

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter December 2013



GUILD ANNUAL DINNER...

IT WAS great to see so many people at our annual awards dinner where journalist Will Hawkes was named as Beer Writer of the Year 2013. Despite the best efforts of the British weather, it was also great that so many battled through the conditions from the North of England and Scotland to make it to the event. The Beer Writer of the Year award is the ultimate accolade for anyone communicating about our national drink.

Entries for this year's competition included press articles, books, radio shows, blogs and apps on a wide range of topics relating to beer. The overall winner is chosen from six category winners. Will is a freelance journalist who specialises in beer. He writes regularly for a range of titles including *The Independent* and *The Washington Post*, and is the author of *Craft Beer London*, an iPhone app and book about the capital's best pubs, breweries and off-licences which also won the Beer Writers' online media category last year. Other winners named at the event at the Carlton Jumeirah Hotel in Knightsbridge were:

Greene King IPA Travel Bursary

Winner: Martyn Cornell

Silver Award: Adrian Tierney-Jones

Shepherd Neame 1698 Award for Beer and Food Writing

Winner: Mark Dredge

Thwaites Award for Corporate Communications

Winner: British Beer & Pub Association

Brains SA Gold Award for Best Use of Online Media

Winner: Richard Taylor

Silver Award: Adrian Tierney-Jones

Adnams Award for Best Writing in Regional Media

Winner: Gavin Aitchison

Silver Award: Leigh Linley

Fuller's ESB Award for Writing for the Beer and Pub Trade

Winner: Roger Protz

Silver Award: Jeff Evans

Molson Coors Award for Writing in National Media

Winner: Will Hawkes

Silver Award: Sophie Atherton

Special thanks should go to our judges: author Pete Brown, Bill Dobson, head brewer at SA Brain, David Wilson, public affairs director at the British Beer & Pub Association, Karen Barnes, editor of *Delicious* magazine, and Craig Woodhouse, political correspondent at *The Sun*.

Brewer of the Year

ONE OF the highlights of our annual dinner is the announcement made for our Brewer of the Year (which used to be called the Beer and Brewing Award). Following nominations from the membership the award is made by the committee. This year's accolade was given to Derek Prentice. In making our brewer of the year — we paid tribute to someone who has made an unmatched contribution to London's vibrant and vital brewing scene. I don't know if there is such a thing as a London brewer, but if there is, then this man is it. He is held in high esteem by his peers and also in the wider community of those who love beer.

He started work at the age of 17 in 1968 and across his more than 45 years career he has worked for four of the Capital's greatest known brewing names — Truman's, Watney's, Young's and Fuller's. He is an outstanding and meticulous

CHAIRMAN: Tim Hampson Tel: 01865 245711; 07768 614283 hampson.tim@gmail.com

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; atierneyjones@gmail.com

www.beerguild.co.uk

brewer who still passionately believes in the romance of brewing. In his current job at Fuller's, which continues to the end of the month, not only is he the curator of some celebrated beers, but he has helped develop some great new ones too — including Seafarer, Frontier, Imperial Stout and Past Masters. That's quite a legacy.

His vast experience and attention to detail combine in perfect harmony. Always genial and enthusiastic, he generally avoids the limelight, but he richly deserves to enjoy the admiration that this award expresses. It was quite a moment, when more than 200 people stood up, to applaud and cheer Derek as he walked up to receive his award. **Tim Hampson**

The judge's story

JUDGING THE Guild Awards for the second time in three years was an interesting experience that gave me a real perspective on how quickly our discipline is developing.

With the boom in real ale and other forms of craft beer and a new generation of brewers, drinkers, bar owners, festivals and ideas, there's so much more to write about beer than there used to be. More of us are trying to write about it, and there are many more ways of communicating about it than ever before.

In many ways, it has been much harder to judge in 2013 than it was in 2010. How do you evaluate a short video made at a beer festival, shot on a smartphone and edited on a laptop, against a podcast recorded simultaneously in three locations, against a self-published book, against a good old-fashioned newspaper article (remember them)?

In the end, however the content is delivered, it's that content that matters most. No matter what the medium, any communication about beer (or anything else) needs to tell a good story. It needs to attract the reader at the beginning and, in an age where everyone and everything is competing for our attention on a second-by-second basis, it needs to hold you and make you want to get through to the end.

It seems like a daunting task, but this year's winners accomplished it in style. Our corporate award had a worthy winner with the BBPA's film about the duty escalator, fronted by Marverine Cole, arguing a genuinely persuasive case for the importance of pubs. Mark Dredge breathed fresh life into the interesting but done-to-death area of beer and food. Richard Taylor's bite-sized blogs may have taken a few minutes to read but stayed with you for the rest of the day. Martyn Cornell made you feel like you were with him in Hong Kong and Bruges, transporting you as did Gavin Aitchison's depictions of Yorkshire pub life. Roger Protz's trade press columns were compelling and

informative enough to have run in national consumer press. And Will Hawkes got beer coverage into parts other writers could not reach this year. His simple, gentle storytelling won the national press award, and saw him crowned Beer Writer of the Year 2013.

Our discipline has never been in better health. And in my own ten year experience of it, it's never been this much fun. Surely a bright 2014 awaits. **Pete Brown**

News

- **GUILD MEMBER** Darren Norbury has started writing a monthly column on beer in glossy county magazine *Cornwall Today*. 'Hoppy Talk' covers news and beer reviews relating to the county's 30 or so brewers, most of whom are members of the newly formed Cornwall Brewers' Alliance. There is also a 'beer of the month' spot.
- **CASK ALE WEEK** and the *Cask Report 2014* — Cask Ale Week goes from Thursday 25th September to Sunday 5th October 2014, while *The Cask Report* is launched Thursday 25th September 2014. Please get the dates in your diaries — more details will follow in subsequent issues. In the meantime if you need any more information please contact Frances Brace, Red Flame Communications on 07432 692309 or Heather Ryland, Red Flame Communications on 07527 375847.
- **GUILD MEMBER** Su-Lin Ong gets in touch with news of www.BringABottle.co.uk, a new website which helps consumers track down the top savings in the world of branded drinks. The monitored list currently comprises 20% beers and ciders, and will grow (the rest is wines and spirits).
- **JUST TWO** years after The Craft Beer Co MD, Martin Hayes launched his first site in London's Clerkenwell, he's now secured his fifth (and fourth in the capital), this time in Clapham, with a free of tie lease through Enterprise on The Manor Arms, Clapham Manor Street, London SW4.
- **FULLER'S HAS** announced the launch of a new limited edition blonde ale, Steel, made in collaboration with

CALENDAR 2014

- Exeter & East Devon CAMRA beer festival
Exeter, January 10/11
- National Winter Ales Festival
Derby, February 19/22
- SIBA BeerX
Sheffield, March 11-15
- World Beer Cup
Denver, USA, April 7-8
- Craft Brewers Conference
Denver, USA, April 8/11

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

Steel City Brewing, the nomadic Sheffield craft brewers that guest brew across the UK and Europe. The limited-edition blonde ale will be available from December 2013 — February 2014 and combines the hoppy ethos of Steel City with the drinkability and know-how of Fuller's. Fuller's has also re-opened its Greenwich pub The Pilot after a stunning six-figure refurbishment that has revitalised the venue with a stylish new look, additional accommodation and a focus on fine dining.

New 'Bookazine' about World's Best Beers

GUILD MEMBERS Chris Hall and Craig Heap have co-written a new 'bookazine' — or large magazine — about the world's best craft beers, published by Future plc this month. *Craft Beer: 365 Best Beers in The World* covers the world's finest beers by season, helping readers to enjoy excellent beers suited to any time of the year. There are also helpful food matches for many of the beers, information on where to find them, as well as features on beer history, brewing, tasting, storing, serving and food matching. Ideal as a Christmas gift for a beer-loving friend (or just yourself!), the bookazine is priced £9.99 and is available in most W H Smiths, large supermarkets, magazine retailers and online at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk. An iOS/Android version is coming soon.

Peramble with Podge

BRUGES BEER Festival & Beyond, Saturday February 1st to Wednesday February 5th 2014. This tour takes in the annual Bruges Beer Festival as well as getting us out and about further afield in Flanders. The success of the festival has meant that a new, bigger venue has had to be found and the festival is moving in 2014 to the Beurshalle just off 't Zand Square. For this tour we will again be staying in the comfortable four star Hotel Academie near Minnewater and only a short stroll from Bruges Beertje. Our stay in Bruges will give us time to visit all the sights, the bars of Bruges and the Beer Festival itself and we will also have the opportunity to experience some visits to breweries and cafes outside Bruges in our coach. We will include brewery visits and tastings to Struise Brouwers in Oostvleteren, Alvinne in Moen, Eutropius in Heule, Cnudde in Eine and other brewery visits are in the pipeline. We also plan to visit some unique and beautiful Flemish cafes with unusual beers such as Café Radio at Ruiselede, Moeder Lambic at Waardamme and both the Witte Paard and De Post in that most beery of West Flanders villages, Oostvleteren. The itinerary is being finalised so watch for updates.

The price of this five-day Tour as £445 per person based on sharing a twin or double room with a single supplement of £128 if you want a room of your own. If

you are traveling alone and want to share a room with another traveller, please contact Podge as we are often able to pair up travellers in a twin room to avoid the need to pay the single supplement. If you would like to secure a place please now send a deposit of £100 per person to Podge, details on www.podgebeer.co.uk or call 01245 354677.

Is it time for UK beer to grow up and leave home?

I AM sitting in a presentation by the Chair of the Belgian Family Brewers, when the focus shifts to an analysis of the perception by North Americans of different nations' beers. No. 4, United Kingdom: 'Sociable', 'Open', 'Honest' and ... 'Simple'.

I am glad I am not the only one.

Thus far the emergence of a small but strong, complex and quality-driven, inexorably rising global market in evermore distinctive beers seems to evoke ambivalence in Britain — as if we think it is a passing fad. Surely the unlikely survival of 'real ale' should have taught us that for a consumer, the path to better beer is usually a one-way street and rarely walked alone?

While Britain remains keen on cask-conditioned light ales, since 1950 our only national beer style of note, the rest of the world is going nuts over types that originated here but are sadly no longer present in significant volume.

That most English of brews, 'IPA', is now rightly considered American, with some foreign brewers even creating on our behalf a style called 'English IPA', involving fewer hops and less alcohol but barely a Fuggle or Golding in sight.

Belgian brewers strut their stuff on the catwalk of the craft beer revolution, assuming authority over styles like 'witbier', 'dubbel', 'tripel' and 'saison'. An impressive 62% of their production goes to export — a significant help in getting a sympathetic hearing from Government.

In Britain we prefer to mither over whether we dare make beers ill-fitted to the handpump, export remarkably little and endure exploitative taxation.

Cask-conditioned beers will never be easily or widely exported. The same goes, I suspect, for all other simples. The inventory required to populate a future export drive will be rich in revivals of and updates to grander UK beer styles, boosted by the largely unearned pedigree that comes with being their country of origin.

To my ear 'India Pale Ale' sounds more authoritative than 'English IPA', pointing towards high dose English hops, a little oak-ageing, plus bottle-conditioning of course. Our Russian Imperial stouts should routinely be aged for a year to get dry and heavy. We might even

revive Double Brown or Wee Heavy to set standards in areas with fewer established faux brands.

In the new export markets, UK family brewers or established micros should not see themselves as competing with other UK brewers. Rather they would be starting to establish British ales to nestle alongside Belgian, American, South Pacific and Scandinavian ones, to assist craft beer in expanding its market share at the expense of industrial beer brands and wine.

The logistics of exporting are fiddly and expensive. Dropping competition in favour of collaboration, as the Brewers Association is doing to great effect for US craft brewers, would buy far greater impact than going it alone, though such a club should exclude any prospective member set on cutting corners.

These new markets are not made up exclusively of those with an advanced palate. However, listen to people who have one, and are peopled by those who wish to acquire one. The new beer aficionados may not know it is maize they are sensing in there but they will sense the maize.

Is our own domestic market ready for such 'beers for export'?

Many older beer lovers have come to mistake cask-conditioned for traditional, so inevitably some will be lost to the cause of being interested in other styles. The younger generation on the other hand will take to anything that tastes good, as will those wavering wine drinkers who dislike the pretentious prices being asked for increasingly predictable, corporate plonk.

All it needs now is the chutzpah to go make them.

Simples. **Tim Webb**

7 beers for 7 breakfasts

THE WOMEN and beer group Dea Latis held its second Beers with Breakfast event last week in a seven-beer hair-of-the-dog, posy beerwriters dinner morning session at the Somers Town Coffee House in London. The female gathering of journalists, bloggers, brewers and marketers assembled to test their taste buds alongside the delicious breakfast menu at the Yummy Pub Co-owned pub in Chalton Street near Euston.

Beer sommelier, Jane Peyton, was guest speaker for the group and offered her impassioned plea to women to consider the UK's national drink as regular a drink of choice. There was no need to persuade the hungry group of tasters of the merits of beer as Beer Sommelier Annabel Smith began her tutored tasting and everyone got stuck in. Over the next 90 minutes they quaffed, nibbled, deliberated, Tweeted, snapped and scribbled through seven beers - kindly donated by each of the brewers — and the accompanying breakfast courses in true multi-tasking style.

The menu began with a poached egg and smoked salmon with Hollandaise drizzle on a toasted muffin served with St Austell Brewery's Clouded Yellow beer and ended with a Wells and Young's Double Chocolate Stout served with pancakes, chocolate sauce and blueberries. At the end of the tasting the unanimous winner was the eggs and smoked salmon with Hollandaise dish which beautifully complemented the citrusy notes of St Austell Brewery's Clouded Yellow beer.

Lisa Harlow, who helped organise the event with Ros Shiel and Annabel Smith, said: 'At the end of a fantastic year for beer — and a year where there are more women brewing and drinking beer than ever before (*Women trying real ale for the first time has grown from 14% to 34% in the last three years. CAMRA, August 2013*) — this was a wonderful cross-industry celebration of our versatile, varied and flavoursome UK brews. It was great that we could highlight that different styles of beers will go with just about anything – even breakfast!' **Lisa Harlow**

Dea Latis would like to give 7 thanks to all the brewers who donated and delivered the beers and to Anthony and the crew at Somers Town Coffee House, the full beer and food menu was as follows:

Poached egg and Smoked Salmon with Hollandaise Drizzle served with St Austell Brewery's Clouded Yellow; crispy smoked bacon with a herby grilled tomato served with Freedom Pilsner; Bombardier rarebit crumpet served with Wells & Young's Bombardier; black pudding and apple crisp served with Taylor's Landlord; chilli avocado on French toast served with Thwaites Wainwright; banana and strawberry smoothie served with Wells & Young's Banana Bread Beer; pancakes with chocolate sauce and blueberries served with Wells & Young's Chocolate Stout.

For more information go to: dealatisuk.wordpress.com or follow them on Twitter @DeaLatis or like them on Facebook at DeaLatis.

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