

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter June 2014



HOPEFULLY ALL members will have received a copy of a document in which the committee details a future strategy for the Guild. Underpinning it is the belief that the Guild is now a mature organisation, which is financially strong. This puts us in an excellent position to build for the future and add value to all that we do.

One of the proposals, which will have to be considered at our upcoming AGM, is that we should make some changes to the membership structure of the Guild.

It is proposed that we make to the process of joining the Guild not just fairer but more transparent. In addition, we want to support the professional development of members.

Currently we have three levels of membership — full, corporate and honorary. To this it is proposed to add a new category for associate members.

All current individual and honorary members of the Guild will automatically become full members. But future individual members would either become a full member or an associate. And eventually some might become honorary. There would then be a pathway for showing how people could move from being an associate to a full member, if they so choose.

It is also proposed that a membership committee should be set up, the full details of this have yet to be established, but it could include members of the committee as well as other full members. This group would be tasked with coming up with proposals for membership criteria and the process.

I welcome comments on the paper. See you at the AGM. **Tim Hampson**

Guild AGM details

The Guild's AGM is now called for Tuesday June 17 at the Parcel Yard, Kings Cross; it will kick-off at 6 for 6.30pm with a buffet served at 8/8.30pm. The Secretary 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, all committee members have signalled their intentions to stand again (there is a maximum of nine members, including three officers). This does not mean that no one else can stand — if you fancy a go let the Secretary know and the time-honoured procedure of nominations, seconding and then having a vote will be undertaken; this year the committee has also agreed that all those standing should provide a short biography of themselves.

There is no stipulation in the Constitution to do so before the meeting, but if there is anyone interested in standing, they can let the Secretary know prior to 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 —furthermore, the committee will be presenting to the meeting their thoughts on Guild future strategy. **ATJ**

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News

• **Dea Latis at Norwich City of Ale Beer and women forum** Dea Latis took its popular 'Beers with Breakfast' tasting to the Norwich City of Ale last month, hosting a female-only tasting session at the Plasterer's Arms in the city. Guests enjoyed six breakfast dishes, each of which were matched to a different ale, with expert tuition from Beer Sommelier Annabel Smith, while Belinda Jennings of Adnams presented her City of Ale Saison, brewed especially for the festival. All the beers served with breakfast at the pub were brewed by women as part of the pub's Fem.Ale event.

The menu was: baked eggs with roast tomatoes — Brewsters Helles 4%; smoked salmon and mandarin salad — Adnams Saison 6.3%; sausages cooked in marmalade — Buntingford Twitchell 3.8%; bacon & herb sandwich on rye bread — Adnams Rye IPA 5%; beer batter pancakes with maple syrup — Oldershaw Miss Red 4.4%; chocolate stout cake — Brentwood Smoked Porter 5.4%.

The event was the third 'Beers with Breakfast' tasting from Dea Latis, who have also paired beers with cheese, chocolate and tapas. Last September the group also ran a tasting event for female MPs in the Houses of Parliament. For more information about Dea Latis go to dealatis.org.uk.

• **Brewers across Britain** are being urged to be part of the nationwide launch of Cask Ale Week on Thursday September 25. 'We're calling on all cask ale brewers to become involved,' says Paul Nunny from Cask Marque. 'It doesn't matter whether they're from national, regional, local or microbreweries — they're all welcome to join in. The aim is to kick start the week with tutored cask ale tastings all over the country. So we're asking brewers to offer their services to pubs for 25th September.'

Brewers on board for hosting an event should get in touch with their favourite pub. The idea started to take hold last year. Brewers including Beer Academy sommelier Craig Stevens from Caledonian, Simon Yates from Banks's, Beer Academy sommelier Bruce Ash from Woodforde's and a number of Beer Academy sommeliers all held tutored tastings in pubs or breweries to mark the start of the week. The events capitalised on the growing interest in crafted food and drink, drawing audiences beyond the usual beer-lovers.

'This year, we're looking to do the same again, but on a larger scale,' says Paul. 'There are far more pubs than there are brewers, so licensees interested in holding master classes in ale tasting need to get in quick!'

Once the details are all sorted, send the information to Natalie@cask-marque.co.uk for inclusion on the Cask Ale Week website and Facebook page. There are reminders to include @caskaleweek in any Twitter postings too! Cask Ale Week runs Thursday September 25 to Sunday October 5. The theme is

Celebrating Britain's National Drink. For more information visit www.caskaleweek.co.uk.

• **Roger Protz** gave a talk and tasting on British beer in Riga, Latvia, at the end of May. Cesu Alus, a leading Latvian brewery, hosted him and former Latvian President Valdis Zatlers attended the event. The beers Roger chose for the event were Elgood's Black Dog, Bateman's Salem Porter, Thornbridge Jaipur IPA, Innis & Gunn Oak-Aged Beer, Fuller's Vintage Ale and Courage Imperial Russian Stout. Great interest was shown in the Imperial Stout as a result of its historic association with the Baltic region. All the beers went down well and the Innis & Gunn was a great hit because, Roger reports, the Latvians — 'sensible people' — prefer whisky to vodka.

• **Derby's Beer King** Les Baynton (and England's only one of this ilk), is celebrating ten years on his throne. An illustrated book of comic verse, mostly beer/pub related, has just been published. *Royal Rhymes* is a different sort of beer writing and is available for the price of a non-London pint — £3 — from Pint Pot Poetry, 01332 206734. BKB — Beer King Bitter — brewed by The Rowditch Brewery, will be available at The Rowditch Inn from June 27.

D-Day Beers

THE ACTUAL date of D-Day — the allied invasion of Normandy — was perhaps history's best-kept secret. For those not involved, Tuesday June 6 1944 was just another day in a long war. It was business as usual. I asked my 82-year-old dad when people first realised that June 6 was invasion day.

'I remember the skies being filled with planes towing gliders,' he said. 'There was so much aerial activity, with everything headed in the same direction fairly early in the day that it was clear that something was happening. I think that by the afternoon it was obvious to everyone that the long awaited invasion had begun.'

Amongst those looking wondrously at the skies along with my 12-year-old father would have been the brewers at Whitbread in the heart of the heavily bombed City of London. For them the day had started as any other, and, it being like any other, they planned to brew three brews that day.

When at 6am they mashed in Gyle 372, an XX Ale (D-Day Juno), the first landing craft were still to hit the invasion beaches. At noon, when the goods were being run in for Gyle 373, an IPA (D-Day Gold), the invasion was fully underway.

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

By midnight, when Pale Ale Gyle 374 was in (D-Day Sword), some 4,413 Allied troops had died, but the invasion beaches were secure and the Battle of Normandy had begun.

I have looked at the original Whitbread brewing logs for the day and recreated these three beers as faithfully as I can. I thought it would be an interesting way to commemorate the 70th anniversary of D-Day, but then it struck me that whilst you can taste these historic brews many of the men who waded ashore on June 6th 1944 never got to. **Peter Haydon, A Head In A Hat Brewing**

• I'd also like to mention my gratitude to Martyn Cornell for the chance conversation that planted the idea in my mind and to Ron Pattinson for helping me make sense of some of the more opaque numbers on the recipes.

Davis the Beer

I'm not the first beer writer to make the trek to the Craft Brewery at SA Brain in Wales to brew a collaborative beer. Many more worthy beer writers than me have travelled this way before and many more will do so in the future.

It is probably likely that these illustrious names know much more about the brewing process than me. Despite having toured far too many breweries to mention over the years I seem to have suffered from only consuming the process in haphazard snippets. The order of the process, and the important minutiae, had clearly passed me by on many occasions.

Brewing with Bill Dobson, Brains head brewer, put paid to this. Being involved in the production process from start to finish and being able to pepper him with inane questions for a whole day was very useful (for me, not for Bill). Patience of a saint maybe or is this simply the patience required of a brewer.

Either way, start-to-finish involved not only the actual brewing but devising the style, choice of ingredients, naming the beer, label design, and a tad of distribution — in so far as deciding who gets two barrels for a launch/tasting in London. It was a lot more immersive than I'd expected and all the more value for being so of course.

The issue of writers brewing collaborative beers has been debated in the past and questions asked about what the brewers, the writer, and drinker for that matter, get out of the exercise. I can't speak for the other two camps but I'm sure it is quite clear that I'm certainly not complaining about my end of the bargain with Brains.

As for the beer — a US-style brown ale Brown Sauce — it will be at in The Three Compasses pub in North London on the evening of June 21, should any Guild members be interested in trying it. **Glynn Davis**

Brazilian craft beer waxes

IN JUST a decade there has been something of a craft brewing revolution in Brazil. Hundreds of microbreweries have opened across the country — more than a handful of which boast medals from

international events. There are dedicated beer festivals bringing the best of Brazil beneath one roof, a brewing school and communities of innovative home brewers springing up in the larger cities. Not only is this new wave satisfying a domestic demand increasing in scale and sophistication, but also increasingly looking towards overseas markets.

This explosion has occurred despite the absence of hop and quality malt production in the country, the challenges of vast distances and climate, the fight for shelf space in supermarkets and taxes that favour the big producers. Marcelo Carneiro da Rocha, founder of The Colorado Brewery (Brazil's first new micro in 1995) and president of the newly formed Brazilian Brewers Association, points out that a bottle of his beer can cost less in the US than in Brazil.

The expense of imported hops and malt has resulted in some brewers looking to local ingredients to produce truly original and unique brews. One of Colorado's earliest offerings is Demoiselle-a Porter infused with Brazilian coffee — a genuine contender for my desert island drinks list. More recently Amazon Beer in Belem has taken this route too, augmenting traditional styles with exotic fruit.

Then there are the traditionalists. An influx of German immigrants a century ago in the south means that brewers like Eisenbahn produce Kolsch and Dunkel amongst other styles. While on the outskirts of Sao Paulo Bamberg's range includes a superb Rauch, Schwarz and Weizen. They have also successfully collaborated with Brazilian bands to make specialist beers.

Heading north and inland, Belo Horizonte offers a distinctly Belgium flavour including Wäls' Monasterium and Falke's Trippel. There is also a dynamic community of home and nano brewers here who meet regularly to sample each other's creations over local specialities such as jacare (alligator). There are a number of bars showcasing Brazilian and imported beers, so discerning England fans will have an excellent range of options to celebrate or commiserate after England's third and final group stage game in the forthcoming World Cup is played in the city.

Back in the Germanic south the Blumenau Oktoberfest is the largest outside of Germany. Blumenau also hosts the Brazilian Beer Festival in March. Last year 20,000 people attended over four days and the list of participating brewers makes this an event not to be missed in 2015 if you wish to sample all that's good in Brazilian brewing under one roof. In November, Rio de Janeiro hosts the 2nd Mondial de la Biere, which also attracted over 20,000 visitors in 2013 to sample 650 beers.

The pace of development is frightening. Innovators are increasingly brewing in casks of indigenous wood with exotic ingredients added, taking brewing into uncharted waters. Alexandre Bazzo of Bamberg says they are currently expanding at around 30% per year. Already an agricultural superpower, Brazil could soon be a leading light in craft brewing. **Andrew Howitt**

Simon Jenkins remembers Leeds brewer Simon Bolderson who died recently after an 18-month battle with cancer, aged just 47.

FOR A while now, Ridgeside's rock-music themed beers have been a familiar sight across Yorkshire, the attractive circular pump clips a guarantor of quality.

Guild members from further afield might not have had the pleasure of trying Simon's beers, or spending an hour in his engaging company, but had his illness not intervened, I dare say that in a few years time, Ridgeside would have been a staple real ale in pubs from Penzance to Penrith, Aberdare to Aberdeen.

Some members may know him — he attended a couple of guild dinners, and was instantly recognisable as the big bloke with the smiley face, the solid Yorkshire accent and the Robert Plant hairstyle.

'Brewing was his passion,' his widow Sally told me. 'He started off experimenting in the kitchen — usually when I was trying to make a Sunday dinner. Then wherever we went on holiday he'd make sure we took in a tour of the local breweries.'

From the kitchen, his home-brew operation expanded to the garage, and when his successful career in engineering ended in redundancy in 2009, Simon took the opportunity to turn his passion into a business.

Along with best friend Dean Hill, he rented a unit on the Penraevon industrial estate in Meanwood, and used his engineering skills to convert old equipment from a Hartley's jam factory into a working brewhouse. 'It was all quite nerve-wracking,' Sally admits. 'To go from a good career with a company car and all the perks to starting your own brewery, but I'm so glad he did it; we're really proud of what he achieved.'

Ridgeside entered a market place in the midst of change. The once-dominant Tetley's was preparing to leave town and Leeds Brewery had already demonstrated that a new name could have a big impact on the local scene. And though Ridgeside lacked the financial and marketing clout — or industry experience — of the likes of fellow-newcomers Wharfebank and Kirkstall, the little Meanwood brewery soon began to make some headway.

The opening of Market Town Taverns' East of Arcadia bar a mile or so up the road helped it, as two great bars and a Waitrose really opened up this slightly neglected part of town for business.

East put on a permanent Ridgeside pump from day one and it proved such a success that it was soon rolled out to other taverns in the group, giving Simon a serious leg up with his sales. Well-known Leeds pubs The Grove and the Duck and Drake were other early adopters but Simon always acknowledged the role that this first break had on his success. 'If it hadn't been for East we'd have struggled to get our foot in the door,' he told me once.

Since then the brewery has gone from strength to strength, satisfying local drinkers as well as winning a heap of awards.

Simon's sheer passion for the job, and for going the extra mile, also won him friends across the city. Like at a local rugby club, where a sudden snowfall left them with no real ale, and no brewers willing to risk their delivery vans down to the remote lane to the clubhouse. Simon was having none of that — and made a personal delivery of two casks direct from the brewery.

He also ensured that the brewery became involved in the community, supplying a house ale to the local Myrtle Tavern and supporting the campaign to save the famous Templar Hotel with a beer of the same name. In partnership with the Junction Inn, Castleford, Simon did a lot to promote beer served from the wood.

The long-term future for Ridgeside is unclear. The brewery may be put up for sale in the coming months, but in the meantime it's business as usual — in fact Simon was on site daily until just two weeks before his death at St Gemma's Hospice.

As brewer Ross Nicholson told me: 'we're just carrying on making beer as Simon would have wanted. It's our way of making sure that his legacy lives on.'

Beer Academy news

June 14, How to Judge Beer, The Draft House, London

June 17, Foundation Course, The White Horse, London

Jun 21, Foundation Course, The Draft House, London

July 3, How to Judge Beer, The Draft House, London

July 7-8, Two day Advanced Course, The Broadfield, Sheffield

July 15-16, Two day Advanced Course, The Draft House, London.

For details on venue, time and cost plus on other events visit

www.beeracademy.co.uk

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