

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter — June 2008

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Chairman **Tim Hampson** looks forward *inside...*

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The Chairman Reports...

WITH THE AGM organised for Thursday, 19 June, I would like to take this opportunity to report on the Guild's activity over the last 12 months. 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.

At our last AGM we agreed our main priorities are to:

- Continue to organise trips and social events and run awards
- Build stronger dialogue with other groups promoting beer
- Create more interaction between members
- Improve the value of the Guild to the licensed trade
- Build relationships with key commissioning editors

DINNER & AWARDS

OUR FLAGSHIP event — the Awards Dinner held at the Millennium Gloucester for the second time — was an outstanding success. The involvement of celebrity chef Brian Turner raised the event's profile and many thanks to the awards' sponsors, Budvar, Cains, Shepherd Neame and Wells & Young's, for their support. The number of entries to the awards was higher than in recent years and there were some quite outstanding entrants. I am hopeful that the four current sponsors of the awards will be involved in 2008. In addition we are in talks with other organisations for sponsorship of new awards, including an electronic media and a book award.

Building on our success, we have decided to freshen up the event by moving to a new location for our dinner. This year's event will be held at Hilton, Tower Bridge on December 11. The meal will be prepared by up and coming Australian chef Christian Honor. Details of this year's event have still to be finalised, but our ambition is to make it even bigger and better.

CALENDAR 2008

| | |
|------------|---|
| June 13-15 | Beers of the World Live NEC, Birmingham |
| 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 |

TRIPS AND EVENTS

THE YEAR saw a number of highly successful trips and events. The seminar on wood-aged beer at Thornbridge Brewery was an outstanding success, and extremely well attended by members and invited brewers. In addition it also generated a lot of copy in a wide number of trade and consumer publications.

Budvar organised a highly successful trip to the Czech Republic, where we able to spend a great deal of time with brew-master Josef Tolar. Brand Distribution and Development organised a trip to Grupa Zywiec in Poland, where we learnt a lot about the Polish beer market and the company's plans to increase the presence of Zywiec. There were also successful visits to Arkells and Springhead breweries.

FUTURE TRIPS

FUTURE EVENTS include a tasting of Hook Norton Beers and a visit to Acorn Brewery. I am very pleased that Chris Marchbanks has agreed to take over the organisation of Guild trips.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

WE ARE trying to build a meaningful relationship with other groups promoting beer — and Tesco, Sainsbury, SIBA and CAMRA all make approaches to the Guild when looking for judges for their beer events

GUILD WEBSITE

THE GUILD'S website continues to evolve. Beer news is posted regularly up on the site and members are sent 'beer news alerts' if something significant happens. Visitors to the site continue to rise. The design of the site is now at least two years old and I am hoping that someone in the Guild will be able take on the responsibility for further development of the site.

THE NEWSLETTER

ADRIAN TIERNEY-JONES continues to produce the monthly newsletter — it provides a regular and essential means of communication between members, and its content is certainly enhanced when members send in contributions.

DIRECTORY

THIS GUILD'S directory has been revamped and renamed *Beer Writers Yearbook 2008*. It will be mailed to several hundred journalists, who will be encouraged to enter the awards. Thanks to Larry Nelson for this.

PRE-GBBF RECEPTION

MELISSA COLE organised a highly successful reception at the White Horse, Parsons Green on the eve of the Great British Beer Festival. A similar event is planned for this year too.

| | |
|------------|---|
| 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 |

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

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP HAS risen to 144, an increase of nine on last year, and this certainly reflects the growing interest being shown in beer by the media.

GUILD@21

AT LAST year's AGM the meeting decided that next year we would organise a 21st birthday celebration for the Guild. Roger Protz is leading a small working group, which will make some suggestions as to how we can mark the event next year.

FINANCE

THE COMMITTEE will not be proposing an increase in membership subscriptions at the AGM. The Guild's finances are currently very healthy and I firmly believe it is vitally important that they stay this way. Events such as the annual dinner cost thousands of pounds, and should a sponsor let us down at the last moment money will be urgently needed to fund any shortfall.

BENEFITS OF GUILD MEMBERSHIP

News alert service • Much reduced fee for Beer Academy course — £50; free to retired members • Free subscription to the *SIBA Journal* • Regular industry press releases • Ten times a year beer writer's newsletter • Regular copies of *Hook Norton Inn Season* • Regular copies of BBPA's *Export Times* • Regular copies of Moorhouse's newsletter • Organised visits to breweries • Annual dinner and awards • Pre-GBBF reception • Dedicated overseas tours • Regular seminars • Social events and beer tastings • Dedicated website

AGM

THE GUILD'S AGM is now officially called for Thursday June 19 at a new venue the Melton Mowbray, 18 Holborn, London EC1 2LE — nearest tube stop Chancery Lane. It will kick off at 6.30pm with a buffet to be served at 8.30pm. Once again we have Fuller's to thank for their kind hospitality. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

THE COMMITTEE

AND FINALLY I would like to thank your committee: Pete Brown, Melissa Cole, Alastair Gilmour, Ben McFarland, Larry Nelson, Paul Nunny and Adrian Tierney-Jones, plus co-optee Kamini Dickie, for their unstinting support and work. All have busy lives and I am very grateful for them giving of their time and expertise to help make the British Guild of Beer Writers a meaningful and dynamic organisation.

I understand that at least two Guild members (Larry Nelson and Alastair Gilmour) will not be seeking re-election; there is also a third place to be filled. Both have made outstanding contributions to the way in which the Guild has evolved in recent years and will be missed. However, we now have the opportunity to bring fresh blood and new ideas to the Committee — so please give it some thought if you would like to stand. Three members have already indicated a willingness: Adam Withrington, Zak Avery and Jeff Pickthall.

TIM HAMPSON, CHAIRMAN

AGM

THE GUILD'S AGM is now officially called for Thursday June 19 at the Melton Mowbray, 18 Holborn, London EC1 2LE — nearest tube stop Chancery Lane; it will kick-off at 6.30pm with a buffet to be served at 8.30pm. Once again we have Fuller's to thank for their kind hospitality. Tim Hampson has indicated he is happy to continue as Chairman, but any members wishing to stand should let the Secretary know. At the time of writing, there are three vacant places on the committee available so any members wishing to stand should let the Secretary know — so far, Adam Withrington, Zak Avery and Jeff Pickthall have indicated an interest. There is no stipulation in the Constitution to do so before the meeting, but if there is anyone interested in standing, please let the Secretary know at least a week before the AGM — or just do it on the night. Any motions that members want on the agenda must be sent to the Secretary at least seven days before the AGM.

Trips

CHRIS MARCHBANKS has kindly indicated that he will organise Guild brewery trips, so he is your man to contact if you have any ideas. Currently there is a trip planned to Acorn and Elland breweries July 23/24. There is a maximum of eight on the trip and if you would like to go please contact Chris Marchbanks. There is a further trip planned in the autumn to Roosters in Harrogate.

Radio ale

WE GUILD members are often found bemoaning the paucity of beer coverage granted by the national media. We scan our newspapers and airwaves in the forlorn hope that someone, somewhere is commissioning something on our favourite subject. And so it was on May 28 at 6.30pm a comedy on Radio 4 grabbed my attention. *Double Science* is written and acted by Ben Willbond and Justin Edwards. It is about two put-upon sixth-form science teachers, Colin and Kenneth, whose nemesis is Danny Woods, head of the drama department. Briefly, this episode: Colin and Kenneth wish to impress their boss Alison by winning a local home-brewing competition. The judge will be real ale guru Roger Halliday. Colin and Kenneth fall out. They make up and befriend Roger Halliday with whom they get drunk. Alison enters the competition and wins. Danny Woods is humiliated for entering a lager. The bulk of the comedy lies in the character of Halliday. In him the writers have poked affectionate fun at the world of real ale by grossly exaggerating the associated lingo into 'beer tongue' which he speaks in a Brian Blessed

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bellow. Colin describes beer tongue as 'a mixture of Latin and Middle English along with traces of Elvish and a smattering of Klingon. It's very difficult to master; of course Halliday and the upper circle of CAMRA are pretty fluent.'

Jeff Pickthall

Corporate member news

THORNBRIDGE WERE so impressed by the unpasteurised Moravka lagers produced by neighbouring brewery Taddington that this has led to the two breweries now agreeing to work together and make Moravka available as part of the Thornbridge range of beers. Taddington Brewery was set up by Richard Hand, who spent a year in the Czech Republic learning the language and the art of making lager. He produces two beers at 4.4% and 5%, both under the Moravka name — based on a bottom fermenting lager yeast strain and hops from Zatec. For more information on Moravka and Thornbridge call 01629 64 1000.

ADNAMS' EAST GREEN, the UK's first carbon neutral beer, is now available in draught as well as bottle. It is brewed in Adnams' groundbreaking new brewery, which has an Energy Recovery System that recycles 100% of the steam created during the brewing process and uses it to heat 90% of the following brew. The beer is made with high-yielding barley, grown in Suffolk, which subsequently greatly minimises CO₂ emissions from transportation. Boadicea Hops are also used — they are naturally aphid-resistant and reduce the use of pesticides significantly. To ensure carbon emissions were as low as possible, Adnams worked with the University of East Anglia's carbon reduction CRed team throughout the project. For more information please contact: Emma Hibbert at emma.hibbert@adnams.co.uk.

The King's new clothes

GUILD MEMBER Les Baynton assumes the role of Beer King every summer to promote and open the Derby Festival with a few well chosen words and a new beer ode. The Beer King was crowned four years ago in Derby to offer a counterpart to Gambrinas Ferdinand who rules over the beer in Derby's twin city of Osnabrück. To celebrate 30 years of twinning Gambrinas Ferdinand opened the Derby Beer Festival two years ago and Beer King Les opened the wonderful Osnabrück *Maiwocke* Fest in 2007. The English Beer King's outfit however suffered badly in comparison with the grand German traditional version. Now the University, City Council, and Beer Festival have come to the rescue to fund a more impressive outfit, designed and made in the University's Fashion Department. Les is not, thankfully, appearing naked as in the fine old tale, but will be opening the 31st Derby Beer Festival in a more regal style. He will be accompanied by the Mayor and 'Private Derby', the Mercian Regiment's mascot. Any Guild members in the vicinity of Derby Market Place

on July 9 are very welcome to view the spectacle and taste the festival's exceptional real ales.

Civil Ales

IT WAS hard to imagine that less than a year ago Springhead Brewery was flooded by the summer rains to a depth of four feet, which put the whole place out of action for many weeks. However, they have bounced back with vigour. Our hosts on the Guild visit were Steve and Shirley Reynolds; Shirley is one of those rare things in brewing: a brewster. Her passion showed as she took the Guild members through her brewing process on the 50-barrel brewhouse that was built in 2005. Many of their beers use whole single hop varieties — such as Northdown (Roaring Meg), Cluster (Charlie's Angel) and Saaz (Roundheads' Gold). Over the year they brew 15+ regular and seasonal draught beers, most which have names related to the English Civil War. Old recipes using spices are also given an airing with Goodrich Castle, which uses sprigs of rosemary; this is a pale ale of light bitterness with the herb giving its pronounced flavour. Marketing man Steve posted a challenge by asking us to taste their beers with some popular dishes — such as pasta, curry, lamb, pizza and cheese — with the request to match them. Hardest was Willys Wheat Beer (Hersbrucker). My best fit for this was the fish pizza — a citrusy moreish beer that harmonised well with the crisp delicate fish. It was all very stimulating and an excellent example of a local craft brewery producing a full range of beers, which can be found in their local public houses and supermarkets. Currently, only Roaring Meg, their flagship brand named after an English Civil War cannon, is available in bottle — but they plan to expand this range. For full details of the brewery, the beer range and heritage go to www.springhead.co.uk.

Chris Marchbanks

SPRING THOUGHTS AT SPRING HEAD

Keep your head at Springhead,
When you've tried The Leveller,
The Liberty, the hoppy Bitter,
You'll feel a lot fitter...
With the Roaring Meg
I grew very fond
Of the 'big blonde',
Sweet citrus, honey aroma,
Real female appeal,
Slow down, don't drink fast,
Is that lipstick on the glass?
An added attraction of this beer
Is Shirley the brewster, brewing down here,
So love in a glass, must surely come to pass.

An 'instant poem' written during a beer and food matching session at Springhead Brewery by Les Baynton