

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter — July 2010



The Chairman Reports...

I WOULD like to thank all those members who attended our AGM at the fabulous Crosse Keys in the City of London. It was good to see so many people there — and it was also very pleasing to see so many who described themselves to me as AGM virgins.

We should be pleased that the Guild clearly encompasses the full range of beer of beer communicators from bloggers to trade journalists, consumer writers to technical writers, from scientists to historians. The range of expertise is reflected by your new Committee: Adrian Tierney-Jones, Paul Nunny, Pete Brown, Larry Nelson, Ros Shiels, Robert Humphreys, Zak Avery and Dave Bailey. The role of the Committee now, with the support of members, is to put into action some of the many ideas that came from the fruitful and constructive discussions that took place.

Part of the challenge we face as a growing organisation is how to keep growing and expand the range of services we offer to members and corporate members. The larger and more successful we get, the more complicated everything we do becomes — from managing our increasing membership to organising a dinner that will potentially have an attendance of more than 180 people means we have to become more professional. The growth has implications on the ability and availability of committee members to undertake the tasks that previously they would have found easier to fit into their working lives. This is a challenge we will endeavour to meet.

At the AGM we reaffirmed our main priorities:

- *To continue to organise trips, run awards and organise social events.*
- *Build stronger dialogue with other groups promoting beer.*
- *Create more interaction between members.*
- *Improve the Guild's value to the licensed trade.*
- *Grow relationships with key commissioning editors.*

To this end we will look at ways of building membership across the full range of beer communicators and developing the benefits of membership to people. As part of this, one suggestion was to make our newsletter more widely available in an electronic format on a regular basis to non-members. Given that the newsletter is now solely available to be downloaded from the website, this will simply be a matter of communicating that knowledge.

The planning for our annual dinner and awards will now begin much earlier — so that sponsors are not only properly in place but we are better placed to exploit PR possibilities. To this end, even though there is still much to do in planning this year's awards and dinner we will begin planning for 2011. This extra time will be very useful when it comes to introducing new categories into the awards and for talking to potential sponsors.

The Beer Writers Yearbook is now becoming an ever more important means of communicating with commissioning editors — and we will look to fund ways to further develop its appeal and extend its reach.

The Guild Awards and our Annual Dinner is rightly the prestigious showcase for our activities. The intention for this year's dinner is to bring the glamour of Bollywood to the world of beer. Building on the success of holding the event in modern, stylish surroundings, not normally associated with fine cuisine and beer, the event is being held on November 25 at the Radisson in Bloomsbury with the meal prepared by Michelin-starred chef Sriram Aylur from the Quilon Restaurant. Further details to be released soon.

Tim Hampson

Rupert Watts

RUPERT WATTS, officially Edmund Hannay Watts, died on June 14 aged 74 after a short illness. 'Rupe', who had been a journalist for most of his working life, had been a member of the National Union of journalists since 1960. A long time member of the Guild, he was also one of the early members of CAMRA. As a regular attendee at Guild events he will be missed. His 50-year career spanned local newspapers such as the *Slough Express*, *Wimbledon Borough News* and the *Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph*, while he also spent time in Canada, at the *Pembroke Observer*, an eastern Ontario daily.

He was also very active in business-to-business publishing and among the titles he worked for were *British Stationer Weekly*, *Building Industry News*, *Pulse*, *Computer Weekly*, *The Publican*, *H&V News*, *Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Today* and *Brewing and Distilling International*. His latter years were spent freelancing and in 2002 his book, *Fifty Square Feet of Swinging London*, his personal account of a journalist living during those tumultuous times was published.

We often ask ourselves what is the importance of the Guild and what is its role — for Rupe it gave him a sense of place and purpose and an opportunity to keep involved with an industry that he loved and a

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Pre-GBBF event at Brew Wharf

THE GUILD'S annual pre GBBF event is being held this year at Brew Wharf in Borough Market on the evening of Monday August 2, 6.30-9.30pm. Its theme is 'Industry Meets The Press' and all Guild members are invited — due to restrictions on space we are obliged to operate a strict invitation-only names-on-door policy so members wanting to attend this event are requested to email angie@cask-marque.co.uk who will then put your name on the door and send you an invitation that you must bring with you. We are also offering the opportunity for you to invite an influential + 1 to the event. Preferably this will be someone in the media or key opinion formers such as MPs. Or it might be your local brewer who has expressed an interest in becoming involved in the Guild (whoever it is we do respectfully ask that you don't use this as an opportunity to bring your drinking buddy with you for a freebie).

forum for contact with old friends and colleagues. His wife Christine told me that he would be buried with his Guild tie — clearly the Guild meant a lot to Rupe. TH

Brazilian craft beers grow

BLAND IS the polite way to describe the majority of beers consumed in what is currently the world's fourth largest beer market. However alongside the marketing-led clones you can now find an impressive range of excellent craft beers in many bars and supermarkets across the country. This revolution in what Brazilians refer to as gourmet beers is a very recent and ongoing phenomenon. Visitors to the 2014 Football World Cup and 2016 Olympics will be pleasantly surprised.

Outside the tropics the southern states have a more European climate. Many Germans immigrants settled here in the 19th century and the whole region has a German feel and appearance. The picturesque town of Blumenau is host to a huge Oktoberfest and also home to award winning micro Eisenbahn. They produce a wide range of classic German styles such as Dunkel and Kölsch as well as some more exotic offerings such as the champagne-style Lust. Further south lays Porto Alegre and around this large city are, among other notable microbrewers, Schmitt and Whitehead.

But it is in the central states of São Paulo and its vast land-locked neighbour Minas Gerais where the changes are most apparent. Bamberg microbrewery is situated in Votorantim, a satellite city of São Paulo. Here Alexandre Bazzo brews styles such as Schwarz, Alt, a delightful Rauch and more recently a beer aged in oak casks. Tradition and authenticity are fundamental.

In contrast, his friend Marcelo Carneiro da Rocha, owner of one of the oldest micros in Brazil, The Colorado Brewery (established in 1995 in Riberão Preto), likes to experiment. Although equally passionate about quality, Marcelo adds a touch of Brazil to each beer in his range which includes; Indica, an IPA with rapadura (a type of raw sugar cane), Appia, a wheat beer with locally produced honey and Demoiselle Porter, infused with Brazilian coffee beans.

Finally the picturesque mountain resort town, Campos do Jordão, is home to Baden Baden, also one of the early brewers of the new wave. Their range includes, perhaps surprisingly for a tropical country, a Stout and a Red Ale (at 7.5% and 9.2% respectively these are not session beers). AH Guild member Andrew Howitt lives and works in Brazil though catches up on UK cask beer in the summer

New edition of Bamberg bible

IN THE late 1970s I was very much swept along with the real ale movement, but I did make a number of visits to Germany

for holidays and got some inkling of the range of interesting beers in that country. Dark lagers intrigued me and clearly bore no resemblance to what we in Britain called 'lager' — cold, yellow and fizzy. In CAMRA circles there was a hostility to foreign beer — lager was seen as a threat to British ale and the continental café a threat to the British pub.

At this time that Michael Jackson visited Bamberg as part of his exploration of world beers and later Graham Lees, a founder of CAMRA then living in Munich, took other CAMRA people on cycle tours of Bavaria. An intriguing article Graham wrote in *What's Brewing* mentioned Bamberg's ten breweries and its speciality Rauchbier (smoke beer). Clearly Bamberg was an exceptional place. I soon made a visit.

In Britain we were spoilt in terms of the availability of beer and pub guides which covered the whole country. I found myself in Bamberg — but where were these breweries? Research in the *Yellow Pages* gave me the basics. I plotted the Bamberg breweries onto a street map on my return, thus creating my first guide.

Often, when travelling in and around Bamberg I had a few disasters — usually travelling some distance only to find a chosen brewery was inexplicably closed! The lessons I learnt and the information collected needed to be shared and hopefully they have smoothed the paths of many beer tourists since.

John Conen

John Conen's new edition of Bamberg & Franconia: Germany's Brewing Heartland. A guide to beers, breweries and pubs is available priced £9.99, CAMRA members £7.99.

Guild seminar

The Guild's annual seminar takes place on the evening of Monday October 18 with its subject Beer Styles. Venue will be Meantime's recently opened Old Brewery. Attendees will also have the chance to visit Meantime's new brewery in the afternoon. Further details will follow in the next newsletter.

CALENDAR 2010

- Pre-GBBF event, London, August 2
- Great British Beer Festival, London, August 3-7
- Great American Beer Festival, Denver, September 16-18
- Scottish Brewing Archive Association half-day conference, September 17, Glasgow, details: forbes.gibb@cis.strath.ac.uk
- World Beer Festival, Durham, October 9
- BGBW seminar on beer styles, London, October 18
- BGBW dinner and awards, London, November 25

Please send details of any relevant events to Adrian Tierney-Jones