

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter September 2011



GUILD STRENGTHENS benefits to members... How much did a household spend on beer in 1964? What was the price of a pint in 1970? How much beer was sold through off licences last year? Did you know that the average price of a British pub pint has broken the three-pound barrier, or that the North East of England is the cheapest region for a beer, whereas London is almost 50% more expensive? These and many more fascinating questions are answered in the *British Beer and Pub Association's annual Statistical Handbook*.

The annual compendium of worldwide drinks statistics is an invaluable historical guide to changes that have taken place in the beer market. It charts the changes over a long period. The BBPA's *Statistical Handbook 2011* is a vital resource for anyone interested in the UK drinks industry. Most tables provide historic trends going back between five and 100 years. Data comes from a wide variety of sources and many tables are derived from surveys of members and other research exclusive to the BBPA. Now the new *BBPA Statistical Handbook*, which normally retails for £47.50, is going to be made available to all current individual members of the BGBW, free of charge as part of their membership package.

The handbook will be distributed to members in the next few weeks. Many thanks to the BBPA.

SO WHICH BEERS should accompany the food at this year's annual dinner? Members will soon be sent details of how to buy tickets for this year annual awards dinner, which takes place on December 1 at the Riverside Plaza in London. But what beers should we drink at the dinner? We would welcome suggestions from members. The chef's style of cooking is classified as Pan Asian. The menu will consist of Japanese, Chinese and Thai contemporary dishes with a twist. Some dishes are new creations and others are traditional dishes brought into the 21st century.

The chef's cooking philosophy is to use the best and freshest ingredients cooked to the highest standards and presented in a simple yet eye-catching way without unnecessary garnishes and accompaniments. He thinks the beers should have simple clean flavours, a richness of colour and depth of flavour that may complement the Asian sense of order and culture by picking out hints of the various spices. But what do you think? Anyone with any thoughts please let me know — tim@infopub.co.uk.

ONLY DAYS until the closing date for the Guild Awards... Beer writers, take note! Entries to this year's British Guild of Beer Writers Awards close on September 9. Don't miss out on your chance to become the Beer Writer of the Year 2011, or to scoop one of the seven category Awards. The competition is open to both members and non-members. This year, entries are welcomed in seven different categories, all

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of which — apart from the new Corporate Communications Award — carry prize money for at least one winner. Judging the entries this year are: Simon Jenkins, winner of the 2010 Beer Writer of the Year title and chair of the judges' panel; Fiona Matthias, executive editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*; Martin Ross, journalist, writer and home brewer; Martin Kellaway, founder of Wharfebank Brewery in Leeds and Joanna Copestick, who has commissioned and published a number of books about beer. Winners will be announced at the Guild's annual Awards dinner. Full details of how to enter the Awards, including a list of the categories and a downloadable entry form, can be found at www.beerwriters.co.uk/awards.php. Entries for this year's Awards must have been published between September 30, 2010 and August 31, 2011. Good luck!

Tim Hampson

Massage in a bottle

BROWN'S HOTEL in London has added a new range of British Beer and Barley treatments to their menu of luxurious spa treatments in celebration of harvest time. Guests can indulge in a blissful barley body wrap, a pale ale pedicure or a honey and barley facial at the hotel, which has linked up with Warminster Maltings in Wiltshire, one of the last remaining floor maltsters, to create the all-British range of treatments using Maris Otter barley — and British beers taken from the extensive beer list at HIX at The Albermarle.

Stuart Johnson, General Manager at Brown's Hotel said: 'we are big supporters of all things British. Our HIX at The Albermarle restaurant is renowned for its impressive British cuisine and our beer list numbers 18 distinctive homegrown beers. Since beer is our national drink, we were interested in looking at how else we could back British produce whilst giving customers something supremely different.'

Shareen Stokes, spa manager at Rocco Forte's Brown's Hotel, added: 'The treatments will blend grists of England's legendary Maris Otter barley with East Kent Goldings hops, Hooky Gold Ale from Oxfordshire, and St Austell's Tribute beer from Cornwall.'

The three treatments will begin with a hot malt drink that's rich in barley, which is high in fibre and has a low glycaemic index which works to stabilise blood sugar levels. Guests will also be treated to a barley snack created specially by Brown's Hotel's Pastry Chef, Theo Ndeh. To make a booking contact reservations on 0800 988 4040 or reservations.browns@roccofortehotels.com.

The treatments are available to view online, click here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFg0K4dRwCg (you might recognise the two geezers sitting in their bathrobes and having a dwink).

Do not adjust your set

IT FEELS like a huge responsibility. More established and venerable beer personages than I have lobbied for years to get beer its due on television, including the recently orchestrated Twitter flashmob of *Saturday Kitchen*. And here's me being asked to contribute to the *One Show*, prime time on BBC One, on the resurgence of British craft brewing, thanks to the CAMRA press office's touting of my book *The CAMRA Guide to London's Best Beer, Pubs and Bars*.

We do the filming at the King William IV, home to Brodie's brewery in Leyton. I'm a bit anxious when the reporter Jay Rayner, *Observer* restaurant critic and son of late legendary agony aunt Claire, announces he really prefers wine to beer. Don't you like beer at all, Jay? 'Well, I like some Belgian beers.'

They film a 15-minute interview that covers lots of ground — the likely reasons why craft brewing is now a growth industry, the marvellous variety of beers (making them ideal for food matching), the emerging new younger markets and beer as a locally made, natural beverage. I realised afterwards I've mentioned the negative stereotypes I really should have avoided, including beards and lager louts. I know the conversation will be edited down but I bet they keep that bit in: rather worrying as the CAMRA press office has now emailed the entire National Executive prompting them to tune in.

Then the Beeb are emailing again: they've decided to do an informal beer and food tasting live in the studio after the filmed report, and would like some recommendations. They promise they'll acknowledge me on air. Blimey, I've been asked by the BBC to recommend beer with food — Dave Bailey will have to withdraw his complaint to Ofcom. I get busy with some choices of easily obtainable beers, insisting they serve it in big wine glasses and not pint pots. I have to write a second email explaining why.

So the film goes out on Friday teatime and actually looks quite good, given its brevity. As expected I'm down to about 30 seconds, and indeed they do keep the beards and lager louts, but it's a great platform for James and Lizzie

CALENDAR 2011

- Oktoberfest, Bavarian Beerhouse, London Sept 21-Oct 29
- Great American Beer Festival, Denver, Sept 29-Oct 1
- BGBW Awards and Dinner, London December 1

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

Brodie, who get both themselves and their excellent beers into plain sight.

It rapidly falls apart with the studio tasting, and not just because they've gone for naff tumblers. Clearly they're running short of time — perhaps they spent too much of it on more important matters like tummy-flattening pants for men — and you can almost hear the floor manager bawling 'get on with it' in the presenters' earpieces. 'Here's a wheat beer called Chalky's Bite to try with your fish,' says Jay, proffering a bottle at guest Jane Asher that's clearly marked Doom Bar. 'Are you sure this is a wheat beer?' queries Jane, betraying an impressive depth of knowledge. 'It doesn't taste like a wheat beer. If it did, it would go better with the fish.'

But Jay's now too busy telling the viewers at home that Twitter has been buzzing all day with 'beer obsessives' barely able to contain their excitement at their favourite beverage being featured. Oh and by the way, he prefers wine really. Chris Evans (isn't he a CAMRA member?) wants a pint of lager with his curry rather than a Thornbridge Jaipur. At least co-presenter Alex Jones seems genuinely to enjoy the Young's Double Chocolate Stout with her chocolate cake. And then mercifully it's all over. They don't bother to credit me — I'm actually quite relieved.

I tweet Jay to point out the Chalky's Bite mistake. 'Oh bugger. Sorry, Des,' he responds. 'It's the stress of sorting through the props before the show and then leaving it to others.' 'Never mind, you're forgiven,' I reply. 'Us obsessives are just glad to see some beer on the telly.' And the sad thing is, we are.

Des de Moor

You can read Des' original recommendations at desdemoor.co.uk/those-one-show-recommendations-in-full

London calling

THIS YEAR the London Brewers' Alliance Collaborative Brew will take place at Windsor & Eton Brewery and will be an IPA. Guild members are welcome to get involved both in suggesting recipe modifications and also take part in brewing it, discussing endlessly the finer points of brewing, having a beer and something to eat. The date is Tuesday, September 13 and the timetable for the day is: mash at 8:10am, which gives enough time for the early birds who want to see this to get here via trains:

06:58 WATERLOO-WINDSOR RIVERSIDE ARRIVING 07:51

07:21 PADDINGTON VIA SLOUGH-WINDSOR CENTRAL 08:00

Trains via these two routes each leave about every 30 minutes so you have a lot of choice. The brewery is 10 minutes walk from either station. There is parking at the site for up to about six cars as well, but in view of later

agenda, it is suggested that the train or cadging a lift is more appropriate!

12:30-2pm will be the BBQ lunch and a visit to the sample room. Beers from Windsor and Eton will be available all day (and will include not only the standard cask beers but also their recent Republika lager and Conqueror 1075 special edition bottled beer), but the organisers feel that it will be a nice opportunity to have a 'show and tell' session so that every brewer who wants to show off one of their beers bring along some samples and there will be a chance to sample and discuss them.

4:30pm will be when the brew should be 'collected' depending on what sort of issues/delays we've had. There will still be ongoing cleaning but most of this will be left to the brewery staff. There will be plenty of opportunity during the day for everyone to get their hands dirty and muck in if you want.

This is an 'open-house' event so please plan to come and go according to your availability etc though it would be really good if as many can be together at 12:30pm for a team photo. Contact for more details paddy.johnson@webrew.co.uk or nationalimbiber@yahoo.co.uk.

Bruges sprouts with Podge

'AS MANY of you will already know rooms at the excellent four star Hotel Academie in central Bruges have been booked again for this Christmas 2011 following our successful 2009 and 2010 Christmas Tours. This Tour is fast taking shape and will include a visit to the brand new Alvinne Brewery in Moen, a meal in the forest made by brewer Hildegard van Ostade at Urthel's brand new brewery in Ruiselede. We will also be having a meal on Christmas Eve at one of Belgium's finest beer cuisine restaurants, T' Hommelhof in the brewing village of Watou. Trips will also probably take place to Mont des Cats, site of Belgium's newest 'Trappist Brewery' and a brand new brewery on the outskirts of Poperinge. We will also fit in a visit to a beer warehouse for an opportunity to take home some quality beers. Get the dates in your diary now, so you can make your excuses to family, work and friends. Have a look at the itinerary and photos of our Christmas Tours for 2009 and 2010 if you want a flavour of this fantastic way to spend Christmas. The price of this five-day tour is £420 per person based on sharing a twin or double room, with a single supplement of £128 if you want a room of your own. Details of visits on this tour are still being arranged. If you would like to book a place

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS

SEPTEMBER 20, 2011

please contact me now to be added to the list, and send me a deposit of £100 per person to secure a place. Can those who have already been added to the list also now send the deposit too?' Further details — podgehome@blueyonder.co.uk

Hoppy trails

FOLLOWING ON from the success of the “CaskFinder” app, which 20,000 pub goers have downloaded, Cask Marque has set an ambitious target of 50,000 downloads by the end of the year. To achieve this aim Cask Marque are to invest £50,000 of their marketing spend by:

- Sending leaflets and dispensers to all 7,400 Cask Marque pubs telling consumers how to find the Best Cask Ale Pubs in Britain.
- Creating the World’s Biggest Ale Trail where consumers will use their smart phones to record visits to Cask Marque pubs and win prizes.
- Appointing Seal PR to communicate via the media with the consumer.

Paul Nunny is particularly excited about the Ale Trail around Cask Marque pubs: ‘It is forecast by the end of 2012 that 60% of users will have a smart phone, as people upgrade their phones. The use of QR codes on our annual certificates will enable customers to record their visit to each pub. It will also allow us to monitor usage and inform pubs of the extra footfall created.

Currently 46% of cask ale drinkers recognise the plaque. This technology will inform customers if an outlet’s Cask Marque membership has expired thus safeguarding our credibility.’

Simon Theakston of Theakston’s Brewery agreed: ‘Many brewers have used Ale Trails as a proven way to engage drinkers but it takes a significant investment to deliver. It makes great sense for Cask Marque to take an industry lead.’

- The launch of The World’s Biggest Ale Trail will take place in the first week of October to coincide with Cask Ale Week. Drinkers will be encouraged to register by a free prize draw competition with prizes donated by Cask Marque corporate members.

Beauty and the yeast

THERE’S GOING to be a Beer Beauty & Marston’s women and beer night at their Burton-on-Trent brewery on Fri Sept 16 from 7-10pm. Hosted by Marston’s Head Brewer, Emma Gilleland, and journalist and Guild member, Marverine Cole (aka Beer Beauty), it’ll be a real treat with blind-tastings, food prepared to compliment each beer by a local chef, the obligatory brewery tour and a beer quiz. Tell your friends in the Midlands/Staffordshire area! For more details contact Rachel Whillock at Marston’s: rachel.whillock@marstons.co.uk.

News

- Brian Glover gets in touch to say that his new email is beerglover@hotmail.co.uk, as he is leaving Media Wales.
- If you need good beer photography don’t forget there is plenty at www.beergenie.co.uk — and it’s free. But don’t forget the Guild’s photographers as well, Steve Sharples and Bill Bradshaw.
- The yeast that led to the brewing of lager has been identified. Full information is in a paper in proceedings of the American National Academy of Science: Microbe domestication and the identification of the wild genetic stock of lager-brewing yeast; www.pnas.org/content/early/2011/08/17/1105430108. The BBC also has the story: Lager brewing yeast identified in Argentina; www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-14592877

Beer Academy dates

Sept 6

One Day Foundation Course, London
Beer Academy

Sept 6/7

Two Day Advanced Course, London
White Horse

Sept 8

How to Judge Beer, Burton
Marstons

Sept 15

How to Judge Beer, London
White Horse

Sept 16

How to Judge Beer, Bristol
The George

Sept 17

One Day Foundation Course, Bristol
The George

Sept 27

90 Minute Tasting, Unexpected Lagers, London
White Horse

Sept 28

90 Minute Tasting, Ales for Autumn, Essex

White Hart Inn

29 Sept

How to Judge Beer, Stockport
Frederic Robinson

Go to www.beeracademy.co.uk for more details