

# *British Guild Of Beer Writers*

*Newsletter — October 2005*

...As the academic year kicks off once again, with students hopefully discovering the joys of **beer** all around the land, I must urge all of them, and all of us for that matter, to enrol on a day's course at the Beer Academy. I recently attended one myself at Harvey's in Lewes — and tutor and Guild member Tim O'Rourke communicated the pleasures of beer and its history most entertainingly.

Andrew Pring goes back to school *inside...*

---

Chairman: **Andrew Pring**  
Tel: 01293 610480 (work)  
[Andrew.Pring@william-reed.co.uk](mailto:Andrew.Pring@william-reed.co.uk)

Treasurer: **Paul Nunny**  
[paul@nunny.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:paul@nunny.fsbusiness.co.uk)

Secretary: **Adrian Tierney-Jones**  
Lee Farm, Winsford, Somerset TA24 7HX  
Tel: 01643 851469  
[tierneyjones@btinternet.com](mailto:tierneyjones@btinternet.com)



[www.beerwriters.co.uk](http://www.beerwriters.co.uk)

# The Chairman Reports...

**Who says the national media takes no interest in beer? Not me. In the last few weeks I've seen a series of interesting stories about our favourite subject, including a full page in the Daily Telegraph about hops. Those in the know will have detected the silky influence of Rupert Ponsonby, working hand in glove with Paul Hegarty of Coors. Together they have been encouraging journalists to open their minds wider than they are accustomed to. Rupert and Paul have for some time been courting senior food and drink editors over rather splendid beer dinners at places like Le Gavroche, plying them with fine food and even finer beer. It seems to be working.**

And then there was, of course, much coverage for the latest edition of Roger Protz's *Good Beer Guide*, now in its 33rd year. You'll have seen the extensive coverage in the papers — and many radio news bulletins — which were impressed by the vibrancy of the real ale market, and the growth of the microbrewery sector.

The GBG's essays are as good as ever — Barrie Pepper's guide to the pubs of Leeds has made me impatient to visit as soon as possible. And the former Guild Chairman is not the only one with a new book. Our

secretary ATJ has just published *The Big Book of Beer: Everything you need to know about the world's greatest drink*, while I am still enjoying *The Book of Beer Knowledge* by former Guild committee member Jeff Evans. They are both pretty indispensable and will hopefully win new recruits to the beer cause.

And that's not all that's new in beer publishing. Dominic Roskrow's new consumer title — *Beers of the World* — is now out and has secured astonishingly good distribution with the national newsagents. It comes out six times a year, covers all styles of beer and is a handsome beast, not a whit out of place alongside the consumer glossies. We must all wish it extremely well.

Finally, as the academic year kicks off once again, with students hopefully discovering the joys of beer all around the land, I must urge all of them, and all of us for that matter, to enrol on a day's course at the Beer Academy. This groundbreaking body has now awarded well over 1000 people a certificate for beer knowledge gained on a course. I recently attended one myself at Harvey's in Lewes — and tutor and Guild member Tim O'Rourke communicated the pleasures of beer and its history most entertainingly.

The Guild is of course a founder supporter of the Academy — and my attendance that day convinced me more than ever what an excellent institution we now have to help spread the beer message.

*Semper Sitiens* indeed.

**Andrew Pring, Chairman**

## CALENDAR 2005/2006

Sept 29-Oct 1	Great American Beer Festival, Denver, Colorado
October 15	CAMRA Awards Lunch
October	CAMRA Cider Month
October 19-20	Cellar to Seller Conference, Burton-on-Trent
October 27	Brewing Research International (BRI) course: The History of Brewing & Beer Styles
November 16-17	Brewing Research International (BRI) course: Introduction to Brewing

November 26-27	Old Ale Festival at the White Horse, Parsons Green
November 29	Celebration of UK beers to mark the UK's Presidency of the EU. Jointly hosted by the British Beer Club in the European Parliament, BBPA, SIBA and CAMRA. Brewers of Europe House, Brussels. Info: Robert Humphreys
December 7	Annual Dinner and Awards, Ironmongers Hall
December 14	All Parliamentary Beer Group, Christmas reception — House of Commons

## The Secretary's round...

DON'T FORGET THAT the Guild's annual awards dinner will soon be upon us. Just a brief mention that this year it is Wednesday December 7, once more at the Ironmongers Hall. As I write beers and dishes are being matched, beers are being donated by Guild sponsors and friends and we have listened to members' thoughts on the dinner and looked at ways we can improve matters. It is always a great highpoint of the Guild year and we hope that we can make it an enjoyable event (especially for those lucky award-winners). Booking forms should be included with both hard copy and electronic versions of the newsletter, if you don't receive one please let me know. Tickets go like the proverbial hot cakes so send your forms in as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. As Andrew says on the opposite page, there is a lot of beer action going on in the media. Beer-writing still doesn't get the exposure it deserves and the loss of regular slots in the nationals is to be regretted, but on the other hand the fact that we have over 130 members all communicating in various ways on the joy that is good beer says something. Members' work appears in print, on the web, can be seen on the TV and heard on the radio — whether it's *What's Brewing*, the *Today Programme*, the *Morning Advertiser*, *Richard & Judy* or the *Yorkshire Post* members of the Guild are there.

### THE BEER KING— A FINE PUBLICITY VEHICLE

*Guild member Les Baynton (King Les 1st) has a right royal time...*

WE CREATED a Beer King for the Derby Beer Festival last year as a lead into the Osnabrück/Derby twinning project which will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2006. The concept of a Gambrinas/Beer King is long established in Germany and we thought that to have our own king in Derby would strengthen our links with Germany, as well as providing a degree of positive publicity for quality beer. This appealed to the *Derby Telegraph* who told me that they were a little weary of 'even more men drinking beer at the festival'. BBC Radio also found this a different slant on a festival that celebrated its 28th birthday this year. So a Beer King was elected by the festival committee and the post fell to me.

## Bavarian bliss at drinktec...

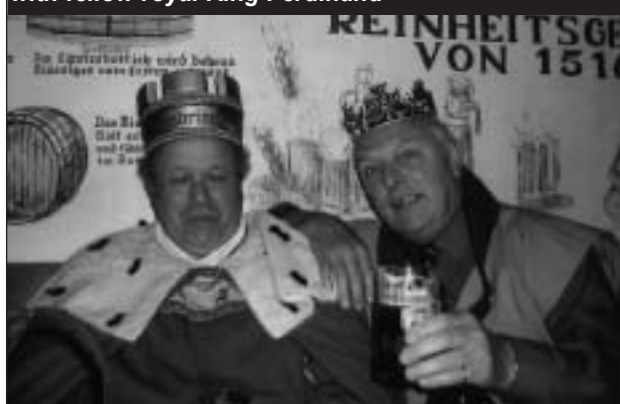
**d**rinktec 2005: modestly lower case in presentation, but decidedly upper case in importance for the more than 1,400 exhibitors present at the six-day event in Munich. The New Munich Trade Fair Centre quite possibly holds the unique distinction of having not one, but two, U-Bahn stops serving its kilometre-apart extremes. Given the demanding time and space continuum, a common lament was that drinktec should be shortened in duration, especially the sixth day, a Saturday, when brewing tourists and locals alike descend to strip stands of coasters, pins, post-it notes and any other not-anchored souvenirs. And it could well be: the last time the event was held, in 2001, it was an eight-day ordeal.

For lovers of British beer the story of drinktec was of an old friend finding itself in new surroundings, the Brewing Industry International Awards, having decamped from Britain for the first

I duly acquired a costume and set about clarifying the role of the King. He would assist the Mayor in the opening ceremony and like his German counterpart would breach the symbolic first barrel of beer in the market square. I added a small extra duty, personally satisfying to me, which was to perform a newly written ode in praise of beer to the waiting public. All this gained a large amount of coverage in the local press and BBC Radio and I was able expound on issues like supporting your local, the wonderful varieties of taste in real ale etc. I also spoke to many of the drinkers about some of the beer issues dear to our hearts as I circulated in the Assembly Rooms after the opening ceremony. So I felt that for the price of wearing a slightly embarrassing crown and costume we had established a public platform to extol the virtues of quality real ales and pubs that served and cared for them.

Just before the festival a number of us joined the official Derby visit to Osnabrück and arranged to meet the Beer King Ferdinand. We had a pleasant lunchtime with him and his wife, our conversation helped enormously by the envoys from both towns. This was covered in both the Osnabrück and Derby press and will result in an official visit by King Ferdinand in 2006, with further publicity. Real ale drinkers are regularly accused of being, insular, middle-aged and boring, but the notion of a city Beer King can create much more positive publicity for the discerning drinking of quality beer. Why not get a 'royal' in your area, and another voice for our causes?

*Monarch of the pen Les Baynton (right) with fellow royal King Ferdinand*



time in its 120 year history. Despite assurances from the organisers that quality could be assured — it was — with no extra shipping costs or aggro (the collection point was at Marstons in Burton), there was muted discount from some quarters as to why a 'British' contest had to be staged on foreign soil.

Despite a disappointing absence of visitor footfall that took away some of the drama during the judging, there was a sizeable gathering of British luminaries for the results announcement. The most eagerly anticipated result was that of Champion Cask Conditioned Ale. The winner was Deuchars IPA from the Caledonian Brewery. It's an award that should cheer the boys and girls in Edinburgh: the sole judging criterion was that the beers be considered on their commercial merit.

**Larry Nelson**

## Renewals

DON'T FORGET that if you haven't sent in your membership renewal form please do so now. The Directory will soon be in the production process and I need members' details to be as up to date as possible.

## Lederhosen all round

DID YOU know that the Guild sponsored an award at the Brewing Industry International Awards? No? Well it does, and this year the awards were held in Munich (see Larry Nelson's report on previous page) and Schneider Weisse Original was the winner of the British Guild of Beer Writers International Speciality Beers category, beating over 700 beers from 41 countries across the world. For more information on the awards go to [www.brewingawards.org](http://www.brewingawards.org).

## Trip news

SOME GUILD members will remember meeting Ridley's head brewer Philip Downes on a trip to Essex earlier this year. Since then the Ridley family has sold out to Greene King and the fabulous Victorian tower brewery in Hartford End stands empty. Philip Downes decided not to take up a job offer from Greene King and their loss is Gloucestershire's gain. The former Ridley's head brewer has joined the Wickwar Brewing Company, Gloucestershire, as head brewer, in what Wickwar owner Ray Penny regards as a major appointment. Philip Downes presided over a number of Ridley's successful beer brands, winning bronze at the International Beer Awards with cask-conditioned Old Bob and another bronze medal for Rumpus at the 2005 Great British Beer Festival awards. At Wickwar, Downes intends to stabilise the brewery's top selling cask ales that include BOB, Coopers, Cotswold Way and IKB. 'There is huge potential at Wickwar,' he says. 'Ray Penny has prepared the company to move from small, local brewer to regional and national player by building considerable capacity into the brewing process. As well as using only natural ingredients, we are seriously considering using our own spring water, once tests have been completed. This will be fabulous and will add a new distinction to our beers.' **Tim Hampson**

- THE GUILD trip to Adnams on 18 October is now fully subscribed.
- IF ANY member has a suggestion for a Guild trip please get in touch with Tim Hampson ([tim@infopub.co.uk](mailto:tim@infopub.co.uk)). Trips under consideration for 2006 include one to Liverpool to see Cains and another to Nottingham to visit some historic pubs and hopefully go and see Hardy & Hansons.

## Ten glorious years

IT'S 10 YEARS, writes **Richard Morrice**, since myself, Barrie Pepper and a batch of Guild and CAMRA folk sat down to work out how the first Tesco Beer Challenge would operate. The initial competition, to select a single autumn beer, was a modest affair but it generated a lot of interest and a worthy winner in McEwan's Number

One Champion Ale. It set the stage for a series of competitions which has grown in stature over the years. The Beer Challenge has morphed into the Tesco Brewing Awards and the single original competition category has now been joined by six others dedicated to small brewers, cider imports and innovation. On Thursday, Sept 29, the Tesco Brewing Awards were attended by nearly 100 people, including many Guild members, journalists, Tesco managers and a contingent from CAMRA. The venue, Ironmongers Hall, was as excellent as ever. The guest speaker, Tim Smit of the Eden Project, encouraged the audience to be genuinely innovative, and Roger Protz gave a thought provoking speech on the high numbers of new breweries that had opened in the last year. He emphasised the need for small brewers to concentrate on producing truly excellent beers made with simple ingredients and to avoid an over reliance on complex additives. The highlight of the event was the announcement of winners of the various competitions which had been judged by 24 dedicated beer buffs. Here are the results:

BEST INNOVATION AWARD: Hambleton Ales Gluten Free Beer;  
 BEST CIDER (a new category this year): Henney's Cider Company;  
 BEST IMPORT: Brasserie du Bocq; BEST BEER: SPRING/SUMMER SMALL BREWER: Ridgeway Brewing; SPRING/SUMMER LARGE BREWER: Hall and Woodhouse; AUTUMN/WINTER SMALL BREWER: Broughton Ales; AUTUMN/WINTER LARGE BREWER: Young's.

In his presentation, which prefaced the awards ceremony, Mark Murphy, Category Director for Tesco, praised the support from the British Guild of Beer Writers, CAMRA and the National Association of Cider Makers whose help in creating the Best Cider category this year was absolutely invaluable. He confirmed that the Best Cider category will now feature in all future Tesco Brewing Awards. If you would like further information about The Tesco Brewing Awards there is a dedicated website — [www.tescobrewingawards.com](http://www.tescobrewingawards.com) — or you can call Richard Morrice on 08456 447660.

## SIBA news

SIBA IS hailing the news of its major supply agreement with Enterprise Inns as a huge step forward for local enterprise and consumer choice. Effective from October 1, the supply of all guest beers and locally delivered cask ales into Enterprise Inns will be conducted through SIBA's Direct Delivery Scheme (DDS). The scheme enables retailers within multiple groups to directly source local brewers' products. SIBA won the deal from the incumbent suppliers Beer Seller and Scot Co. The new arrangement represents the widening of DDS from Enterprise's former Unique pubs to the whole estate boosting the number of licensees able to source locally delivered beer from around 350 to an anticipated 1000. Nick Stafford, Commercial Director SIBA, comments: 'This is excellent news for licensees, drinkers and local brewers as it means a huge increase in the number of pubs where all parties will be able to benefit from the continued growth of locally brewed beer. Enterprise Inns has given us a great vote of confidence and this deal represents the coming of age for DDS.' **Steve Griffin**

## Lager than life in the Cotswolds

Lager. One word, five letters and probably 138 definitions or is it 242? Oh and it spells regal backwards. Probably more nonsense has been written about lager than any other beer style — is it just a yellow coloured beer to be served chilled; or is it a beer to be kept stored at a cold temperature for four days, a month or even 90 days? And is there such a thing as an English lager? Well, lager has been brewed on these islands for at least 100 years, while I cannot believe that beer kept for long winter months in the bunter pebble sandstone

caves of Nottingham was not by some definitions a lager. But an English lager still doesn't feel right or does it? Cains has shown that one can be produced — with a rich intense taste and clarity of palate. Recently set-up is the Cotswold Brewing Company in Foscott, near Chipping Norton, a deeply rural part of Oxfordshire, devoted to brewing lager-style beers (chill conditioned for four weeks). Brewer Richard Keene learnt his craft from some of the best places, including Herriot-Watt, Courage, Pilgrim, Freedom and Archers. After all this he took an MBA. But his biggest step is a £250,000 investment to set up the CBC along with wife Emma. The 15-barrel brewery has nine fermenters and

conditioning tanks, which were shipped from Albany in New York State in seven containers to be lovingly re-assembled in a former grainstore barn. 'It is a life changing move for both of us,' he says. The Premium Cotswold Lager (5%) is brewed with Maris Otter from Warminster while Liberty and Hersbrucker hops go into the copper, with the yeast coming from Hurliman. Now on its fourth brew, the beer is already on sale in three local pubs and it is a revelation. With a long lingering and satisfyingly dry finish it is like listening to Anthony and the Johnsons — a bit exciting, something different and just a bit challenging — a high falsetto with a long and dry finish. **Tim Hampson**