

British Guild Of Beer Writers

**Newsletter
May 2014**



NEW MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE At the Guild's AGM we would like to recommend a new membership structure. Currently, the Guild's membership is a relatively unsophisticated structure comprising full and concessionary membership for individuals and corporate for companies.

We now have more than 200 individual members and more than 40 corporate members — all categories of membership are growing, but it is getting increasingly difficult to decide who should be a member, as we do not have clear criteria for membership. We will propose having two new categories of individual membership: Full and Associate. The concessionary category would stay the same. No changes, would affect any current members — who would automatically become full members. However, if the new membership categories are adopted by the AGM, we hope the information on who can join and what the process is for joining will be much clearer. Full details will be shortly sent to the membership.

Daily news alerts A technical fault with the Mailchimp software which sends out the daily news alerts from the Guild's website means the service isn't working currently. Hopefully, normal service will be shortly resumed — however, in the

meantime I would suggest that members regularly check the news section of the website to keep up to date.

Guild AGM Our AGM will be held on 17 June, at the Parcel Yard in King's Cross, 6 for 6.30pm — see below for more details.

Date for the diary The Guild's annual dinner and awards will be held on 4 December in central London. Location is to be confirmed. **Tim Hampson**

Guild AGM details

THE GUILD'S AGM is now officially called for Tuesday June 17 at the Parcel Yard, King's Cross; it will kick off 6 for 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 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).

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

However, 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

• **If you** are in London on May 7 and fancy a free pint of a new beer called Brewers' Dozen then please come to the Mad Bishop & Bear pub in Paddington station from 6pm. Brewers' Dozen is a collaboration between Derek Prentice (British Guild of Beerwriters Brewer of the Year 2013-14) and Sara Barton (British Guild of Beerwriters Brewer of the Year 2012-13) and they want to invite you for a free pint to thank members for awarding them the brewing accolade. Brewers' Dozen is a 5.5% SPA (Special Bitter) and was brewed at Sara's brewery, Brewster's, in Grantham. The name Brewers' Dozen relates to the widespread opinion that beer is liquid bread, so it is only fair that brewers should share the same dozen as the bakers! This is coupled with the fact that Sara and Derek's British Brewer of the Year title spanned 2013. The inspiration for the beer also derived from the bakers' dozen as the beer was brewed to an Original Gravity (OG) of 13° Plato. This is typical of the SPAs historically brewed by many brewers who would name them Best or Special Bitter on the bar. The beer was brewed using East Anglian barley malt, caramalt and crystal malt, with four varieties

of English hops — Fuggles, First Gold, Admiral, and Target. Derek and Sara will be at the Mad Bishop & Bear on May 7 for a chat from 6pm. They hope to see you there but don't delay as there is only one free firkin (72 pints!). Come and say hello to them and they will give you a raffle ticket to exchange at the bar for beer.

• **Dea Latis Beers with Breakfast tasting at Norwich City of Ale** As part of City of Ale in Norwich next month, beer and women's group Dea Latis is staging a Beers with Breakfast tasting. Co-hosted with Adnams, the tasting takes place on Friday May 23 from 10am to midday at the Plasterer's Arms, 43 Cowgate, NR3 1SZ — a pub known for its great range of cask ales. Guests will sample five breakfast foods alongside a specially chosen ale, with expert guidance from Beer Sommelier Annabel Smith talking through the matches. To find out more about the event and buy a ticket, visit www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/city-of-ale-beers-with-breakfast-tasting-tickets-11344073429.

Complimentary places are available to journalists and Dea Latis corporate partners are eligible for a discounted ticket, for more details contact ros@shielporter.com.

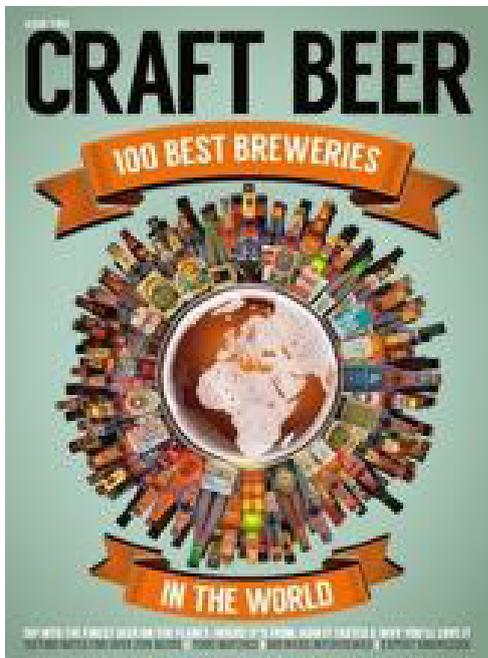
• **New Issue of Craft Beer covers the world's best breweries** Guild members Matthew Curtis, Chris Hall, Craig Heap and Leigh Linley, along with Newcastle-based beer writer Ruari O'Toole, have co-written the second issue of *Craft Beer* for Future Publishing: *The 100 Best Breweries in The World*. The new issue features 100 breweries from the UK, US, Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy, Ireland, Scandinavia,

CALENDAR 2014

- British Guild of Beer Writers AGM, London, June 17
- Great British Beer Festival, London, August 12-16
- British Guild of Beer Writers dinner and awards, London, December 4

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

Australasia and more; there are also tasting notes for beers from each of the breweries and interviews with head brewers and the stories behind their beers. There are also guides to pubs, bars and beer culture in the UK, US, Belgium, Germany and the Czech Republic, as well as features on the brewing process, brewing history and abandoned breweries. Retailing at £9.99, *Craft Beer: 100 Best Breweries in The World* is available now in most large newsagents and online from www.myfavouritemagazines.com with free shipping.



• **Over 11,000 pints sunk at UK's biggest ever pub beer festival** Craft Beer Co. hosted the UK's biggest Pub Beer Festival at its site in Clapham, London, over the first weekend in April, with visitors drinking over 11,000 pints. Going under the name 'Craft 100', the festival showcased 100 beers at the same time, from the very best breweries across the UK, along with a few international guests. Craft Beer Co. MD Martin Hayes said: 'Craft 100 was a huge success, with a range of beers that blew people away — many of the beers were brewed specifically for the festival which made it even more special for those that came along. This was a very special

weekend for us, we've never tried to tackle an event on that scale before, but I'm delighted with how the team dealt with the logistics of it all.'

In honour of the retirement of longstanding Guild member Denis Cox, who many members will know as Budvar's representative in the UK, here's a reprint of Roger Protz's recent tribute to him.

DENIS COX IS RETIRING. It's one of the vagaries of the English language that it could be taken to mean he's the shy type. But anyone who has met and supped with the PR controller for Budweiser Budvar UK will know that, on the contrary, he's an ebullient and uproarious character who tirelessly supports the brand and the brewery he loves.

Denis is a street fighter. He is the polar opposite of the smooth-talking PR type who likes to keep his or hers views tightly buttoned. Like a stick of Blackpool rock, he has Budvar stamped all over him. He has fought tirelessly not just to promote the Czech beer but also to keep it free from the clutches of the American giant Anheuser-Busch, brewer of the rival Budweiser.

Denis dubs AB — now AB InBev — 'the evil empire', a phrase burrowed from Ronald Reagan. Ten minutes in Dennis's company will quickly tell you it's the only thing he has in common with the former US president.

His contribution to the Budvar cause was marked at the brewery in Ceské Budejovice in February when he was presented with an engraved drinking stein and a key to one of the coveted boxes in the brewery's reception area. The boxes hold beer mugs for those people the brewery recognises as its vital friends and supporters. Denis Cox has joined me and we're the only two Brits honoured with mugs and keys: mine is Number 68, carefully chosen to recall the Prague Spring of 1968, the first revolt against Soviet rule.

If that suggests Denis and I are joined at the hip, it's a reasonable assumption. I first

met him when he invited me to sample the two beers named Budweiser and asked for my opinion. The American version — brewed, as the label makes clear, from rice as well as barley malt — is thin and largely devoid of taste. The Czech beer, on the other hand, is packed with juicy malt and tangy hop character: a joy to those ‘who have sense in their mouth’, as a British beer writer observed several centuries ago.

From then on, I joined Denis on a helter-skelter ride to defend Budvar from possible takeover and emasculation. He gave me a quick history lesson to explain why there are two beers with the same name. Budvar is based in a town in the Czech Republic that’s best known by its old German name of Budweis. For centuries, beers from the town have been called Budweiser, just as the great brewing city of Pilsen names its beer Pilsner.

The waters were muddied in the 19th century when two German emigrants to the United States called Anheuser and Busch opened a brewery in St Louis and called their beer Budweiser. The result has been a long and seemingly unending legal tussle over trademark rights to the brand name.

For years, it seemed inevitable that the financial muscle of the American giant would lead to Budvar’s takeover. But the Czech brewery remains owned and controlled by the government that has repeatedly made it clear it will not allow AB InBev — or any other global beer maker — to snap up this jewel in the brewing crown.

The fact that so many people in Britain are aware of the ‘battle of the Budweisers’ is due largely to Denis Cox’s indefatigable support for the Czech version. He’s a journalist by trade, a background that has helped him tell a good story with clarity and panache. He was born in Luton, educated in Bedford and worked for both the *Luton News* and *Bedfordshire Times* before moving into public relations.

It was while performing PR duties for a British engineering firm that worked in

communist Czechoslovakia that he came into contact with Kospol, the government body that controlled the export of food and drink to the West. Ironically, his first work for Kospol was promoting not Budvar but its rival, Pilsner Urquell.

But back in Britain, his wife Shirley, who worked for the magazine *Drinks Retailing*, put him in touch with Lynne Zilka, who had started to import Budvar and needed PR support. Eventually Lynne Zilka was replaced when the Czech brewery opened its own London office and set up Budvar UK. Denis Cox, however, remained as the hub, endlessly proclaiming the superiority of the Czech beer and taking parties of journalists to the brewery.

Now, as he prepares to take a well-deserved rest, he can point to the success of Budvar that can be measured by sales in Britain that have grown from 20,000 hectolitres a year to around 100,000. On its home patch, Budvar has just announced that global exports have risen by 16% to 763,000 h/l or 20m gallons, the best for 118 years. The beer that won’t lie down is now sold in 65 countries.

Neither, I suspect, will Denis Cox lie down for long. He’s not, in every sense of the word, the retiring sort. A farewell party is planned by Budvar UK and what better theme for the occasion than Sinatra’s *I Did It My Way*. **Roger Protz** (first printed in the *Publican’s Morning Advertiser*)

Beer Academy news

6 May The Beer Academy 90-Minute Tasting — Battle of the Beers (anything EU can do... we can do better!), The White Horse, London
For details on venue, time and cost plus on other events visit www.beeracademy.co.uk

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FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

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