

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter — April 2007

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Chairman Tim Hampson confounds expectations *inside...*

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The Chairman Reports...

I WOULD recommend members to visit the Durden Park Beer Circle's website www.durdenparkbeer.org.uk. Some years ago the Circle organised a wonderful seminar for the Guild, where the colours, aromas and tastes from a bygone era were wonderfully recreated, and it is good to see that this group of hobbyists are still trying to capture beer styles that might be lost.

Its main activity is based on the research, production and appreciation of old British beers, particularly from around 1840-1914 when a vast range of quality beers were brewed. To sup one of their beers means that you are sharing a glass with someone who lived while Victoria sat on the throne, who saw the start of the Industrial Revolution, or even took the King's shilling and went off to war.

Seminars and trips are a key part of what we do, and I am certainly looking forward to the Wood-aged Beer event Adrian Tierney-Jones is planning for later in the year. I believe this will turn out to be a wonderful showcase of the vibrancy and creativity of British brewers.

Thanks to Roger Protz we have an invitation from Marston's for a tour of Burton's iconic cathedral of beer. But more than that it will be an opportunity to finally complete the Guild's series of events on the ingredients of beer — over the years we have looked at barley, hops and yeast and now we turn to water. Marston's director of brewing Richard Westwood has agreed to lead a session on the importance of water to beer, something that is extraordinarily special in Burton.

For those of you who like to plan ahead, the Guild's dinner and awards is booked for December 6 at the Millennium Grosvenor Hotel, and hopefully we will have the services of Brian Turner again. Our plan is to build on the success of last year and the

larger venue should mean that more of us can share in the friendship of the evening.

Finally, we will soon be releasing research undertaken by Pete Brown for the Guild. The good news is that there are now 7.2 million beer fans in the UK, an increase of one million since last time the research was undertaken. Beer fans, broadly speaking, are people who drink a wide variety of beer styles (ie not just lager), and are interested in quality beer and new flavours.

Beer fans shatter the stereotype many have of beery people. Half a million of them are women. They are upmarket, affluent, and tend to be aged 25-44. Beer fans are into beer because they are interested in food and drink generally. They also enjoy drinking good quality wine, and like new recipes, new food products and exotic dishes. Better still they are avid readers of the broadsheet press and magazines. These discerning beer fans certainly deserve to be able to read more articles by members of the Guild in the media.

TIM HAMPSON, CHAIRMAN

Wherry good news for Glasto

I WAS interested to read your feature on beer at the Glastonbury Music Festival in the March newsletter, and the good news is that real ale WILL feature at Glastonbury this year, and it will be available in ALL the bars. Since 2004, Woodforde's has been the main supplier of real ale for the festival and we will be back this year, working in partnership with the Workers Beer Company, who provide the beer marquees, bars, bar staff and all the behind-the-scenes logistics that make it all work. So, even though Carlsberg will be the official lager beer of the festival, and the beer tents will be adorned with Carlsberg marketing material, Woodforde's WHERRY will also be there for people who like real ale and like their beer with flavour!

Woodforde's flagship award-winning beer — Wherry — will be served by gravity straight from the cask in all the 18-20 beer tents at Worthy Farm. Woodforde's will have a refrigerated depot and a team of ten people on-site throughout the week, using delivery vehicles to keep the bars supplied with their real ale. Most of the deliveries will take place during the night when it is easier for the delivery vehicles to negotiate the narrow

CALENDAR 2007

April 12-14	SIBA SW Tuckers Maltings Beer Festival
April 13-14	Helsinki Beer Festival
April 20-22	CAMRA Members Weekend, Wolverhampton
June 14	BGBW AGM, Star Tavern, Belgravia

Aug 7-11	Great British Beer Festival, Earls Court
Dec 6	BGBW Annual Dinner & Awards, Millennium Grosvenor Hotel

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

— and often very muddy — farm tracks. One of the beer tents — the Red Flag — located near to the Acoustic Stage, operates as an ‘Ale House’ throughout the event, with some 32 casks of real ale on stillage being permanently served by a large team of bar staff. A choice of several Woodforde’s beers will be available on this bar, together with a selection of real ales from some of the craft breweries local to Glastonbury.

Michael J Betts,
Joint Managing Director Woodforde’s

Visits

A visit to Marston’s is organised for May 23.

Provisional itinerary

11am — arrive, tea/coffee

11.30am — talk on water, Q&A session

Richard Westwood, Director of Brewing

12.30pm — lunch at visitor centre

1.30pm — guided tour of brewery,

Lesley Sweeney/Richard Westwood

2.30pm — tasting session, Richard Westwood

Anyone interested contact Tim Hampson,

tim@infopub.co.uk. There are also plans afoot

for a visit to Arkells at the end of August, more

details on this to follow, but if you are interested

contact Adrian Tierney-Jones.

End of an era at the White Horse

THE END of March sees Guild member and inimitable beer champion Mark Dorber bow out as manager of the White Horse. A lot of Guild members will have good memories of many memorable events at this temple to beer and food, especially the eve-of-GBBF receptions (*at the time of writing it looks like this event will be staged elsewhere, more news to follow next month*). Mark will now be spending his time at his other pub, the Adnams-owned Anchor in Walberswick, where he says ‘I am looking forward to new challenges in Suffolk and the heady world of beer buying! My time at the White Horse has been made hugely enjoyable by the legions of great and appreciative customers, the steady flow of bright, curious staff from all over the world and the awards that have been showered on us.’

ATJ

Cask Marque success

THE COMPETITION to find Britain’s best regional beers received a big ‘thumbs up’ from the pub industry with 2074 Cask Marque pubs electing to be polling stations at which consumers can register their vote. This has been helped by a lot of media support from the *Morning Advertiser*. During the week of voting 6 million £1-off

vouchers will be printed in the *Daily Telegraph* to encourage their readers to vote. Polling stations can be found by a text messaging service and 1000 people used the service in the first two days, a full week before voting can take place.

Paul Nunny

Man Alive

DROPPING INTO Ronaldsway Airport on a beautifully bright February morning it looked like the Med had shifted north a bit. Actually it was much better than that. For, come rain or shine, the Isle of Man is full of great British beer — and much of it courtesy of the Guild’s hosts, Okells, the dominant Manx brewer.

Guild members enjoyed a whirlwind tour around the compact island that took in part of the famous TT Race route and some great pubs, including the Trafalgar at Ramsay. This is a real ale haven where landlord Jimmy Keen’s house ale is brewed by Okells using his own wild hops.

Back in Douglas, head brewer Dr Mike Cowbourne enthusiastically took us around the 60-barrel high-tech brew-house that has carried on with the tradition of innovation begun by Dr William Okell when he introduced steam brewing in 1875 (the brewery was set up in 1850). Later, in the Tap, we sampled more of the extensive Celtic cask beer range: the splendid Doctor Okell’s IPA and Mac Lir wheat beer, along with a selection of seasonals such as the Smoked Celtic Porter and Olde Skipper.

Mike has developed the brands to build on the success of the mild and bitter and grow business outside the confines of the self-governing island — IoM is part of the British Isles but not in the UK. Now there are five quality Okells pubs in the UK and more are planned, while barrelage in the free trade is growing exponentially.

And centuries after the last Viking rulers left the island, the Celtic heritage and the unique selling point of the Manx Purity Laws have recaptured the attention of contemporary Norsemen to win export orders. Here is a brewery that is clearly tackling today’s challenges with great passion, energy and enthusiasm to secure tomorrow — and further confound the industry’s doom and gloom pundits.

Steve Hobden

Zoigl, a German communal brew

THOSE DEVELOPING an interest in German beers soon find themselves in Bamberg, in the Franconia (Franken) region of Bavaria, with its 10 brewing establishments and their taps. On hearing rumours of a legendary, elusive beer

called Zoigl, brewed by communal brewers in the neighbouring Oberpfalz region, they head there, but then return to cry in their beer, having found no Zoigl.

There are five Oberpfalz towns with communal breweries, where those with historic brewing rights, wheel wort from the breweries to their homes or pubs, where they convert it into beer and then sell it direct from the lagering vessels, unfiltered. Unfortunately, their complicated opening times, have led to tears for those in the hunt from this shy snow leopard of a beer. However, help is at hand, since there are websites giving details of when and where Zoigl can be sampled, for example www.zoigl.de and www.zoiglbier.de. The latter covers two twin towns, Windischeschenbach and Neuhaus, which are easily reached by train, and have a good number of Zoigl outlets. From the www.zoiglbier.de home page, click on the links to each town and then on Kalender, to reveal the dates on which Zoigl can be found in the communal brewers' establishments. If you regard this as too easy, just make your way to these two towns one weekend, and look for the six-angled Zoigl star, which hangs outside those establishments currently serving this wonderful brew. Appropriate photos and further details, including information on two further breweries with taps, in Windischeschenbach, and how to get to this guaranteed-to-find-Zoigl place, are given in www.whitebeertravels.com/zoigl. John White

Change at the top at SIBA

AT ITS annual conference, SIBA confirmed the new line-up in the leading roles of Chairman and President with immediate effect. Keith Bott steps down as SIBA Chairman after a four-year tenure and becomes President of the Society, replacing Carola Brown. Wye Valley Brewery's Peter Amor is SIBA's new chairman. 'I am looking forward to the challenges of the next three years,' said Peter, 'and building on the exceptional progress achieved under Keith's chairmanship. The market is still very restrictive and work must continue to allow more beer drinkers the opportunity to drink quality, fresh, local beer.'

The *Daily Telegraph* and Cask Marque: a statement by Roger Protz

ON MARCH 10 the 'Weekend' section of the *Daily Telegraph* ran a page feature in collaboration with Cask Marque on 'the best of British beer'. The page included an article 'What Is Cask Ale?', with

the byline 'by Roger Protz, Chairman of the British Guild of Beer Writers'. I am not, of course, the current Chairman and was not commissioned to write the article. On the Thursday before the article appeared, Paul Nunny of Cask Marque called to say the *Telegraph* had contacted him to say they needed an explanation of what constitutes cask beer. Paul said he didn't have time to commission a piece and suggested the *Telegraph* pull an article from the Cask Marque website I had written several years ago. Paul said the page had gone to press the previous Monday and he had not seen a proof. He regretted that the byline called me Chairman. When I saw the paper I was surprised to find that the page carried the strap 'Advertisement Feature'. Far from being a collaboration between CM and the *Telegraph*, it was a paid-for advertisement and I had unwittingly participated in an 'advertorial'. The appearance of my piece begs the question: why does Cask Marque continue to tag an article I wrote for their website at least four years ago 'Chairman of the British Guild of Beer Writers'. Being technical the article was quite out of place in a newspaper with a general readership. However, tight the deadlines, my permission should have been sought to run the article. Had I been given the opportunity, I would have written a quite different piece — if I had wanted to participate in an advertorial. I regret the paper called me Chairman: I immediately contacted Tim Hampson to explain I was in no way responsible for this error. I also emailed the *Telegraph* requesting a correction but at the time of writing no such thing has appeared. I shall, of course, seek payment and/or compensation for the use of my work without permission. I trust this sorry episode will encourage organisations to keep their websites up to date and not allow work on those sites to be reused without the permission of the authors.

Reply from Paul Nunny: 'I totally agree with Roger that Guild members must be paid if commissioned to write copy and that all websites must be kept updated. However could I correct one point of fact. The articles in the Daily Telegraph were never intended to be 'advertising features' and this is a matter we are discussing with the DT so it can be resolved for next year's competition.'

British Library campaign

IT MAY be of interest to members (*writes Jeff Evans*) to learn of a new campaign to save services at the British Library, an invaluable research centre. Funding cuts may mean that the Library will have to: Close all schools learning programmes; close all public exhibitions; slash opening hours by more than a third; charge researchers for admission to the reading rooms for the first time; drastically reduce the permanent collection; close completely the international newspaper archive based at Colindale. An online petition can be found at: www.petitiononline.com/britlib/petition.html