plockton



For the train buffs, the two car, Class 185 DMU set off from Inverness at 08:55 for the most agreeable journey on the famous “Kyle Line”. The line has steadfastly retained its status as one of the greatest train journeys in Great Britain, and indeed the World, popularised by Michael Palin when the journey he made was televised in 1980.

My journey was not going to take me to the end of the line at Kyle of Lochalsh, but I would be alighting at Plockton, after nearly two & a half hours.

This has to be one of the best ways to start the day, particularly when your destination is a Gin and Beer festival at Plockton Hotel held this year 19th to 21st May.

With a CAMRA commitment in Aberdeen on Saturday, and “challenging” public transport on

Sunday, the only day I realistically had to attend the three-day festival was Friday.

Although it is true I have visited Plockton 100's of times, by road, this is only the second time I have made the journey by train.

Whilst road and rail generally follow the same snaking route with both being in sight of each other most of the way, the view from the train window is subtly different. With the benefit of not having to concentrate on the road there was ample opportunity to gaze out of the window at the dappled rough grazing and heather, which the hazy sunshine picked out in rich tonal contrasts on hills punctuated by white dots of sheep grazing the rough pasture. The deer which are normally seen were conspicuous by their absence on this occasion.

I questioned the guard, Gavin, if



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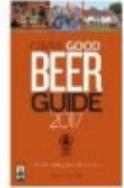
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Walkers and cyclists are welcomed, and cyclists following Sustrans NCN Route 7, which goes past our front door, can take advantage of secure dry storage provided for bikes.

the train was normally this busy, but of course many were on the train who were keen to travel the Kyle Line travelling in the footsteps of many who seek to experience the natural beauty that the Highlands have to offer.

Although there are many stations along the single track, most are "request stops", but the driver slows down, just in case. Each bend along the route revealed yet another vista.

At the end of Strath Carron itself a hotel, build about 1900 as a "Railway Hotel" to encourage tourists to use the line, stands like a sentry at the head of Loch Carron sea loch.

At the station, the small waiting room was receiving a long overdue

lick of paint.

A few minutes after pulling away from Strathcarron, the road traffic on the left which had been stopped at the level crossing, inched past as the train picked up speed and to the right revealed the tide in Loch Carron was in, and picked out the linear village of Lochcarron to the North with the rising hills beyond.

A view not normally appreciated by the road user is the sheer steel netted hillside which during the winter still "shivers" and sends frost-loosened boulders crashing down onto the single track road and railway line. One year Stromferry with "no ferry" on its road sign had the "no" covered up as the road was closed. With the alternative of a 100+ mile road

journey for pupils in Lochcarron attending the school in Plockton, the ferry was re-instated.

You can expect to be joined at Stromferry by a "Friend of the Kyle Line" who will encourage you to visit the museum at the end of the line, Kyle of Lochalsh, where the ferry used to sail from connecting Skye to the mainland before the impressive bridge was built.

Here the line leaves the road and continues, hugging the edge of Loch Carron onto Duncraig, and my destination, Plockton.

Plockton "Am Ploc" was the setting for "Hamish Macbeath", the 1980's TV adaptation of the M. C. Beaton books. Called "Lochdubh" it remains a popular destination for many who enjoy wandering around the outside settings.

Do not expect to find the "Stag Bar" in Plockton, that is at the Balmacara Hotel, a few miles over the hill.

It is a ten minute walk down from

the station to the Plockton Hotel, but it is very difficult to pass the Plockton Inn without going in for a pint!

I had arranged to meet up with fellow local member, Mike Godfrey



who was also attending the festival with his wife and had the good sense to book a room at the Hotel.

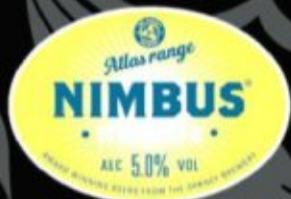
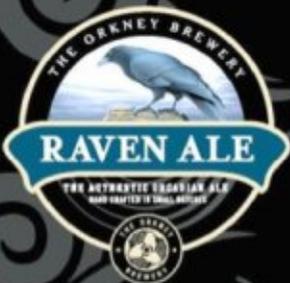
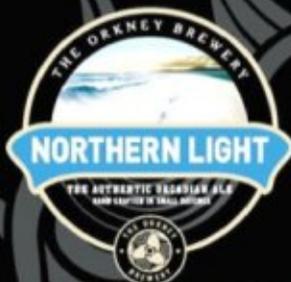
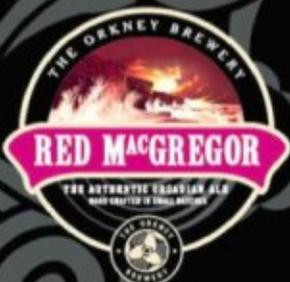
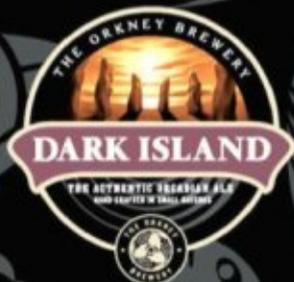
We have included this account of the journey to Plockton to inspire others to consider alternatives for a great day out which allow you to have a few pints, but leave the car behind!

Simon Urry
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