

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter — September 2008

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Chairman **Tim Hampson** gets electrified *inside...*

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The Chairman Reports...

I HAVE been on a journey — a voyage that began thousands of years ago. I was in the Royal Institution in central London, the same lecture theatre where in the 19th century one of the world's greatest scientists, Michael Faraday, stunned the scientific world with his theories on the nature of matter and light.

In a room packed with more than 450 people — O'Hanlon's head brewer Alex Bell, aided by Guild Secretary Adrian Tierney-Jones, described the science of making beer. They also told the story of beer — simply, alluringly and with great humour.

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The lecture was an adventure, a journey through a fascinating world of tastes, colour and aromas. They described an ancient oral poem from Babylonia called the *Gilgamesh Epic*, which tells the story of the civilising influence of brewing. First told some 4000 years ago in Babylonia, it is the story of Enkidu, an uncivilised man who was taught to eat bread and drink beer. Enkidu drank seven cups of beer and his heart soared. According to the legend, he washed and became a refined human being — beer had tamed the savage beast.

The audience was transfixed and entranced, especially when it was time for the tastings conducted by Alex, Adrian and O'Hanlon's assistant brewer Richard — these were ordinary men and women of all ages, not beer geeks or members of the industry, just people who had a passion for science and wanted to learn more about beer. This marvellous evening revealed there is an untapped passion for more communicating, writing and broadcasting on beer.

And as we announce this year's Guild awards it is worth reminding ourselves that people do have a thirst not just for beer the liquid, but beer — the best long drink in the world — that has its roots deeply entwined within our cultural tapestry.

So who amongst us has the words to be Beer Writer of the Year 2008 and win £1000? Once again we are giving writers, broadcasters, photographers, poets, illustrators, designers and webmasters the chance to enter their work in six different categories, with one of the category winners to be named as the British Guild of Beer Writers' Beer Writer of the Year.

The categories are:

COORS BREWERS NATIONAL JOURNALISM AWARDS, prize £1,000 and £500: for the very best writing in the national press, consumer magazines, national television and radio.

WELLS & YOUNG'S BUSINESS TO BUSINESS JOURNALISM AWARDS, prize £1000 and £500: for the very best writing in trade and company newspapers, newsletters and magazines.

BRAINS SA GOLD NEW MEDIA AWARD, £1000 and £500: for the very best writing on beer websites, company beer sites, news websites and blogs.

BISHOP'S FINGER AWARD FOR BEER AND FOOD WRITING, prize £1000: the objective is to encourage journalists to write or broadcast material on the subject of matching beer with food. Entries can be written or broadcast in national, local or regional media, it could be in a trade magazine or a company publication, on the internet or part of a video.

BUDWEISER BUDVAR JOHN WHITE TRAVEL BURSARY, prize £1000 plus trip to Czech Republic: for the entrant considered by the judges to benefit most from a travel bursary. The winner will be encouraged to write a feature on wherever they visit.

REGIONAL JOURNALISM AWARDS, currently no sponsor, prize £1000 & £500: for the very best regional beer writing or broadcasting; includes local and regional newspapers, radio and television, CAMRA newsletters.

We are very fortunate to have four experienced judges to choose the winners. Current Beer Writer of the Year Alastair Gilmour has agreed to be Chairman of the judges — he has put together a team which includes Steve Dyson, editor of the *Birmingham Mail* and long-term CAMRA member; Tina Snowball, former press officer at the Independent Family Brewers and now corporate communications director at Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative, the North East destination and culture agency; and Alex Brodie of the Hawkshead Brewery and former BBC World Service anchorman and sometime *Today* programme presenter.

To enter send four copies (photocopies accepted) of each entry, published or broadcast in the 12 months up to September 30, 2008 — stating where it has been

CALENDAR 2008

Sept 12-14	European Beer Festival, Copenhagen
Sept 25-28	Beer Exposed, Islington, London
Oct 6	Guild Lager Seminar, Thornbridge
Oct 9-11	Great American Beer Fest, Denver
Oct 10	SIBA Local Brewing Business Awards

Dec 10	Joint Beer Group/BBPA 2008 Christmas party, House of Commons
Dec 11	BGBW Dinner and Awards, Hilton London Tower Bridge

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

published; authors of books need to send four copies of the book. Alternatively good quality PDFs of work will also be accepted. Website entries: send web address only.

Entries should be sent by with a covering letter by October 10 to Beer Writers Competition, c/o Seal Communications Limited, Islington Gates, 8 Fleet Street, Birmingham B3 1JH. Email address required.

The winners will be announced at the British Guild of Beer Writers annual awards dinner, December 11, Tower Bridge Hilton, London.

Entrants are asked to nominate which category they would like their work to be entered into but the judges reserve the right to consider work for other categories.

Third party entries are accepted.

Entrants do not have to be members of the British Guild of Beer Writers — they just have to communicate about beer or beer culture, new products or the ingredients and brewing of beer.

There is no limitation on the number of categories that an individual may enter.

Entries can only be returned if accompanied with a self-addressed, stamped envelope or packaging. For more information on the British Guild of Beer Writers Awards contact Tim Hampson: 07768 614283; tim@infpub.co.uk. **TIM HAMPSON, CHAIRMAN**

Membership renewal

JUST TO remind those that haven't renewed their membership yet, the deadline for rejoining is October 1, after that members who haven't been in touch are deemed to have quit the Guild. If you have misplaced your form, please get in contact with the Secretary and he will send you one. Also, if you would like to pay the reduced price of £35 by Standing Order please ask the Secretary for a SO form and send it filled in to your bank (not to the Secretary).

A Big Thank You

THANKS TO all the brewers who kindly contributed beer to the pre-GBBF reception at the White Horse, it was great to see so many of you there and I hope you had an enjoyable evening. Big thanks also go to Dan Fox and his team for making the evening fun and flawless. Also, I know I spoke to most of you on the evening about any beers that were left over (and that wasn't a lot I assure you!) going to support the Mercury's March that ended at the Tower of London — I'm delighted to say that the march raised over £100,000 for the charity Help for Heroes, which raises funds for the Headley Court veterans hospital. The beer was more than appreciated by the lads and lasses of the Army at the end of their long journey and was also instrumental in raising funds on the day. I would also like to thank all the other breweries that additionally contributed to the event: Shepherd Neame, Purity, the Association of Welsh Brewers, Coors and Stiegel — your generosity was amazing and truly appreciated.

Mike and Richard at Utobeer, who not only warehoused and delivered the beer, saved me from logistical embarrassment on several occasions! Thanks guy. To know more about the event or charity please visit: www2.army.mod.uk/mercurysmarch/index.htm.

Melissa Cole

Shadows on the wall

ZAK AVERY and I have created a Guild group on Flickr, the photography website. It can be found at www.flickr.com/groups/beerwriters. If you wish to join you'll need to register a Yahoo account on Flickr (the basic package is free) and you'll then need to send a request to the administrator (Zak) to join the Beer Writers' group.

The group is as yet experimental; we don't quite know what it's going to be useful for, if anything. There is also a discussion forum within the group; we can discuss what we're doing while we're at it. Certainly it will be good to see pics of events such as the forthcoming lager seminar and the Guild dinner. Members may also post pictures of brewers, breweries, pubs etc., especially if they are in the news and of possible interest to media organisations. Members should resist the temptation of posting pictures such as 'my dog in sunglasses', cute though they are. The default status of your images is 'all rights reserved' but more flexible licensing options are available under the 'Creative Commons' scheme. More information at www.flickr.com/creativecommons and www.creativecommons.org. Jeff Pickthall

Morris dancing with swords...

ALASTAIR GILMOUR, the Guild's current writer of the year, has been using his knowledge of Newcastle pubs to organise locations for two television projects. For *Oz And James's Big UK Adventure* (Oz Clarke and James May) he guessed that the Cumberland Arms in Byker would be the perfect antidote to Bigg Market revelries. Oz seemed impressed by the untouched nature of the pub, the Ukulele Allstars rehearsing in the next room, and the 'bring one, borrow one' library which promises literary delights such as *Dale Winton: My Life*.

A fortnight later it was American television travel series *Three Sheets* asking for guidance. Alastair says that the sequence with him and presenter Zane Lamprey talking real ale in the historic Crown Posada should last about a zillionth of a second. They also found their way to the Cumberland Arms where the attraction was the Kingsmen Rappers — Morris dancing with swords rather than hankies (they're a hard lot up there). 'Not my idea,' he admits.

AG's busy summer continued as he also featured at a Northumberland food and drink event talking beer while the Hairy Bikers talked food and former

footballer turned winemaker David Ginola praised Bacchus. Then in October he's in Prague judging the International Master Bartender of the Year Awards. And, following recent journalistic jaunts to Carlisle, Kirkcudbright, London, Edinburgh and Queen of the South v Partick Thistle, apparently his family would appreciate information as to his whereabouts.

Beer Exposed

SEPTEMBER 25-27 will see the first outing of Beer Exposed, a brand new beer consumer show to be held at the Business Design Centre in Islington London. It is the first independent event of its kind to be held in London, bringing together beers and brewers from all over the world to create a unique experience designed to expose drinkers to the incredible diversity of tastes and flavours that beer can offer. Some of the greatest beers in the world will be present as will be many Guild members taking part in tastings and beer walks over the three days. For more information go to www.beerexposed.com.

Cellar to Seller 2009

THE NEXT Cellar to Seller Exhibition and Conference will take place at the Centennial Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham April 22-23, 2009. This purpose built centrally located exhibition centre is easily accessible and close to Brindley Place, with its acclaimed canals and continental style cafes. The Exhibitors are obviously looking forward to a stand-alone event as in

so many successful past years and they have already booked over half the available area for this tried and tested occasion. Contact Guild member Keith Hornby Priestnall (bdi4keith@aol.com; www.cellartoseller.com) for more details.

Trips

CHRIS MARCHBANKS is now the Guild's trip supremo and currently he has been working to rearrange a trip up to renowned Yorkshire brewers Acorn and Elland. The trip will also take in some Leeds pubs and is an overnigher. At the moment the proposed dates are October 29/30, so if you are interested get in touch with Chris and he will be able to fill you in with more details. Also, if you have any ideas for trips to breweries, good contacts etc don't hesitate to tell Chris — always remember these trips exist both to generate stories for members and help breweries spread the word.

And finally...

FOUR BOOKS from Guild members have appeared in the last month: Jeff Evans suggests *A Beer A Day* (CAMRA Books). Chris (Podge) Pollard takes us *Around London in 80 Beers* (Cogan & Mater), Tim Webb and Joris Pattyn have *100 Belgian Beers To Try Before You Die!* (CAMRA Books) and Martyn Cornell dissects British beer styles with his e-book *Amber, Gold And Black* (www.thecornerpub.co.uk). All come highly recommended.

Lager: fizzy yellow liquid or...

MONDAY OCTOBER 6 is the date for Guild members' diary: Thornbridge Hall, home of Thornbridge Brewery, will see a groundbreaking attempt to understand the history, the flavours, the technology and the uniqueness of lager beer. For the first time in its history the British Guild of Beer Writers will attempt to get to grips with the beer known as lager. Cold wet and tasteless and the colour of cellophane...or a flavour-packed delight with a wide-ranging palette of colours and flavours? The Guild's annual seminar will try to answer some of these questions.

Speakers

ROGER PROTZ, esteemed beer writer and bestselling author: The history of Lager, how it grew to be the world's most popular drink.

PAUL BUTTRICK, former Stella Artois Brewmaster and student at the German brewing school at Munich-Weihenstephan: Lager as an international phenomena, licensed lager brewing and the international brand, its emergence in the UK market from the 1960 to present day; the role of technology.

ALASTAIR HOOK, Meantime Brewery founder and brewmaster, student at the German brewing school at Munich-Weihenstephan: Modern micro brewing of Lager in the UK; the specialist approach to brewery conditioned beer. A tasting of various lager beers produced in the UK and some interesting rarities will follow this.

Then there will be a panel discussion

Lager micro-brewing in Italy and the Epicurean approach with DR AGOSTINO ARIOLI of Birrificio Italiano

Cask Conditioned Lager with Harviestoun's head brewer STUART CAIL

Setting up your own Lager Micro with RICHARD KEANE of Cotswold Lager Brewing

The history of Lager Brewing in the UK with MARTYN CORNELL

Lager brewing on the other side of the world with Thornbridge's KELLY RYAN

For further information contact Adrian Tierney-Jones; the event starts at 2.30pm at Thornbridge Hall, concluding at approximately 7pm. There will be a free coach for Guild members to the Hall from Sheffield station and back. All they have to do is get to Sheffield station by 1pm — attendees will be sent details on how to get on the bus.