

# *British Guild Of Beer Writers*

*Newsletter — July 2008*

‘The world stage on which InBev and Anheuser Busch are slugging it out is just one part of the brewing world — their story is fascinating, but equally as fascinating is a growing worldwide movement towards localism.’

Chairman **Tim Hampson** globe-trots *inside...*

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# The Chairman Reports...

**THE SHEER scale of InBev's bid for Anheuser Busch can only beggar belief. InBev has made a \$46.35 billion 'friendly' bid for America's biggest brewer promising shareholders that it will slash costs in an effort to improve A-B's profitability.**

Anheuser Busch is certainly taking its suitor seriously — for the St Louis company is saying that any jobs InBev can cut, it can cut better. To this end, it has announced plans for \$1 billion of cost cuts, including the termination of more than 1290 jobs. It seems a curious defence to InBev's advances — Anheuser Busch has picked up a gun, held it to its head and yelled 'stop or I shoot'.

At the end of the day the future of A-B will depend on what its shareholders want to do — for years the share value has languished at around \$50; for many the offer of \$65 might be very tempting.

The world stage on which InBev and Anheuser Busch are slugging it out is just one part of the brewing world — their story is fascinating, but equally as fascinating is a growing worldwide movement towards localism.

In many parts of the world (UK, USA, Canada, Denmark, Italy, Australia and New Zealand to name just a few) there is a new wave of brewers who see beer making as part of a commitment to the environment and a way of expressing regional and cultural identity.

It is this very diversity that makes beer and brewing so fascinating — and these many strands of the brewing industry and their supporters, reporters and even detractors can be found within the membership of the British Guild of Beer Writers.

FOLLOWING OUR well attended AGM Adam Withrington, Zak Avery, Robert Humphreys and Jeff Pickthall have been elected to the Committee to join with Adrian Tierney-Jones, Paul Nunny, Pete Brown and Melissa Cole. The British Guild of Beer Writers is

certainly coming of age, with membership standing higher than at any times in its history.

Our new directory — *The Beer Writers Handbook 2008* — has been superbly produced by Advantage, publishers of *Brewers' Guardian*. Within its pages can be found the country's leading beer experts — members of the British Guild of Beer Writers — who have the collective expertise to write about all aspects of the beer industry from its ancient routes to the drink of choice for the Nintendo Wii generation.

We also now have an annual awards dinner, a must-attend event for beer writers and senior figures in the industry. This year's event will be held at the Hilton London Tower Bridge on December 11. Each year the dinner celebrates the best writing about beer. This year the Guild has added a new category, Electronic Media, recognising the growth of this now indispensable news channel and to encourage the quality of writing in this arena. We hope to shortly announce a sponsor for this award. It joins our other awards that continue to prosper because of the generous sponsorship of corporate sponsorships.

We have the Coors Brewers National Journalism Award, Cains Finest Lager Regional Journalism Award, Wells and Young's Business to Business Journalism Award, Bishops Finger Beer & Food Award and the Budweiser Budvar John White Travel Award.

In each of the media channel categories — National, Regional, Business to Business and now Electronic Media — gold and silver tankards are awarded. Gold tankard winners receive £1000 prizes; silver tankard winners receive £500 prizes. In addition, prizes are awarded in two specialist categories, travel writing and beer and food. Each of these awards offers a £1000 prize. We are showing that beer is a modern sophisticated drink, the equal to fine vintage wines.

As part of our activity trips are being planned: book now for a fascinating one up north to Acorn and Elland, while there are plans for a visit Harrogate later in the year, where Sean Franklin wends his brewing magic.

Following on from the outstanding success of the seminar on wood aged beers held in the stunning surroundings of Thornbridge Hall, Adrian Tierney-Jones is planning an event in the same venue that will highlight a new age of lagers. And if is not enough activity for members, we are hosts of a reception to be

## CALENDAR 2008

Aug 4	Pre-GBBF reception, White Horse
Aug 5-9	CAMRA Great British Beer Festival, Earls Court, London
Sept 12-14	European Beer Festival, Copenhagen
Sept 25-28	Beer Exposed, Islington, London
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**

held on the eve of the Great British Beer Festival. Full details of the event are elsewhere in this newsletter.

Since its inception the Guild's primary objective is to improve the standards of writing and broadcasting on beer and beer-related topics, the status of the journalists and authors involved, and the public's understanding and appreciation of the qualities of beer. However, I would like to add one more objective to our mission — to work to help establish a national museum of brewing.

The Coors Visitor Centre in Burton-on-Trent has now closed. Coors has changed its plans to disperse the museum's contents — including the town's celebrated shire horses — and agreed to mothball the museum in the hope of finding a new body to run it. Coors also offered to contribute a one-off payment of up to £200,000 and £100,000 a year to keep the attraction open under new management.

It is now up to the brewing industry to join with the thousands of ordinary supporters who have called for the museum to stay open. If we don't fight for a national museum now, the chance might be lost for a generation.

TIM HAMPSON, CHAIRMAN

## GBBF

ONCE AGAIN the Great British Beer Festival is upon us and one of the treats this year will include Budweiser Budvar's Krausened lager, new product launches and a multitude of foreign speciality beers. To get members in the mood for the event, the Guild is running its regular pre-GBBF reception at the White Horse in Parsons Green, where Dan Fox has kindly agreed to host this popular event. Melissa Cole will be sending out an email this week to members with full details of this much-loved yearly gathering, so please ensure that you RSVP — we need to know numbers for food and to make sure we don't completely overload the room!

## The Beer Writers Yearbook 2008

BY NOW most guild members will have received their copy of *The Beer Writers Yearbook 2008*, the renamed *BGBW Directory*. The book is the creation of Advantage Publishing, home to *Brewers' Guardian* and *The Brewery Manual*. Our objectives were to make the yearbook a shop window for the Guild and its members, especially its writing awards and annual awards dinner; and to explain to editors and journalists why beer should matter to their readerships and audiences.

In addition to Guild members, the *Yearbook* has been mailed to 600 editors and reporters, mostly UK-based, from the nationals through consumer and trade titles, regional daily and weekly newspapers, and radio and television stations. Bulk copies have been sent to Sainsbury's for their promotional purposes, and to Robert Humphries, secretary of the

All Party Parliamentary Beer Group, for distribution to relevant decision-makers.

Advantage Publishing has, in effect, acted as a contract publisher on behalf of the Guild. We created the mailing list of journalists, commissioned writers, designed and edited the book and sold the advertising. We assumed all costs, including design, printing and mailing (with one minor exception), and assumed all commercial risks involved in creating the publication. We also guaranteed a £1000 payment to the Guild, the sum offered in exchange for the right to publish the *Yearbook*.

There were unexpected benefits accruing from this project — several additional brewing companies have now joined the Guild as corporate members, and new BGBW members have signed up. The reaction to the *Yearbook* has been both helming and gratifyingly positive; my thanks to everyone who has taken the time to call or email to say how much they like the look/appreciate the content. I think we have achieved our objectives and that the *Yearbook* represents a step-change in the way the BGBW presents itself to the world at large.

Advantage Publishing wants to take this project a step further next year and I look forward to working with the Guild Committee to making the *Yearbook* bigger and better in 2009.

I'd like to thank my colleague Kamini Dickie for her work on making this project commercially viable — it was her suggestion that the *BGBW Directory* be rechristened as a yearbook. Martin Barfoot, a new Guild member, imbued the *Yearbook* with a classy, upmarket look; and BGBW secretary Adrian Tierney-Jones ensured that all Guild members were present and that their entries were accurate.

Larry Nelson, Publisher/Editor,

*The Beer Writers Yearbook 2008*

## Lager seminar

MONDAY OCTOBER 6 is the proposed date for the Guild's 2008 seminar on lagers. It is hoped that speakers from Cotswold Lager Company, Meantime, Taddington and Harviestoun will be present, while Agostino Arioil of Birrifico Italiano, who produce the peerless Tipopils, has also indicated that he will be present. This will be an attempt to look at the smaller producers of lager, how they make their beers (is maturation still important?) and also ask what is cask-conditioned lager? Once again, there will be a coach going from Sheffield station to Thornbridge and back. If you want to put your name down please contact Adrian Tierney-Jones.

**COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS AUGUST 26**

## Cask Marque sponsor GBG again

FOR THE second year in succession Cask Marque are to sponsor CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide*, with the 2009 edition out in September. This sponsorship package includes editorial and the Cask Marque logo being placed by the side of every pub in the guide that holds the Cask Marque award. With the increase in Cask Marque awareness and cask ale in general, there are now over 4800 licensees holding the Cask Marque award, an annual increase of 22%. You can find your nearest Cask Marque outlet via text by typing the word cask followed by a full stop then enter your postcode and send to 83211. Over 200 consumers are using this service every week.

Paul Nunny

## Standing orders

FOR THOSE members who would like to pay their subscription by Standing Order the Guild are offering an incentive by reducing the cost of subscription to £35 (normal cost £40). To take advantage of this offer download the Standing Order form from our website ([www.beerwriters.co.uk](http://www.beerwriters.co.uk)), which will be available at the start of August, complete and email to the Secretary.

## E-bay-gum

GUILD MEMBERS interested in adding to their memorabilia might be interested in some of the historical items of Truman, Hanbury, Buxton, that will be appearing on a 10-day e-bay auction ending on Sunday July 13. Photos of the items, in advance of the e-bay auction, may be viewed by clicking on: [www.helpfulandhandy.co.uk/antiques-for-sale-cirencester-cheltenham-cotswolds-gloucestershire.htm](http://www.helpfulandhandy.co.uk/antiques-for-sale-cirencester-cheltenham-cotswolds-gloucestershire.htm).

## Travel the world and drink beer

FLAVORACTIV IS an Oxfordshire-based company that trains and monitors the performance of professional beer tasters. They are looking to recruit for various beer tasters — some of whom can speak European languages and some who can speak Chinese.

A possible Food Science or a Maths degree would be of use as well. The successful person should also be a good numbers person (stats or maths) and be a confident individual with a strong business sense, customer-focused, and very capable when it comes to systems and software. They will most certainly have to be fast learners. There is a fair amount of travel involved. If this is something you might be interested in please contact Greg Arthur at e-Resourcing: [greg.arthur@e-resourcing.co.uk](mailto:greg.arthur@e-resourcing.co.uk) or call 01372 748444.

## Not going for a Burton yet?

MARGARET HODGE, Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, pledged her support for a National Museum of Brewing in Burton-on-Trent at a meeting in June with members of a campaign group fighting to stop the closure of the current Coors Visitor Centre in the world-famous capital of British brewing. Coors was due to close the centre at the end of June but a steering group

set up by Burton MP Janet Dean is making strenuous efforts to find alternative means of funding the complex, which includes the former Bass Museum created 27 years ago. Mrs Dean led the delegation, which included representatives of West Midlands Museums and Arts, the Burton Civic Society and Chamber of Commerce, and the editor of the *Burton Mail* newspaper. John Arguile of the Derby branch and GBG editor Roger Protz represented CAMRA. Margaret Hodge praised the group for the spirited work they had carried out and said she was whole-heartedly behind the need to maintain a museum in Burton that reflected the role brewing played in the history and culture of the country. She heard that a company that specialises in raising funds for museums had been appointed to draw up a business plan for the museum, with a view to creating a charitable trust that would be able to apply for Heritage Lottery funds. The minister agreed with the delegation that it was vital that a new museum should be independent of the Coors' brewing complex and should have displays of artefacts and memorabilia from breweries throughout the country. Mrs Hodge plans to write to several national and regional brewers to ask them to pledge their support for a national museum. When Roger Protz suggested that a national museum should incorporate a school of brewing to train young brewers, Margaret Hodge said such a school could attract a new stream of financial support from local education authorities.

## Inn Way Walking offer

THE INN WAY Walking Club brings together everything you need to experience and enjoy the great outdoors in one walking club, from a monthly Walking Weekend route pack to discounted pub accommodation and guided walks with BGBW member Mark Reid. Membership costs £12 per year. For more information visit [www.innway.co.uk](http://www.innway.co.uk) or call 01423 871750 for an application form.

**SPECIAL OFFER FOR BGBW MEMBERS:** Join on-line and save 10%. Visit [www.innway.co.uk](http://www.innway.co.uk), join on-line and get 10% discount off your membership fee. Simply quote BEERGUILD08 in the coupon box and your discount will be automatically deducted. This discount only applies to on-line purchases from [www.innway.co.uk](http://www.innway.co.uk) and includes all books and products within our on-line shop. Offer valid until 01/09/08, no cash alternative, BGBW members only.

## I shall never play the Dane, but drink this instead

GUILD MEMBER Phil Lowry of [Specialitymerchants.com](http://Specialitymerchants.com) gets in touch to say that the company has now managed to get hold of a selection of beers from acclaimed Danish brewers Mikkeller. Go to [www.BEERmerchants.com](http://www.BEERmerchants.com) for more details.