

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter July 2015



AGM/EGM 2015 At the EGM prior to our AGM the meeting voted unanimously to adopt a new structure as a non-profit making company limited by guarantee.

At the AGM, Matthew Curtis was elected to the Guild's committee. All the other members of the committee, other than Dave Bailey, who decided to stand down, were re-elected.

Several members raised concerns about the move to change the status of the Guild. In particular, questions were asked about the tax liability the Guild could be exposed to, because of the current level of our cash reserves, if the change was made. We are currently seeking advice from our auditors on this matter, and will report back as soon as the situation is clarified. Below is the report I made to the AGM.

Chairman's report: AGM 2015

New structure This year a large part of the committee's time has been taken up with developing a new structure, which is suitable for our size, finances and planned future activity. If accepted by the EGM — the new structure will ensure increased accountability, certainty and put the Guild in a good place to continue its development. Special thanks should go to Christine Cryne for assisting us

with this and Paul Nunny for pulling the project together.

Membership As agreed by last year's AGM the Guild has adopted a new membership structure for ordinary members — full and associate. We also agreed to have a membership committee, which comprises, Adrian Tierney Jones, Bryan Betts, Georgian Wald and John Porter. The membership committee has done some very good work in bringing the new system together, and I would like to thank them for that.

Membership survey The committee also undertook a membership survey, which is being used to help shape proposed future activity. Thanks go to Sophie Atherton for organising this and to Cask Marque for collating the results.

Communications Sophie Atherton, Paul Nunny and Frances Brace have worked to develop a costed communication plan for the Guild, which will be shortly unveiled.

Training courses The development of members' professional skills is recognised as an important party of our activity. We are trialling two courses: How to Judge Beer with the Beer Academy and Pitch and Deal using NUJ trainers to assess interest in these.

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Guild events We have held a number of successful seminars this year. Together with the Brewery History Society a very well attended seminar on the history of beer writing was held at the Hook Norton Brewery. Another on the ingredients of beers was held at the Institute of Brewing — with thanks to Paul Hegarty for leading on this. An event on historic beer styles is planned for September.

Great British Beer Festival A successful reception was held prior to the Great British Beer Festival and a similar event is planned for this year at a venue to be confirmed.

Annual Awards Dinner Last year's event was held at the Jumeriah Carlton for the third time. With more than 210 people in attendance it was the best-attended dinner we have ever had. A new venue has been chosen for this year's dinner, the Park Lane Hotel, Piccadilly on 3 December.

Beer writer awards A new award for young beer writer of the year was introduced last year. It was well received and we plan to continue with it. The awards would not be possible in their current form without the support of our sponsors — so special thanks must go to this year's partners Molson-Coors, Adnams, Fuller's, Caledonian, Shepherd Neame and Hall & Woodhouse.

Guild directory A new Guild directory will soon be produced, which will be even bigger and better than last year's. We are undertaking a project to see ways in which it can be developed and improved.

The committee I'd like to thank Secretary Adrian Tierney-Jones, Treasurer Paul Nunny and the rest of the committee Frances Brace, Paul Hegarty, Sophie Atherton, Ros Shiel, Robert Humphreys and Dave Bailey who do the work and make the British Guild of Beer Writers such a success. And finally special thanks should go to Angie Armitage at Cask Marque for her hard work providing administrative support.
Tim Hampson

News

• **Martyn Cornell's** latest book, *Strange Tales of Ale*, a collection of odd but true stories connected to beer and pubs, is published on 15 July by Amberley Publishing, priced at £12.99. Ideal summer reading for the beach-bound beer fan, the tales include how the RAF flew beer in Spitfire fuel tanks to thirsty D-Day troops; the Great London Beer Flood of 1814 and why England's aristocrats drank 21-year-old ale.

• **Brew it Yourself Book Launch** Guild members Nick Moyle and Rich Hood (aka the Two Thirsty Gardeners) are launching their first book in July. *Brew it Yourself*, published by Nourish Books, contains over 75 booze-making recipes from wines, beers and ciders to Finnish *sima*, Mexican *tepache* and Norwegian *glögg*. The authors also provide advice on how to grow and source many of the ingredients. The book's beer section encourages readers to start brewing with simple one gallon recipes using malt extracts as a base and goes on to explore other grains and adjuncts for a variety of beer styles.

Nick and Rich will be launching the book at the Finborough Arms, London on 15 July and The Garricks Head, Bath on 30 July, both events kicking off at 6.30pm. To celebrate the launch they have produced a collaboration cider with Honey's Midford Cider and a home-grown rosemary and coriander ale with 'the Bosbury brewer', Derek Orford, of Hillside Brewery. A few places are available for both launches — if you're interested in attending, or would like more information on the book, please email Nick Moyleat nick@inkcapdesign.co.uk.

CALENDAR 2015

- British Guild of Beer Writers pre-GBBF event, London, venue TBC, August 10
- Great British Beer Festival, London August 11-15
- British Guild of Beer Writers awards and dinner, London, December 3

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

• **Beer & Football!** Anyone who loves the beautiful game and good beer should head down to Kingsmeadow, the home of AFC Wimbledon on the weekend of 10-12 July for the inaugural Ale FC Wimbledon beer festival.

The details of each day are as follows:

Friday, 10 July (5pm-1am) The first day of the festival is an opportunity to sample the beers before the masses descend on the Saturday.

Saturday, 11 July (12 noon until 1am) The Saturday is a pre-season friendly match day and the mighty Dons welcome newly promoted Premier League Watford for the Football Manager Cup.

For those of a more cricketing persuasion, the bars will be showing day four of the first Ashes test match.

Sunday, 12 July (12 noon until 6pm)

The final day sees the bars open again and once again showing the Ashes on the screens. For more details visit AFC Wimbledon's website.

Beer Day Britain

MANY THANKS to everyone who participated in the first Beer Day Britain — National Beer Day — on 15 June. It was a resounding success. The National Cheers to Beer trended on Twitter several times during the day and evening, there was lots of interest from local radio and TV stations, and the *Daily Star* even dedicated a full front page to the event. Some breweries and pubs gave away free beer or had special discounts, some brewers brewed special beers and across the country people visited the pub and tweeted their pictures of beer. Next year's Beer Day Britain will be even bigger!

Cheers Jane Peyton

There's a glass for that

There's been an industry conundrum for some time about how to broaden beer's demographic (from predominantly male) to a more balanced audience of men and women.

The recent survey conducted by Friends of Glass showed that 47% of non-beer drinking women think that a woman

drinking from a pint glass can be seen as unfeminine and exposed that 43% would choose to drink beer from a continental lager glass, given the list of other options.

The important thing to understand is that there are two debates playing out in tandem here. The first debate is to consider, openly and fairly, how the industry can break down the barriers that currently stop women drinking beer. One has been identified in the glassware issue and, with those kinds of statistics as responses, it is an incredibly valid point to raise. The second part of the debate is trickier, because it identifies women's preferences based on how they are perceived in terms of traditional perceptions of femininity and, rather than seek to challenge those, bends to become more accepting of what would be considered ladylike.

In the past I have been a pint drinker for all sorts of reasons. I like beer, but also I have not wanted to have been patronised out of a pint and talked into accepting a smaller glass across the bar. 'What's good enough for the guys is good enough for me,' I'd say, proudly clutching my drink.

But times have changed and so have I. These days, I am more interested in beer than ever before — in drinking it, in brewing it and in talking about its virtues as a truly great drink — but I am so much happier with a more sensibly sized glass than a standard pint.

I see many benefits in there being more of a variety of glassware available in pubs and bars. But not just for women but for men too. It is quite patronising to question anyone's choices (male or female) upon ordering but it is not if everyone is introduced to a selection and asked to choose. When someone goes into a coffee shop and orders a latte, it is unlikely that if they select a 'grande' a 'regular' will be suggested instead. We are empowered by being given choices, but those choices have to be fair across both genders or we are taking backward steps in an ongoing battle for equality.

Let's go back to the first part of the debate though, the part where a high

percentage of women who could potentially be interested in drinking beer, but are not because of the glassware. Let's look at that again. It seems clear to me that glassware needs to be updated to be appealing to men and women on equal terms and that way we dispel and outdate the perception of certain styles being overtly masculine or feminine.

But let's not get caught up too heavily in the gender equality battle here and remember that this is about reminding people, all people, about the virtues of beer and to introduce more people who don't think it is for them to find a style they do enjoy.

I remember when Richard & Judy first introduced their book club being cynical about the choices because, at the time it seemed like a dumbed down version of the Man Booker. I was so wrong. I had just read English at university and looked down my nose at what I deemed to be easy-reading holiday novels. I had a good friend haul me back from aloofness with the reminder that anything that got people reading was a good thing. Anything that got them excited about books, about talking to their friends about it meant they were expanding their repertoire and embracing a once considered old fashioned pursuit. Should everyone start with *Ulysses*? No, we work our way up, in everything. I think the same way as the book club analogy about the way beer is perceived by lots of women. There are only a few barriers to overcome and issues to tackle in terms of perception, for instance lots of women still believe that beer is unhealthy and fattening and it's just not. We need to change that too.

But where do we start?

We start with glassware as one of the identified barriers. It's the small book club that opens up the category to all. Then we get people talking about what they are trying. We get them excited to talk and interested in sharing their discoveries and favourites. We make beer interesting as a topic to all.

I'm still there and I still love it and my enthusiasm for such a diverse drink grows and grows. I'm still only just a

fledgling brewer and getting into Gose. You see there's plenty of time for *Ulysses*.

Jessica Mason

Features Editor, *Publican's Morning Advertiser*

Beer Academy news

An on-line course providing the essential introduction to beer has been launched by the Beer Academy. This will provide all those working in the Beer Sector, but particularly those working directly with consumers, the essential knowledge to allow them to qualify as a 'Beer Steward'. The On Line course consists of eight modules, each of which is tested with an on-line multiple choice assessment. Candidates can take the modules at a pace that suits them — and re-sit the assessments as required — and will build up their portfolio at an individual pace. When all eight modules have been completed and the assessments passed then the candidates will receive a Beer Academy Beer Steward Certificate by email.

To find out more and book a place go to www.beeracademy.co.uk/courses/beer-steward/

Courses

- 9 July Advanced Course 09:30-16:30 The Vaults, Devizes, SN10 1BN
- 18 July How to Judge Beer 09:30-16:30 The White Horse, London, SW6 4UL
- 20 July Foundation Course 09:30-16:30 The Beer Academy, London, SE1 2ND
- 21 July Advanced Course 09:30-16:30 The Beer Academy, London, SE1 2ND

Chris Marchbanks

Those of you that know long-standing Guild member Chris Marchbanks will have heard of his serious stroke a few weeks back. I have heard from his wife Vicky, who sent me the following paragraph.

'Chris is making progress from his stroke and enjoys your (Guild) e-mails. He has moved to a nursing home and is making progress — moving "locked in" left hand side limbs, wriggling digits, trying to speak and his mind is as acute as ever — so he needs the stimulation of contact with you all via his membership.'

So if you want to drop him an email I'm sure he'll be really pleased to hear from you.

ATJ