CAMRA Highlands and Western Isles No 57 Autumn 2018

## What's Yours Then?





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## From the Editor



Well, the clocks are fallen back, my boot (as the Big Yin would have put it) has been taken off the rear ends of the Uist trick-or-treaters, and the February storms are getting their retaliation in first and

early, by queueing up in the Atlantic to keep things nice and moist chez nous. 'Ceud mile fàilte' by the way, if you're a visitor to our beautiful region and are reading this 57th edition with your winter gloves on already.

#### WHAT'S IN A NAME

An unfortunate brain-fade means that the half page I had intended to devote to matters nominal was nabbed by a very-welcome new advertiser in the form of Clachnaharry. This means that it has to appear here instead. You'll recall from last issue that the plan was to change name and some candidates were proposed, namely 'Slàinte', 'Slàinte Mhath', and 'Deoch an Dorais' (thanks to Jim Bruce for correcting my spelling, a handicap of never actually having learned to read and write Gàidhlig).

A total of five responses were received, four to myself and one directly to Simon. In date order, Jim Hall wrote "...(I) was not impressed with your suggestions. We need something that's memorable, funny and relevant, so my proposal is 'Gael Ale'...". The wonderfully-named Arnold Stout observed "...The wish to change (the title) is self indulgent, disrespectful, unnecessary and frankly pretentious beyond the pale...". Gordon Streets backs Arnold up: "...After over 20 years of the magazine of the Highlands

CAMRA branch, those that know, look for that title. What's Yours Then? is also intriguing to pub goers who don't know what it is. An (almost completely) incomprehensible, Gaelic name would make no sense at all...". Better not tell any Gaels, then.

Finally (in my post bag), Jim Bruce opines "...Of the three suggestions, I think Slàinte is best...You asked for other ideas. Thinking of things associated with our geographical area, eg mountains, deer, etc, how about a parody of the 1978 movie The Deerhunter, ie The Beerhunter. ie if you're looking for a decent pint of beer, read this magazine. Just a thought".

So there you have it. Our shortlist has grown to a 'mid-list' (if that's a thing), 'Beerhunter', 'Gael Ale', 'Slàinte', 'Slàinte Mhath', and 'Deoch an Dorais'. Please (e)mail Simon before the AGM on the 19th January with your preferred title, or turn up at the AGM itself to have your say on the whole name change thing.

#### ALE BE BACK

The Glenfinnan brew-kit lives on, in the form of Glen Spean's shiny new brewery. Turn to the first article in this issue and read the feature on Glen Spean, and their plans for a future as a boutique Lochaber brewer. Best of Scottish to them.

Finally, all at H&WI and WYT? wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and as the man said, "...May your God go with you".

Ad multas cerevisias

Tony Vernon editor@highland.camra.org.uk

## From the Chair



AN APOLOGY

No sooner did "Kenny" accept the Highlands & Western Isles Runner-up Pub of the Year certificate as featured in the Summer edition (page 15 and 36) than his

better looking twin brother "Jimmy" replaced him. Out of habit the regulars now call out "Cheers Kenny" when they leave the bar". Apologies to Jimmy, and we are pleased you saw the funny side of it! Anyone calling out for "Kenny" can put £1 in the charity box as the joke is now wearing thin.

#### **BRANCH MAGAZINES**

Through my own travels and those of Keith Morrell who travels down to Nottingham to see his sister, and attend the occasional beer festival in the Midlands, and indeed all over the UK, I now have a growing collection of branch magazines from all over the country.

The collection is added to by Philip Chinery who sends me copies of "Darlington Drinker" and magazines from branches close to him. Although Philip is a "lapsed" CAMRA member he has sent stamps and envelopes through to us so we can post copies of our mag to him, and I always "nag" him about re-joining.

Whilst I read every one, it would be good to allow others to peruse them. I recall visiting the Swan with Two Necks, Pendleton (CAMRA UK Poty 2014), which had magazines from all over the

country, including WYT, on a very full shelf. Accordingly, I would like to invite nominations from readers as to which pub, or pubs, might like to take on the 'challenge' in being H&WI's 'library' and the place where CAMRA members from all over the UK can drop off magazines.

#### **GOOD BEER GUIDE 2019**

There was an "issue" at the printers, which led to many branches not getting their order for GBG 2019 until after GBGday. H&WI were fortunate and the 50 ordered came through with a few days to spare. On Thursday 13th September (GBG release Day) those with GBGs ventured forth and delivered licencee offered the packs, and GBG2019 at the discounted rate of £10. Due to Mike Godfrey in his wife being in Yorkshire, the ones to Skye and Plockton were delivered six days later (see below). One way or another the 50 ordered have been distributed, if you missed out, you can still buy a copy via Amazon for £10.60.

#### **BOB BARNES-WATTS**

On Monday 13th August, Gareth Hardman reported the following: -

"I have just heard the sad news that Bob Barnes-Watts died today. A regular down the Clachnaharry he was a true lover of ales and was always very complementary on the work the CAMRA Branch did.

"I knew he had been ill when I saw him down the Clach a few months ago but in typical BBW fashion he said he had responded well to treatment and the outlook was ok.

"For those that didn't know him that well, he was a transport consultant

who worked on train and bus timetables up and down the UK and was a walking encyclopaedia of transport knowledge and could give you travel info faster than any website!

"More importantly, he was a thoroughly decent good bloke, well read and intelligent who was always cheerful and upbeat, and it was always a pleasure to be in his company. He will be sadly missed by many people".

Whilst there are about 250 H&WI CAMRA members, I am very pleased that I met Bob on a couple of occasions and exchanged many emails with him over the years both during the last 18 months as Chair, and before.

I was hoping to get Bob to help me set up some "Rail Ale" routes from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh and Thurso/Wick both for locals and visitors to the H&WI Branch area. Other than an exchange of emails, sadly it was not progressed.

#### YOU CAN ONLY DO WHAT YOU CAN

I have always put family first, and CAMRA somewhere down towards the end of the line.

Sadly, due a family bereavement, Mike & Shirley Godfrey had an extended stay in Yorkshire and could not be expected to deliver the Licencee packs, nor be available for the monthly get togethers.

My wife's grandmother died at the beginning of October, and at the end of October my sister-in-law will be undergoing an operation to remove a tumour from her brain.

I know that not all CAMRA members in H&WI are in the best of health, but we all do what we can, when we can.

> Simon Urry chair@highland.camra.org.uk

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Just north of Fort William in Spean Bridge, a new brew tradition is being born. In some converted cow-sheds on the gentle north slopes of the valley just east of the village, James Leggett, lifepartner Lucy Hicks and business partner Ian Peter MacDonald are making some beers that may just be prize winners one day for 'Glen Spean Brewing Co'.

James handles the brewing while Lucy takes care of the office side of the operation and all paperwork, and Ian Peter MacDonald takes care of the Sales & Marketing and also owns the building & farmland that is the site for Glen Spean's operation.

A trained chef to trade, hailing from Suffolk, James was helping his good friend David at one of his pubs in Bury St Edmunds with an event. The pub had a garage attached and whilst doing some setting up the conversation moved to what the space could be used for. James & David between them casually remarked that it would make an ideal micro-brewery. As the two looked around, David said "well if the size of brew-kit is put in here that we used to use at Bishop's Road, you could

fit about six in", calling to mind the house that James, David and three others once shared and that had been a hot-bed of homebrew.

David's micro was a roaring success and quickly outgrew the garage. Following the purchase of a new building and exhaustive research into brewery builders, it was on a visit to John Trew of Oban Ales in Fort William as part of his purchase of a 12bbl expansion plant that he and James caught up again with David staying at James' B&B in Spean Bridge. This sowed the seed for James, knowing that there was a quality brewery builder in the area.

A year later the defunct Glenfinnan Brewery was coincidentally offered to Ian Peter who decided that neighbours James & Lucy would make good business partners and after sitting down and discussing the offer, they decided to go for it. The team brought the kit over to Spean Bridge from its original home in Glenfinnan and asked John Trew to come and take stock of the equipment.

At this meeting it was decided that the equipment would be totally refurbished

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by Oban Ales, who subsequently restored and upgraded the equipment removing all the old wooden-slat insulation and replacing this with double-wrapped Kingspan insulation covered with new steel skins. harmonising all pipe gauges and installing modern thermometry systems so that the brew kettles didn't have to be opened and dipped.

By summer 2017 everything was installed in the former cow sheds at Glen Spean's Tirindrish Steading and after a period of self-instruction and studying online, James settled on the brew method and recipes to be used and the trial brewing began. Based on his preparatory work trying out a few brew recipes, James started with a Pale Blonde and an IPA. "Our aim was to create really good, tasty session beers that both locals and hopefully tourists alike would enjoy, rather astonishingly impressive technical beers", he says. "We made the pale blonde as light as we could possibly get away with, and the Highbridge IPA as classic but also light as possible."

These went into cask in March this year, with distribution to about a dozen local outlets, as per the philosophy of Glen Spean not to have beer travelling far from the brewery. "There's no plan to expand the real cask sales, any sales growth will come from keg, bottle and eventually cans, when a cost-effective means to do this becomes available" he added.

Glen Spean made a seasonal, summer ale in July, selling 6000 pints. "A summer beer should, true to name, only be available for a couple of months in the summer. Likewise a winter beer should only really be available in the Winter months" remarked James. "We may produce a gold for next summer, which would be much lighter than Red Revival's deep, crystal malts".

The beers are fined but not filtered, conventionally copper-fined near the end of the boil as part of the brew process and then only re-fined once 'in cask'. They decided in the brewery's early stages that they didn't want huge cask sales, so as tightly to control overall quality. This will be the situation at least for the next couple of years, while production is kept to the old cow sheds at the farm.



Highbridge IPA, Snowgoose Premium Craft Lager and Pale Blonde will be going into keg as well, for commercial reasons, shortly followed by the Red Revival. This is for the restaurants and hotels particularly Fort William town centre and along its 'Golden Mile' that neither have any space for, nor the chilling equipment to hold real ale.

Many of the commercial outlets in Lochaber prefer a steady product like kegs, much easier to keep and easier to use, especially if the outlet does not have vastly experienced staff. Keeping real ale in the summer months is tough

and requires space, which wouldn't trouble a kegged product. Of alternative dispense methods, James observed "We did seriously investigate Key Keg and similar competitors but decided to steer clear of this until there is some movement on harmonisation of dispense fittings with the UK market". Key Keg themselves have said that changes are coming for the future but not immediately, with metal keg being dominant in the UK market".

The Snow Goose craft lager takes three weeks to make as opposed to the other products' two weeks, as it sits for an extra week in a closed top conditioning tank getting slow carbonation from a carb stone. For their expanded metal keg range, Glen Spean have taken delivery of a closed-top fermenter with carb stone, filter, CO2 fittings and new cooling plant. "We've ordered a hundred kegs as a mixture of 30l and 50l, when those arrive we'll pack it all together and see how the taste of the keg compares with the cask".

"We are going to keg in early November, with our Highbridge IPA and Snowgoose Lager. The Red Revival amber is also due to be bottled this winter and we have ordered the label design. That will result in the Glen Spean range being sold under blue, white, yellow and red labels, giving us a bottled range of four beers by the end of this year. This will give us 13-14 outlets for cask, with a further 30-40 taking bottles. We'll have gone from zero in March to 'quite a bit' by year end".

"Demand has been incredible. We have been very lucky with huge support from the area and its licensed premises. If we could have made three times our volume of beer, we could have sold three times our volume of beer. Logistically for us, it makes sense to brew the number of times we do it just now, but on a larger scale". So plans are

afoot to upgrade the 5 barrel kit to a 10 barrel kit in the near future. As for eventual scale of the brewery operation, relative to the next-door hotel business, he added "Once you reach 15 brewer's barrels I'm not sure you can really class yourself as a 'craft or micro-brewery' whereas at 10 barrels, the kit still fits inside our cowsheds."

As part of his successful recipes, James' favourite hop to use in blends for the brews in Amarillo. The recipes are all his own, with no special brewing education other than being a trained chef, and sharing a house with three other lads for four or five years where there was a good amount of amateur brewing went on. He came up with six recipes in the end and tried three, one result was woeful and was dropped straight away but the two others are current products in the form of the Highbridge IPA and the Pale Blonde.

One piece of good fortune James had early on was to run a hotel near Stowmarket, home to the famous Muntons Malts business and actually extensively hosted many Muntons' reps, when they visited head office around the from country. Michaela Crack, one of his hotel's employees at the time has gone on to have a career with Munton's Craft Brewing services, furnishing James with an immediate 'in' when the time came to compare his brew recipes with the finished product. Via his connection with Michaela, he was able to have Muntons run taste and quality predictions for the Glen Spean brews based on the paper recipes sent through; apart from a minor change to the amount of caramel malt in one formulation, the Muntons taste forecasts gave the recipes a resounding 'thumbs up'.

As an aside, James explained "The craft brewing service Muntons offer is essentially with these ingredients in this

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combination, the beer should taste like xyz', which allows a brewery to adjust their intermediate processes if the beer doesn't sample according to the prediction. So the tweaking after the Muntons forecast came back only involved another couple of brews for both Pale Blonde and Highbridge IPA, and by November last year we were happy that we were getting out a product that corresponded with the ingredients going in".



It then got too cold to brew in the converted cow-sheds so they closed the brewery down and restarted in February this year. Only doing a brew once a fortnight, there was not enough heat generated in the cowsheds; now, brewing three times a week and with the brew-shed insulated, the brewery can operate year-round if necessary.

Having cracked the initial stages of making a successful product range, James, Ian-Peter and Lucy turned their attention to the later stages of the value chain, in the form of packaging and delivery. "We're very interested in canning the product, but initial enquiries were negative; the quotes we had were

that it would cost us around 60p per can, which amazingly is more expensive than bottling. This is due to the mobile canneries that a small-scale brewery would use all being located in England, they would have to decamp for a week in their Ford Transit Connects to churn out our 20,000 or so cans from our conditioning tank".

"Realistically you have to be looking at 100,000 cans and upwards per cannery visit to make it cost effective and be able to sell at a competitive price. We are thinking of teaming up with a couple of local businesses for a joint canning effort, possibly with another Highland brewery who are also interested, in order to reduce unit costs. These plans are in the very early stages but our intention is to try and create a small but cost effective canning business that would be able to service the growing number of smaller breweries in the northern half of Scotland".

Backing this up with statistics, James reports that he heard that last year, craft brewery canned product sales went up by 500% (albeit from a low base). "Cans are definitely the way to go, especially for the younger drinkers segment who will progress during their drinking appreciation from lagers through lighter beers eventually to darker beers and stouts".

What of new products for next season? As well as a gold, Glen Spean Brewing Co. intend to produce a slightly stronger (approx 5.5%) Red Revival based ale that will go into whisky barrels to pick up whisky tones. Cross-over products i.e. whisky aged in IPA barrels and beer/cider matured in whisky vats are all the rage at the moment, and should make for a tasty beer once perfected. WYT? wishes Glen Spean every success!

Tony Vernon editor@highlands.camra.org.uk





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### Behind the Beer



When I first moved to Scotland as a fresh-faced undergraduate student in 1990, the search for a decent pint was often a fruitless and frustrating one. Confronted with a choice often restricted to Tennents or MacEwans I yearned for a greater variety of styles and the chance to sample beers from other breweries.

In recent years, however, there is no doubt that things have changed for the better. The explosion of micro-breweries producing artisan craft ales has revolutionised the beer scene and led to a far greater choice, and arguably quality, of beers. Although this phenomenon has yet to reach every town and village in Scotland, there is no doubt we live in the best of times to be a beer drinker.

As an academic, aside from enjoying drinking their beer I have always been curious about the people who make it and the conditions of work and employment in which they do it. As a result, I am presently leading a research team examining people management and the nature of work within the Scottish micro-brewing industry. So far, the

research team (comprising Dr lames Richards of Heriot Watt and Dr lennifer O'Neil from Edinburgh Napier) have visited 13 breweries, includ-Stewart's, Coul ing Brewing, Beath Brewing and Windswept, with another 12 arranged during the rest of August.

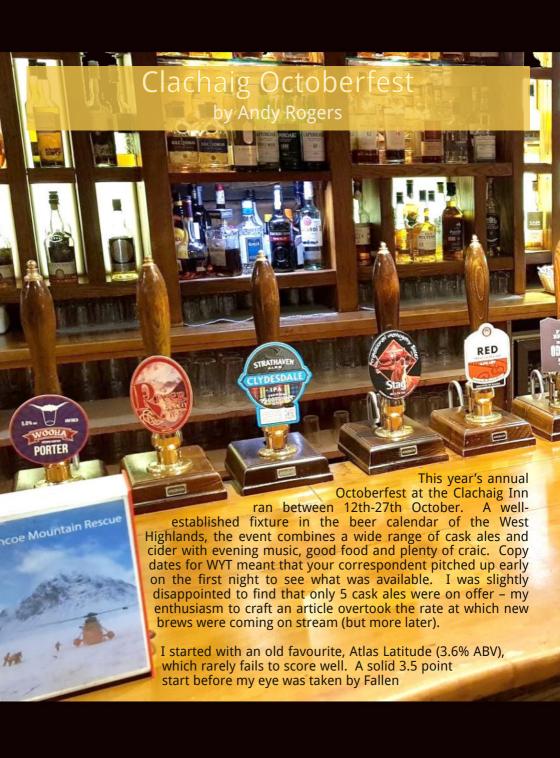
However, we are still looking for more participants to take part in our study. The study is seeking to learn more

about quality of working life, job satisfaction, work-life balance and career opportunities within the Scottish craft beer industry. In addition we are keen to examine the industry's skill requirements and how skills are developed/acquired and to appraise management approaches to managing staff within breweries at different stages of growth and maturity. More information can be found about the study at https://behind-the-beer.co.uk/. We are also on twitter: @behind\_thebeer

If you are the owner/manager of a microbrewery in Scotland we'd love to hear from you. Participation in the study takes the form of a friendly, confidential interview, typically lasting around an hour, at a time of your choosing. If you are interested in finding out more or wish to arrange an interview then please contact me at v.ellis@napier.ac.uk.

Dr Vaughan Ellis Edinburgh Napier University

Picture: the research team at Coul Brewing in Glenrothes





two from Cairn Mhor. Storm Callum was approaching the West Coast of Scotland so, after a plate of smoked salmon with some fine oatcakes and a healthy portion of Game Pie, it was time to get home to batten down the hatches.

My weekend then took me down to Old Trafford to watch my team, Warrington Wolves face the hot favourites Wigan Warriors in the Rugby League Super League Grand Final. Despite roaring myself hoarse, it was not enough to upset Wigan Coach Shaun Wane's farewell party before he takes himself north to join the Scottish Rugby Union set-up next year.

After a disheartening Saturday evening in the company of 64,000 other RL fans, it least did give me the opportunity to pop into the Clachaig once more on my return on Sunday afternoon. By now, the forest of hand pumps was well occupied with brews from Strathaven (Drookit and Clydesdale IPA), Williams Bros (Red and Joker IPA), Cairngorm Stag and Loch Lomond Lost in Mosaic joining the two Wooha beers and the New World Odyssey. I sampled a glass of the Lost in Mosaic (3.5 points) and

chatted with one of the bar staff, who sagely pointed out that 4 of the 9 ales on offer were IPAs.

As I have remarked before on these pages, the Clachaig policy of using smaller, local brewers to provide their keg offerings is still going strong. The keg range included Cairngorm Black Gold, River Leven Pilsner, Loch Lomond Helles Glen lager, Cromarty lager and Williams Caesar Augustus. Not a national brewer in sight! If you do persist in drinking keg, then at least it's kept local.

Finally a beer list from William, the bar manager at the Clachaig showed that that almost 35 cask beers will be coming forward over the fortnight. Breweries such as Black Isle, Cromarty, Glen Spean, Merchant City and Orkney will be added to the breweries represented to date. Notable rarities for this part of the world include Orkney Celebration XXX, a 4.6% peat smoked ale brewed to celebrate Brewery's Orkney birthday, Cairngorm Witches and Cauldron, a 4.9% ruby red seasonal special ale.

andymarian@btconnect.com



## CAMRA at the University of the Highlands and Islands Freshers' Day



A few months ago my daughter had a problem with her car, and I ran her to the UHI campus, and took the opportunity to have a look around, eventually introducing myself to Anne Thorn of the UHI Students Association. Thinking of the opportunity for both CAMRA and the students, I asked about any "Freshers events" when the academic year begins. Having passed on my details, CAMRA were invited to "turn up" on Wednesday 12th September.

I found our "prime pitch" just opposite the reception desk in the cavernous entrance area, next door to the Wetherspoon table. Three loads of "kit" were brought in from my car using a sack trolley to 'set up shop'. The table was quickly "dressed" just before the event started at 10:00 with a squat bookshelf with over 20 old GBGs on it, thirteen different (full) bottles of beers

which Cromarty Brewery had kindly donated, and two boards which had CAMRA "propaganda" blu tacked onto them, plus various leaflets & leaflet holders, the current and back copies of What's Yours Then? And beer mats promoting cider and community pubs, the latter are like jigsaw pieces and all connect – just like a pub joins a community together!

Having already gained permission to dish out alcoholic samples of 20 ml, I was wary of not making sure someone was underage, and so as to be fair samples were limited to two per person. To limit the number of samples per person, I put a black indelible mark on one then the other thumb.- "two and out".

bookshelf with over 20 old GBGs on it, You know it is said that "Policemen (and thirteen different (full) bottles of beers women) always look so young", (well

some do) if someone asking for a sample looked young (they all did!) I asked them for proof of age which was willingly offered. I was pleased that noone who was under 18 "chanced it", although most of the students there were in the 20 -30 age bracket.

Many had a worryingly good understanding of the various types and styles of beers, not just the difference between cask and keg, but also many expressed a preference for "craft keg "which many within CAMRA dismiss as a "hipsters drink". Clearly, the customer knows best!

I was fortunate to have had the 2019 GBGs delivered two days before and brought some copies along just in case anyone did sign up on the day and wanted to buy one at the members rate of £10. However, there were two members there, one manning a stall, and the other a student who did collect one each. The last of 13 bottles of beer was emptied just before13:00, with still another hour to go.

Summing up, I thought it was a very well organised event, and the Students Association had arranged for sandwiches and water to be distributed to the "stall holders". Other than political parties, there was also representation by the police and armed services, and "pressure groups", including CAMRA and business interests as well such as Eastgate Centre, and not one, but TWO Pizza firms and of course Wetherspoon. Later I found out there were 96 stalls, although apparently two did not turn up.

Although no-one signed up on the day, it was great to "pitch" CAMRA to such a knowledgeable group of people.

Do anything differently? Yes, I would have had a CAMRA logo 'skirt' around the table, some pull-up CAMRA

hoardings, and a second person to help!

Many thanks to Anne Thorn for offering the pitch and offering another one next year.

A massive thanks to Jenni at Cromarty for the bottles of beer, and of course the students who came along to see what CAMRA was all about and trying the beers which included:-

500ml:- Happy Chappy, Kawabunga, Brewed Awakening, Red Rocker,

330ml;- Breakfast in Berlin, Man Overboard, AKA IPA, White Out, Lager, Rogue Wave, Udder Madness, Arctic Swell, Ghost Town.

Simon Urry chair@highland.camra.org.uk



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### Real Ale Pubs List

These Pubs, Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale. They are listed 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 (ξ΄;) or have only bottles (Δ) 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 via the contact details on the penultimate page or fill in What?ub scores (CAMRA members). Additional notes show lastknown discounts for card-presenting CAMRA members.

#### INVERNESS

Black Isle Bar Caledonian Castle Tavern (30p) Clachnaharry Inn Corrigarth Hotel **Encore Une Fois** Fairways Loch Ness Golf Course Gelleons Glen Mhor Hotel (Nicky Tams) **Gunsmiths Bar Heathmount Hotel** Hootananny **Inches Gate** Johnny Foxes Kingsmills Hotel Kings Highway (JDW, 50p) Lauders (10%) Loch Ness House MacGregors Number 27 Phoenix Bar Platform 8 Snowgoose Three Witches Waterfront WoodWinters A White House A

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Cawdor Tavern (20%)

#### Strathspey -Grantown on Spey-

Ben Mhor Hotel Boat Country Inn & Restaurant, Boat of Garten Cairn Hotel (Rowanlea Bar) Carrbridge (20p) Carrbridge Hotel Craig Bar Grant Arms Hotel

**High St Merchants** Muckrach Lodge Hotel

#### Aviemore

Aviemore Inn Ben Macdui Cairngorm Brewery Cairngorm Hotel 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. Glenmore

**ILoch Inch Boathouse** (Quarter Deck Bar), **Kincraig** Rowan Tree, Kincraig Suie Hotel, Kincraig -Kingussie-

Duke of Gordon Hotel (Ghillies Rest Bar) Glen Hotel, Newtonmore (q02) Kingussie Golf Club Tipsy Laird

**EASTER ROSS** 

#### **Black Isle**

Royal Hotel, Cromarty Cromarty Arms Plough Inn, Rosemarkie Crofters Bistro, Rosemarkie A Anderson, Fortrose Station Hotel, Avoch Allangrange Arms, Munlochy, (20p) Culbokie Inn

#### Tain to Inverness

Platform 1864 A Edderton Inn (hotel) Castle Hotel. **Portmahomack** Mallard, Dingwall Highland Hotel, Strathpeffer Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer A Inchbae Lodge Hotel, Garve Aultguish Inn, Garve

#### Strathconon

Slaters Arms, Cannich Tomich Hotel

## Loch Ness (c/w from INV)

Dores Inn
Craigdarroch Inn (Am
Fuaran Bar), Foyers
Whitebridge Hotel
Bothy Bar, Fort Augustus
Caledonian Hotel (Corbie
Bar), Fort Augustus
Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
Glenmorriston Arms
Hotel, Invermorriston
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 🔆 Old Station Restaurant. Spean Bridge Roy Bridge Hotel (Roy Bar) Stronlossit Hotel, Roy **Bridge** Glenspean Lodge Hotel, Roy Bridge :: **Corrour Station House** Restaurant, Corrour Estate (restaurant,  $\Delta + \frac{1}{2}$ ) Moor of Ranoch Hotel.

#### **In Fort William**

Moorings Hotel (Neptune

Rannoch Station (hotel, Δ)

Bar/Mariners Lounge),
Banavie, nr Ft William
Lochy
Ben Nevis Hotel \( \Delta \)
Ben Nevis Inn
Glen Nevis Restaurant
Cobbs \( \@ \) Nevisport
Crofter Bar \( \& \) Restaurant
Garrison West
Grog \( \& \) Gruel
Ben Nevis Bar
Great Glen (JDW 50p)

#### Fort William (S)

Corran, Onich A Four Seasons, Onich (10p) Onich Hotel Loch Leven Hotel. Ballachulish (N) Ballachulish Hotel. Ballachulish A Laroch Bar, Ballachulish 🎎 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 Δ
Glenuig Inn
Loch Shiel Hotel,
Acharacle
Salen Hotel
Ariundle Centre, Strontian
Lochaline Hotel Δ
Arisaig Hotel (Crofters
Rest)
Chlachain Inn, Mallaig
Steam Inn, Mallaig
Tea Garden Café,

#### **Branch**

Scottish and Northern Ireland Branches Meeting Sat 17th Nov Ayrshire & Wigtownshire

Christmas Walkabout Sat 15th Dec 2018 Provisional start 13h @ Kings Highway Inverness

H&WI Branch AGM Sat 19th Jan 2019 13h, MacGregors Inverness

Scottish and Northern Ireland Branches Meeting Sat 2nd Mar 2019 Renfrewshire

## Diary

Members' Weekend and AGM Dundee 5th - 7th April 2019 helpers required, volunteer via Simon

Scottish and Northern Ireland Branches Meeting and AGM Sat 11th May 2019 Northern Ireland

Scottish and Northern Ireland Branches Meeting Sat 24th Aug 2019 H&WI (please suggest a venue!) Mallaig ::
West Highland Hotel,
Mallaig ::
Old Forge, Inverie

## WESTER ROSS

#### Cluanie to Kyle of Lochalsh

Cluanie Inn (temp. closed) 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 Applecross Walled Garden, Applecross A 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 👙 Glendale House, South Erradale A

#### In Gairloch

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

### Gairloch to Ullapool

Poolewe Hotel
Aultbea Hotel (Convoy
Tavern)
Dundonnel Hotel
(Broombeg Bar)

#### In Ullapool

An Teallach Shop \( \Delta\)
Arch Inn
Argyll Hotel (20p)
Ceilidh Place
Ferry Boat Inn (20p)
Morefield Motel
Royal Hotel (Waterfront
Bar)
Seaforth Bar & Restaurant

#### **Ullapool North**

Summer Isles Hotel, Achiltibuie Am Fuaran Bar, Achiltibuie Δ

#### CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND West Coast

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

#### North Coast

Sango Sands Oasis,
Durness ::
Smoo Cave Hotel,
Durness ::
Ben Loyal Hotel,

Tongue 🎊

Tongue Hotel 🎨 Central Hotel (Top Joes), Thurso Commercial Hotel (Comm Bar), Thurso Holburn Hotel (Bar 16), Thurso Weigh Inn (Ashes Bar), Thurso Ulbster Arms Hotel (Anglers Nook), Halkirk 🔆 Castletown Hotel A Northern Sands Hotel. Dunnet Seaview Hotel, John O'Groats Storehouse, Iohn O'Groats Δ

**East Coast** Alexander Bain, Wick (JDW 50p) Mackays Hotel (Cocktail Bar), Wick Bin Ends, Wick A Porltand Hotel, Lybster Bay Owl Restaurant, Dunbeath Bannockburn Inn. Helmsdale Belgrave Arms Hotel, Helmsdale Sutherland Inn. Brora Golspie Inn (Sutherland Hotel) Stags Head Hotel, Golspie  $\Delta$ 

Trentham Hotel, Poles nr Dornoch

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 🔆 Old Inn. Carbost Taigh Ailean Hotel (Munros Bar), Portnalong (20p / B&B deal) Old School Restaurant Dunvegan 🔆 Stein Inn, Waternish **Edinbane Inn** Skeabost House Hotel Uig Hotel Bakur Bar, Uig Ferry Inn, Uig Bosville Hotel (Merchant Bar), Portree Isles Inn, Portree (10% food discount) Portree Hotel Royal Hotel (MacNab's Inn), Portree Sconser Lodge Hotel Broadford Hotel (Gabbro Bar) Claymore Restaurant, **Broadford** Hebridean Hotel, Broadford Saucy Marys Lodge, Kyleakin 🎎 Isle Ornsay Hotel (Praban Bar), Sleat Ardvasar Hotel (Hideout Bar) Kinlock Castle, Isle of Rhum A

#### FILEAN STAR / WESTERN ISLES

-Leòdhas/Lewis-

Carlton Lounge & Bar

Crown Inn (Harbour Bar), Stornoway, Lewis Edge O' the World. Stornoway (temp. closed) Stornoway Sea Angling Club

#### -na Hearadh/Harris-

Harris Hotel, Tarbert 🔆 Hotel Hebrides (Mote Bar), Tarbert ::

#### -Uibhist a Tuath/North Uist-

Hamersay House, Lochmaddy A Lochmaddy Hotel A Langass Lodge, Loch Elport 禁 Westford Inn, Claddach Kirkibost

-Beinn na Faoghla/

#### Benbecula-

Dark Island Hotel A Isle of Benbecula Hotel, Creagorry A

#### -Uibhist a Deas/South Uist-

Borrodale Hotel. Daliburgh A Lochboisdale Hotel. Lochboisdale A Polochar Inn A

-Eirisgeidh/Eriskay-

Am Politician A

## An Ubhal as Àirde

#### II. THE APPLE HARVEST

Well, Nairn games has been and gone and that can only mean one thing for us in the Highlands, Autumn. Glorious Autumn, my favourite season by a country mile. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy Summer (especially when it's as warm and sunny as this past one has been), Spring and of course Winter but Autumn is a very special time for us cider makers, for with the Autumn comes the apple harvest.



Cider makers tend to be more rural than their brewing counterparts and as such are fairly well connected to the seasons and their changes, each bringing in their own set of jobs both in the orchard and the cidery, be it pruning, bottling or cutting grass. But Autumn is when cider makers spend the most time out in the orchards surrounded by (hopefully) fruit

laden trees, endlessly attempting to estimate the crop, judging the ripeness of the apples and crawling about on our hands and knees picking up the harvest.



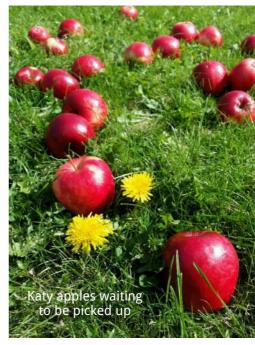
You see, there's a crucial difference between the harvesting of apples grown for eating and those destined for a higher purpose, namely cider. Apples for eating and indeed the supermarket shelves are carefully picked from the tree, placed gently into bins and shipped away for further scrutiny in a processing plant. Meanwhile, cider apples are generally allowed to fall to the orchard floor before being picked up and taken to the mill.

The reason for this difference is basically that a few bruises or bird pecks don't bother the cider maker as much as it would the casual apple muncher, after all, the apples are a lot more than bruised when they get crushed in the mill! Also apples for cider aren't expected to last for months, generally they're squashed and pressed within a week or two of falling from the bough.

Many cider makers, myself included, like to leave the crushed apples for a couple of days before pressing, here the "bruising" is allowed to progress even further extracting both extra colour and flavour from the prolonged exposure to the apple skins. This process of leaving the apple pulp, typically for 24 to 48 hours is known as maceration. In addition to all that colour and aroma the apple skins are also home to the myriad wild yeasts that some of us use to convert the apple juice from the press into cider, so a bit of extra contact time can do no harm.

Picking apples up off the floor can be hard on the back (not to mention the long suffering knees) but it ensures you're definitely getting the apples at their ripest, they don't fall off the trees if they're not ready (unless a strong wind comes along and takes them off!). This hands and knees stage is also the first and arguably most important stage in the cider making process, it's here on the orchard floor that we decide which fruit goes in the mix and which doesn't. We don't mind cuts and bruises but rot is a definite no-no as is anything showing signs of mould.

Typically for a larger apple tree we'll pick the fruit from under it up to 3 or 4 times, each time getting the ripest fruit which has fallen and leaving the rest on the tree until their time comes, frequently revisiting the tree ensures you're not going to lose any of the fallen fruit to rot, it's a bit of balancing act trying to time the harvest just right to ensure perfectly ripe apples. For smaller trees



where we can get a better gauge of overall ripeness we can give the tree a gentle shake which if done right can



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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.

mean you only have to pick that tree once and you get a load of delicious ripe apples.

Most apples (especially those varieties bred specifically for cider) can be fairly forgiving and stay perfectly ripe for several weeks before spoiling while pears on the other hand can have a prime window of just a handful of days!

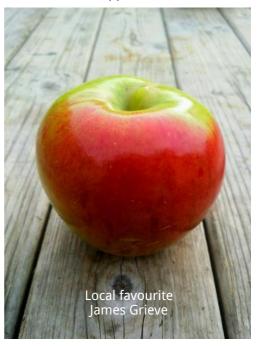
There's a bit of a myth that cider can only be made from cider apples. While it's true that certain styles of cider can only be made from cider apples, exceptional cider can be made from any apples at all by employing different techniques, even varieties traditionally considered as cooking apples such as the ubiquitous Bramley or local favourite James Grieve (both typically ready by late September) can result in a truly delicious cider.

There are some cider varieties such as Brown Snout or Tremletts Bitter however that have a tendency to hold on to their fruit. Quite frequently up here in the Highlands where it's colder than their native West Country homeland the harvest of these apples can stretch well into December, in fact one cider variety grown on the Black Isle can hold its fruit right through the winter and into the following spring!

In addition to going about the place picking up apples, quite a lot of folk bring me their excess crop; generally this seems to be all apples that remain in the garden after approximately 5 apple pies have been made and duly consumed. This is a great arrangement because I get more apples to make more cider and in exchange the apple donor gets a bottle or two of cider to enjoy (probably with a slice of apple pie).

There's few things more disheartening than seeing fruit go to waste on a gard-

en floor so feel free to drop me a line if you find yourself with more apples than you can eat, bake or give to the neighbours, I'll gladly swap them for a drop of cider (ryan@caledoniancider.com). In addition to that there are community orchards springing up all over our region these days; many offer a juicing facility such as greenhive.co.uk in Nairn or moofood.org in Muir of Ord, a quick search online will probably help you locate someone nearby to help with all those excess apples.



If you'd like to learn a bit more about this important stage of cider making then we are planning to have a H&WI branch apple picking session on the black isle in November so keep your eyes peeled for more details on this as we approach November.

Until then enjoy this glorious season and all the bounty that it brings.

Cheers, Ryan

ryan@caledoniancider.com

### 14th Morefield Beer Festival, Ullapool 25th-27th Oct



We were able to just squeeze this into the Autumn edition before it went off to printers. After returning from Orkney from a short week away, it was an early start (by comparison) on a cold and snowy morning to join the service 961 at" Tore Interchange" at 08:35 on Saturday morning for the journey of just over an hour to Ullapool.

As a driver, other than the "slow" bit between Contin and Garve, I really like the journey, particularly the section alongside the reservoir after the Altguish Inn, although the black lines of tarmac against the white snow dusting was a bit worrying in such cold conditions. Descending from Braemore Junction, sweeping past Loch Broom (groan) down to Ullapool the grey gave way to clear blue skies and sunshine, albeit still a wee bit chilly.



few "slippery" moments! The downside of using a service bus arriving at the Pier at 09:45 is that there are no pubs open until 11:00! However, with conditions bright and sunny it was worth a walk around the places listed on WhatPub taking updated photos to upload later.

I made my way to Ferry Boat Inn for 11:00 where I had arranged to meet up with local member Rod Baker. The FBI was down to two of four handpumps for the winter, offering Deuchars and Poppy Otter, a "rebadged" Otter Clause which was very good. Rod turned up at 11:30, a wee bit late because his passengers, daughter Jo (the DD) and partner Ian, both of whom work at the school at Scoraig, had problems with their motor boat across Little Loch Broom to Dundonnell.

We finished our drinks and then a quick drive up to Morefield. Rod had already tried some of the 20 beers on offer from the 13 breweries, and three ciders from Thistly Cross (all from Scotland) the previous day with his wife Christine and other daughter, Alison. Although only day three, Strathaven's Clydesdale IPÁ had already sold out, and Fallen's "Chew Chew" (Christine's favourite) had left the station, as Tony Oulton advised in the freshly updated schedule.

Rod advises that Alison's favourite was Thistly Cross's Real Ginger cider, very appropriate for CAMRA's "cider month" and recommended the Alchemy "Bad Day at the Office" which seemed like a good place to start, moving onto Top Out's "Pale Ale" and "Copperheid", the latter being just toooo "gingery" for my liking. Top Out beers are inspired by climbing routes, so for all you Munro baggers, "collect them all".

On reaching Ullapool safely the coach Tony had prepared some voting forms to driver did comment that there were a score the beers and was asking if I could enter the scores. Although there is a "back door" route, I asked Tony to encourage CAMRA members visiting to enter their own scores via WhatPub. Rod, Tony and myself had an interesting discussion about the NBSS beer scoring system. It was clear that there was a lot of confusion about the zero to five scoring index in particular, and 'how to score beers' in general.

I pointed out that although subjectively I might be inclined to score Copperheid low because of my own preferences, that would be unfair, because the beer, in terms of style etc. was exactly as the brewer designed it to be, it was well kept and served at the correct temperature. I may have appreciated it more, had it been a very hot day!

As an aside, within CAMRA there is a growing (heated?) debate about beer scoring, some members just understanding the system at all, and other becoming very confused. Many are scoring subjectively based on their preferences and prejudices, although each score should be objectively based on a strict set of criteria. CAMRA place great weight behind beer scoring because it is used to select 4,500 entries in Good Beer Guide by the 200+ branches in the UK. Interestingly, one CAMRA branch had a beer festival where the "Beer of the Festival" turned out to be kegged! Clearly a debate which will run and run, but in the meantime, PLEASE score the beers you try.

Intrigued by the name, I tried Stewart's "Radical Road Reverse" and was not disappointed, just the right amount of bitterness for me. Not sure how the name came about! Rod's family had been swimming, and an arrangement had been made for them all to meet up at FBI at 13:30, so I was left propping up the bar! My final half was "Just the Ticket" from Fallen, who are based at the old Kippen station in Stirlingshire

and the names of the beers are all a "nod" to all things railway. All the half pints were priced at £1.95.



I was pleased I had taken all of the pictures in the morning because on leaving Morefield Motel, the weather had changed and was very overcast and wintery again. Calling by the "Seafood Shack" at 16:00 I learned they were just closing – for the season, opening again at Easter. The Arches was my next port of call, to down a pint of An Teallach. I emailed Rod the next day with a draft of this report, inviting comment. He revealed that he really liked the Alchemy Bad Day, although it was a close-run thing with the Keith Pale Ale which Ian also liked.

Finally, we are very fortunate that publicans such as Tony are willing to put on beer festivals such as this, offering a wider selection of beers than they would normally keep. OK, so it is not a Great British Beer Festival sized event, but at least you do not have to travel far! Although there were only two CAMRA members there during the day on Saturday (Jo and Ian are lapsed members from "Englandshire" but may rejoin H&WI) these events are open to all and the branch does its best to promote them to the H&WI membership.

Maybe make a note in your next year's diaries, for the 15th Ullapool Beer Festival 24th – 26th October 2019!

Simon Urry chair@highland.camra.org.uk

### **Pub News**

#### **CAITHNESS & SUTHERLAND**

**Kylesku Hotel** – Was four HPs on cask, now 3 HPs, one on (real ale) keykeg. Weigh Inn (Ashes Bar) – Orkney and John O'Groats HPs removed.



Keith Morrell popped along to the **Seaview Hotel**, John O'Groats, to present its maiden licencee pack for appearing in GBG19. He is pictured handing over a souvenir copy to licencee Andrew Mowatt, with regulars Carole Whittaker and Mark Gibson together with Allan Farquher from JoG Brewery looking on. The hotel is the tap for the brewery and is all of 50 metres away.

#### **EASTER ROSS & LOCH NESS**

**The Anderson** – one HP removed, now just two RA, and a cider. **Conon Bridge Hotel** – Cairngorm HP removed. **Culbokie Inn** – has had Happy Chappy on keg for some time, but now has its HP offering a "rotating" RA from Cromarty. **Ledgowan Lodge** – has remodelled its bar and the RA (from An Teallach) is temporarily unavailable, but they keep a good range of bottles.

Ken & Beatrice Macrae took a trip to the Black Isle and met one HAPPY CHAPPY. Its always inspiring to receive a hearty welcome from a barman after a walk, and we received this in abundance from Calum MacKenzie (pictured), nephew of the owner, and his team at **The Plough Inn**, Rosemarkie.

We had a fine pint of staple Happy Chappy, from the neighbouring Cromarty Brewery, and had it been the weekend we could also have sampled sister brew



Red Rocker, a red rye based beer, "recklessly" laced with American hops during the boil and dry hopped after fermentation. They have also stocked Orkney Brewery Dark Island, and others from the H&WI region.

The Plough is a classic independent pub in a pretty small village, and as such Calum also caters for speciality whisky, gin and lager connoisseurs [?? - Ed.] in a setting where all drinkers are encouraged to mingle and unwind.

#### **INVERNESS**

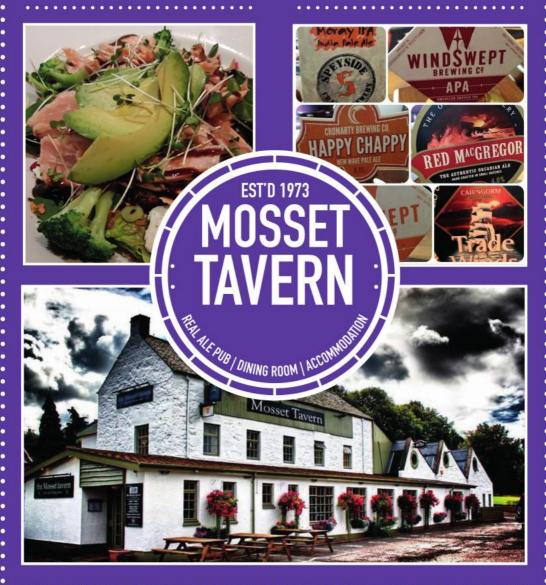
Eric Wiseman advises that Nico's at Glen Mhor was renamed **Nicky Tam's** – three years ago! **Kings Highway** now has a "patio" area outside in their part of the car park. Tomlinsons closed its doors for the last time on 12th August and as of 15th October, Gunsmiths Bar no longer has Real Ale.

#### **NAIRN & STRATHSPEY**

Jacko's – (Nairn) a report of Wooha RA on keykeg. A local member will pop in and "check it out" (see keykeg article in Summer WYT). Garth Hotel – (Grantown-on-Spey) following the installation of a "new" cellar, there was no room for cask ales, so the HP's have been removed Carrbridge Hotel - has

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sprouted two Cairngorm HPs. **The Bothy Bar** directly under Winking Owl – (Aviemore) is newly '100% disabled accessible' and an outside 'protected' seating area has been made from reclaimed corrugated tin sheeting, so you do not have to wait until the summer to sit outside to enjoy the changing "mood lighting".

Aviemore Inn - the static caravan site (opposite the turning for Old Bridge Inn) has a Cairngorm HP. After a short closure at the end of last year, the Pine Marten Bar (Glenmore) re-opened its doors on 1st Jan. We have been advised by Mandy Peden (Bill Wilson's sister) that she and her husband John will be running the place until 1st November when Katie Jachacy and Scott Fleming take on the lease.

Rowan Tree – (Kincraig) NEW – found a Cairngorm HP offering Stag, also Cairngorm Gold on font. Siverfjord – (Kingussie) confirmed, no RA HP, but does have a full selection of Cairngorm bottled beers. When Tipsy Laird (Kingussie) transferred from Punch to Heineken Star, Lisa advised it would be sprouting two new handpumps, bringing the total to four.

#### **FORT WILLIAM & LOCHABER**

Andy Rogers writes: **The Lochy** in Caol, Fort William is serving Glen Spean Highbridge IPA through a single HP. According to Gordon, the landlord, the beer is selling well and is a good pint. He will take the beer off through the winter as the tourist trade from the Caledonian Canal dwindles - he is keen to ensure that the beer quality is maintained. Normal service should be resumed in March.

#### **SKYE**

Mike Godfrey reports: We met last Friday with Nathan Fielding, the Hotel

manager of the **Cluanie Inn** which has been bought by Mars Black Sheep Hotels Ltd. This is a new branch of the 'Mars Group' who are mainly based in India and operate a varied portfolio of establishments ranging from luxury hotels to pizza parlours.

This venture into the Highlands also includes the Letterfinlay Lodge Hotel (now renamed 'The Whispering Pine') on Loch Lochy and Craigard House in Invergarry (now Rokeby Manor, the same name as one of Mars Group's mountain hotels in the Himalayan foothills). All three properties are due to open in March - more information at blacksheephotels.com.

Nathan appeared keen on the idea of serving locally brewed real ales, at least in the Cluanie, and we left him with details of the three breweries most local to him. More details to follow as things develop.

#### **EILEAN SIAR / WESTERN ISLES**

Yours truly braved the Atlantic swell and swam all the way from South to North Uist to present a GBG19 pack to Eilidh and Colin Murray of the **Westford Inn**.



Unfortunately, Edge O' the World in Stornoway, the Hebridean Brewery tap, closed its doors on 24th August. We understand that the former licencee's son is trying to restart the pub under his own personal licence. **Harris Hotel** – Tarbert – Windswept APA "discovered".

## **Brewery News**

#### 20 and still Counting



Craig Steven from Orkney Brewery writes: "Orkney Red MacGregor won Gold at the Great British Beer Festival at Olympia in August. The category

was the Bitter class, so essentially taking on the many English contem-poraries and demonstrating mastery in their area of expertise. Since this beer and its fellow Orkney Dark Island won their regional classes in April last year, the brewery has amassed no less than 20 awards.

"To demonstrates the strength of Orkney's performance further has been the wide variety of certification and judging panels which includes SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers), the World Beer Awards and London Beer Competition and CAMRA regional and culminating with the CAMRA national award at this year's Great British Beer Festival at Olympia.

"Norman Sinclair MD of Orkney and recent addition to the team Craig Steven the Commercial Manager, were both present on the Trade Day to greet customers and fellow brewers as well as hopefully gain some more industry recognition, they were not disappointed.

"Of course, the only problem has been in getting some of these awards back home safely but that's a nice problem to have of course" Norman joked. He added "Seriously though another fantastic achievement for our brewing team and all the commercial team who work hard to support, promote and deliver great beer experiences for our customers and drinkers throughout the UK".

"Further it goes to show sometimes focus and meticulous attention to process and the quality of ingredients can be recognised rather than overnight just trying to brew the next new thing, Red MacGregor and Dark Island have both been with us for the 30 years of our existence and there is a great affection from longstanding loyal drinkers and new converts".

Craig then expressed, the pursuit of excellence in the core beers is not the only strategy of course. "These two beers have a strong reputation we feel and have been consistently recognised with many awards but we are not resting on our laurels, we have innovated this year with the deep golden citrusy Cliff Edge IPA and Wave Breaker Blonde Ale using New Zealand Hops. These new beers are an excellent counterpoint to our known beers and after receiving a great welcome from trade, we can see them returning in 2019, perhaps for longer.

Naturally there is more to come in 2018, Celebration XXX an Orcadian Peat Smoked Ale will come out in September, brewed to commemorate the 30 years of Orkney Brewery.

However, the immediate attention now is on Red MacGregor of course. Craig said "Red MacGregor is what I call right bang in the sweet spot of beer drinking, having the toasty and caramel malt character more akin to brown ale or bitter but having the citrusy and fruit notes of American Pale Ale"

When it debuted it was the first beer that expressively used US Cascade hops and so was out ahead of its time and a truly innovative brew. There are various qualities in the flavour profile of this beer which offers wide appeal to both



Tel: 01667-404555

## NATIONAL CHAMPION 2018

Red MacGregor is a mighty beer indeed, it has a wonderfully complex aroma of fruity hop zest and spiciness with rich malts. Initial toasted and caramel malt, then mouth-watering citrus hop fruits, giving way to a dry refreshing robust hop bitterness.



Red Macgregor was one of the first beers in Scotland that expressively used the citrusy American hop Cascade and as a result became a forerunner to Britain's new wave of craft beers





older and newer drinkers and at a flavoursome 4% aby is well suited for both pubs and at home".

Whatever you are drinking these days it may be worth making it a beer from the Orkney Brewery and raise a toast to their latest success, 30 years and an exciting future.

#### **Champion Beers of Scotland for Black Isle Brewing**



Congratulations to Black Isle Brewing Co., who at this year's Champion Beer of Scotland awards picked up Gold for 'Yellow Hammer' in the Golden Ale category and

Overall Silver for 'Hibernator'. Pictured receiving the award from left to right are co-owner David Gladwin, head brewer Thorsten Walscheck, brewer Morgan Gage and Mike Gladwin, brother of David and also co-owner.



Simon reports: "BIB will be installing a canning line soon, and have had some trials off site. I was given a tin of 'Rhode Runner' - a New England pale ale natural & unfiltered 440 ml, 5%. This was an export tin as it reads 'imported by Froth Beer Co Floriat WA6014 Australia'. I am assured by David that "All the BiB beers are unpasturised and unfiltered." Accordingly, this is their first real ale in a ringpull can! To explain David's rather fruity 'finger geometry', a bee had just landed on his fingertips.



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## **Inverness Cider Walk-about Oct 13th**

After being dropped off at the bus stop in Munlochy by my daughter on the way to work a VW Golf pulled up just before the bus was due. "Inverness Simy" the hidden familiar voice hailed from inside.

Ducking down it was Jim Anderson. I had not seen Jim for a while, and normally the conversation is short because he is busy in his pub. He advised that he was still getting viewings for the pub, but there were no strong contenders yet.

I recalled to Jim him telling me how he found and then bought the then-Royal, by taking a wrong turn at the Tore roundabout, and said that there was no reason why it could not happen again. I reminded him that lighting can strike twice! I also commented that he had better watch his son who now worked behind the bar whilst not at Uni because he seems to have become as knowledgeable about beer as his dad!

Jim has always been very "pro cask" although he did remove one handpump from the bar earlier this year. Having said that, he is also in favour of "interesting" kegged beer, and it is a view I share with him. He dropped me off immediately outside the Blackfriars which is currently being renovated. Not the most welcoming day, with Storm Callum blowing itself out, which would continue dumping its rainfall for the rest of the day.

After completing a few chores in town, I made my way to Kings Highway for noon to meet WooHa. I reviewed the Wetherspoon "Real Ale & Cider Festival" menu and circled the three of thirty beers and one of five cider/perrys available, opting for Rooster's 24-7, swayed by the "four big hitting hop varieties". A pleasant enough pint, but not delivering the hoppyness I had

expected – think Jarl! I joined Bill Potter and Neil Murray who were trying the "Hope & Glory" from Brentwood.

Just before 13:00, Katy Heppell and Craig Graham, a brewer from WooHa, turned up after a very slow transit up the A9 from Glasgow, an hour late because of the appalling weather conditions. Saying a quick hello, and then goodbye, I walked down to MacGregors where I found Ryan Sealy and someone who I presumed to be a friend of his, chatting away at the bar.



The "friend" introduced himself as Calum MacRae, who had been a CAMRA member since January and thought he would come along and see what it was all about and quite by chance had started chatting to Ryan. Both had travelled to Inverness on the same train Dingwall and Conon respectively. MacGregors had arranged to have a 'box' of Harry's "Scrummage" (which recently won gold at the CAMRA National Cider and Perry Championship) to be delivered but although delivery was attempted, sadly, nothing was left. So, we all ended up drinking bottled "North Shore" (from Ryan's Caledonian Cider Co.) which was very enjoyable.

Retracing my steps, we dived into Kings Highway and with only one of the five cider / perrys available, we ordered three pints of "Broadoak Premium Perry" (7.5%). After the first sip, we all agreed that we should have ordered halves. The perry was very sweet and after a while there was a clawing saccharine taste which lingered. Katy came over to our table with a bottle of Blonde and three tasting glasses. We all agreed it was a relief from the sweetness of the perry. Further visits brought us samples of lager, IPA, wheat and a very smokey Porter. The label styling for the US export market featured the "cows head" coloured up as per a Saltaire, and this now a feature for all WooHa products.

Although we had intended to visit Black Isle Bar, we skipped (aquaplaned) onto Castle Tavern where we found Craig Middleton from Cromarty just leaving, and Windswept just setting up. Nearly like "musical chairs", WooHa were also moving on to the Castle later.

A few weeks ago, Castle Tavern gave one of their six handpumps over to a

"rotating" cider offering. Given it was a "cider crawl", I should really have had the Westons Old Rosie dry cider (7.5%) which is a classic scrumpy, but with time pressing I elected to go for the



Windswept Weizen. I had it first about three years ago. Then the banana smell and taste made it "challenging" but nothing I would return to immediately. I had some more at this year's Bandstand

#### What's Yours Then? Contributions

We are always looking for pub and brewery news and "travelogue" contributions with pictures for WYT? and you do not have to be a CAMRA member or live in the H&WI branch area to contribute. The Highlands has in excess of 2 million visitors every year, and if you are one of those visitors and have picked up a copy of the magazine, please share your experiences with others, good or bad. Contact our editor Tony Vernon at editor@highland.camra.org.uk. If we do publish your item we will contact you to arrange a "vanity" copy of the magazine to be sent to you free of charge!

#### By Post

As much as we would like to mail out copies all over the UK free of charge to anyone who has picked up copies in the past, this has proved to be a wee bit costly, particularly at 56p (from April 2017) per edition. However, we are more than happy to send four copies to you for the charge of £2.50 per year which covers the cost of four 2nd class stamps. (currently 56p \* 4 = £2.24). We will buy the appropriate number of stamps and print up the same number of addressed envelopes but NOT sticking the stamps on until that edition is published. When we use the last stamp, we will add a note in with the mailing. If for any reason we discontinue the "offer", we will place any unused stamps in one of the addressed envelopes and mail them to you at OUR expense. Please contact info@highland.camra.org.uk for more details. Alternatively, you can read the current and back copies as far back as Winter 2003 free of charge, https://www.highland.camra.org.uk and click on the 'branch magazine' link.

beer festival, and really enjoyed it, hence this half pint, to "renew the acquaintanceship of an old friend". Everything tells you it is wrong – it is cloudy (it is supposed to be for a Weitzen) and it has that banana taste and smell. The banana flavours in beer are caused by chemical compounds called esters, in this case, isoamyl acetate which is produced by the yeast used to ferment the beer.

Although I departed first, hurrying through the rain which had not stopped all day, Ryan and Calum were not that far behind. It was a shame that more could not have come along for the first

"Inverness Cider Crawl" but there is no compulsion to attend and it was such a dreadful day. Whilst cider (and perry for that matter) are not particularly popular in Scotland generally, it is a growing market and has an increasing following.

The list of places within the H&WI branch area stocking "real" cider is massively out of date and it is hoped to address the matter over the next few months. So, if you find cider somewhere, please let us know!

Simon Urry chair@highland.camra.org.uk

### **Dundee Members Weekend 2019**

It may seem like ages away, but on Saturday 1 December, it will be 125 days until the members weekend opens. So far 500 CAMRA members have preregistered (as of 27Oct) to attend which is higher than the same time last year for Coventry. Many are making the journey to have an extended stay in or around Dundee.

Other than staff at St Albans, a team of CAMRA members from Scottish branches are also involved in the planning and "delivery" of making the weekend a success. I am working on brewery trips

out and contributing to the members weekend booklet. A document has been circulated which shows we still need a small army on the day to direct delegates and generally help out.

If you would like to help, please let me know, and I will pass your details onto Joe Crawford, the "local" organiser leading the event. Other than the CAMRA event, Dundee offers so much more, including the new Dundee V&A which opened on 25th August.

The Members weekend website is currently under continual development but it may be worth reviewing it to see what all the "fuss" is about: https://agm.camra.org.uk

Simon Urry chair@highland.camra.org.uk



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#### WHAT'S YOURS THEN?

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