

# *British Guild Of Beer Writers*

*Newsletter* – March 2007

‘What a range of tastes, styles, colours, strengths and stories. Sounds like there are plenty of good **beer** stories out there – now if only I could find the place to tell them.’

Chairman Tim Hampson’s tales of ales *inside...*

---

Chairman: **Tim Hampson**  
Tel: 01865 245711; 07768 614283  
[tim@infopub.co.uk](mailto:tim@infopub.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...

***'THE TROUBLE with beers is there are no new stories to tell.' These are not my words but those of a commissioning editor I was talking with last week. So in the last few weeks what beer stories have the readers of one of England's regional newspapers missed out on.***

Cains has launched a stunning 8% Bock. This is a complex beer with a long, long finish; it kicks off with a rich orange aroma, and tastes like rich fruit-laden cake before it envelopes your taste buds with a long warming finish — and like a true continental bock it is a celebratory brew, in this case to mark Liverpool's 800 years as a city.

Nowadays it is rare to see a pub without dishes like Chicken Madras or Thai Green Curry while hasn't Chicken Tikka Massala been declared as the national dish for quite some time now? So what better to drink with a spicy dish than a beer from East Africa. The crisp and refreshing Tusker (5%) is brewed using the highest quality malted barley grown in Kenya's Rift Valley. With a heritage dating back to 1922, this is a favourite of East African drinkers and has become part of the rich regional fabric. It is named in memory of the brewery's founder George Hurst, who was killed by a rogue elephant in 1923.

A saintly trio of German beers, from the world's oldest monastery brewery in Bavaria are now on sale here: Barock Dunkel, a premium 4.3% dark beer; Barock Hell, a lively 5.3% pilsner, and Asam Bock, a dark 7.2% Doppelbock. The Weltenburger Kloster has been producing beer on the banks of

the Danube since the year 1050 AD, with the quality of Weltenburg's beer owing much to the low nitrate levels in the local water as well as a lengthy storage process — up to three months — in stone cellars, located 40 metres below the ground.

A limited quantity of Sierra Nevada India Pale Ale will be available for the first time in the UK. Sierra Nevada India Pale Ale (6.8%) is a traditional English-style IPA using all English hops varieties as well as 50% Maris Otter malt. Deep red in colour this fine India Pale Ale has a sweet malty body with good bitterness and plenty of hop aroma, providing an ideal accompaniment to spicy dishes.

Simonds Farsons Cisk is one of the top breweries in the Mediterranean. Rarely before have new products been introduced to the UK which have already been enjoyed by millions of British consumers, as is the case with the company's beers.

The brewery has a fascinating history. In 1880, Simonds, forerunners of Courage, established an operation in Malta to supply the garrison. In 1928, Simonds merged with Farrugia & Sons. In 1946, Simonds Farsons Ltd merged with the Malta Export Brewery to become Simonds Farsons Cisk. This gives the brewery 126 years experience of brewing award-winning ales and lagers with a unique Mediterranean-British heritage.

The SFC range includes: Cisk Standard Lager (4.2%), Cisk Export Lager (5%) and Cisk XS Lager (9%). The ale and stout range includes Hopleaf Extra, Blue Label, Red Label Pale Ale and Lacto Stout.

The Lacto Milk Stout, at 3.4 %, is one of the curiosities of the beer world. As the name suggests the stout contains lactose and is a classic example of a beer marketed as a restorative, for with the added vitamin B it is said to be good for nursing mothers.

What a range of tastes, styles, colours, strengths and stories. Sounds like there are plenty of good beer stories out there – now if only I could find the place to tell them.

**TIM HAMPSON, CHAIRMAN**

## CALENDAR 2007

March 1-2	SIBA Conference, Leeds
March 20	Publican Awards
April 12-14	SIBA SW Tuckers Maltings Beer Festival
April 13-14	Helsinki Beer Festival
April 20-22	CAMRA Members Weekend,

Wolverhampton	
June	BGBW AGM, date and place TBC
Aug 7-11	Great British Beer Festival

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

## The Secretary's round

YOU GO to the Glastonbury Festival to celebrate a different way of living (usually in a teepee), but I wouldn't bother getting exciting if you drink beer, as it was announced the other week that Michael Eavis, the founder and leading light behind the Festival, had signed a deal with Carlsberg for it to be the official beer of the festival — for the next four years. The agreement gives Carlsberg exclusive supply rights to over 22 bars at the festival as well as for promotional activity, so if you want a glass of Mystery Tor (produced by Glastonbury Brewery) or Merlin's Magic (Moor Brewery) to accompany the Arctic Monkeys or one of the bands that has been dredged out of the mists of prehistory (The Who for instance), then I presume you're out of luck. I don't have any problems with Carlsberg being available at the Festival, given that the size of the event is comparable to a large town and Carlsberg have the logistics, but I do find the lack of any other beer, whether local or British, utterly baffling given the 'alternative' aspect of living that Glastonbury seems to promote. Corporate rock indeed.

- CONGRATULATIONS go to one of the Guild's brace of Italian members Maurizio Maestrelli who has won an award for 'the best article on Italian craft beer', in an event organised by Unionbirrai, the association of Italian brewpubs and microbreweries.

- IT'S SHAPING up to be a busy year for Roger Protz. As reported in the last newsletter, he will appear alongside Raymond Blanc for a Beer Dinner at Le Manoir au Quat' Saisons in September. In April he will deliver a lecture on beer at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC, followed by a beer tasting at the renowned Washington bar, the Brickskeller. Meanwhile, his book *300 Beers To Try Before You Die!* has been reprinted for the second time.

## In search of Yorkshire beer

*IS THERE such a thing as a Yorkshire style of beer? That was the question BARRIE PEPPER proposed to a group of Guild members, brewers and CAMRA magazine editors who discussed the issue and tasted some appropriate beers. What was their conclusion?*

FROM THE START it became pretty obvious that there would be no agreement — so we

agreed to disagree. To some extent it was possible to say that in the heavy industrial areas such as steel city Sheffield and the former mining areas medium-strength bitter beers were the preferred drink and in the East Riding dark mild ales were the choice; in the heavy woollen districts light milds — usually called 'best' — were popular.

An examination of hops and malts used by several breweries failed to show any related lines and of the three brewers still using the Yorkshire square method of fermentation, only one — Black Sheep — accepted the invitation. Paul Ambler, its head brewer and Guild member, explained their use and also said that the use of Demerara sugar was popular with the county's brewers a century or more ago, indeed was still used by a major one even today. So we went on to taste a few Yorkshire beers.

Peter Eells, the head brewer of Timothy Taylor's of Keighley, made it clear that four elements affected flavour: water, malt, hops and yeast. Unless there was a common linkage it would be difficult to find a relationship. 'For example, nobody else uses our water,' he said, 'It comes from a spring under the brewery'. He presented Landlord as a good example of a Yorkshire beer — that is to say, a beer that is popular in Yorkshire. It had been in the portfolio for almost 70 years and while the use of Golden Promise barley added distinction and Styrian Goldings hops a unique flavour, these came from Scotland and Croatia.

Nick Stafford said his Stallion (4.2%) was developed from his first brew of his first beer, Hambleton Bitter, and it had always been his intention to use Yorkshire ingredients as far as possible. His yeast came from a local brewery, now, obviously, a competitor.

Kelham Island's recently produced Pride of Sheffield (4%) was in their own words a full-flavoured amber-coloured bitter where the initial aroma of English Fuggle Hops predominates leaving a beer which is pleasant on the palate with a lingering bitterness. Most of us agreed and enjoyed the usual high quality product from this brewery. At least it had a Yorkshire name. Daleside also looked for a Yorkshire birthright with Crack Shot (5.5%), said to be based on a 17th century recipe found at Ripley Castle near Ripon. The unusual use of malted oats was not readily obvious and somewhat detracted from the purpose but it was a fine ale.



***In search of Yorkshire ale: (l-r) Peter Eells, Paul Spencer, Dave Sanders, Barrie Pepper, Paul Ambler, Nick Stafford  
Photo Steve Sharples***

From Dave Sanders' Elland brewery we enjoyed the only draught beer of the afternoon — Nettlethrasher. The trouble was that according to Guild member John Gray it had a Nottingham birthright, or so the tale goes. It was brewed originally by John Eastwood. Eastwood is a town in Nottinghamshire. DH Lawrence, the author, was born in Eastwood and he used to thrash himself with nettles. Ergo: Nettlethrasher. It's a good tale. Dave once produced a beer called Yorkshireman. Perhaps he ought to have brought that along.

Paul Spencer of Ossett brewery is a great advocate of American hops such as Cascade and believes bitterness is a character of Yorkshire beers. However his Excelsior — a banner with a strange device — was hoppy yet rather sweet. But he was on the right lines. The final beer, Black Sheep Ale, was presented by Paul Ambler who, for me, is a wizard with the hops. His Yorkshire Square ale was, he said, an attempt to fulfil the proposition. There is a Yorkshire style. He uses all the right materials and equipment and he was born in Bingley. What more could you want?

However the general view was that there is no direct link but there are plenty of good beers brewed in God's Own Country. Just look at the number of awards won by Yorkshire brewers and ask yourself why Yorkshire folk don't go very far on their holidays.

*Thanks go to John Rowe and the staff of the Grove Inn in Leeds for hosting us and feeding us with some superb Yorkshire food.*

### **Fuller's Hogarth deal**

MANY GUILD members will probably already know about the Hogarth exhibition at Tate Britain, which is a great tribute to a legendary beer-lover. As a former Chiswick resident, Hogarth has many affiliations in the area, and, as such, over 30 Fuller's pubs will be offering a two-for-one ticket deal, in return for the purchase of two pints of Chiswick Bitter. The tickets will get two visitors into the exhibition for just £10, where they can view works including *Gin Lane*, *Beer Street* and the *Marriage A-la-Mode* series. Fuller's is also supporting the exhibition through a Hogarth Lecture, with the exhibition's curator Christine Riding, which will be held at the Victoria pub in Strathearn Place, London W2. Tickets for the event on March 7, 2007 at 7.30pm are limited, and cost just £5 — including a pint of London Pride and canapés. Anyone interested in attending should contact the pub on 020 7724 1191.

### **Badger job vacancy**

IF YOU want to sett yourself up with a new job, then Badger Brewery might just have the answer. They are looking for a PR Manager and Guild members with the right experience might just be the right person. For more details contact Simon Milligan, Human Resources, Hall & Woodhouse, The Brewery, Blandford St Mary, Dorset DT11 9LS; e-mail: [recruitment@hall-woodhouse.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@hall-woodhouse.co.uk). Closing date is March 16.