

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter May 2012



THE GUILD'S awards celebrate the very best of British beer writing. The scope, scale and variety of the work created by the winners is astonishing, and demonstrating that writing about our national drink is now being treated very seriously indeed.

Last year Ben McFarland was crowned as Beer Writer of the Year at the British Guild of Beer Writers Annual Awards Dinner and soon the search will start for this year's potential winners. We will shortly be announcing details of the dinner and will be letting people know how to enter into this year's awards.

The Beer Writer of the Year is chosen from one of six category winners which seeks to find the very best of beer writing and journalism in the UK; in addition we have a category for the Best Corporate Communications, an award which can be won by an individual but it is more likely to go to an organisation or a team of people working together.

The full list of this year's categories and the awards is:

Greene King IPA Travel Bursary — £1000, £500

Shepherd Neame 1698 Award for Beer and Food Writing — £1000

Thwaites Award for Best Corporate Communications

Brains SA Gold Award for Best Use of Online Media — £1000, £500

Adnams Award for Best Writing in Regional Media — £1000, £500

Fuller's ESB Award for Best Writing for the Beer and Pub Trade — £1000, £500

Molson Coors Award for Best Writing in National Media — £1000, £500

Greene King is welcomed back as a sponsor. The company has agreed to support the travel category. However, special thanks must be given to Budvar for their many years of support of this category. With Budvar's support the travel bursary became very popular with entrants and winning it has certainly helped propel several writers into the limelight. So thank you Budvar for the support you have given us, and the Guild looks forward to continuing to work with you on other projects.

Also, at the dinner we will also announce our Brewer of the Year Award. Last year this was given to Evin O'Riordain of Kernel Brewery. The award winner is chosen by the Guild's committee after nominations

CHAIRMAN: Tim Hampson Tel: 01865 245711; 07768 614283 tim@infopub.co.uk

TREASURER: Paul Nunny paul@nunny.fsbusiness.co.uk

SECRETARY: Adrian Tierney-Jones Woodcote, 2 Jury Road, Dulverton, Somerset TA22 9DU
Tel: 01398 324314 tierneyjones@btinternet.com

www.beerwriters.co.uk

have been made by members. So if you know of a brewer who in the last 12 months has displayed passion, skill and creative flair, then please nominate them for this award — email the name of the brewer together with a two of three sentences why you think they should be considered for this award to the Secretary.

SO WHAT IS A CRAFT BEER? Trying to devise a definition of what is a craft beer is not easy. The Americans define it by volume of beer produced, and any brewer producing below six million US beer barrels a year (equivalent to approximately 4.2 million UK barrels) can use the term. Some people have told me that the term should only be used by brewers who use whole hops; others think the term should only be used by brewers who make minimal use of automation and computerisation. Yet, some of the most modern hi-tech brewers in the world include those who we would all probably agree are leading craft brewers.

Recently, CAMRA at its AGM debated the definition of what is a craft beer. As the outcome of the debate will shape communications on brewers and beers we receive from the consumer group here is what was decided: 'Craft beer is beer with a distinctive flavour brewed by artisans. As a consequence, most real ales are craft beers but not all craft beers are real ale and CAMRA's communication should reflect this.'

Tim Hampson

Guild AGM details

THE GUILD'S AGM is now officially called for Thursday June 21 at the **Clachan** (34 Kingly Street, London W1B 5QH); it will kick-off upstairs at 6.30pm with a buffet to be served at 8/8.30pm. I would like to thank Nicholson's 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; while the Treasurer is also happy to continue. As Secretary I indicated last year that I would be standing down but I have had an Alex Ferguson change of heart (masochism or enjoyment? I think the latter) and would like to do one more year — however, if you wish to

stand for Secretary please let me know and it will be put to the vote.

At the time of writing, I am waiting for the members of the committee to signal their intentions whether or not they wish to continue (there is a maximum of nine members, including three officers). At the moment, we have no contenders wishing to stand, but if you fancy a go then why not stand? If it tickles your fancy then let the Secretary know — and the time-honored procedure of nominations, seconding and then having a vote will be undertaken. 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. However, according to the Constitution any motions that members want on the agenda must be sent to the Secretary at least seven days before the AGM. Finally, if you are coming please try and let the Secretary know so that he can tell the pub how many people they can expect for the buffet. If you have never been to an AGM before please make an effort, it's a chance to meet other Guild members and make your voice heard.

News from the Brewery

History Society

A TALK given by Dr James Sumner at the Royal Society on 13 April can now be heard here: <http://royalsociety.org/Podcasts-of-Library-events>. *How should a chemist understand brewing? Beer and theory around 1800* explores how 18th-century chemists could gain useful income and patronage as advisors to industry, and some of the wealthiest and most influential industrialists

CALENDAR 2012

- 21 June, BGBW AGM, the Clachan, London
- 7-11 August, GBBF, Olympia, London (there's a sports day of sorts on at the same time as well)
- 6 December BGBW annual dinner and awards, London, venue TBC

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

were brewers. Making chemical knowledge credible to this audience, however, was not always easy: most brewers trusted the direct lessons of the brewhouse and also the counting-house to those of the laboratory. This talk discusses how chemists tried to resolve these problems, and how they were challenged by experienced brewers promoting a scientific identity of their own.

The Geoffrey Ballard Essay Award

The Brewery History Society has just launched its first essay prize. This is open to all those with a serious interest in the history of the brewing industry. The unpublished essay, based on original research, should fall within the remit of the journal, *Brewery History*. The winning entry is chosen using the journal's standard criteria for selection (i.e. excellence and interest to a wide audience) and will be published in the journal.

The award consists of: a cash prize of £250; publication of the winning entry in *Brewery History*; a year's subscription to *Brewery History*. The deadline for submissions is October 1, 2012. More details can be found at www.breweryhistory.com/journal/EssayPrize.

Sainsbury's Great British Beer Hunt

AFTER ALMOST a year in the planning the Sainsbury's Great British Beer Hunt got off to a flying start at Vinopolis in London on Saturday April 21. With over 30 beers to choose from and ten brewers to meet in 'The Meet the Brewers' area nearly 200 Sainsbury's customers and their guests had a really splendid afternoon. Once the hard work of judging was over the guests were able to enjoy more beer and some excellent artisanal cheese, delicatessen meats and 14 kinds of biscuit! Perhaps most encouraging of all was the presence of a large number of younger men and women many of whom had not tasted ale before but, often to their surprise, found that they quite liked it! Converts to the cause one and all. There are four further events in Edinburgh, Bristol, Manchester and Birmingham, all at highly prestigious venues. Winning beers go through to a regional listing or to an in-store competition in September where Sainsbury's customers have three

weeks to pick their favourites. A Grand Final in October will allow two beers to be selected for a national listing across the Sainsbury's network. Sincere thanks go to British Guild of Beer Writers members, 11 of whom gave generously of their time on the day. They all enjoyed the opportunity to try some interesting new beers, meet customers, brewers and senior Sainsbury's managers and to garner important information that they will be able to use in future articles. As always you help, at every stage, to make this event a success and in turn the good news about interesting beer reaches new audiences.

Richard Morrice

Hives

FOR THE past three years, Guild members Tim Hampson, Steve Williams and John Porter have judged the Honey Beer category at the National Honey Show. The venerable event has been a fixture in the beekeeping calendar since 1923. While there have always been prizes for mead, the show organisers decided to embrace beer in 2009, recognising the increasing number of brewers using honey as an ingredient. Beers from Freeminer, Fuller's and Sharps have already won the Best Honey Beer title, and the judging team are hoping to spread the net wider this year. According to John: 'Frankly, the beers on display at the show are dwarfed by shelf after shelf of mead, and we'd like to see the brewing sector make a better effort this year. For Tim, Steve and myself to stand there in our white coats and adjudicate on a handful of beers, while the mead team are cracking into their 20th bottle, is a bit embarrassing. We'd be grateful for any Guild member who knows a brewer with a beer which features honey as an ingredient to encourage them to enter.'

The 2012 National Honey Show takes place in October and entry forms can be downloaded from www.honeyshow.co.uk. If you know a beer you think should be entered, please email John the details at john@shielporter.com.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS MAY 28

Try your hand at hop picking!

SHEPHERD NEAME is hosting its second hop picking trip from August 31-September 1 in Faversham, Kent. It will coincide with the weekend of the 22nd International Hop Festival. The Hop Festival is a free, two-day, family event that commemorates the golden days of hop-picking, when families would come to Kent on working holidays.

Pickers would pass the evenings with music and stories, a tradition that continues through this celebration of beer, music and culture. The trip will include the opportunity to pick hops in a local hop garden, followed by a Q&A session with brewers, a researcher and farmer. Guests will then be taken to their accommodation before enjoying a beer and food matching meal deep in the Kent countryside. The following morning will include a tour of the Shepherd Neame brewery and a further Q&A session about hops with a brewer.

The morning will be rounded off with lunch, after which the guests will be left to enjoy the Hop Festival for the rest of the day. Guild members are welcome to attend some, or all, of the trip. However, accommodation is limited, so it is available on a first-come, first-served basis. If interested email jhumphreys@shepherdneame.co.uk with your address and daytime phone number.

Cider hit

AN UNINTENDED consequence of the new MUP (minimum unit price) policy is likely to cause the fatal demise of the most traditional method of buying the best farmhouse cider — at the farm, fresh from the barrel. If the minimum unit price of alcohol forces the increase, the cost of four litres will leap from between £5-£6 to nearer £12. Traditional cidemakers all over UK are obviously very concerned about the effect this will have on their regular customers with both SWECA and NACM releasing statements adding their concern about the damaging effect this will have on one of Britain's oldest traditions. CAMRA however don't seem to care much about it at all presently adding 'CAMRA's view on MUP is intended to save pubs...' and that it 'should have only a limited effect

on the retail price of cider at the farm gate' despite the waffle on their website about its sad demise at the farm gate in recent times. Many farmhouse cidemakers supplement any wholesale business with sales direct to the public on the farm who often bring their own containers to refill and believe that traditional farmhouse cider is not part of the problem. Sign here if you want to help: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/32849>.

Bill Bradshaw

Appy Hour

THE CASKFINDER APP produced by Cask Marque was used more than 46,000 times in March as consumers look for quality cask pubs. The app now has an Ale Trail covering over 8000 pubs. When in a Cask Marque pub use your smartphone to scan the QR code on the Cask Marque certificate and your visit will be recorded. Prizes are issued on completion of a certain number of visits. Already 10 people have visited over 100 pubs! It is fun and a good reason to discover pubs. To find out more about the app, which is available on iPhone and Android platforms, visit You Tube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7Y1QENORcg. For more information contact: Paul Nunny, 07768 614065, paul@nunny.fsbusiness.co.uk.

The best idea since...

THE BEER ACADEMY presents a Festival of British Beer and Baking at the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Brewers in London, where visitors will have the opportunity to sample a wide range of beers and foods, meet the producers and enjoy the company of fellow beer enthusiasts. There will be three 90-minute visitor sessions at the following times: 11:30-13:00; 14:00-15:30; 16:30 to 18:00. Confirmed brewers so far include Meantime, Hopback, Everards, Shepherd Neame and Miller Brands. More brewers and bakers to be announced - Date June 26. Ticket prices: £20 per person per session. To book please call 0207 499 8144. For a full calendar of events run by the Beer Academy go to www.beeracademy.co.uk.