

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter September 2012



IN KEEPING with our current policy of holding the Guild's annual awards' dinner in bright modern surroundings it is confirmed that this year's venue will be the Jumeriah Carlton Tower, which is situated off Sloane Street and is five minutes' walk from Knightsbridge Underground station.

Last year one of the highlights of the dinner was the spectacular view over the Thames to the Palace of Westminster. While we cannot replicate that, I can confirm that the view of the garden in Codogan Place from the room where we hold our pre-drinks reception is pretty impressive. Details of the menu have yet to be finalised but the date for the dinner is December 6.

Guild Awards There is just still time for members to enter their work into the competition or encourage others to do so (closing date is September 7. With so many members working in public and corporate relations it is worth reiterating that your company's work can be entered into the **Thwaites Award for Corporate Communications**. The prize will be given for the best writing or communication in a corporate environment. Entries can be for in-house or customer magazines internal or external websites, corporate films/video blogs. This award, introduced in 2011, recognises the excellent work to promote beer which is produced by or on behalf of brewers, pub companies and other related organisations.

Visit www2.beerguild.co.uk/?page_id=2162 for more on the awards. **Tim Hampson**

Cask Ale Week

THERE MIGHT be a big rumpus going on in Munich at the end of September, but over in the

UK Cask Ale Week kicks off on September 28 and goes all the way to October 7. If members want to know more about how they can use events happening during the week to generate copy, please get in touch with Frances Brace (frances@redflamecommunications.co.uk), who can also provide images.

Florence and the mashing

BEER HISTORIAN, beer sommelier, brewer and Guild member Peter Haydon has successfully concluded the purchase of the Florence Brewery from owners Greene King. This unique and ground breaking deal, whereby one brewery is producing in premises owned by another, will see output at the South London brewpub double over the forthcoming months.

Haydon explains: 'the five barrel brewery was installed in 2007, but I took it on in January 2011 and spent the year getting quality and yields up and costs down. However, my relationship was with Capital not Greene King, so the purchase cast a shadow of uncertainty over my plans that I felt was necessary to remove.

'Greene King has been a pleasure to work with and could not have been more supportive. They accepted my proposal to buy the brewery outright and were happy for me to become a tenant in the Florence. The deal we have agreed gives me the financial security to justify investment in the business and a trading base upon which to build and expand output.'

The Florence will continue to make the beers it has always done (Weasel, Bonobo and Beaver), which have built a solid local following.

'The Capital managers have always been very supportive of the brewery,' says Haydon 'and I am keen to reward that loyalty by giving them something that is both unique to them and a little bit special.'

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However, there is spare capacity in the brewery and Haydon plans to use this to produce a further range of beers. 'If you know me you'll know I'm usually to be found under a hat and that my origins in this industry lie in the realm of pub and beer history. Consequently my beers are all recreations of old London beers from long gone brewers, each beer being named after a hat, all under the A Head In A Hat Brewing banner.'

So, for example, Titfer is a Dinner Ale from 1923 and Topper is a powerfully hoppy East India Porter from 1805. Discussions with publicans have revealed a keen interest in historical brews, so Haydon is confident that he won't have to hawk his beers far and wide.

'Historically beers didn't travel,' he says, 'those that had to were specially brewed. Like so many brewers of old, I want to keep my beers close to home and, the odd festival aside, I want to them to be enjoyed by the people of South London, an area which, after all, has a great and centuries old brewing tradition we can be proud of.'

Land of Hops and Glory

AT THE beginning of July the Soil Association put on a day looking at the world of organic beer called Land of Hops and Glory, featuring a beer brewed specially for the day by Little Valley Brewery. The event was hosted in the education centre of Laverstock Park Farm, an organic and biodynamic farm founded by former Formula One World Champion Jody Scheckter.

The day started with small trade show of organic brewers including Bath Ales, Stroud Brewery, Little Valley from West Yorkshire, Caerphilly based The Celt Experience and Laverstock Park.

The first of the talks focused on brewing; unfortunately it was the brewing of the compost teas that Laverstock use on their fields... Robin Appel, of Robin Appel Ltd, followed this by giving the grain merchant's point of view. Two elements of Robin's talk stood out. The first was how close modern organic farming was to general farming when he started, due primarily to the lack of fertiliser and pesticide use. The second was about the quality of the final product as 'the art of making good malt from bad barley has yet to be found'.

This in turn was followed by a presentation by the Stroud Brewery, who in addition to being committed to producing organic beers, is aiming to put their brewery into the heart of their community, through initiatives such as their hop growers club and Maris Otter Vintage Ale (a single malt and single hopped beer).

A surprisingly interesting talk, given by Lee Holdstock of The Soil Association, was not about beer at all but the organic marketplace, which has seen a downturn in UK sales consistently since 2008. The single biggest increase in organic sales was from McDonalds, boosting a 9% increase, whilst beer as a whole only managed an increase of 1.4% in 2012.

Unlike the rest of the world, which is increasing its organic production, the UK is leading both Ireland and Norway in the decline.

The end of the day saw a panel made up of fellow Guild member Roger Protz, Greg Pilley from Stroud Brewery, Dom Lane of beingAstronauts, Robin Appel and Lee Holdstock. There was the familiar call to stop using clear glass to bottle beer and a plea from one of the supermarkets for smaller brewers to learn how to bottle beer effectively so that they can stock it. Most of the panel's time was taken up with the thorny issue of organic malt prices being significantly higher than regular malt.

With local breweries such as Stroud Brewery and Little Valley and some of the larger regional brewers such as Fuller's with Honeydew and Hall & Woodhouse, with their River Cottage collaboration, Stinger, there's definitely a place for organic beer. Whilst the day highlighted many of the positives for organic products it also highlighted that producers cannot, and should not, use the organic label to up sell a mediocre product. First and foremost it needs to be good beer. **John Read**

Remembrance of brewing times past

MANY PEOPLE remember their first beer. The taste lingers in the memory like their first kiss. Perhaps they puckered up their face in disgust, as it tasted so bitter compared to the sugary pop of childhood. But then came that golden moment when we discovered a drop that really tickled our taste buds. That tentative sip, a tingle on the tongue, a swirl around the mouth and a lick of the lips, then the first swallow, followed by a summer of pint after pint.

Many of these beers have now gone, but not all are forgotten. They may have been swept away by a tide of takeovers and closures, their rich heritage casually spilt on the boardroom floor, but their powerful presence still lingers in the air. And some famous names have even risen from the dead to haunt the bars once more.

Barnsley Bitter was once a name to conjure with in Yorkshire. When Courage decided to close the Oakwell Brewery in 1973, thousands of protest marchers poured on to the streets and questions were asked in the House of Commons — all to no avail. But the beer's pulling power was so strong that a number of new breweries have tried to revive the revered recipe and two still trade on this liquid legend today.

CALENDAR 2012

- Independent Manchester Beer Convention, Oct 5-6
- Great American Beer Festival, Denver, Oct 11-13
- BGBW annual dinner and awards, Jumeriah Carlton Tower, London, December 6

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

In my new book, *The Lost Beers and Breweries of Britain* (Amberley Publishing, £15.99), I have looked at some of the beers and breweries which have vanished, from Alton Pale Ale and Brickwood's Little Brick to Yorkshire Stingo and Mercer's Meat Stout, including some that are pouring again. Packed with colourful illustrations showing the fine art of selling beer, it's a rare chance to drink in the past. **Brian Glover**

British Pub Channel

'DEAR GUILD members I am writing to you as a very new member. My team and I have created The British Pub Channel to be an all-embracing pub and brewery website. We want to vigorously campaign for British pubs, making people aware of the great variety of evolving pubs plus their many facilities. Indeed, our main motivation is to support the trade by encouraging appreciation of pubs and beer. I believe it is, and will be, rather more than just another pub website.

'We are aware that our database is, in some areas, very out of date. Consequently, we have a small army of temporary employees beavering away and our target is to have checked over 45,000 pubs by the date of our public launch at the end of September. If there is any help and exposure you can give us that would be wonderful and of course feedback is always welcome! Visit www.pubchannel.co.uk for more information. Cheers.' **Philip Porter**

On dividing up the world

THROUGH A masterpiece of timing on my part I managed to be on holiday for the publication date of *The World Atlas of Beer* on August 28. I was in Krakow in southern Poland.

When we were planning the space allocations for the Atlas last year, Poland was problematic. Although it had 80 breweries it felt 'stuck', showing few signs of joining the global beer revival that has been gaining pace these past few decades. So along with Switzerland, the other country that caused us problems as we divided up the world, it failed to get a chapter of its own.

The origins of the craft beer revolution are imprecise. Unquestionably CAMRA (1971) was important, but so were those US home brewers who gained the right to brew commercially (1979), spurred by Michael Jackson's first World Guide to Beer (1977) and faintly crazed revivalists like Belgium's Pierre Celis (1965) and San Francisco's Fritz Maytag (1970).

Writing the Atlas my co-author Canadian beer writer Stephen Beaumont and I were aware that it was commissioned by the same company who had published the iconic Jackson book. Whereas Michael wrote in the mid-70s of living beer cultures in West Germany and Czechoslovakia and failing ones in Belgium and the UK, chronicling elsewhere a few survivors hanging on in inhospitable environments, we found quality brewers in 74 countries, nearly 40 of which could claim to have an established, often vibrant, invariably growing local beer culture.

Based on its outline alone and before we had completed a single chapter, we knew our book would be translated into American, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and Russian, with several others likely to follow. Such is the international thirst for beer knowledge.

There are four bars in Krakow I would consider top rate specialist beer cafés. One even served hand-drawn, naturally carbonated Hardcore IPA from BrewDog. I felt amendments coming on already. I had time to try about a dozen of the 150+ Polish beers they stocked, mostly from new or revitalised independent producers. Which, I wondered, would spearhead Poland's inevitable push into the rapidly expanding world market in good beer? And will they do better than the Brits?

Anyway, what we have written is now for others to judge. World beer is developing so rapidly that we can only be confident that the Atlas is already out of date. If we did our job properly our snapshot will have caught the angles about right. And lure in new converts. **Tim Webb**

The World Atlas of Beer (Mitchell Beazley, £ 25) is written by Tim Webb and Stephen Beaumont. It was published in the UK on August 28 and appears in North America (Sterling) on October 2 2012.

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 at www.breweryhistory.com/journal/EssayPrize.

World Brewing platform for

ALL BEER in Portland

GUILD MEMBER Alex Barlow of ALL BEER has recently returned from Portland, Oregon where he presented a research paper conducted in collaboration with University of Nottingham's Brewing Science section. The research is the first stage of a project which analysed the database of sensory flavour profiles created by Alex for beers represented on the allbeerfinder.com website.

Barlow says 'ABF may not have the greatest number of beers on the web, but we have by far the most detailed information on the flavours of each beer entered, making finding beers to suit people's tastes easier. Such is the

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS SEPT 28

detailed flavour information gathered on each beer, a 500-beer portion of the ABF database was used in a piece of collaborative research, initially to test the robustness of the ALL BEER Flavour Notepad sensory scoring system.'

The results were impressive, as Dr David Cook from the University said: 'we were pleasantly surprised by the strength of the initial results, which justified the paper at the World Brewing Congress. We're looking forward to extending the research with ALL BEER, allowing us to jointly present more detailed findings at next year's European Brewing Congress.'

Future research will include tools to predict beer style based on flavour characterisation and zones of personal flavour preference.

The response at the Portland Congress was impressive too with great interest shown by a host of world Brewers, American and German Universities with brewing research programs, and by sensory specialists.

Barlow said that he 'was delighted with the interest, questions and request for copies of the paper.'

He believes that in addition to finding the beers to suit people's tastes easily via allbeerfinder.com there is an opportunity for brewers to use the ALL BEER Flavour Notepad to design beer flavours and recipes, predicting relative balance, flavour strength and drinkability. Copies of the poster and supplementary handout are available from alex@allbeer.co.uk.

In addition to the ALL BEER presentation Barlow was chaperoning two students from the University of Sheffield's inaugural Craft and Micro brewing course. He was recruited as Honorary Lecturer for the MSc course at his local university, taking on an increased workload after the untimely death earlier this year of industry legend Dave Wickett.

'Understandably Dave's death left a big gap in the course so my involvement increased, and the decision was made to send Dominic and Paul to the World Brewing Congress to boost their technical brewing knowledge with some cutting-edge research.'

Barlow chose to enhance the experience value of the trip by calling in favours from some of his craft-brewing friends on the West Coast.

'The help and hospitality of the brewers and hop farmers we visited was superb,' he said, 'some of these brewers are at the forefront of craft brewing in the USA and the world, with expertise in bottle and can-conditioning, wild yeast and bacteria management and brewing with unusual botanicals, herbs and spices. They included Sierra Nevada, Russian River and Elysian, as well as a host of excellent Portland brewers and a visit to J. Haas in Yakima.'

This unique experience cannot be promised to all Sheffield University's post-graduate entrants but, covering 1300 miles between San Francisco and Seattle, it did make great use of the long haul trip to America's West Coast.

Talking about future years Barlow said, 'if you ask the students, brewing a recipe they devised on the plant at

UC Davis, courtesy of Professor Charlie Bamforth and assistant Candy Wallin, was probably the highlight in what was a real trip of a lifetime and we will continue to maintain close links with other universities and craft breweries worldwide. The role of the course is to enhance the employment potential of our post-graduates within UK craft brewing and inspiring experiences like this can only help that.'

Other news

THWACK! ROGER Protz will conduct a beer tasting at Lord's cricket ground — the OctoberTest — on Monday October 8. There will be a beer from breweries close to each of the main Test grounds. The event is for MCC members but tickets will be offered to selected non-members if any remain.

NEW GUILD member Simon Martin writes in to say that he will be taking up a role as 'Sales and Media Relations Manager' at the Celt Experience Brewery in Caerphilly. 'I look forward to starting the role to help me further develop my understanding on how the brewery world works. As for the Youtube channel I am best known for — www.youtube.com/realaleguide — I will endeavour to keep the same energy and enthusiasm with my daily reviews as possible. For further info email me at realaleguide@googlemail.com. THE LAUNCH of the next Cask Report is taking place in the evening of September 27; more details will be announced nearer the time.

Podge's Belgian Beer Tours

Xmas in Bruges, December 22-26

We are pleased to announce that rooms have once again been secured at Hotel Academie in central Bruges and we will be running a Christmas Tour, so get the dates in your diary and get your request for leave in!

The price of this five-day tour is £445 per person based on sharing a twin or double room with a single supplement of £128. If you would like to book a place, please register your interest now to be added to the list. **Chris Pollard, www.podgebeer.co.uk**

Beer Academy latest

September 11 90 Minute Tasting, Oktoberfest, London, The White Horse, 1-3 Parsons Green, London, SW6 4UL

September 18 One Day Foundation Course, London Beer Academy, 33 Clarges Street, London, W1J 7EE

September 19 90 Minute Tasting, Scandinavia, London The White Horse, 1-3 Parsons Green, London, SW6 4UL

September 20 How to Judge Beer, London The White Horse, 1-3 Parsons Green, London, SW6 4UL
Please go to www.beeracademy.org for more details