

Gael Ale

CAMRA Highlands and Western Isles
No 58 Summer 2021



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

FREE



Annat Point's Wild Barn Brewery brings
Belgian quelque-chose to the Highlands

Highlands and Western Isles - the biggest CAMRA Branch IN THE WORLD!



The only Pub in North Uist

Real Ale - Bar Food

Claddach Kirkibost
North Uist
HS6 5EP
01876 580 653
westfordinn@hotmail.com

Booking
essential for
evening meals!



BEER FEST 2021 FRI 6th & Sat 7th AUG - BOOK AHEAD!



From the Editor



To say that a lot has happened since our magazine last appeared in the holders wouldn't even come close. Our once-in-a-hundred-years pandemic has ripped through licensed trade and pub-goers

alike, and now looks as if it'll be something that we'll be dealing with for the remainder of our natural lives. Predictions of the effect on the on-trade were dire, with some soothsayers forecasting as many as 90% of premises going to the wall. At the time of writing, many pubs are still operating from memory, and are not in profitable territory. Your contribution will be quite literally vital, in getting up and out, and supporting your local.

GREEN SHOOTS

At least hope seems to spring eternal on the brewery scene, with the last year and a half seeing strong mail-order sales for many H&WI brewers. In this issue, Andy Rogers has penned features on both Annat Point, Corpach's Wild Barn Brewery and the eponymously-located Ardgour Ales. He has also updated us on Glen Spean, which featured in the final issue of the outgoing 'What's Yours Then?'. A feature common to all three is the imperative to diversify product range and adapt to the local retail landscape.

OLD CERTAINTIES

As the dust settles after the past year and a half, we are left somehow trying to pick the Campaign up where we left off back in March last year. This year's 50th anniversary celebrations are

trailed in our 'founding fable' story of the lads' trip to the westernmost pub in the British Isles, however the joy of making it to a semi-centenary is muted by thoughts of all for whom the last two years have been a horrendous time.

Arguably hardest hit of all have been our young people and teenagers; nowhere have the various governments' make-it-up-as-we-go-along approaches been starker than in the disruption to their education and lives, leading to misery and psychological damage the whirlwind of which will likely be reaped in years to come - at the same time that the same generation is dealing with CoViD's pent-up debt catastrophe. Bear in mind that they are the future of CAMRA, and a lack of outreach by those who should have been supporting them through this time, should be CAMRA's opportunity to give them a focus.

KEITH MORRELL RIP

The ocean of loss around us did not deflect from the sorrow felt by all in H&WI at the sudden departure of Keith Morrell. I'll leave the last word to Jim: "The Branch mourns the recent sad passing of Committee member Keith Morrell, who died suddenly of natural causes at the age of 70. He was a stalwart of the Branch, often travelling great distances from his home in Thurso to attend Committee Meetings and Socials in Inverness and Fort William. He will be much missed. Our condolences go to his widow and family."



Ad multas cereviasias

Tony Vernon
editor@highland.camra.org.uk

From the Chair



Welcome to the first issue of your new Branch Magazine, Gael Ale, rising phoenix-like from the ashes of 'What's Yours

Then?', last issued three years ago. And what a gloomy time it's been, not only because we've had nothing of significance to read but also because of one or two other distractions that have kept us from the pub. But now we can look forward to a cheery future, a return to the *status quo* of sitting in our favourite corner of the Local, sipping proper beer and enjoying Gael Ale.

I can understand any unfairness that Branch members might feel with Covid restrictions having had such, some would say disproportionate, impact on our pub-going lives. The Powers That Be have decided that the drunken revelry (?) we're used to is a major source of transmission of the dreaded plague, and that the hospitality industry is superfluous so it must bear the brunt of trying to control the pandemic.

The real economic victims here are the real ale publicans who have had to pour product away on more than one occasion during the pandemic, and are now being squeezed with Brexit-related staffing and delivery problems. On top of that, their life-saving summer trade is being severely impacted by arbitrary Covid restrictions. This factor is all the more significant in the Highlands, where the tourist industry is so crucial. The ones still sticking with real ale are our heroes.

We expect in the darkening days of

Autumn to come, when the government withdraws its financial support, that the real pub carnage will set in. Already, some local rural pubs are coming on the market, their owners not seeing a sufficiently profitable future in low turnover venues.

Rest assured that CAMRA is continuing to promote real ale, principally in community pubs, despite the authorities regarding social drinking as an almost religious sin. It has a constitution and branch structure that is resilient enough to weather the current storm and support its members interests as the need arises. But it is up to members to support their locals, forget the attraction of cheap bottled supermarket beers, get out there and re-establish that regular routine and corner spot in the pub, and drink ale at its best.

On a personal note, recently your Treasurer and I did our bit by cycling out the 35 miles to Arisaig from Fort William, to validate the promotion of the Crofters Rest to GBG status. We'd just missed the Happy Chappy but we did enjoy the Highbridge IPA (3) and Red Revival (4) before catching the 6.30pm train back eastward, and what a superb ride that is, one of the most scenic in Europe, and only £11!

Finally our Branch area is massive (one and a half times the size of Wales) so keeping in touch with members and pubs is difficult. Please let us know of pub news in your area (at pubsofficer@highland.camra.org.uk) so we can pass it on to other members; an information transmission vector that is an antidote to the gloom and doom spread by the viral one!

Jim Hall

chair@highland.camra.org.uk

We would be delighted to share our amazing food and drink with you at...

The Applecross Inn

Scotland Pub of the Year 2012!

CAMRA Wester Ross, Highlands and Islands Pub of the Year



Food served all Day / **The Freshest Seafood** /
Amazing Shoreside Location / 7 Sea view Rooms

Shore Street, Applecross, Strathcarron, Wester Ross / For up-to-date specials and offers, visit our Twitter and Facebook

t. 01520 744262 e. applecrossinn@btconnect.com www.applecross.uk.com

Why not also visit our renowned sister hotel...

RELAX INTO THE SIMPLE PLEASURES OF LIFE AT THE LOCH NESS INN...

EATING / DRINKING / SLEEPING

SERVING **SCOTTISH ALES** BREWED IN AND AROUND THE GREAT GLEN

Great food, modern rooms and quaint bar on the banks of Loch Ness, between Drumnadrochit and Urquhart Castle, We look forward to giving you a warm welcome...

Dining in the Lewiston restaurant is more than just food; it's an experience. You can enjoy your food and drink all day inside or out. House speciality's include our famous Applecross Bay Prawns and locally sourced ingredients, a seasonal specials board, with something for everyone.

Scottish Hotel Awards

Gold Medal for "Real & Local Food"
Rising Star Inn of the year 2011

Michelin Pub Food Guide 2012/13

the
lochness inn



Lewiston, Drumnadrochit, Inverness-shire IV63 6UW info@staylochness.co.uk +44 (0)1456 450991

For up-to-date specials and offers, follow us on Twitter and Facebook or visit www.staylochness.co.uk

Lads' Holiday that changed the face of the British Pub



This article is reprinted with kind permission of The Shropshire Star newspaper, where it was first published on 16th March 2021.

There had been a whiff of discontent the night before, when they met for a warm-up session in Chester, getting a few in before catching the ferry. But the beer was horrible - flavourless, gassy, produced with no love whatsoever. It was time to take action.

"We were bitterly disappointed to discover that many of the places we called at in search of good beer - half a dozen pubs and a boat club - sold nothing of the sort. Instead of the flavoursome ale we loved, we were offered only gassy

liquid from flashy bar-top dispensers."

And when they finally reached the Emerald Isle, things got even worse. "We had to content ourselves with Guinness, pint after pint of it," he recalls.

It was time to take action, and action they took. Deciding to salvage something from the holiday, former Express & Star journalist Michael and his mates decided to form a new drinking club to rectify the situation. And 50 years ago to this day Hardman and his three mates held the inaugural meeting of the Campaign for Real Ale.

Living in the heart of the West Midlands, Hardman had honed his taste buds on

the great West Midlands ales such as Bathams, Holden's and Banks's, but when the lads crossed the Irish Sea, they found the choice distinctly underwhelming. And as the conversation during the jolly boys' outing turned to jocular banter about how they would tackle the deteriorating quality of beer back home, the four – Michael, Graham Lees, Jim Makin and Bill Mellor, came up with a name for their new drinking club.

"We came up with the acronym CAMRA, which might mean the Campaign for something-beginning-with-R of Ale," he says. "We couldn't for the life of us think of what the missing word could be."

There was no such term as "real ale" back then. In fact it was only later, during conversations with pub landlords, that they realised what it was that differentiated the beer they liked – which was kept in casks – and the beer they didn't which was served from pressurised kegs.

Watney's Red Barrel – viewed almost as a swearword among many beer aficionados today – was the first keg beer, developed in the 1930s. Pasteurised and filtered to stop it going off, it was loved by landlords and wholesalers because it lasted a long time, required little nurturing, and using carbon dioxide to pressurise the barrel meant there was no need for a traditional long pull.

By the early 1970s it had pretty much taken over, with the traditional cask ales which were conditioned in the cellar apparently on the brink of dying out. But while pressurised kegs may have been great news for the brewing giants, which at that time held a monopolistic stranglehold over the industry, all this filtration and pasteurisation meant that by the time the beer reached the punter,

all the flavour had been filtered away.

Today, the Campaign for Real Ale – the "Real" bit was adopted later – has more than 160,000 members across the UK, and has been described as 'the most successful consumer organisation in Europe'.

But there were few expectations during the new society's first meeting at Europe's most westerly pub, Kruger Kavanagh's in County Kerry. "Everyone, except the landlord's mother and the four of us, spoke only Irish, so we decided it was as good a place as any to hold the first meeting of our secret society," says Michael, now 74.

"My son asked me how I got to meet the Queen by pouring beer down my neck. I think he was quite impressed by that...."

"Because I was the first to say anything, I became chairman. Graham Lees had a pen and a crumpled piece of paper, so he was secretary. Jim Makin was an office worker, an ideal treasurer, and Bill Mellor, who hadn't offered to do anything else, was put in charge of organising

events."

Michael admits the foursome had no idea what the new group was set up to achieve, and it looked like it would fizzle out almost as quickly as the head on a pint of Watneys. "We had no formal ambitions, no battle plan, no depth of knowledge of beer, no proper administrative experience," he says. "Things seemed so hopeless after a few months that we had to call a special general meeting to keep the campaign alive."

The first annual meeting was held at the Rose Inn in Nuneaton, on the anniversary of the Ireland trip, and after that things began to look up. Christopher Hutt, who was writing 'Death of the English Pub', and Frank Baillie, about to have his 'Beer Drinker's Companion'

published, got to hear about the new club, and brought in a degree of professionalism and expertise.

By the time of the second annual meeting, in 1973, the club had more than 1,000 members. A young DJ called Jeremy Beadle tagged along and was voted onto the executive committee, giving the new movement a plug on his BBC Radio London show.

Michael, who lived in both Wolverhampton and Erdington as a young man, remembers the area as a rare oasis in the desert of bland beer mediocrity. "Back then there was a great choice of beers, there were the two Wolverhampton breweries, Banks's and Springfield, and there were the Birmingham beers as well."

"But I also used to also enjoy going out to the Black Country, places like Brierley Hill, to the Bull & Bladder, where Bathams Brewery is, to Holden's, and to The Old Swan in Netherton which is a beautiful pub. I think Wolverhampton and the Black Country was always a lot better than Birmingham, in Birmingham the Quaker movement imposed restrictions that pubs had to be at least a mile apart, which made pub crawls a nightmare unless you were in the city centre."

Half a century on, the impact that CAMRA has made on the beer industry is there for all to see. In 1971, there were 150 breweries, whereas a report this week by accountants Hacker Young reported there were more than 3,000 -

up by 200 on last year, despite pubs being mothballed during the lockdown.

In 2014, CAMRA declared Britain to be the microbrewery capital of the world, with more breweries per head than any other country. While long-established breweries such as Springfield in Wolverhampton, Highgate in Walsall and Hanson's in Dudley have disappeared, there have been plenty of new, smaller breweries taking their place.

Michael's work in preserving Britain's ale heritage was recognised in 2009 when he was made an MBE. "My son asked me how I got to meet the Queen by pouring beer down my neck," he says with a chuckle. "I think he was quite impressed by that."



James Lynch, who organised

CAMRA's first Great British Beer Festival, says: "CAMRA's greatest strength has always lain within the ranks of its membership. No other organisation I can think of has ever had such a broad appeal to people on every spectrum of society, bringing people together who would never otherwise have even passed the time of day with each other. So refreshing, a common cause that united everyone regardless."

Something we could certainly do with today...



Mark Andrews
Express & Star
[@MarkAndrews_Star](mailto:MarkAndrews_Star)

PLOCKTON HOTEL

WEB : www.plocktonhotel.co.uk

PHONE : 01599544274

E-MAIL : info@plocktonhotel.co.uk

**ENJOY A REAL ALE IN ONE OF THE MOST STUNNING BEER
GARDENS IN THE WEST COAST**

NOW WITH FOUR HAND PULL PUMPS SERVING

REAL ALES FROM ONLY SCOTTISH BREWERIES



**WESTER ROSS
& GAIROLOCH
HWI CAMRA
PUB OF THE YEAR
2015**

Follow us



@plocktonhotel

**NEW!!!
OUTDOOR
TENT AND
BAR**



JUST A FEW OF THE MANY BREWERIES



An Appreciation of Highland Climbing Pubs

by Jim Hall

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the Highlands have a lot of big hills ideal for walking, and an abundance of craggy rock faces ideal for climbing. I've done a fair amount of the former with three Munros off being a compleater, but it's the latter that rocks my boat. Give me a high, steep, clean, solid cliff with an abundance of cracks and features, and the warm sun on my back, and I'm in heaven.

For me it is an obsession, an habitual drug and a meaning for life itself. Nothing surpasses the feeling of being gripped by fear, high above your last protection and having to work out the complex manoeuvre required to reach sanctuary. At this point adrenaline kicks in (or should), the mouth dries and new reserves of strength and energy appear out of nowhere, the moves are made and you're up.

It's that combination of dry mouth and feeling of elation, not just at succeeding but also at surviving, that turns one's thoughts to ale, and not tasteless fizz out of a bottle, can or keg, but a pint of naturally foaming, full-flavoured ale. This is the reason why serious climbers in the climbing meccas of Skye or Lochaber seek out, and are provided with, oases of real refreshment.

The Clachaig Inn and the Kingshouse Hotel have for many years succoured the thirsty Glencoe climber. That inspirational author, W H Murray, well desc-

ribes using the Kingshouse as a base in the 1930s and vividly recounts his many precarious climbs from there, move by move. Oddly he doesn't mention the beer, though these were pre-CAMRA times after all. He could afford to stay in the Hotel but the impecunious post-war climbers preferred dosses and wild campsites near-by. Sadly the historical old building, with the sordid climbers back bar, is now no more and has been replaced with a modern building which doesn't look too out of place in it's superb setting. I'll reserve judgement on the beer itself!



Clachaig Inn Exterior - Jim Hall

At the lower end of the glen is the famous Clachaig, which was my regular haunt through the 1980s and 90s. A fast after-work drive from Glasgow, we'd be up in time for the Friday night climbing

lecture, before drunkenly erecting a recalcitrant tent in the pitch dark outside.

My funniest memory of that time was seeing an inebriated Chris Bonington CBE, that climbing prima donna and doyen of Himalayan mountaineering, helplessly fall off his stool mid-lecture.

A Saturday on the rock face, or in winter the ice fall, would be followed by a night of revelry with a live band in the public bar, which can still be the case. It was not uncommon to see a bedraggled climber stagger through the door, still in full climbing kit, and lurch on a mission straight for the bar; even hardened bikers would make way for him.

The Clachaig is at the foot of the eponymous Gully, one of the longest and wettest climbs in the area. On my first ascent, slowly inching my way up the gully, I had the misfortune to have a grandstand view of the lucky customers arriving, and then leaving, the bar below on one Saturday evening best forgotten. Needless to say, our descent in the dark went unrefreshed.

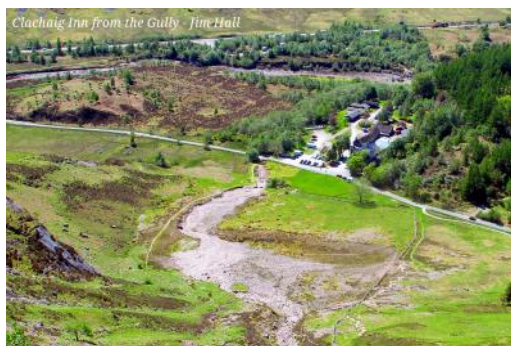
Peter Daynes took over the Clachaig at that time and revolutionised the ale choice on offer, to reflect the burgeoning Scottish ale scene ably supported by CAMRA. All I remember from the previous ownership (by Rory MacDonald, the father of Glen Spean Brewery's Ian Peter) was McEwans 80/- and Youngers No 3, but now it's a revelation. On a busy weekend, sometimes a dozen different ales will be busily pumped.

The Daynes' not only refurbished the Clachaig but expanded into the Grog & Gruel on Fort William's High Street, where you still have probably the greatest chance of finding the best ale in that town. But spare a thought for the ubiquitous Wetherspoons there, where not only economical ale is supplied to the thrifty, but just as importantly, a late night meal is possible for those tardy climbers coming down from big routes on the Ben.

Another innovation of modern times was introducing good fires where damp climbers could dry their gear. My first Christmas (camping) holiday in Fort William was sabotaged by finding nothing but cheerless, cold pubs. I'd had enough of scraping ice off the inside of windows in my student digs not to

have to do it on holiday as well!

Longer holidays could be spent on Skye, where Glen Brittle has probably the largest acreage of good climbable rock in Britain, but also, on a still warm, summers day, the highest density of the notorious midge. The other downside to this mecca is the lack of a convenient pub. The nearest is the Old Inn at Carbost but the most famous is the Sligachan, 16 miles by road, though only 8 by foot. The "Slig" is the ultimate destination for those traversing the Cuillin Ridge and where you might be accosted late at night by some smelly and dirty climber begging for a lift back the Glen Brittle. Take pity, it could be me (it has been).



Clachaig Inn from the Gully - Jim Hall

The latest news from the Slig is that Seamus's Bar is open and Stuart Patience is busy turning out Eagle (3.8%), Old Bridge (4.1%), Blackhouse (4.3%) and Pinnacle (4.7%), what I reckon to be a pretty decent pale, bitter, mild and IPA respectively. He has a wee shop open most days to sell bottles, and might even be persuaded to fill a carry-keg, ideal if you're off to camp in Glen Brittle. There is a campsite opposite but it doesn't appear to be opening this year.

So those are my favourite climbing waterholes and whilst I wouldn't necessarily advocate near-death experiences to appreciate them, there should always be a variety and quality of ales on tap for even the armchair climber to savour. Just spare a thought for the mindless idiots who have earned them the hard way!

chair@highland.camra.org.uk

New In the Peninsula - Ardgour Ales

by Andy Rogers

At the beginning of November 2020 I took the opportunity of a beautiful day to take the town ferry to Camusnagaul and cycle down to Ardgour to deliver a copy of the Good Beer Guide 2021 to the latest brewery to open in Lochaber. Ardgour Ales certainly like a challenge, as they first started brewing in late Summer 2020 as CoViD rampaged across the globe. Fergus Stokes greeted me and showed me round the brewery, having started a brew off earlier that day.



The brewery is contained within an impressive bespoke brewhouse in a timber frame building that was sourced from Saltire Stables over in Cupar. A new three-phase 60kVA connection brings power into the building. Fergus has completed a lot of the installation himself and the set-up was very impressive. The plant is based upon a five barrel unit, purchased from Sandiway Ales in Cheshire. Currently there is a 1500 litre hot liquor tank, mash tun, kettle, under-back, hop filter, a highly efficient contra-flow heat exchanger powered by a dairy pump and two fermenters. Getting the kit to Ardgour proved to be a lengthy journey as the fermenters were too tall to fit under the railway bridge at Drumsallie at the head of Loch Eil. It was 2am before Fergus and two of his sons finally arrived in Ardgour after a long detour.

Fergus trained with Andy Booker at Lytham Brewery and had completed

several trial brews as he perfected the recipes. Three beers are currently brewed and tasting details can be found on the website (www.ardgourales.scot). Ardgour translates to "the height of the goats" in Gaelic, so the beer names have a similar, caprine theme. Gobhar Odhar ("Dun-coloured goat") is the best bitter with Cascade hops, Boc Bàn ("Pale Buck") is a paler, crisp bitter ale with Challenger hops and the stronger Boc na Braiche ("Buck of the Malt") has been specially brewed as an accompaniment to single malt whisky! Fergus was kind enough to allow me to test each of the beers from the cask and I was impressed by the quality of each, the Gobhar Odhar in particular hitting the spot.

During my visit, Fergus took a call from a local hotelier wanting a repeat cask order from the brewery following a successful trial. Fergus has also obtained a Council licence to sell bottles from his semi-automatic mini-bottling line. Times are extremely tough for brewers and licensees at present, but he is determined to make a success of the enterprise. Freshly-baked bread from the oven twice a week helps boost sales and promote the business.

I left with a couple of bottles in my rucksack and resisted the temptation to crack one open at a sunny spot on my long (but stunning) journey home around the head of Loch Eil.

POST SCRIPT

As CoViD continued to wreak havoc to normal life into 2021, Fergus broadened his product range to include home-baked pizzas for the locals on a Friday night; he had shown me the refurbished ovens during my visit in November. Quarantine has forced many businesses



Voted

"Inverness Area Pub of the Year 2017"

& "Runner up Pub of the Year 2018"

by **CAMRA**, Accolades we are really proud of.

Delicious Home Cooked Meals Served With Cask Ales

01463 239 806

www.clachnaharryinn.co.uk

to find alternative ways of generating cash flow and as I update my Ardgour Ales story to May 2021, the pizza sideline remains popular and can now be combined with beer sales, either in takeaway containers or bottles. Fergus has even added a breakfast roll option to his range; as he says himself, he's in the brewery for most of the day so it's not a great problem to rustle up a bacon roll and mug of tea for passing trade.



Returning to the core business, the range of beers on offer has been widened to include Gobhar Reamhar ("Stout goat" [as in "fat", Ed.]), a 6.5% ABV dark, dry Irish-style stout, and Boc Beag ("Wee buck"), a lighter 3.6% ABV tasty session ale brewed with 100% Fuggles hops. Another cycle trip on a beautiful day in the Spring allowed your rapporteur to meet a friend from Ballachulish at the brewery. We had a good chat with the ever-cheery Fergus while he poured us a 4-pint carry-out of Gobhar Odhar and left with rucksacks stuffed with the full range of bottles. A couple of hours were then spent relaxing in the sunshine, catching up on life and all-too-quickly getting to the last drop from the carry-out! Let's hope that the remainder of 2021 allows Fergus and all of the brewers in Lochaber successfully to grow the West Highland brewery scene even further.

treasurer@highland.camra.org.uk



Overlooking the sea on the beautiful Isle of Harris, Loomshed Hebridean Brewery has built a growing reputation by supplying the Outer Hebrides with great-tasting craft beer for the past couple of years. We are now looking for a Head Brewer to lead all aspects of the day-to-day operations and take the brewery to the next level after the Covid pandemic

This is a varied role involving the management of the brewery, making purchasing decisions, meeting with customers and recipe development and managing resources.

We need someone with sufficient professional experience to lead and oversee our brewing operation with the support of our existing team and will become an integral part of our growth and future plans.

You should have:

- A passion for beer
- Broad experience of the brewing process, supported by formal brewing education/qualifications
- Buckets of self-motivation with the ability to multi-task
- An entrepreneurial streak with a positive outlook
- High standards and drive to achieve

Your role will cover:

- Responsibility for beer quality, consistency & safety
- Development of recipes and product range
- Managing operations to a high standard against all relevant quality, health & safety and other guidelines and legislation
- Acting as the ambassador locally and nationally

If this sounds like you, tell us why you are the right person for the Loomshed Hebridean Brewery, attach an up-to-date CV and send to jamie@loomshed.scot. If you'd like to talk things through or have a question, call Jamie on 01859 421020.

John O'Groats Brewery

by Mark Gibson

It has been a difficult year for many in the North so far, especially for real ale lovers wishing the ambiance of a nice pint in a Highland pub. However it is not all doom and gloom and we have heard of some very interesting developments in John o'Groats.

The far North tourist destination on the edge of mainland Britain has seen something of a renaissance recently. Local inhabitants and businesses are putting in effort and investment to transform what was once described as Scotland's most dismal town into a world class destination.

Planned enterprises include the building of whisky distillery, the development of walking trails, and, not least of the matter for real ale enthusiasts, the decision by the John o'Groats Brewery to expand by occupying the iconic "Last House" at the "End of the Road" and at the very end (or start) of the new long distance footpath, the John o'Groats Trail.

There are not many breweries that can claim to be the "First and Last" on the mainland, but John o'Groats Brewery must now have a strong claim. The Pentland Firth laps just a few feet from its new visitor attraction.

The brewery has operated since 2015. It was established by Allan, Simon and John who combined forces with local

hotelier Andrew and set up a 4 barrel (656 litre) brewery in the Old Fire Station in John o'Groats. With the first brews available from the Seaview Hotel (GBG 2021), the ales began building local support and popularity, and before quarantine were available from numerous outlets around Caithness.

Building on early success it would be easy to go big and brash. However the team tells us that their ethos is to concentrate on producing small batch brews with a focus on supplying locally, rather than chasing rapid expansion.

That said, the Brewery has embarked on a substantial investment at the historic Last House and is in the perfect and enviable position to take advantage of the phenomenal draw which is the NC500, and the massive rise in staycations. A

stone's throw from the shore, the famous signpost, the campsite and other tourist accommodation it is fair to say that a good location is one of the keynotes here.

At the 'Last House' a new 500 litre brewery and visitor centre has been established. Tours will tell the story of the brewery team, the brewing process, the building and local myths and legends. If the appetite is not whetted enough after that the team tells us that guests will be able to relax in either the tasting room or the front of the house



with wonderful views of the Pentland Firth and Orkney. The bar can also be accessed from outside via a serving hatch to take advantage of a good summer's day. We do often get them in Caithness!

It has to be said that the shop, tasting room and shiny new brewery kit at the last house look fantastic. For the completionists amongst us it will also be a place to buy as much of the full range as is available at the time of this Far North brew. As well as their draught offerings from the tasting room, The shop will sell gift packs of their beer as well as the individual bottles and the obligatory brewery merchandise and other local products.



we are told that the team plan to install a small semi-automatic bottling plant at the fire station site.

It is fair to say that this news is music to the ears of local CAMRA members in

that it is a real ale brewery doing well and developing for the future in these very uncertain times. And perhaps, like the old fog-horn that stands almost right outside the

brewery doors, it will be a big noise this coming summer.

The current range of beers and tasting notes can be found on the brewery website - www.johngroatsbrewery.co.uk.

It is not the end of the story though as

messagepaw@gmail.com



REAL ALE BAR, BEER GARDEN & RESTAURANT

Six real ale taps, large selection of Scottish whisky, gin, wine and ale.

Freshly prepared food served all day.

1 View Pl, Inverness IV2 4SA - enquiries@castletavern.pub - 01463 718178

No More Roving for Annat Point's Wild Barn Brewery



such a distinctive beer quality. Simon also grinds and mills all of the malt used on site. Equipment also includes can-filling and crimping. Transportation costs to the Highlands for bottles have led Simon to offer a wider range of canned beers. It is also worth noting that the beers are generally unfiltered without the use of finings.

After a couple of previous incarnations as the Jacobite Brewery and the Ben Nevis Brewery, the new Wild Barn Brewery (www.wildbarnbeer.com) came into existence in the autumn of 2020.

Simon Delvaux and Freja MacDougall brew and sell a variety of beers offering a healthy mix of traditional Belgian methods and more modern experimental styles. The brewery is situated in a rustic unit west of Corpach on the A830, opposite Annat Point Industrial Estate.



The signature beer is HPA – Highland Pale Ale. Simon continues to perfect the beer and the current version is a refreshing improvement on a long-standing recipe, being slightly stronger than the older version at 6.5% ABV.

The beer range is constantly evolving. Beers that have been produced from the latter part of 2020 included Wit, a 5.4% ABV wheat beer and Moloko Plus, a 5.1% ABV milk and caramel stout, not normally a type of beer favoured by your local correspondent but turns out to be surprisingly moreish.

The brewery was totally refurbished with the addition of a mash tun, kettle, two conical fermenters and two egg-shaped secondary fermenters located in a cold room. Batch size is typically 500 litres per brew. Simon has not skimped on the equipment with kit being sourced from as far afield as Switzerland.

His expertise also shows through in the choice of the 'egg' fermenters as he feels that these form a key part of producing





Occasional brews included Life's a Riot, a New England IPA at 6% ABV that did not include those mouth-sucking, grapefruit hop overloads often seen elsewhere and Heartbreak IPA (5.5% ABV), the result of a collaboration with a local homebrewer, Rob, and named after Rob's Mum. Christmas saw the release of a truly superb Imperial Stout. The beer was brewed during the first Covid quarantine and then aged in a Ben Nevis whisky barrel for a few months. I ordered a case as a Christmas treat and have thoroughly enjoyed quietly supping each one, treating the 9.4% ABV beer with due respect!

Sixieme, (flavoured with a touch of coriander) Rocky Brae (an excellent 6.2% ABV IPA), Lagar (after the Gaelic for lager at 4.7% ABV), Viking Juice (a very good hazy NEIPA at 6.7%) and the Big in Japan 2 (the second time around for this 6.5% ABV slightly modified mango and pineapple IPA).

An on-line shop combined with a current license to sell from the brewery between 11-6 on Fridays and Saturdays help to share the beer far and wide. The handle to use for all social media feeds is @wildbarbeer, including all channels from Facebook to Untappd.



Simon is never one to stand still so 2021 brought some new beers as the range offered moved forwards. These included a new 6.5% ABV Belgian blonde, La

Certain local pubs, hotels and shops are taking the beers, including in cask form, as we emerge from the Covid quarantines. The beer range will no doubt develop further during the years to come. Beer strength is typically a little higher than your supermarket swally but the tastes and flavours that result are well worth trying out. I have watched Simon and Freja's journey with interest over the last couple of years and can honestly say that the quality of their work is improving all the time and well worth seeking out.

Andy Rogers
treasurer@highland.camra.org.uk

Real Ale Pubs List

These Pubs, Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale. They are listed by geographical area and in an order that would allow a continuous pub crawl if you have safe transport. We make no claims as to the quality of the beer and you should note that some of the pubs listed may only stock real ale on a seasonal basis (☺☺) or have only bottles (Δ) available. Please let us know about the quality of real ales on offer, particularly if you think Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited. Please e-mail us via the contact details on the penultimate page or fill in WhatPub scores (CAMRA members). Additional notes show last-known discounts for card-presenting CAMRA members. Pubs in **red** = real ale verified after quarantine.

INVERNESS

Black Isle Bar
Caledonian
Castle Tavern (JDW, 30p)
Clachnaharry Inn
Corrigarth Hotel
Encore Une Fois
Fairways Loch Ness Golf Course
Gelleons
Glen Mhor Hotel (Nicky Tams)
Gunsmiths Bar
Heathmount Hotel
Hootananny
Inches Gate
Johnny Foxes
Kingsmills Hotel
Kings Highway (JDW, 50p)
Lauders (10%)
Loch Ness House
MacGregors
Number 27
Phoenix Bar
Platform 8
Snowgoose
Three Witches
Waterfront
WoodWinters Δ
White House Δ

SPEYSIDE (N TO S)

Nairn

Gun Lodge
Inverness Airport (D'Lish)
Golf View Hotel & Spa

Havelock House Hotel
Braeval Hotel (Bandstand) (rooms 10%)
Jacko's Bar Δ
Cawdor Tavern (20%)

Strathspey

-Grantown on Spey-

Boat Country Inn & Restaurant, Boat of Garten
Cairn Hotel (Rowanlea Bar) Carrbridge (20p)
Carrbridge Hotel
Grant Arms Hotel
High St Merchants
Muckrach Lodge Hotel

Aviemore

Aviemore Inn
Ben Macdui
Cairngorm Brewery
Cairngorm Hotel
Glenmore Lodge (Lochain Bar)
Pine Marten Bar, Glenmore
Dalfaber Country Club
La Taverna, restaurant
Balavoulin
Old Bridge Inn
Skiing Doo (Doo Below)
Winking Owl (20p)
Hilton Coylumbridge Hotel (Woodshed Bar)

BADENOCH

Loch Insh Boathouse (Quarter Deck Bar),

Kincaig
Rowan Tree, Kincaig
Suie Hotel, Kincaig
-Kingussie-
Duke of Gordon Hotel (Ghillies Rest Bar)
Glen Hotel, Newtonmore (20p)
Kingussie Golf Club
McInnes House Hotel

EASTER ROSS

Black Isle

Royal Hotel, Cromarty
Cromarty Arms
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Crofters Bistro, Rosemarkie Δ
Anderson, Fortrose
Station Hotel, Avoch
Allangrange Arms, Munloch (20p)
Culbokie Inn

Tain to Inverness

Platform 1864 Δ
Inver Hotel, Inver
Edderton Inn (hotel)
Castle Hotel, Portmahomack
Mallard, Dingwall
Highland Hotel, Strathpeffer
Deli in the Square, Strathpeffer
Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer Δ

Inchbae Lodge Hotel,
Garve

Aultgish Inn, Garve

Strathconon

Slaters Arms, Cannich
Tomich Hotel

Loch Ness (c/w from INV)

Dores Inn

Craigdarroch Inn (Am
Fuaran Bar), Foyers

Whitebridge Hotel

Bothy Bar, Fort Augustus
Caledonian Hotel (Corbie
Bar), Fort Augustus ☼

Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
Glenmoriston Arms Hotel,
Invermoriston

Loch Ness Inn, Lewiston
(Brewery Bar)

Benleva Hotel,
Drumnadrochit

FORT WILLIAM

Fort William (N)

Invergarry Hotel
Great Glen Water Park,
South Laggan

Eagle Barge,
South Laggan ☼

Old Station Restaurant,
Spean Bridge

Roy Bridge Hotel (Roy Bar)

Stronlossit Hotel, Roy
Bridge

Glenspean Lodge Hotel,
Roy Bridge ☼

Corrour Station House
Restaurant, Corrour
Estate (restaurant, Δ+☼)

Moor of Ranoch Hotel,
Rannoch Station (hotel, Δ)

In Fort William

Lochy

Ben Nevis Hotel Δ

Ben Nevis Inn

Glen Nevis Restaurant

Cobbs @ Nevisport

Crofter Bar & Restaurant

Garrison West

Grog & Gruel

Ben Nevis Bar

Great Glen (JDW 50p)

Fort William (S)

Corran, Onich Δ

Four Seasons, Onich (10p)

Onich Hotel

Loch Leven Hotel,

Ballachulish (N)

Ballachulish Hotel,

Ballachulish Δ

Laroch Bar, Ballachulish ☼

Glencoe Inn (Gathering)

Clachaig Inn, Glencoe

Kings House Hotel,
Glencoe

MacDonald Hotel (Bothy
Bar), Kinlochleven

Fort William (W)

Glenfinnan House Hotel

Lochailort Inn Δ

Glenueig Inn

Loch Shiel Hotel,

Acharacle

Salen Hotel

Ariundle Centre, Strontian

Lochaline Hotel Δ

Arisaig Hotel (Crofters
Rest)

Chlachain Inn, Mallaig

Steam Inn, Mallaig

Tea Garden Café,

Mallaig ☼

West Highland Hotel,

Mallaig ☼

Old Forge, Inverie

Branch

Westford Inn Beer
Festival

Fri 6th & Sat 7th Aug
2021

Claddach Kirkibost
Western Isles

Scottish and
Northern Ireland
Branches Meeting
From 11am, Sat 21st
Aug 2021
Online

Bandstand Bar Beer
Festival
Fri 8th - Sat 17th Oct
2021
Nairn

Diary

Jocktoberfest
Dates TBC
(search for up-to-date details)
Munlochy, Black Isle

Ullapool Beer
Festival
Morefield Motel
Thu 21st - Sat 23rd
Oct 2021
Ullapool
(provisional)

Dornoch Whisky
Festival
Fri 29th - Sun 31st
Oct 2021
(search for up-to-date-details)
Dornoch

WESTER ROSS

Cluanie to Kyle of Lochalsh

Cluanie Inn

Glenelg Inn

Kintail Lodge Hotel (Kintail

Bar), Glenshiel Bridge

Jac-o-bite Restaurant,

Glenshiel Bridge

Dornie Hotel

Clachan Bar, Dornie

Plockton to Gairloch

Plockton Inn

Plockton Hotel

Strathcarron Hotel

Lochcarron Hotel

Applecross Inn

Applecross Walled

Garden, Applecross Δ

Tigh an Eilean Hotel,

Shieldaig

Torridon Inn, Annat, by

Torridon

Kinlochewe Hotel (diners only)

Ledgowan Lodge Hotel,

Achnasheen

Loch Maree Hotel,

Talladale

Badachro Inn ☼

Glendale House, South

Erradale Δ

In Gairloch

Old Inn ☼

Steading Restaurant Δ

Myrtle Bank Hotel

Millcroft Hotel (Fish Box

Bar & Stags Head

Lounge)

Gairloch to

Ullapool

Poolewe Hotel

Aultbea Hotel (Convoy
Tavern)

Dundonnell Hotel

(Broombeg Bar) ☼

Ocean View, Laide

In Ullapool

An Teallach Shop Δ

Arch Inn

Argyll Hotel (20p)

Ceilidh Place

Ferry Boat Inn (20p)

Morefield Motel

Royal Hotel (Waterfront
Bar)

Seaforth Bar & Restaurant

Ullapool North

Summer Isles Hotel,

Achiltibuie

Am Fuaran Bar,

Achiltibuie Δ

CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND

West Coast

Altnacealgach Inn,

Ledmore Junction ☼

Inchnadamph Hotel,

Assynt ☼

Caberfeidh, Lochinver

Kylesku Hotel

Scourie Hotel ☼

Kinlochbervie Hotel Δ

North Coast

Sango Sands Oasis,

Durness ☼

Smoo Cave Hotel,

Durness ☼

Ben Loyal Hotel,

Tongue ☼

Tongue Hotel ☼

Central Hotel (Top Joes),
Thurso
Commercial Hotel (Comm
Bar), Thurso
Holburn Hotel (Bar 16),
Thurso
Weigh Inn (Ashes Bar),
Thurso
Ulster Arms Hotel
(Anglers Nook), Halkirk ☼
Castletown Hotel Δ
Northern Sands Hotel,
Dunnet
**John O'Groats Brewery
Tap**
**Seaview Hotel, John
O'Groats**
Storehouse,
John O'Groats Δ
East Coast
Alexander Bain, Wick (JDW
50p)
Mackays Hotel (Cocktail
Bar), Wick
Bin Ends, Wick Δ
Village Inn, Keiss by Wick
Portland Hotel, Lybster
Bay Owl Restaurant,
Dunbeath
Bannockburn Inn,
Helmsdale
Belgrave Arms Hotel,
Helmsdale
Sutherland Inn, Brora
Golspie Inn (Sutherland
Hotel)
Stags Head Hotel, Gol-
spie Δ
Trentham Hotel, Poles nr
Dornoch
Eagle Hotel, Dornoch
Dornoch Castle Hotel
Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar
Bridge

Invershin Hotel ☼
Achness Hotel, Rosehall
(SW of Lairg)
Crask Inn, N of Lairg Δ
SKYE
Sligachan Hotel (Seumas'
Bar), Sligachan ☼
Old Inn, Carbost
Taigh Ailean Hotel
(Munros Bar), Portnalong
(20p / B&B deal)
Old School Restaurant
Dunvegan ☼
Stein Inn, Waternish
Edinbane Inn
Skeabost House Hotel
Uig Hotel
Bakur Bar, Uig
Ferry Inn, Uig
Bosville Hotel (Merchant
Bar), Portree
Isles Inn, Portree (10%
food discount)
Portree Hotel
Royal Hotel (MacNab's
Inn), Portree
Sconser Lodge Hotel
Broadford Hotel (Gabbro
Bar)
Claymore Restaurant,
Broadford
Hebridean Hotel,
Broadford
Saucy Marys Lodge,
Kyleakin ☼
Isle Ornsay Hotel (Praban
Bar), Sleat
Ardivasar Hotel (Hideout
Bar)
Kinlock Castle, Isle of
Rhum Δ
**EILEAN SIAR /
WESTERN ISLES**

-Leòdhas/Lewis-
Carlton Lounge & Bar
**Crown Inn (Harbour Bar),
Stornoway, Lewis**
Edge O' the World,
Stornoway (temp. closed)
Stornoway Sea Angling
Club
-na Hearadh/Harris-
Harris Hotel, Tarbert ☼
Hotel Hebrides (Mote Bar),
Tarbert ☼
-Uibhist a Tuath/North Uist-
Hamersay House,
Lochmaddy Δ
Lochmaddy Hotel Δ
Langass Lodge, Loch Eport
☼
**Westford Inn, Claddach
Kirkibost**
**-Beinn na Faoghla/
Benbecula-**
Dark Island Hotel Δ
Isle of Benbecula Hotel,
Creagorry Δ
-Uibhist a Deas/South Uist-
Borrodale Hotel,
Daliburgh Δ
Polochar Inn Δ
-Eirisgeidh/Eriskay-
Am Politician Δ

Pub Companies -

Who They Are and What They Do

CAMRA, via the Pub and Club Campaigns Committee, feels that both the general public, and indeed our own membership, would find it helpful to have a better insight into pub companies that control the majority of our pubs. This is the first in a series of articles that will provide the facts on pub company practices and operations, explaining in particular how their business models work and what this means for both licensees and, ultimately, us as customers. The aim is to let the facts speak for themselves so that members can make up their own minds about the positive or negative effects of these practices on our pubs and the folk who run them.

1. A POTTED HISTORY OF THE PUBCO

Fifty years ago, when CAMRA was formed, the pub landscape looked very different. For a start, there were many more of them – some 75,000 against around 47,500 now. The majority of pubs (52,000 or so) were owned by breweries. The 89 small and regional breweries had 13,800 of them and the rest were in the hands of the ‘Big Six’ – Bass Charrington, Allied, Whitbread, Scottish & Newcastle, Watney / Grand Metropolitan and Courage / Imperial.

Most of the other 23,000 pubs were free houses (in name anyway – many tied their beer supplies to a big brewer in return for loans and discounts). Companies that just owned pubs were few and far between – the likes of Sir John Fitzgerald in the north-east and Heavitree in the south west (though they tied themselves to Bass).

Just about every pub-owning brewery rigorously imposed a supply tie on its own products. As late as the mid-1980s, I remember a Greene King Director

recoiling in horror at my suggestion that they allow a few guest beers in their pubs. As a result, new breweries found outlets hard to come by and we customers were hardly spoilt for choice, as a glance at a Good Beer Guide of that era will reveal.

Then, in 1989, along came the Beer Orders. The story of this epochal legislation (for better or worse) is superbly told in Laura Hadland’s recent Fifty Years of CAMRA book but, in essence, the government acknowledged the stranglehold on the industry exercised by the Big Six and, among other things, capped their ownership at 2,000.

By now, because of closures and sell-offs, the Big Six owned fewer pubs between them but the Orders still meant around 11,000 pubs coming onto the market. We, of course, dreamed of a new golden age of multi-handpumped Free Houses galore, but the reality was sadly different.

Companies were quickly established, usually with close links to the Big Six, to Hoover up these pubs in big batches then negotiate supply deals, invariably with the company who previously owned the place. Enterprise Inns, for instance, started off with the purchase of 368 pubs from Bass, and that’s from where they bought the beer.

In the years that followed, wheeling and dealing saw companies variously grow, collapse, merge, acquire, dispose – it was very difficult to keep up with who owned what. Some companies concentrated on managed pubs, some on tenancies, a few on a mixed model. Behemoths emerged – by 2004, Punch Taverns and Enterprise each owned more than 8,000 pubs, though both had

accumulated so much debt that they ran into trouble come the financial crash and subsequently retrenched. We'll have a closer look at the current pub company scene in the next article.

A brief history of Punch Taverns illustrates the volatility surrounding pubcos from the 1990s onwards. Punch formed in 1997, purchasing a tranche of pubs from Bass. Two years later, they bought Inn Business (mostly former Whitbread pubs) and then the rump of the Allied estate. The managed pubs were spun off into a separate division called Spirit. In 2003, they acquired their 3,100-strong rival Pubmaster plus a couple of smaller companies.

Next, Scottish & Newcastle's managed pubs were snapped up and added to Spirit. By 2011 the impact of the crash was being felt, calling for a 'strategic review'. Spirit was demerged and, in 2015, sold to Greene King. Come 2016, a takeover bid totalling £403m (plus the taking on of a billion pounds of debt) was accepted; 1,900 pubs went to Heineken with the remaining 1300 residing with Patron Capital, though the Punch brand has been retained.

In the meantime, the treatment of their tenants by many of the Pubcos had become a major issue and, after years of campaigning, the Government was persuaded, in 2014, to announce a statutory Pubs Code aimed at regulating their practices and ensuring fair treatment for tenants. We'll return to the Code in a future article. In this context, though, it needs mentioning that the currently accepted definition of a pub company embraces breweries that own pubs – and nowadays most such companies have separate management structures for their pub and brewing operations.

Pub companies are here to stay. There is nothing wrong with the basic model and, indeed, there are some excellent companies (mostly smaller ones) who treat their licensees well and clearly see their pubs as more than just property assets. It would, though, be difficult to argue that the ways in which some companies operate raise many issues around their custodianship of what aren't just piles of bricks-and-mortar but, in most cases, precious and valued community assets. We'll examine those issues in due course.

paul.ainsworth@camra.org.uk



Get Involved!
The Great British Beer
Festival @ Your Local,
more info at:
<https://local.gbbf.org.uk>



CROMARTY BREWING CO.

BREWERY SHOP

WWW.CROMARTYBREWING.COM

We are a family-run multi award winning microbrewery based in the picturesque Cromarty Firth, producing innovative, handcrafted, small-batch beers.

Monday - Friday:	10:00 - 16:00
Saturday:	Seasonal - see website
Sunday:	Closed

THE CROMARTY BREWING COMPANY
 DAVIDSTON, CROMARTY, IV11 8XD
 T: 01381 600440
 E: enquiries@cromartybrewing.co.uk

 facebook.com/cromartybrewing

 @cromartybrewing



The Cairn Hotel

**Main Road
Carrbridge
Inverness-shire**

*20p real ale discount
for card carrying
CAMRA members*

PH23 3AS

Tel: (01479) 841212

Fax: (01479) 841362

info@cairnhotel.co.uk

www.cairnhotel.co.uk



Enjoy the country pub atmosphere - log fire, local real ales, large selection of malts and craft gins, plus good affordable food in this small, family owned, village centre hotel.

Close to the 1717 historic pack horse bridge over the River Dulnain, and nestling in the very heart of the Scottish Highlands, the Cairn Hotel is the perfect base for exploring the Cairngorms National Park, the Malt Whisky Trail, Loch Ness, Strathspey and Badenoch; and for visiting the nearby Cairngorm, Black Isle and Cromarty Breweries.

Walkers and cyclists are welcomed, and cyclists following Sustrans NCN Route 7, which goes past our front door, can take advantage of secure dry storage provided for bikes.

Tony Goes to...Inverness

All good things come to he who waits, goes the saying; Tony Gamblin of Somerset CAMRA forwarded the below article way back in December 2018, awaiting the next issue of Gael Ale. None of us back then would have expected that would be in 2021! For those nostalgic for the 'good old days', read on and enjoy...

On discovering that Easyjet were offering flights from Bristol to Inverness with fares starting at less than £15, I decided it was high time I renewed my acquaintance with the Highland capital. So it was that at the close of November I set off for the north. After less than half an hour on the airport bus I was in the city centre and checking in to my guest house (of which there are seemingly hundreds - think Weston-super-Mare!).

It wasn't long before I was out and about exploring the local ale houses. I decided to start with my favourite, the Castle Tavern on the street of the same name. It is set in an angle between two streets (rather like the Gryphon in Bristol, if you know it) with a dog-friendly tiered patio area at the front with TV screens. The beer was as good as always: there were six hand pumps - four with Scottish beers and one English, all between 4% and 5% in strength - and one reserved for cider (Stan's Cheddar Valley of all things!).

I tried the Spey Valley "David's not so Bitter" which I scored 3 and on a later visit sampled the Swannay "Dark Munro" (scored 3.5). The food also lived up to expectations - quality pub fare - and whilst I chose to eat in the bar area there is an upstairs restaurant available. This was a bit of a mistake as a group of lads gathered round the bar indicated by their language, attitude and manners that they were perhaps struggling to come to terms with puberty! On my return visit the next day it was much

more civilised, with a lot of the clientele engrossed in the football on TV. Altogether a most pleasing atmosphere.

Down at the bottom of Castle Street I called in at Number 27. All three hand pumps carried beers from Windswept Brewery of nearby Lossiemouth (Blonde, APA and Wolf) and the "Wolf" I tried (a dark 6% porter) was superb and received a score of 4. There was also a wide and interesting range of craft beers in both keg and bottles for those so inclined.

The place is somewhat food oriented - with plenty of deals/specials on offer - though nevertheless drinkers are made very welcome.

Next up was the Black Isle Bar, a relatively new establishment on Church Street. At first glance the 26 taps seem to be craft fonts but

fear not as the six on the end are electric pumps. Many of the beers are from Black Isle Brewery, perfectly understandable once it is realised that this is the brewery tap! I enjoyed a pint of Black Isle "Red Kite" (scored 3.5) accompanied by one of their wood-fired organic pizzas. They pride themselves on their organic credentials as applied



to both drinks and food. On the roof is a decked "secret garden" (something of a challenge in December but great for the summertime) and they also offer accommodation in the form of en-suite bunk rooms both private and dormitory-style.

Immediately next door is The Kings Highway, one of only three J.D.Wether- spoon establishments in the north of Scotland and also offering accommodation. All the usual suspects were to be found on the 10 hand pumps along with more local options: I chose Orkney's

award-winning "Red MacGregor" (4).

On the parallel Academy Street can be found the "new kid on the block" known as MacGregors, celebrating its first birthday on St. Andrew's day while I was in the city. The bar displays eight craft taps plus two real ale pumps and quality food is also avail-

able. I was assured the cask offering is ever-changing and I sampled the Swannay "Scapa Special" scoring it as a 3 on this occasion. I was heartened that the music in the background was Runrig - my all time favourite band and one I truly believe to have done more for Scottish tourism than the legends of Bonnie Prince Charlie and Nessie put together! I also learned that the pub is owned by Bruce MacGregor (hence the

name) of Blazing Fiddles so assume this will become a real cultural hangout.

Just opposite is to be found the Phoenix Ale House with its bar and separate restaurant. There were six hand pumps lined up here but only four were in use when I called in, encouragingly three being Scottish. I chose the Cairngorm "Trade Winds" which I scored 3. Also the juke box is free, so more Runrig!

These are my Inverness "six of the best" but I must mention one more to make it a lucky seven. This is the Clachnaharry Inn just a short bus ride out of town or a very pleasant walk along the canal tow-path by daylight. This former coaching inn is a real gem - oozing character and offering a friendly welcome to locals, visitors and their four-legged friends alike. A roaring open fire was a bonus in the sub-zero temperatures outside as was the Fyne Ales "Jarl" which I unhesitatingly scored 4.5 - the highest for my little tour. I didn't try the food this time, which in the past has always been very good, nor did I venture to sit on the outside patio overlooking the canal - that's for a future, summertime visit!

There are many other pubs and hotels in the city and WhatPub will set you on the right track. Some are former and potential GBG listed; some Cask Marque accredited; and sadly others that have no real ale or do not even know what Cask Ale is! However the above are my own personal favourites and I don't think they will disappoint you should you make the effort to visit. While I was in the area I spent a day in the company of Simon Urry, then chairman of the local CAMRA Highlands and Western Isles branch. He introduced me to even more excellent pubs and we called in at the Black Isle Brewery as well - but that's another story.

Tony Gamblin, Somerset CAMRA
apgamblin@googlemail.com



EASTER ROSS & LOCH NESS

The Anderson – Jim the owner has taken the Anderson back off the market, and is investing in the fabric of the pub and a new-look menu. When visited, a Guinness 'pod' was being constructed in the back garden, complete with internal heater and light, and exterior bulkhead light. This was part of a package of aid applied for some time ago by Jim, and is apparently the furthest north they have delivered and installed a pod!



SKYE & LOCHALSH

The **Clachan** in Dornie is under new management. No word yet whether the new owners have maintained availability of real ale. The **Dornie Hotel** is now stocking beers from the Plockton Brewery. The **Cluanie Inn**, about half way between Invermorriston to Shiel Bridge, on the way to Kyle and Skye has just re-opened after a pandemic-delayed refurbishment. Reported closed way back in the last issue of WYT? three years ago, this famously remote pub has passed into the ownership of the Mars Group (India) and is being run under their Black Sheep Hotels brand. Always worth a stop off on the road down from Skye, the formidable range of whiskies is joined by a HP serving Skye Gold for the summer.

INVERNESS

News that the **Craigdarroch Inn, Foyers** was sold recently. When called they still had real ale on, one HP serving Cromarty's Happy Chappy. Also in Foyers, the **Foyers House** website is

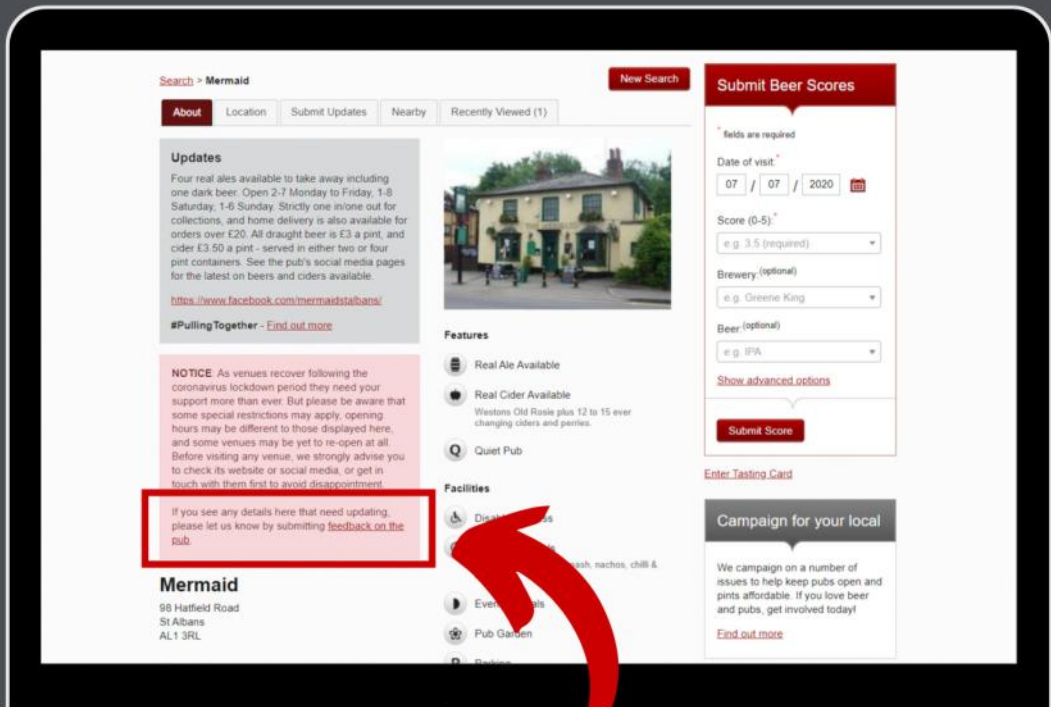
reporting that they have completed refurbishment, and the Inn re-opened at the start of May. **Hootanany's** is still closed and undergoing refurbishment; as it's a club-type venue, presumably there is little incentive for them to re-open at this time. The new Cairngorm Brewery outlet in Inverness, the **Rose St Foundry**, hasn't opened because of staffing problems. At the **Kings Highway** the new manageress is Evangeline Anne Emmerson who also covers the Alexander Bain. Wetherspoons are reportedly still honouring quarantine-stymied 2020 beer vouchers!

FORT WILLIAM

Bucking the trend of pubs fighting shy of stocking real, the **Chlachain Inn**, Mallaig has both its regulars on HP, Chlachain Gold and Chlachain Dark, brewed by Caledonian. The **Loch Leven Hotel** is reported back to full strength, serving both its regulars beers, an IPA and a Blonde from River Leven Ales, at the eastern end of Loch Leven. There having been no Pub of the Year 2020 nor (it would seem) 2021, we are left to report that the **Grog and Gruel** went forward to the national PotY from H&WI, but as runner-up, the 2019 PotY Winner Kinlochewe Hotel having been disqualified



Help us power WhatPub



Things are a little different right now. Help CAMRA keep WhatPub up to date by using the feedback form to let us know about any changes at the pub:
www.whatpub.com



Campaign
for
Real Ale

after it entered new management. Andy Rogers is pictured on the previous page, presenting the Runners-Up certificate to Aidan and Beth, former and current managers respectively. At the **Glenuig Inn** there's been a change of ownership and real ale is reportedly no longer on.

NAIRN

The much-trailed change of hands at the **Braeval Hotel** finally took place in early 2019, new owners Paul and Lyndy Geddes taking the keys from Gordon and Morag and, without pausing for breath, going on to host the Bitters round of Champion Beer of Scotland the following month. 'Braeval' has disappeared, the bar and hotel being known henceforth simply as '**Bandstand**'. Our Chair reports that the Geddes carried out a big refurbishment to the entrance, hotel reception & bar during quarantine. This has given a contemporary and fresh look, making the bar in particular more open and airy. Former owners Gordon and Morag Holding have moved on to

the **Havelock**, where they have upgraded the cellar and are maintaining the real ale tradition at their new location.

BADENOCH

In the Spey Valley, both the **Tipsy Laird**, Kingussie and the **Suie**, Kincaig are up for sale. The Topsy is currently closed, while the bar is open evenings-only at the Suie.

CAITHNESS & SUTHERLAND

Press reports that the **Kylesku Hotel** has been sold by former owners Tanja Lister and Sonia Virechauviex hinted that new owner Highland Coast Hotels Ltd intended to acquire several more properties along the iconic 'North Coast 500' route. The hotel company stated that another acquisition was imminent in May, with another three to four hotel prospects waiting in the wings. In what direction this steers the hotels' real ale policy, we shall report in due course when this becomes clear.

Brewery News



The near-universal availability of Cairngorm's **Black Gold** (in H&WI at least) belies this delicious brew's award-winning pedigree. Indeed in the last championships held before the pandemic it scored yet another podium, this time at Champion Beer of Britain 2019 where it picked up Bronze in the Stout category.



John O'Groats Brewery have expanded by converting the iconic 'Last House' on the mainland into a 500 litre brewery and visitor centre. Tours will tell the story of the brewery team, the brewing process, the building and local myths and legends

(see feature earlier in this issue).



At Inverie on the Knoydart peninsula, the remotest pub in mainland UK 'The Old Forge' is again brewing 'Remoteness 3', its signature custom brew provided by Wild Barn in Corpach (featured earlier in this issue). The pub is also stocking Wild Barn's Lagar.



Grantown-on-Spey's Two Thirsty Men report that they are about to open up a bottle shop on the High Street and online store. They are planning on contacting as many Scottish brewers as possible to supply stock for the bottle shop.

Ullapool's Premier Dining Experience

MOREFIELD MOTEL & MARINERS RESTAURANT

North Road, Ullapool, Ross-shire, IV26 2TQ

01854 612161

www.morefieldmotel.co.uk

Email: stay@morefieldmotel.co.uk

Proprietors: Mr & Mrs AD & BJ Oulton

Accommodation bookings accepted online



www.ullapoolbeerfestival.co.uk

Real Ale in the Real Highlands



Supporting Local breweries



Listed in the Good Beer Guide for the 13th year. A warm welcome & quality ales available from Tony & Bev

Boc Beag 3.6 Summer Ale

Gobhar Odhar 4.3 Best Bitter

Boc Bàn 5.1 Pale

Boc na Braiche 6.4 Hauf and a hauf

Gobhar Reamhar 6.5 Irish Stout

Coming Autumn 21—**Gobhar Shamhna** Red Ale

<https://www.ardgourales.scot/mail-order-beer>

Fergus Stokes (brewer)

01855 632321

brewery@ardgourales.scot

[///shrug.tastings.darkest](http://shrug.tastings.darkest)

(what3words)

Traditional Ales brewed on the West Highland Peninsulas

- Five styles themed around Gaidhlig goats!
- In 500ml bottle conditioned, 5L mini-cask, growler or cask
- Try at The Clachaig, The Grog and Gruel, Salen Hotel, Inn at Ardgour, Oban Beer Seller, Garrison West, The Lade (Kilmahog) and most village shops in Ardnamurchan

Ardgour Ales

BEER • SCOTLAND • LIFE

Nøvar Doubles Number of H&WI Cider Makers



Having planted an apple orchard for cider production on Novar Estate, close by Evanton on the Cromarty Firth, William Munro Ferguson

has started selling his cider Nøvar. This doubles the number of cider makers in H&WI, joining Ryan Sealey's Caledonian Cider, great news for local real cider and perry enthusiasts.

A decade ago, having worked and trained with French cidermaking legend Eric Bordelet in Normandy, Will realised that the craftsmanship of the UK industry had slowly faded, despite our long tradition of cider drinking. Thus, he set about his own contribution to revival.



The style he chose to focus on and learnt to make in Normandy requires tannins: phenolic compounds that give cider a depth of flavour which the acidic green cooking apples that are abundant in Highland orchards struggle to provide. While acidic apples are crucial to

cider making on a microbial level, they contribute very little flavour.

Will knew that Normandy apples could be grown in far north orchards, but their skins would struggle to ripen into that glowing mix of sunflower yellow and sunset reds, blossoming from acidic greens. A search closer to home saw him heading down to Hereford, well-

known for its tannic apples. On his first enquiries, Will was met with a mix of perplexity and disbelief, that is, until he met John Worle, a renowned apple grower.

Aided by John, 21 Hereford apple varieties were planted a decade ago on the Novar estate, alongside Highland heritage apples, making Nøvar's orchard unique. Today in 2021, over 3000 trees yield a rich harvest that ensures his cider is produced fully in-house.

There are only a few bottles of Nøvar's 2019 vintage still available, which can be ordered online at thegoodspiritco.com, or enjoyed at prestigious Michelin-starred Edinburgh restaurant 'The Kitchen'. His 2019 vintage is a 50/50 blend of bittersweet and sharp apples and has distinct toffee apple flavour with hints of smoke and spice.

Will's 2020 Vintage was launched earlier this year, and is available from Aeble Cider Shop in Anstruther; it is a completely spontaneous fermentation, leading to an abundance of light aromatic flavours. An initial sip greets the front of the palate with strawberries and elderflower, followed by more tropical flavours of lycée and peaches. The blend consists of indigenous Scottish cookers, that impart a zing of lemon as final parting flavour before the next sip.



editor@highland.camra.org.uk

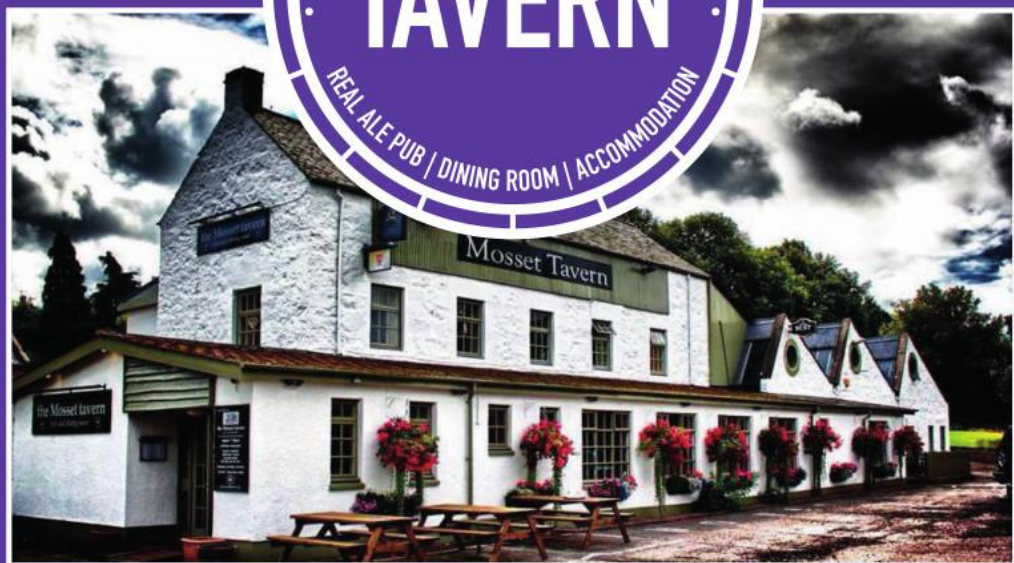
(contributions from Ryan Sealey and Will)

GOOD LOCAL FOOD
SERVED ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

SIX HAND PULLS
FEATURING LOCAL SPEYSIDE
& HIGHLAND ALES



EST'D 1973
**MOSSET
TAVERN**
REAL ALE PUB | DINING ROOM | ACCOMMODATION



DOG FRIENDLY WITH ROARING LOG BURNER & OUTSIDE SEATING

Mosset Tavern, Gordon Street, Forres, IV36 1DY · 01309 672981 · www.mossettavern.com

Follow us on social media   & review us on TripAdvisor!



GLEN SPEAN BREWING CO.

**BREWERY SHOP
OPEN TUES - SUNDAY 1 - 5PM**

**FREE LOCAL DELIVERY AVAILABLE
IN LOCHABER
07511 869958**

**TIRINDRISH STEADING,
SPEAN BRIDGE PH34 4EU**

Gael Ale Contributions

We are always looking for pub and brewery news and "travelogue" contributions with pictures for Gael Ale and you do not have to be a CAMRA member or live in the H&WJ branch area to contribute. The Highlands has in excess of 2 million visitors every year, and if you are one of those visitors and have picked up a copy of the magazine, please share your experiences with others, good or bad. Contact the editor at editor@highland.camra.org.uk. If we do publish your item we will contact you to arrange a souvenir copy of the magazine to be sent to you free of charge!

By Post

As much as we would like to mail out copies all over the UK free of charge to anyone who has picked up copies in the past, this has proved to be a wee bit costly, particularly at 66p (from January 2021) per edition. However, we are more than happy to send four copies to you for the charge of £4 per year, which covers the cost of four 2nd class stamps (currently 66p * 4 = £2.64) plus four C5 envelopes. When the last stamp is used, we will add a note in with the mailing. If for any reason we discontinue the "offer", we will place any unused stamps in one of the addressed envelopes and mail them to you at our expense. Email contact@highland.camra.org.uk for more details. Alternatively, you can read current and back copies as far back as Winter 2003 free of charge, <https://highland.camra.org.uk> and click on the 'branch magazine' link.

Glen Spean Brewery Update

by Andy Rogers



Following up on a comprehensive article on Glen Spean brewery, penned by your illustrious editor in the Autumn 2018 edition of 'What's Yours Then?', I recently spoke to Ian Peter Macdonald, Head of Sales and Marketing for Glen Spean.

The first CoViD quarantine in March 2020 completely upset Glen Spean's normal business. With a stroke of good fortune, Glen Spean received confirmation for an off-trade license on the first Monday! This at least put the brewery in a position to begin offsetting its lost on-trade sales.

A more imaginative approach to social media was forced, and a hook-up with Lochaber Larder to share home deliveries was quickly agreed. Lochaber Larder sell meat, fish and game in the local area and agreed to distribute Glen Spean's beers in the West of Lochaber,

whereas Glen Spean would concentrate on businesses and consumer deliveries in the East Lochaber area.

Ian Peter was compelled to go out in search of new customers. With brand-new, high-impact livery on the brewery van, he quickly built up a group of distinctive Lochaber locals who proved to be regular buyers; these provided Ian Peter with much needed light relief on delivery days during those dark times.

Already buoyed by winning Best Brewed Beer for Snowgoose Craft lager at the Highlands and Islands Food and Drink awards at the end of 2019, a further accolade followed when the same beer was awarded Best Premium Lager in Scotland at the 2020 Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) virtual awards ceremony.

The brewery then ran a successful series



of local food and craft fairs in the run up to Christmas 2020, further establishing the Glen Spean brand within the local area. A familial link with the new Highland Cinema also proved useful and gave a chance for further advertisement once we were allowed back in to begin to enjoy ourselves once again!

On the beer front, the regular High-bridge IPA, Pale Blonde and Red Revival beers were joined by Glenfinnan Gold and Dark Mile (*sic.*). Glenfinnan Gold (4.2% ABV) is brewed from a single malted barley sourced from a farm in Fife. Dark Mile (5.0% ABV), a dark porter, is flavoured with Scottish blackcurrants and vanilla from slightly farther afield. Seasonal beers brewed for the holiday period included Corrie Hop and a new ginger-based beer that your correspondent sadly missed.

As we move into Summer 2021 and restrictions begin to ease, Ian Peter reports

that cask sales have been somewhat better than the anticipated low level. Some pubs are still not prepared to take the risk, but other outlets are sticking with local suppliers to shorten supply chains.

Glen Spean is now brewing five days per week with all five fermentation tanks in use. New personnel training is ongoing to bolster the brewery, shop and delivery runs. The brewery now has two delivery vans and has perfected a fortnightly run that takes product all the way down to Edinburgh.



A new distributor, L'Art du Vin, has been appointed and bottles of Glen Spean are now available at the R&A in St. Andrews! A new website is also under development. The first promising signs of an improvement in trade as we gradually ease out of the restrictions needs to be followed by a good trading year.



Tel: 01955 611220
 Email: seaview@fastmail.com
www.seaviewjohnogroats.co.uk



Decisions on how to cope with the growth in business since the brewery started in late 2017 can now be made with much more confidence. These include looking again at canning options, building on the success of the distinctive 500ml bottles. An ever-enthusiastic Ian Peter reports that the team are in fine form and looking forward to a better second half of 2021.

BAR MEALS, LUNCHES & DINNERS DAILY
 Enjoy freshly prepared quality home cooked meals made with fresh local produce & served by friendly local staff.

treasurer@highland.camra.org.uk



THE CROWN INN
CASTLE STREET, STORNOWAY, HS1 2BD
01851 703734 | CROWNHOTELSTORNOWAY.COM

TWO CHANGING BEERS (SOURCED NATIONALLY; OFTEN CALEDONIAN, INVERALMOND, ISLE OF SKYE)

THE HARBOUR BAR IS THE PUBLIC BAR ON THE GROUND FLOOR WITH AN IMPROVED ENTRANCE. WHILST "THE HARBOUR VIEW RESTAURANT" ON THE FIRST FLOOR ALSO HAS IT'S OWN ENTERANCE OTHER THAN BEING THE EATING AREA. ALTHOUGH BOTH THE UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS BARS EACH OFFER TWO HAND PUMPS, THEY DO HAVE THE SAME ON UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS WHICH INCLUDE BEERS FROM SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND. HOWEVER, A TESTAMENT TO THEIR POPULARITY IS THAT THEY DO RUN OUT VERY QUICKLY. CLEAR SOME PEOPLE ARE THIRSTY FOR REAL ALE IN STORNOWAY!



WELCOME TO THE CROWN HOTEL LOCATED IN STORNOWAY. THE HOTEL WHERE PRINCE CHARLES, AGED 14, ONCE BOUGHT A CHERRY BRANDY, AFTER GIVING HIS SECURITY DETAIL THE SLIP WHILST ON AN EXCURSION.

WE WANT TO MAKE THE CROWN INN A KEY PART OF THE STORNOWAY COMMUNITY, OFFERING A LITTLE BIT OF SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. THE PUB ALSO OFFERS, WI-FI AND ENTERTAINMENT, WITH SKY SPORTS AND BT SPORTS ON TV SO YOU'LL NEVER MISS A MATCH!

THE CROWN HOTEL IS MOMENT AWAY FROM ALL THE ATTRACTIONS AND AMENITIES WITHIN STORNOWAY MEANING THE CROWN HOTEL IS THE ONLY PLACE TO STOP WHEN ENJOYING STORNOWAY.

Love beer?

Love pubs?



Campaign for Real Ale

From as little as **£28.50***

a year. That's less than a pint a month!

Includes **£30**** Real Ale Cider & Perry Vouchers

CAMRA Membership is for you!

We're leading the fight to keep pubs alive and thriving in every community, serving quality ales and ciders.

Find out more camra.org.uk/joinup

Or enter your details and complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and save £2 on your membership subscription

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinup, or call **01727 798440**. * All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your details:

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Address

..... Postcode

Email address

Daytime Tel

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership (UK)	£28.50 <input type="checkbox"/>	£30.50 <input type="checkbox"/>
Under 26 Membership	£20.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership	£36.50 <input type="checkbox"/>	£38.50 <input type="checkbox"/>
(At the same address)		
Joint Under 26 Membership	£22.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	£30.00 <input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate whether you wish to receive **BEER** by email OR post: Email Post

I wish to Opt-in to General Communications Branch Communications

Concessionary rates are available only for Under 26 Memberships.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association which can be found on our website.

Signed

Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days.

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Direct Debit Instruction

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to: **Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4LW**
Email: membership@camra.org.uk Telephone: 01727 867201

Name(s) of Account Holder **Billing Address** _____

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code **Postcode** _____

Payments will show as CAMRA Membership on your bank statement.

I understand that CAMRA has partnered with Stripe, who collects Direct Debits on behalf of CAMRA and confirm that I am the account holder and the only person required to authorize debits from this account.

Signature _____



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit, Stripe will notify you 2 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Stripe to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by Stripe or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Stripe asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us. Setup of Direct Debit instruction with Stripe on behalf of CAMRA.



Campaign for Real Ale

*Price of single membership when paying by Direct Debit. **Calls from landlines charged at standard national rates, cost may vary from mobile phones. New Direct Debit members will receive a 12 month supply of vouchers in their first 15 months of membership. The data you provide will be processed in accordance with our privacy policy in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

BRANCH CONTACTS

Editor, Gael Ale

Tony Vernon 01878 784242/07768 662161
editor@highland.camra.org.uk

Chairman and Branch Contact

Jim Hall 07307 202576
chair@highland.camra.org.uk
contact@highland.camra.org.uk

- Area Leaders -

Badenoch & Strathspey

Position Vacant
strathspey.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Caithness & Sutherland

Mark Gibson 07527 558681
northcoast.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Easter Ross & Loch Ness

Position Vacant
easterross.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Fort William & Lochaber

Andy Rogers 01397 772926
fortwilliam.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Inverness

Position Vacant
inverness.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Nairn

Liz Bligh 01667 455890
nairn.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Skye

Colin Ashton 07527 558681
skye.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Wester Ross & Lochalsh

Mike Godfrey 01599 511296
westerross.news@highland.camra.org.uk

Eilean Siar/Western Isles

Don Catterall 01851 704540
eileansiar.news@highland.camra.org.uk

In case of persistent short measures, failure to display price lists, strengths or business names contact Trading Standards for either Highlands or Western Isles councils via **Advice Direct Scotland** on **0808 1646000** or via their website www.consumeradvice.scot. You can no longer contact Trading Standards directly.

GAEL ALE



Gael Ale (GA) is a Vector Sum publication on behalf of the Highlands & Western Isles Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. It is brought to you quarterly by unpaid volunteers with 5,000+ copies distributed free to pubs and festivals across the region. It is also available to read online at highland.camra.org.uk.

Please email letters, news, views and articles for publication to Tony Vernon, editor of GA. Our committee is distributed all over H&WI so we do not have a 'snail mail' address - please email contact@highland.camra.org.uk so we can direct your correspondence to the most suitable person.

Views or comments expressed in GA are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA Ltd or the H&WI branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. E&OE. To advertise in GA, contact either Tony or Jim on the details above.

Printed by Jamprint, 28-30 Calne Business Centre, Harris Road, Portemmarsh Industrial Estate, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 9PT, 01249 823950, email jake.fortune@jamprint.co.uk.

ADVERTISING RATES

1/8 page £40, 1/4 page £55, 1/2 page £90 (portrait or landscape), full page £150, full inside front and inside/outside back covers £180. Includes free design if required, for terms and conditions contact the editor.

DEADLINE
Autumn 2021 Issue
WEDNESDAY 21st
SEPTEMBER

WAS BORN IN A BARN DURING THE SUMMER OF 2018, ON A PARTICULARLY FINE NIGHT

WE ARE A CRAFT BREWERY IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS RUN BY SIMON & FREJA, A BELGIAN & A HIGHLANDER. THE IDEA

WHEN WE CRACKED OPEN A FEW BEERS & LET OUR IMAGINATIONS RUN WILD. THE REST, AS THEY SAY, IS HISTORY. SLAINTE!



@WILDBARNBEER