

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter — September 2009



The Chairman Reports...

COULD YOU be the first winner of the Michael Jackson Gold Tankard Award?

It is that time of year again when the search for the best beer writers is launched. So do you think you have you got the words to be Beer Writer of the Year 2009 and win the Michael Jackson Gold Tankard Award? The only way to find out is to enter your work.

The Guild is giving writers, broadcasters, photographers, poets, illustrators, designers and web-masters 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 and receive the Michael Jackson Gold Tankard Award.

This year, for the first time the Guild is honouring the memory of the world's greatest beer writer Michael Jackson, who died in August 2007, by renaming its Beer Writer of the Year Award as the Michael Jackson Gold Tankard Award.

Nominations and entries are being sought for six categories:-
COORS BREWERS NATIONAL JOURNALISM AWARDS: prize £1,000 & £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 £1,000 & £500 — for the very best writing in trade and company newspapers, newsletters, magazines and websites.

BRAINS SA GOLD NEW MEDIA AWARD: £1,000 & £500 — for the very best writing using new communication technologies on beer websites, company beer sites, news websites and blogs.

BISHOP'S FINGER AWARD FOR BEER AND FOOD WRITING: prize £1,000 — the objective is to encourage journalists to write or broadcast material on the subject of matching beer with food, a subject area formerly dominated by wine. 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 £1,000 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 their visit.

DEUCHARS IPA REGIONAL JOURNALISM AWARD: prize £1,000 & £500 — for the very best regional beer writing or broadcasting; includes local and regional newspapers, radio and television, CAMRA newsletters.

The winners will be chosen by four experienced judges — current Beer

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Writer of the Year Zak Avery has agreed to be Chairman of judges. The other judges are: Larry Nelson, publisher of *Brewers' Guardian*, Sean Franklin from Roosters Brewery and Jamie Goode, wine writer at the *Sunday Express*.

To enter the Guild's awards send four copies (photocopies or PDFs of the relevant pages accepted) of each entry, published or broadcast in the 12 months up to 30 September 2009 — stating where it has been published — authors of books need to send four copies of the book. The entry should be accompanied by a letter stating which category or categories are being entered. Website entries — send web address together with four printed copies of home page plus other selected pages.

Entries should be sent by with a covering letter by 9 October to Beer Writers Competition, c/o Seal Communications Limited, Commercial Street, Birmingham B1 1RH. For queries contact 0121 616 5800 or email: birmingham@seal.uk.com. The winners will be announced at the British Guild of Beer Writers annual awards dinner — 3 December — at the Tower Bridge Hilton. 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 Guild's Awards contact Tim Hampson: 07768 614283; tim@infopub.co.uk.

Barley wine Guild seminar

ONCE AGAIN Thornbridge Brewery is generously hosting a seminar for Guild members and invited guests — this year it will happen on Monday October 12 and as ever there will be free transport from Sheffield station and back at the end of the event (Guild members with some time on their hands might like to linger in Sheffield). The subject of the seminar is barley wine — at the time of writing speakers include Mark Dorber, Steve Wellington, John Keeling and Steve Grossman from Sierra Nevada; there will also be a barley wine and local cheese tasting plus a panel that will talk about Yorkshire Stingo, how to sell barley wine and how to make barley wine — we will find all about wheat wine as well. The event starts at 2.15pm for 2.30pm and will finish about 7pm-ish. As ever there will samples of interesting beers for members to taste. If you haven't put your name down yet please contact Adrian Tierney-Jones.

Membership renewal

THIS IS just to remind those of you who haven't renewed their membership yet, that the deadline for renewing 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. Meanwhile, 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). Finally, if you would like a membership card then please also get in touch with the Secretary (at the moment there are a couple of dozen on the waiting list and they will be done in September).

Honey – I've drunk the beer

AND TALKING of competitions earlier on Britain's beekeepers have launched a

CALENDAR 2009

Sept 24-26	Great American Beer Festival, Denver
Oct 3	World Beer Festival, Durham, USA
Oct 12	British Guild of Beer Writers Seminar on Barley Wine, Thornbridge Hall

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

competition to find the best honey beer in the world. The National Honey Show wants to find the best beers in the world in which honey has been used as an ingredient.

For the first time the National Honey Show has added beer into its competition to find the world's best honey and there is still time for brewers, wholesalers, retailers and importers to enter.

The 2009 National Honey Show will be held at St George's College, Weybridge, Surrey, October 29-31, 2009. The beer must be packaged in either bottle or can, it should be commercially available and honey must have been added to it as an ingredient.

Entries together with three samples of the beer must reach the Entries Secretary by October 1, 2009. Entries can also be made at www.honeyshow.co.uk/class41.shtml

Trips

THE GUILD has arranged a special Norfolk visit for members on Tues/Wed November 3/4; it is based in Norwich. The draft proposed programme is: noon, Tuesday November 3: meet at Norwich station then visit Woodforde's new custom-built brewhouse/brewery at Woodbastwick, followed by a discussion on the local craft brewing scene and a tasting of Woodforde's prize-winning beers with buffet lunch at the brewery tap, the Fur & Feather.

In the evening a visit to some of the notable pubs of Norwich including the Fat Cat. Overnight at a local hotel — hopefully at a special price.

Wednesday November 4

Early start: transfer and visit to Crisp Maltings in Great Ryburgh, visiting both traditional floor and modern maltings; discussion of barley/specialist malts and current harvest intelligence.

Transfer to Wroxham Barns on the Broads to visit the Uncle Stuart Brewery with a tasting of their beers and other local craft breweries beers led by their brewer, which could also include:

- Humpty Dumpty (Reedham)
- Beeston, Icení (Mundford)
- Blackfriars (Gt Yarmouth)
- The Why Not Brewery (Thorpe St Andrew)

- Tipples (Acle)
- Wagtail (Old Buckenham)
- Elm Tree Beers (Snetterton)

Lunch at Wroxham Barns, then transfer back to Norwich Station during the afternoon. Numbers are limited and will be on a first come first served — please let Chris Marchbanks know if you wish to attend — cjmarshbanks@aol.com — or 01283 561626; the deadline is October 6, 2009

The Guild committee has agreed that there will be a contribution for each member attending to assist in defraying costs; the amount is yet to be determined.

There should also be a mini bus to ferry people about on the Wednesday.

Craft Brewing Association

THOSE GUILD members titillated by our Chairman's article in the last edition may be interested to know that the Oxford Brewers are one of the groups within the Craft Brewing Association, the UK organisation for home brewers who brew properly, currently with some 350 members. One of the important activities is holding meetings, as Tim described, where they can taste and compare each other's brews. The wise man can learn from his mistakes and successes but the crafty guys learn from others.

There are active Groups around the country: Scotland, Northern, Midlands, East Anglia, Oxford, London and North Hampshire. Any Guild member who would like to visit a Group should contact Guild Member James McCrorie, Founder and Central Co-ordinator, at james@craftbrewing.org.uk. Most regular meetings would not have such a range of beers as Tim enjoyed but the National Craft Brewing Festival will this year be held in Sutton, Surrey on 14th November where a large variety of brews will be competing with each other. You will be most welcome to try them, you may develop a new appreciation of amateur brewing. **James McCrorie**

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS
SEPTEMBER 27, 2009.**

I bet this doesn't happen to Martin Amis...

"LADIES AND gentlemen, wasn't that amazing? Please give another big hand for... Jeremy Hardy!" As the crowd goes wild, the famous comedian rushes off stage and brushes past, ignoring me. The little girl in a tutu who performed cartwheels across the stage behind him, and the littler, even cuter girl who surprised him with a birthday cake a few minutes ago and inspired the whole tent to sing 'Happy Birthday', follow in his wake. He's overrun by 15 minutes, and that means the Pet Shop Boys — the evening's headliners — are just about to take the main stage. At the same time as I am, here. The tent begins to empty. Surely, I think, at least it can't get any worse than this.

Oh yes it can.

The compere continues. "Don't go anywhere because we've got more great comedy coming up right now.

Put your hands together and go wild for... Pete Brown!" Great comedy? Oh, Jesus. Oh, b*****ing s***.

I take the stage. The spotlights blind me.

"Um... hi," I begin. Then, thinking of the adorable little girls who have just departed, I continue, "I think I'm about to bring the tone down a bit." And I begin my anecdote about the night I got drunk with Brazilian whores in a dockside bar. The problem with any type of public speaking is that it is trapped in a decaying orbit around stand-up comedy. Even a best man's speech is expected to make you laugh. So are poets and authors, especially at events like this, the literary tent of the Latitude Festival.

A few weeks previously, the first reading on my Hops and Glory promotional tour was very different — but took place, funnily enough, in a comedy club above a South London pub. Subtracting the staff from the library that had organized the event, the earnest people from the local bookshop and the barman, three people had turned up to see me. Two of them stayed for a chat afterwards.

Eventually, they told me they belonged to a public speaking club, and started giving me

pointers on my performance. The main thrust seemed to be to stick to writing instead of speaking. My performance has improved with practice. I've done bookshops, pubs, food festivals, beer festivals, literary festivals and music festivals. I've gone up against James Naughtie, and traded neuroses with David Aaronovich. I've nodded politely as lonely men have spent half an hour telling me how much they know about IPA, asking me if I knew it was brewed in Burton, before walking off without buying a copy of my book. I've signed autographs for hysterical teenage girls who didn't have the slightest clue who I was and had no interest in me whatsoever beyond the fact that if I was reading bits of a book out to six people in their local Borders, I must be famous. I've enjoyed some of it. And even though I eventually got laughs and applause as the strains of *West End Girls* drifted across the valley, I'm looking forward to following the advice of the lads from Lewisham, and getting back to the writing.

Pete Brown

Grand tours

GUILD MEMBER Chris Pollard (aka Podge) contacts the newsletter with a mouth-watering itinerary of the latest list of his Belgian beer tours. These include Ghent, Brussels, Aalst and Bruges over Christmas. If you would like to join him on any of the tours or need more information please contact Podge on 01245 354677 or email podgehome@blueyonder.co.uk.

And finally... paper cuts?

THERE IS some debate amongst members of the committee about the viability of a paper newsletter — given that we're all trying to go green and act in a sustainable manner, maybe it would be one small step (and one less carbon footprint) if the newsletter went completely electronic. This doesn't mean that you cannot print it out yourself, but given the paper used, there is an argument for letting members print their own paper version if they so wish. However, I would like to hear what people think — so please contact me on tierneyjones@btinternet.com with your thoughts.