

# British Guild Of Beer Writers

**Newsletter  
May 2013**



***I ADMIT it; I am a sucker for books on beer. So it is good to see new publications from two of our award-winning members: Mark Dredge and Ben McFarland.***

One of the profound changes that have taken place in recent years is that the brewing of good, interesting beers knows no geographical barriers, something which is charted in both these books.

Out now is Mark Dredge's first book — *Craft Beer World* — which describes 350 different beers and his own experience of drinking them. Also included throughout the book are informative looks at beer, covering everything from the catalyst that has caused the astonishing growth in craft beer, through to matching beer with food.

Coming later in the year is *Boutique Beer* by Ben McFarland, in which Ben describes 500 of the world's finest beers. It includes sections on evaluating and tasting beers; a study of the craft in cans; the importance of good glassware and a guide to hops, yeast and grain. It too is a romp around the world with a glass of beer in hand and describes brewers in the US as well as some of the exciting developments coming out of

countries such as Japan, Scandinavia and Australia.

*Craft Beer World* — A guide to over 350 of the finest beers known to man, Mark Dredge (CICO, £16.99).

*Boutique Beer* — 500 of the world's finest craft brews, Ben McFarland (Jacqui Small, £25).

**American beer writers...**It is worth noting that the North American Beer Writers Guild has been re-constituted. Elected co-chairs were Don Russell, Joe Sixpack columnist for the *Philadelphia Daily News* and executive director of Philly Beer Week, and Jay Brooks columnist, author and editor of the *Brookston Beer Bulletin*. The organisation offers three levels of membership: full-membership for writers; industry membership for those employed in the brewing or allied trades and associate membership for those interested in supporting the group. **Tim Hampson**

## **GUILD AGM DETAILS**

**The Guild's** AGM is now officially called for Tuesday June 11 at the Hand & Flower (1 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8XJ); it will kick-off upstairs at 6.30pm with a buffet to be served at 8/8.30pm. I would like to thank Fuller'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

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know; while the Treasurer is also happy to continue. I shall also be happy to serve as Secretary again — 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 a couple of 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. **ATJ**

## NEWS

**Guild members** Roger Protz and Tim Webb will conduct a beer talk and tasting during the Edinburgh Festival. It will be held at the Caledonian Brewery and it's hoped that top crime novelist Ian Rankin may read from his new Inspector Rebus novel. Full details in the next newsletter.

**A Cambridge** man has become the first person to visit 1000 pubs as part of Cask Marque's World's Biggest Ale Trail. The Ale Trail is one of the features of the Cask Marque phone app (CaskFinder), which pinpoints cask ale pubs across the country. Users can 'scan' the Cask Marque certificate in pubs and their visit is recorded as part of the Ale Trail. Prizes are available to consumers as a reward for the number of visits they make to different pubs and when they hit 100 pubs they are sent on a full day Ale Ambassadors course to give them the

skills and knowledge about cask beer and how to professionally taste beer. The CaskFinder app is free on both iPhone and Android mobiles.

## Cask Ale Week

CASK ALE Week 2013 is Friday 27 September to Sunday 6 October, with the launch on Thursday 26 September. 'We're calling for breweries, pubs, industry champions with a passion for Britain's national drink to put their backs into supporting the Week,' says Paul Nunny, executive director of Cask Marque, which is facilitating the whole event.

The theme for this year is Introduce a Friend. 'A huge 47% of British adults have never even tried cask ale,' says Paul, 'including many who are regular pub-goers. Extraordinarily, nearly 30% of them can't even give a reason why they've never tried it. Presumably no one has ever introduced them to the delights of a perfect pint — hence our theme for the Week. Quite simply, Cask Ale Week is a platform for pubs and breweries all over the country to give people the reason to try!'

Further information can be had from Guild member Frances Brace (07432 692309; frances@redflamecommunications.co.uk).

## Beer Academy news

*7 May, One day foundation course, Bull & Castle, Dublin*

*14 May, One day foundation course, Beer Academy, London*

*21 May, How to judge beer, The George, Bristol*

*21 May, Beer and Cheese, Nigel Sadler with Nigel White from the British Cheese Board.*

## CALENDAR 2013

- London's Brewing, Hackney, London, May 3-5
  - BGBW AGM, London, June 11
  - European Beer Bloggers Conference, Edinburgh  
July 12-13
  - BGBW 25th anniversary event, venue TBC
  - Great British Beer Festival, Olympia, August 13-17
- Please send details of any relevant events to Adrian Tierney-Jones**

11 June, *Love London Beers*, Debbie Parker  
6 August, *Hallelujah to Hops*, Debbie Parker  
8 October, *Old World vs New World Beers*,  
Steve Livens

To find out more visit [www.beeracademy.co.uk](http://www.beeracademy.co.uk)

### *It was 40 years ago*

IT WAS as I recently sipped my pint of Bass delivered direct from the barrel visiting the Prince of Wales in Kenfig that it dawned on me: this was it, this was what the last 40 years had been about. I was reminded of a phrase from long ago describing British beer as 'warm and flat as ink', and that is how it should be. By warm, I don't mean hot, but not cold, something akin to wine's 'room temperature'.

I think this aspect started to go awry with holidays in the sun. A cold San Miguel in Malaga is in place, but it is out of place with the Bristol Channel crashing onto rocks and being surrounded by pictures of ship wrecks. But some feel it is right, and, as a result, far too much beer is served too cold.

This affects another aspect, the taste. Was the Kenfig Bass as tasty as one served up in the Barley Mow at Kirk Ireton in the mid 70s under the care of 90-year-old Mrs Ford? Probably not, but it had good taste.

The then keg beers lacked taste or if they had any it was disgusting. So preserving taste was then another aim. And that has probably been the greatest success; today we are blessed with a huge variety of tastes of well made beers, led by the tsunami of craft beers from the USA. To pettifog about 'craft' or 'real', to bletcher about minor differences of dispense and heads or no heads is to insult the true celebration, the taste of a good pint. **Roger Davies**

### *Podge's Belgian Beer Tours*

*Beer and Heritage, Friday 9 August-Monday 12 August 2013*

**Due to** a change of dates of the Ipswich Beer Festival we have moved this tour forward by two weeks, returning the day before the start of the Great British Beer Festival at Olympia. Based at Novotel Leuven this tour combines beer tourism with great visits to historic and cultural sites. We are

looking to include: a visit to the Marl caves at Kanne where Grottenbier is aged and can be sampled; a boat trip on the famous Ronquières Inclined Plane on the Brussels-Charleroi Canal; a meal at Dupont brewery tap; a beer and biscuit tasting; a visit to the historic city of Tongeren; a visit to Kerkom brewery; a visit to the Archeosite and Museum in Aubechies which just happens to have a special beer Cervesia brewed for it; lastly a tour and tasting at the brand new brewhouse of Delirium Brewery in Melle.

The price of this four-day tour is £405 per person based on sharing a twin or double room with a single supplement of £100 if you want a room of your own.

If you are travelling alone and want to share a room with another traveller, please contact Podge ([podgehome@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:podgehome@blueyonder.co.uk)) as we are regularly able to pair up travellers in twin rooms to avoid the need for payment of a single supplement. If you would like to secure a place, please send a deposit of £100 per person now. The balance for this Tour is due as usual five weeks before departure.

Included in the cost of our tours are: hotel accommodation and breakfast; luxury coach travel on a 49 seater coach with toilet; pick up from Ipswich (Crown Street Layby), Colchester (Southway Chapel St South Layby) or Chelmsford (The Woolpack, Mildmay Road); arrangements can be made for different joining points on the way to Folkestone or even on the other side of the channel; all Brewery visits, tours and brewery beer tastings; entrance fees to all group attractions, museums and historical sites; all items marked with an asterisk on individual detailed tour itinerary; copies of Podge's City Bar Guide and Map for the town or city where we stay or spend some time on Tour; free still and sparkling water on the coach.

**DEADLINE FOR COPY THE NEXT ISSUE IS  
MAY 27. 2013**

## BRITISH GUILD OF BEER WRITERS NEWSLETTER MAY 2013

The Guild is 25 years old this year and an event is in the middle of being planned, but to get you in the mood here is copy of the minutes of the first ever meeting...

### BRITISH GUILD OF BEER WRITERS

Minutes of the inaugural meeting  
at The Horniman, Hay's Wharf, London SE1  
on Tuesday 2 February 1988

**Members present:** Michael Jackson, Roger Protz, Stephen Windos, Steve Pinder, Mary McLeod, Alan Hall, Brian Glover, Ronald Atkins, Robert Metcalfe, Rupert Watts, Peter Martin, Alisdair Aird, Andrea Gillies, Mike Bennett, Paul Mosley, Phil Mellows, Ted Bruning, Jane McCallion, Andrew Barr, Sam Rowe, Lois Jones, Iain Dobson, Neil Hanson, David Kitton, Mark Davis, Michael Hardman, Mike Ripley.

Roger Protz acted as chairman at the start of the meeting.

**Apologies for absence:** Graham Lees, Peter Coulson, Kenneth Dunjohn, John Simpson, Maurice Lovett, Ted Elkins, Tim Hampson, Danny Blythe.

**Name of the organisation:** There were a number of objections to the originally conceived title, Guild of British Beer Writers, mainly because it was felt that it would suggest that only native Britons could be members. It was agreed that the title should be The British Guild of Beer Writers.

**Election of officers:** Michael Jackson agreed to be president, and took over the chair. His title was almost immediately changed to chairman to allow for the subsequent election, if it were ever felt necessary, of an honorary president. Michael Hardman agreed to act as secretary for a six-month trial period, and Iain Dobson agreed to be treasurer. It was agreed not to elect further officers at this stage.

**Aims of the organisation:** The meeting discussed suggestions made by Tim Hampson in a paper circulated along with the notice of the meeting. It was suggested that the aims of the guild would be to improve the professional journalistic standards on, and public understanding of, beer, brewing and the brewing industry. Membership would be open to people who write professionally about beer and the brewing industry, work in a public relations capacity for the industry, or edit magazines about the industry. The guild would keep a directory of members, which would be made available to

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editors, PR companies, newspapers, magazines, radio and television. It was agreed that an annual award would be presented to the Beer Writer of the Year and that sponsorship would be sought within the industry. The possibility of awarding prizes to beers or breweries would be considered later. Michael Jackson suggested that a newsletter should be introduced, and circulated to the media to create interest in the guild's aims and activities. It was agreed that the officers of the guild would draft firm proposals by the next meeting.

**Annual subscription:** It was agreed that there would be only one class of membership and that the annual subscription should be £20.

**Future meetings:** The next meeting will be on Tuesday 5 April. Michael Hardman agreed to organise a venue at a Young's house in central London. In addition, the officers of the guild and other interested members would be meeting at the Calthorpe Arms, Gray's Inn Road, Holborn, on Tuesday 9 February to discuss what format meetings should take, to look further at the guild's objectives and to make any necessary recommendations to the next full meeting of the guild.

**Any other business:** Mike Ripley proposed a vote of thanks to Roger Protz and others who had helped to establish the guild, and proposed that they should be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses. This was agreed. The management of the Horniman, Nicholson's Inns and Alan Hall of Lowenbrau were thanked for providing and arranging accommodation and refreshments.

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