

# British Guild Of Beer Writers

## Newsletter October 2013



**Guild annual dinner...** It may be too late now to get an entry into this year's Beer Writer of the Year awards, but it's not too late to buy a ticket for the dinner.

Our annual awards dinner will take place on 5 December at the Jumeriah Carlton off Sloane Street in London. The price of tickets has been held at last year's level — £56.40 for Guild members and £96 for non-members and corporate members (all prices are inclusive of VAT). A booking form will shortly be circulated to members.

Anyone wanting a hotel for that night should contact Fiona Whitehead at CTEM who should be able to arrange: [fiona@ctem.co.uk](mailto:fiona@ctem.co.uk).

**Hook and Thompson beat the bankers...** Guild member Alastair Hook and Hogs Back's Rupert Thompson recently went to sea in a very small boat to raise money for charity. The sea-going pair were members of a Worshipful Company of Brewers crew that rowed across the Channel and raised money for Greenwich-based charity Ahoy and Alzheimer Research.

And they did it — despite delays waiting for large container ships to pass and a seven-knot counter current they still managed the 24 miles in 5 hours, 8 minutes and 54 seconds, setting a season's record for the course. And despite having an average of 50, they showed a clean set of blades and clear seawater to two boats crewed by young HSBC bankers. Clearly beer is better than champagne for cross-Channel rowers.

It's not too late to donate money to their causes. For Rupert's cause visit <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/rupertschannelrow> and for Alastair visit [www.justgiving.com/Meantime-Brewing](http://www.justgiving.com/Meantime-Brewing).

**Brewing up a storm: history and the politics of beer...** The next in our regular series of lectures on beer-related topics will be given by Dr James Nicholls, author of the highly respected *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England*, which traces the alcohol debate back to Tudor times. Dr Nicholls is Research Manager at Alcohol Research UK and a regular media commentator

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on alcohol issues. The talk takes place at 7p.m. on Thursday 17 October at the White Horse, Parsons Green.

In 1829, a *Times* editorial commented that 'the power of selling beer ought, on the face of things, be no more obstructed or restrained than that of selling potatoes'. The argument that beer was a traditional commodity and something that should be freely available to all was later countered by temperance campaigners who claimed it was merely a gateway to stronger drink. James will look at how beer stood in Victorian debates on alcohol control and consider its political fortunes in comparison to wine and spirits both then and now.

The lecture is free to Guild members and to book a place contact [angie@cask-marque.co.uk](mailto:angie@cask-marque.co.uk).

**Beer writing: past, present and future...** A joint workshop with the Brewery History Society on beer writing is planned for spring next year. The likely venue will be the fabulous Hook Norton Brewery in Oxfordshire. A tour of the Victorian tower brewery is included in plans for the day and, for those planning to come by rail, transport will be arranged from Banbury Station to the brewery.

Topics for the day include a look at beer writing from the 19th century through to the present day. Subjects include the birth of modern beer writing; can the printed word survive and how do we ensure that beer writing has a glorious future? Full details will be shortly circulated. **Tim Hampson**

## NEWS

• GUILD MEMBER Allan McLean, winner of the first Gold Tankard 25 years ago

for his column in *The Scotsman* newspaper, has started a new beer blog. Allan, who also tweets @allanpint, is Editor of the *Scottish Brewing Archive Association Journal*. His first blog is the initial part of a rediscovery of his old haunts in York — [allanpmclean.wordpress.com/2013/09/25/brewed-within-the-city-walls](http://allanpmclean.wordpress.com/2013/09/25/brewed-within-the-city-walls).

• PETE BROWN used the launch of Cask Ale Week to issue the latest *Cask Report*. Headlines included: cask beer has outperformed the beer market by 6.8%; over 10,000 beer festivals were held during the year and 184 new breweries emerged to satisfy demand. If you would like a copy of the report e-mail [angie@cask-marque.co.uk](mailto:angie@cask-marque.co.uk). You can also read it online at [www.caskreport.co.uk](http://www.caskreport.co.uk).

• ANDY HAMILTON, author of *Booze for Free*, the UK's best selling homebrew book since 2011, will be releasing *Brewing Britain: Quest for the Perfect Pint* on 24 October with events in Bristol, Nottingham, Peterborough and London to follow. *Brewing Britain* is a homebrew book aimed at the drinker and beer lover as well as the self proclaimed beer geek,

## CALENDAR 2013

- Independent Brewers' Beer Festival, Burton upon Trent, October 4-5
- Great American Beer Festival, Denver, October 10-12
- Indy-Man-Beer-Con, Manchester, October 10-13
- The Politics of Drinking, Guild lecture, White Horse, London, October 17
- SIBA North-west Beer Competition and Festival, Staveley, Cumbria, October 24-26
- BGBW Awards and Dinner, Jumeriah Carlton, London, December 5

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

full of recommendations to drink your way through the ingredients that go into beer.

· **ALEX HALL** writes from New York... 'Following on the pilot Cask Marque cask accreditation project rolled out earlier this year in the Philadelphia area by Paul Pendyck of UK Brewing Supplies, it has now been launched in the New York City area by Paul and myself. The first assessments were made on four bars (one in Manhattan and three in Brooklyn) on Saturday 28 September, though as in accordance with the rules they will need to be visited again and pass on two separate occasions before qualifying. Anyone after further information should email [alex@wanderingstarbrewing.com](mailto:alex@wanderingstarbrewing.com) (note I can't disclose the exact locations that have applied until they qualify).'

· **SPECIALIST CRAFT BEER** pub operator, The Craft Beer Co, is changing its name this November and brewing a beer to raise awareness for the 'tache-encouraging prostate cancer charity Movember. The Craft Beer Co, will become The Craft Beer 'Mo' for the whole of November, with new signs hung at each site, while the beer will be brewed at Harbour Brewing Co, with malt donated by Simpsons and hops from Charles Faram. It will be available throughout November, sorry, Movember, free to 'tache-wearing gents at all four Craft Beer Mo sites in London's Islington, Brixton and Clerkenwell, as well as in Brighton.

Craft Beer Co is also launching a new set of awards aimed at home brewers. The awards will recognise beers across a wide range of categories, with the overall winner of 'The Craft

Beer Co Home Brewer of the Year', handed a £5,000 cash prize and the opportunity to brew their winning beer commercially with Dark Star. Full details of the awards are at:

[www.nationalhomebrewingawards.co.uk](http://www.nationalhomebrewingawards.co.uk).

### **Lager's early start**

THE BREWING of lager began in Britain earlier than many people realise. Brewers in Glasgow and Wrexham were long regarded as Britain's lager pioneers in the 1880s, but lager was first brewed in Edinburgh before either of these notable locations.

Records in the Scottish Brewing Archive show that the William Younger company was brewing lager in Edinburgh before the launch of what is regarded as Scotland's lager era in Glasgow. But even less well known is the fact that Britain's first lager was actually brewed in Edinburgh many years earlier.

This fascinating history is outlined in the latest edition of *The Journal of the Scottish Brewing Archive Association* (SBAA), in an article based on a transcript by Robbie Pickering from a talk by Ron Pattinson during the 2012 Glasgow Beer Week.

Scotland was one of the first places in the world where lager was brewed outside of southern Germany. Indeed, Scotland even managed to beat Denmark and Bohemia.

'The first lager brewed in Britain was in Edinburgh in 1835. And it's connected with one of the most seminal events in the history of lager: Gabriel Sedlmayr's visit to Britain in the 1830s to check out advances in brewing technology,' the article states.

'In 1833, Sedlmayr stayed for a month with brewer John Muir in Edinburgh.

The two men hit it off and Sedlmayr learned all about Scottish ale brewing.'

As recorded in *Die Spaten-Brauerei 1397-1997* by Wolfgang Behringer, customers in Edinburgh were impressed by the crystal clarity of a lager brewed by Muir in accordance with Sedlmayr's guidance, using bottom-fermenting yeast sent by Sedlmayr from Munich in 1835.

That lager — almost certainly a dark beer as Munich lagers were at the time — proved to be a one-off. The lager beer, produced at Muir's Edinburgh brewery in the street then known as the North Back of the Canongate, could not be reproduced successfully because there were problems with propagating the yeast. The experiment ended. And Sedlmayr's production of Scotch Ale in Munich also appears to have gone no further than the experimental stage.

When lager brewing then came back to Edinburgh almost half a century later, the production of the William Younger product was soon discontinued because that company decided to concentrate on brewing ale, for which Edinburgh was famous.

The Scottish lager mantle then went to Tennent's in Glasgow who started production in 1885 and continue to brew lager to this day. So it is Tennent's and Glasgow that hold the record for Scotland's longest successful production of lager.

The article also includes fascinating information on the history of lager consumption and production in England and Wales, as well as noting the role of Alloa in the Scottish lager production story.

The journal of the SBAA also includes articles on other aspects of

Scottish brewing history, including a description by an Edinburgh brewery worker of what it was like during his career at the William Younger Holyrood Brewery, on the site now occupied by the Scottish Parliament.

Ron Pattinson's history of British lager, the only in-depth one yet written, is available under the title *Lager!* from lulu.com for £24.20 (hardcover) or £10.24 (paperback). A Kindle edition is available from Amazon.

The SBAA supports and promotes interest in Scottish brewing and pub history and the Scottish Brewing Archive, which is housed at Glasgow University. Email contact is via [info@scottishbrewingarchive.co.uk](mailto:info@scottishbrewingarchive.co.uk), [www.scottishbrewingarchive.co.uk](http://www.scottishbrewingarchive.co.uk) and ScottishBrewingArchive on Facebook.

Membership of the SBAA is £20. To join go to the website and the relevant page. **Allan McLean**

## **Beer Academy news**

*8 October, 90 Minute Tasting: Old World vs New World Beers, White Horse, Parsons Green*

*9 November, Beer and Food Matching, the Drafthouse, Westbridge, London*

*11 November, 90 Minute Tasting: Best of British, White Horse, Parsons Green*

*12 November, How to Judge Beer, The Bull, Highgate*

For details on venue, time, cost and other events visit [www.beeracademy.co.uk](http://www.beeracademy.co.uk)

**DEADLINE FOR COPY THE NEXT ISSUE IS**

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