



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

The New Glasgow Guzzler

Glasgow & West of Scotland branch of CAMRA
Vol. 5, No. 2 Free Summer 2014

*New
brewery
opens in Glasgow
see page 4*



**We're having
a G-RAF!**

**Glasgow Real Ale Festival
The Briggait, 26–28 June 2014**

Win tickets – see pages 8–9



The Festival Organisers would like to thank our sponsors for their support that they have shown the G-RAF.

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Jackson's Bar

WEE BAR

Isle of Skye Brewing Co

CIDER BAR

The Three Judges

**More about
the festival –
pages 8 and 9**

Still campaigning

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CAMRA is part of the European Beer Consumers' Union.

THIS YEAR marks the 40th anniversary of CAMRA in Scotland. As part of these celebrations some of the original members, all of whom are testament to the age defying power of real ale, have shared their memories.

It was shocking to discover that by 1974 real ale had all but disappeared from Glasgow. Indeed, their first meeting was held at the Golf Inn at Bishopton. Sadly the pub has gone. However, we now have numerous excellent real ale outlets and great beer throughout the Branch area.

Branches are, in part, defined by what they do to actively campaign for real ale and places to drink it. Part of that process is holding a Beer Festival which helps spread the word beyond the converted. And so for the first time in almost 20 years Glasgow will have a Branch Beer Festival to be held at the Briggait at the end of June.

I hope we will never go back to the dark days of 1974. But don't take it for granted. We are here because of those pioneers who had enough of dull, fizzy, nondescript beer. Whether it's at the Festival, on-line or at a Branch meeting come and join us.

HOWARD YOUNG

Branch Chair



Cover: The Briggait.

Photo by Andrew Lee

Branch diary

Wed 18 June
Byres Road Crawl
Start at Òran Mór at 7pm.

Thu 26 - Sat 28 June
Glasgow Real Ale Festival

The Briggait, Glasgow. Volunteers required - sign up at <http://www.glasgowrealalefestival.co.uk/>

Thu 10 - Sat 13 July
Scottish Real Ale Festival

Edinburgh, see sraf.org.uk for details.

Tue 15 July
Argyle St Crawl
Start at Islay Inn at 7pm.

Sat 19 July
Branch Meeting & Visit to Loch Lomond Brewery

12.30pm, Captain James Lang, Dumbarton. Only a few places left on the brewery visit: if you want to attend you must contact the Social Secretary in advance.

Tue 5 August
Branch Meeting
7.30pm, The Granary, Shawlands

Sat 23 August
Rothessay social trip
Meet at Glasgow Central in time for the 10:57 train to Wemyss Bay.

Wed 10 September
Branch Meeting
Venue tbc

Sat 13 September
Celebration: 40 Years of CAMRA in Scotland
Callums, Johnstone. Further details as available.

Visit www.glasgowcamra.org.uk for the latest news
Or follow @GlasgowCAMRA on Twitter
[facebook.com/GlasgowCAMRA](https://www.facebook.com/GlasgowCAMRA)

JAW BREW

Tight schedule for Jaw

THE PRESSURE is on at Glasgow's other new brewery.

At Hillington-based Jaw Brew, work started on site on 30 April, and they should be having their brewing kit installed by the time this issue of the *Guzzler* is published.

The first batches will have to be spot on, though, as brewer Mark Hazell is hoping to launch his beer at the Glasgow Real Ale Festival on 26th June. There's no time for mistakes!



GBBF dates

■ This year's Great British Beer Festival will take place from 12th – 16th August at London Olympia, featuring over 800 real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers including American cask beer. Tickets can be bought by visiting www.gbbf.org.uk.



IT SEEMED AN unlikely match: Scotland's biggest lager factory teams up with the producer of some of Scotland's oddest beers.

But Drygate, the joint venture between Tennent Caledonian and Williams Bros, opened in May and the *Guzzler* went along to see.

Situated in a formerly disused building on the edge of Tennent's site at the corner of Duke Street and John Knox Street, the new development includes the installation of not one, but two breweries – one microbrewery size and one even smaller pilot kit, a restaurant and beer hall. The restaurant is run by veterans of the team from Leith's award-winning The Vintage.

On the beer side, there will be plenty of choice, with over half a dozen real ales and even more unpasteur-

Glasgow's newest brewery opens

ised and unfiltered kegs. There are eight cask lines with four on handpump and another four using flo-jet fonts.

Drygate has head-hunted ambitious young brewers for the new project. The brewing staff includes Jake Griffin, formerly of Fyne Ales, together with Ed Evans, who was previously at TSA, and Alessandra Confessore joins the team from Harviestoun.

The brewery equipment itself was not



up and running yet as opening, so for the first few weeks the Drygate-branded beers will actually have been made at the Williams

New developments in licensing policy

THE LICENSING world in Glasgow continues to provide much food for thought for publicans across the city.

Last year the Glasgow licensing board consulted on allowing pubs to open until 1am seven days a week.

The consultation itself was a breath of fresh air, which saw a board listening to both the trade and consumers. Some of those present expressed that they found it odd that the city's pubs close at midnight when those in Edinburgh can open to 1am. The result, however, was that the majority of consultation respondents, including the trade, were against increasing the licensing hours, so the midnight terminal hour remains.

It will be some time before this is revisited. The board has instead acknowledged that additional hours may be appropriate for Glasgow 2014 and it is expected city centre pubs will be allowed to trade to 1am during the Games.

The Glasgow board has also redefined the areas it considers have too many licences. These zones of 'overprovision' are now Calton, Gallowgate and

Bridgeton, Carntyne West and Haghill, Govan and Linthouse, Ibrox, Laurieston and Tradeston, Parkhead West and Barrowfield, Shettleston North, and Whiteinch.

The effect of all this is that is very difficult for someone to open a new pub in these areas with a 'rebuttable presumption' against issuing a licence. The flip side is that the old overprovision areas are no longer deemed 'overprovided', which includes e.g. Byres Road, John Street, Shawlands Cross, and the Charing Cross end of Sauchiehall Street. This is a different approach to what constitutes overprovision, with the board now more concerned with the alcohol health harm of a particular area instead of the simple number of licences.

There are wider moves afoot at Holyrood, with another Licensing Bill to be laid before Parliament imminently. This will almost certainly re-introduce a 'fit and proper' test for licensees.

STEPHEN MCGOWAN Stephen is one of Scotland's leading licensing lawyers and is also the Chairman of B11 Scotland, and a CAMRA member.



Above, brewer Alessandra Confessore explains the combined mash vessel and copper to visitors; below, the brewing kit is visible from the bar; below left, brewer Jake Griffin pours a pint in the upstairs beer hall



Bros brewery in Alloa. But the brewers are champing at the bit to get the kit commissioned so they can start making some special beers!

We asked boss Scott Williams what the place of real ale is in the new venture.

He told us the core beers – Gladeye IPA,

Bearface Lager and Outspace Apple Ale – will initially be in kegs and bottles. But other beers will be brewed for cask and they plan to eventually have a permanent core range of cask beers too.

With real ale scarce east of the Merchant City, Drygate should be an oasis. [rp]

OUR YOUNG Members (18–30) presented their second-ever Pub of the Season award to the Bon Accord on Wednesday 7 May.

The Bon won the award for Spring 2014 for its excellent variety, condition and availability of Real Ale, especially being so close to student accommodation and the Mitchell Library. Alan Ramsden presented landlord Paul McDonagh with the trophy, which was very well received. The Young Members enjoyed a great night with generous hospitality.

The Bon has been

PUB OF THE SEASON

Bon delight at Young Members' award



Photo: Joe Pakenham

the recipient of many, many awards, but Paul said this is one of the most meaningful, as it represents the drinkers of the future.

The vote for the Summer Pub of the Season will be held online over the next few weeks. Join the Facebook page to vote (search *SNIB Young Members*). [jp]

Paisley pulls in punters

THE 28TH Paisley Beer Festival proved to be a resounding success.

The festival, organised by Renfrewshire CAMRA, sated the thirst of over 4,000 real ale fans from across the country during its four-day run at Paisley Town Hall. As well as some of the best beers from around Scotland including Windswept, Kelburn and Fyne Ales, the festival also focussed on the Lincolnshire area of England



with a wide range of beers from breweries such as Grafters, Bate-mans, Brewster's and 8 Sail being available throughout the Festival. The Foreign Legion bar also proved very popular with fruity Belgian and hoppy German beers being much in demand. [kh]



Photos: Kenny Hannah

ONE ACCOUNT dates the Clutha Vaults to the 1790's and contemporary with the Saracen's Head. Another states that the original tenement was built in 1814.

Possibly the pub was rebuilt with the tenement. Certainly, it is one of Glasgow's oldest surviving pubs. 'Clutha' is an ancient Gaelic name for the Clyde and was also the name given to the passenger-carrying steamboats on the river. The pub's name is derived from the boats which used to start from opposite the pub up until the 1890s.

The first known record of a licence was granted in 1819. One notable owner was Thomas Brown who had the Clutha between 1888 and 1892. Being next to Glasgow's fish market, later to become known as The Briggait, Mr Brown established a good reputation for fine wines and spirits for which people came from afar. Fine French cognacs and champagnes were stored in the Clutha's extensive cellars. Beers were also sold, and in 1888 included Bass, Allsopp, Melvin's and Guinness (which then would have still been real ale). All beers were recorded as being served in good condition. In

A short history of the Clutha Vaults

1892, George Johnston took over and continued Brown's legacy of fine wines and spirits, adding his own 'Real Duke' blend of high quality Highland malts. The pub then had six rooms, all observable from the bar, and the Clutha was considered a most orderly establishment by visiting inspectors in 1893.

In 1899, a change in licensee brought on a change in pub name with the Clutha becoming McLaughlin's after the new owner. Other previous names for the pub had included the Popinjay, Wee Mann's, The Merchant. The latter name was still above the pub until 1991, by which time the upper storeys of the pub had been removed.

In 1992, the pub was taken over by Brendan McLaughlin who, following a competition in the local press, reverted to its older name – not McLaughlin's as might have been expected – but the original Clutha Vaults at the suggestion of John Gorevan, author of *Glasgow Pubs and Publicans*.

Since then, the pub



has continued to be a popular social and music venue owned now by Alan Crossan. In the spring of 2013, Glasgow CAMRA learned of the application to add a rooftop beer garden. This sounded a good idea. It would be a sun trap and provide views across and along the Clyde. We also heard that Alan was planning to widen the range of real ales.

But it was not to be. Just over half an hour before the start of St Andrew's day, the roof of the Clutha received a most unwelcome visitor in the form of a crashed helicopter, with subsequent loss of life and injury. Experts are still working to establish the cause of the

accident and questions remain over the future of the Clutha.

Whether the pub will be demolished or whether it will arise from this tragedy remains to be seen. The *Guzzler* hopes that it will be the latter and that such an old and historic Glasgow pub will one day trade again.

ROBIN JONES

■ The author acknowledges the valuable help of John Gorevan's book, the helpful staff at the Mitchell Library and issues of *Scottish Wine and Beer Trades Review 1888–1893* in the preparation of this article.

Going for gold (or ruby, or black, or amber...) in Glasgow



IT PROMISES to be a busy summer in Glasgow as thousands of finely honed athletic specimens converge on the City with the aim of pushing themselves to the limit in search of their personal best.

For these ale athletes, it is the culmination of many months of preparation and practice.

Their target is not the Gold, Silver and Bronze of Commonwealth competition. Instead, they will be seeking out the Amber, Gold and Black beers at the Glasgow Real Ale Festival. The G-RAF, organised by the Glasgow branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), takes place between the 26th and 28th June at the gloriously historic and stunningly beautiful venue, The Briggait. The site of Glasgow's Fish Market for over 100 years, it is now a thriving artistic centre and cultural hub with a superb event space in the shape of the 1873 Hall (pictured on the cover of this issue) which we will be

Win tickets for G-RAF opening session

Since we are generous and kindly people in the G-RAF organising team, we have decided to give you the chance to win a couple of tickets to the opening session of G-RAF. All you have to do is guess the name of our Giraffe G-RAF logo and mascot then tell us your guess on either our Facebook or Twitter pages: @GlasRealAleFest, www.facebook.com/glasgowrealalefestival. Winner will be announced on Saturday 21st June. Good luck!

using for the G-RAF.

The city centre venue is well served by public transport with Central Station and Queen St Station no more than a ten-minute walk away and St Enoch Subway station a mere five-minute stroll from the Briggait.

It's been almost two decades since the last real ale festival in Glasgow and the Festival Organising Committee have been frantically planning and working on the event for almost a year to ensure that this year's festival is a success. If it is a success, we'd like to see the G-RAF become an annual event on Glasgow's beer calendar.

The 2014 G-RAF will have over 100 beers from over the UK. It is currently a fluid list (pardon the pun) which seems to change daily but we have a few special things planned for the festival. On the opening day we will be launching the first beers available from Glasgow's newest brewery, Jaw Brewing. Talking of new breweries, we will also have three beers available from Drygate Brewing, another welcome new arrival on Glasgow's beer scene.

Expect, also, to see beers from breweries such as Fyne Ales, Windswept, Oakham, Dark Star, Kelburn, Williams, Ossett, Mal-

linsons among others making an appearance at G-RAF. A complete beer list will soon be available on our website www.glasgowrealalefestival.co.uk and will also appear in our festival programme.

If you fancy something other than real ale, we also have our Foreign Bar, Rick's Bar, which will be serving fantastic Franconian bottles and draught Bavarian beer from the likes of Kitzmann, Schlenkerla and Keesmann. Not forgetting our real cider and mead bar which will tickle the taste buds of our fermented apple and honey fans. Hot Bockwurst, Bratwurst and Rindwurst from the German Sausage People will be available too. Sauerkraut and *Senf* (mustard) optional.

Everything is nearly in place. The plans are coming along. We just need you to turn up. Hope to see you at the Briggait for the Glasgow Real Ale Festival 26th – 28th June.

KENNY HANNAH

Readers can keep up to date by following on Twitter @GlasRealAleFest or on Facebook [facebook.com/glasgowrealalefestival](https://www.facebook.com/glasgowrealalefestival) or www.glasgowrealalefestival.co.uk



Volunteer at G-RAF

■ Like all CAMRA beer festivals, we are staffed entirely by volunteers. If you are a CAMRA member and want to volunteer your services at the G-RAF you can do so by filling in a staffing form on our G-RAF website. We'd love to have you along, giving us a hand. www.glasgowrealalefestival.co.uk/volunteer

The Glasgow Real Ale Festival

The Briggait

*Thursday 26th June 2014
5pm to 10.30pm*

*Friday 27th June 2014
3pm to 10.30pm*

*Saturday 28th June 2014
Noon – 10.30pm*

Entry: £4 to CAMRA members, £6 non-members (discounted entry to subsequent sessions with current festival glass)

Last round for Three Judges star Ronnie

A GLASGOW BEER institution is getting ready to pour his last pint as a barman.

Ronnie Anderson, 66, has announced that he is to retire as deputy manager at the popular west end pub The Three Judges. Ronnie's retirement in June will bring to an end a dozen years of service at the Judges which saw him use his vast beer knowledge to oversee the cellar and ensure that the real ale served was of optimum quality. It was a role that he excelled at, with the Judges winning the Glasgow CAMRA pub of the year on many occasions.

To those that know him, Ronnie is more than the guy who pours you a pint. He's a walking, talking beer and brewery



Photo: Kenny Hannah

encyclopaedia, ready to recount and retell a thousand beery tales stored meticulously in his long-term memory.

Ronnie plans to use the time gained from his retirement to visit more pubs and drink more beer. Prior to that, Ronnie

will be putting his years of experience to good use by managing one of the bars at the Glasgow Real Ale Festival. The *Guzzler* thanks Ronnie for his commitment to real ale and we wish him every enjoyment in his retirement. [kh]

Govt action on pubcos at last

PUB CAMPAIGNERS celebrated when the Westminster Government on 3rd June finally agreed to introduce statutory regulation of pub companies ("pubcos").

Over 42,000 people signed a petition which was delivered to Parliament in May.

"Tied" pubs must buy their beer from the pubco at an inflated rate, often 50% more than the open market.

But the plans do not go far enough. CAMRA calls for a guest beer right and a 'market rent only' option for tied pubs.

Nonetheless we now call on the Scottish Government to also introduce at least this level of protection for tied pubs. [rp]

McEwan's returns to real ale

THE LEGENDARY beer brand McEwan's has finally returned as real ale.

Although McEwan's Edinburgh brewery is long since demolished, Bedford-based brewer Wells & Young's bought the brand from Heineken after the latter took over most of Scottish & Newcastle in 2008.

The beers are brewed in Bedford, but only available in pubs in Scotland. Drinkers who remember the old McEwan's may be surprised: there is no 70/- or 80/- in sight. Instead the range includes two golden beers: IPA and Amber, and a dark ale, Signature. All are new recipes. [rp]

■ Will you drink the new McEwan's ales? Are you glad to see a famous name back, or do you object to brands from closed breweries being moved around the country? Can it compete with trendy new micros? Drop us a line at theeditor@glasgowcamra.org.uk and we'll print your thoughts in the next issue.



Around the branch area

■ We very much appreciate updates from readers about pub openings and closures, and information about pubs that have started (or stopped) selling real ale. Send your gen to theeditor@glasgowcamra.org.uk, or tweet it to @GlasgowGuzzler.

Where there's life there's Hope

■ Opening as a keg-only venue nine months ago, Maclays-run **THE HOPE** on Wellington St has done a U-turn and started selling the likes of Deuchars, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, and Clockwork Amber.



Pub discounts

Members of CAMRA benefit from discounts in a number of pubs. The following local pubs offer a discount (membership card may need to be shown):

- Cairns Bar: 10% off real ale
- Clockwork Beer Co: 50p off a pint
- Scaramouche: 10% off a pint
- Three Judges: 30p off a pint
- 50p off a pint (with voucher) in all JD Wetherspoon outlets
- Some JDW pubs are now offering 30p off a pint early in the week. This discount is available to all, not just CAMRA members, and is not "stackable" with a voucher – so you get 50p off the standard price with a voucher, or 30p without one.

After refurbishment of the Arrol in Glasgow Central Station, it re-opened as **THE BEER HOUSE** on 22nd May. Patrons are offered an expensive and limited range of Greene King cask beers.

A new opening next door in Central Station is **ALSTON BAR & BEEF**, specialising in gin. Beer is keg from Greene King/Belhaven. No real ale.

The **ARLINGTON** has stopped selling real ale.

The **RAM'S HEAD** in Maryhill Road no longer has real ale.

The **HALT BAR** has had decidedly erratic opening times lately but is apparently not closed. However, the pub is up to let on owner Punch Taverners' website.

The **ARDEN BAR** in Thornliebank is soon to be a Tesco.

The **BEECHWOOD** on the south side is reported to be selling real ale.

In East Kilbride the **TOWER** is selling real ale and the **BYRE** in Hairmyres has Deuchars and Flying Scotsman.

We are told **THE WOODCUTTER**, Cumbernauld, has real ale.

GARVIE & CO in Milngavie has no real ale yet, but says it will stock it in the summer once they are up and running.

The **RAVEN** is a new Maclays enterprise due to open soon on Hope St in the premises of the former Bay Horse. It will sell three cask beers.

The Stirling Castle in Yorkhill has closed, soon to be replaced by the **GRUMPY GOAT**.

PARK LANE on Hope St has had to give up on real ale.

The Source Café at St Andrews in the Square is a long-established real ale outlet just

Local Trading Standards Offices

If you have a complaint about quality or service in a pub, always try to sort your complaint out with the pub first. If that doesn't help, you can contact your local Trading Standards offices:

East Dunbartonshire
0141 578 8813
trading_standards
@eastdunbarton.gov.uk

West Dunbartonshire
01389 738552
trading_standards
@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Glasgow
0141 287 6681
ts.enquiries@glasgow.gov.uk

North Lanarkshire
01236 638678
(Coatbridge)
01236 638905
(Cumbernauld)
01698 274220
(Motherwell)

South Lanarkshire
08457 406080
Business.Enquiries
@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

off Glasgow Green. Now it has a new offshoot, **SOURCE TOO** in Hyndland. It is a new restaurant-bar attached to Hillhead Sports Club, and sells real ale.

O'NEILL'S in the Merchant City is selling Doom Bar and Deuchars.

The **CLOCKWORK BEER CO** closed for refurbishment at the beginning of June, but may have re-opened by the time you read this!

WHEN IN Antwerp, a trip to Kulminator, a small bar with a global reputation, is always a must.

Its mess of books, old newspapers, and bottles, all set to a classical music backdrop, may baffle some, but this quirky style is just an extension of its equally eccentric owners. The expansive menu boasts rare vintages, some going back decades, although I sat with a comforting Cuvée du Kasteel and listened in on owner Dirk as he waxed about the bar's name to some visiting Germans.

However, this trip I intended on exploring the city further. I had a mental list of beers or breweries that I was interested in. Ditto bars. And the first of those beers came in Bier Central, another notable destination like the nearby majestic Antwerp Central train station. All wood and dusty bottles, its large beer list (including recipes and brewery information) made for enjoyable reading as I opted for some lambics from Hanssens. The Oude Kriek, dry and intensely fruity blend, was particularly good.

About ten minutes' walk away, in the shadow of the cathedral, are both Paters Vaetje and Den Engel. The first, a bijou bar, that



Antwerp adventure

somehow packed a mix of tourists and locals across two levels. Ordering a *bolleke*, I sat at the bar and soaked up the atmosphere, eavesdropping on nearby chat, and browsing the breweriana and other clutter that obscured the walls, before heading up the Grote Markt to the other bar, an altogether different experience. Den Engel is more of a local affair, a bruin cafe stubbornly resisting the tourism scene beyond its window. As the door opened and another elderly punter slipped in, the barman had fetched their favoured tippie without prompting and set it down on their chosen – perhaps regular – table.

Across the square,

Gollem boasted, in large letters, thirty beers on tap, but seemed more modest about its menu of over a hundred further beers. Into its darkened room, long and thin, I wandered, finding a seat at the bar, happy to have found a range of beers from De Dochter van de Koreenaar, a relatively young micro (2007) from just outside the city, and, more importantly, one of the breweries on my list. Best of these were the dark Embrasse, and Extase, their take on an IPA, although the others were also very good.

But with breweries producing beer, you can, in reality, get their beers in most places. So it was nice to wan-

der into Oud Arsenaal, a small family-run affair in the theatre district that had a house beer (made elsewhere, admittedly), and order that. As its name suggests, the bar was formerly an arsenal, although now it seems more like a living room with locals and the occasional tourist dropping in. Men played cards in the corner as I browsed the pictures of a book about Antwerp's brewing history.

While all these bars were special in their own way, the most unique experience came at 't Antwerpse Bierhuiske. While chatting with the barman he offered a taste of something unnamed. Dark amber in colour, with a large frothy head, it carried a strong whiff of soy sauce. However, to taste it was very interesting. Very sour, and with flavours of both wood, dark berries, and vinegar. And flat. Almost completely flat. Asking what it was I was told it was Rodenbach Foederbier, a Belgian cask beer with limited vendors.

Usually used to blend with younger beers, this was a unique opportunity to try the base for a classic. Purists beware, though, it was served with a sparkler.

STEWART MCBABNEY

■ If Stewart's Antwerp adventure has got you thinking about visiting Belgium, CAMRA's newly published guidebook is here to help you plan your trip.

The Good Beer Guide Belgium, now in its 7th edition, has been exhaustively updated by Tim Webb and Joe

Stange to reflect the growth in the Belgian beer market that has taken place in the five years since the last edition. Tim Webb sees Belgian influence reaching far beyond just visitors to that country. He says:

"Belgian brewing's distinctive blend of tradition, invention and quality will continue to fuel a growing demand for complex and interesting beers far beyond its borders. This book gives people all the advice they need to get out there and explore what's on offer."

Split into two distinct sections, the book first takes an in-depth look at over 900 beers produced by the country's diverse array of brewers – from global giants to equipment sharing proto-brewers. Each brewer is presented with full contact details and given a rating out of 5 for quality, while each beer is also given a star rating out of 5.

Then, having acquainted the reader with what to drink, the guide turns to the tricky question of where to drink it. Over 500 bars, cafés, bistros and beer shops are hand-picked by Tim and Joe from the ultra modern to the incomparably traditional. Organised into regional listings, each bar entry includes full address information, details of size & range of the venues beer list and key dos and don'ts for visitors.

■ CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide Belgium* costs £14.99 (CAMRA members £12.99) and is available from CAMRA at www.camra.org.uk/shop and all other good bookshops.



40 years of CAMRA in Scotland

1974–2014

‘Mediocre, but improving’

BY 1982 CAMRA was already reasonably well established in Scotland, at least enough so that the press occasionally asked us to comment on beery matters.

On the occasion of the publication of the first Scottish real ale guide on 18th August, Glasgow branch chair Graham Lait spoke to the *Glasgow Herald*, making clear there was a lot still to complain about: "I don't think the standard of beer kept is good. It's mediocre, but improving." At the time, fewer than one in ten of Glasgow's pubs sold real ale – but that was double the number the year before, whereas seven years prior to that there had been none.

Graham's favourite beer in 1982 was Belhaven 70/-, "well

hopped, with a distinctive taste". Editor of the guide Steve Scott said that his favourite pub was on Arran: "It sells McEwan's 70 shilling."

The same *Herald* article also reported the opening of the Strathalbyn brewery in Clydebank, director David Anderson proudly announcing that they had twenty outlets lined up for their real ale. Strathalbyn's beers were to prove popular with CAMRA members, with their Porter Stout a particular favourite. Unfortunately the business failed and the brewery was wound up in 1987.

But Strathalbyn is not forgotten – the branch's Beer of the Year trophy is still called the Strathalbyn Cup today. [rp]

with	Leith Heavy	0 G	1039
Primer & Clark	70/- (Ale)	0 G	1036
	80/- (Ale)	0 G	1043
	Caledonian Strong Ale	0 G	1077
scley's	60/- (Light)	0 G	1030
	70/- (Heavy)	0 G	1035
	80/- (Export)	0 G	1040
Strathalbyn	Strathalbyn Ale	0 G	1039
Traquair House	Traquair House Beer	0 G	1050
	Traquair House Ale	0 G	1075

Encouraging growth in Helensburgh

PUBS COME and go for all sorts of reasons. Helensburgh has had its fair share of closures over the last few years and not all due to poor trading.

Currently the situation is looking a little rosier, at least for the real ale drinker. It has not been easy. A few years ago, before it was redeveloped, the Commodore Hotel supplied Bass but you could never be sure of the quality. Since the refurbishment it took time for the pub to find its real ale feet. The pub is part of the Vintage inns chain and their board have a commitment to real ale and this has paid off. A seasonal list of ales from all over the United Kingdom supported by the ubiquitous Deuchars IPA can be enjoyed. Ales from Everards, Adnams, Daleside, Brewhouse, Butcombe, Exmoor, Castlerock and Sambrooks have

been served in the recent past. A fine bonus for this pub is the large lawn to the front overlooking the Gareloch and the Clyde. I can't guarantee the sun or a passing submarine but this is the spot to enjoy the sun on a summer's day.

The imminent arrival of a Wetherspoon pub is generally greeted with glee by drinkers but with trepidation by publicans. This was no different when the chain purchased an old furniture store and converted the same in homage to both John Logie Baird and Rennie Mackintosh with a nod in the direction of another local worthy, Henry Bell, after whom the pub is named.

I think the conversion is stylish and although still large has some quiet corners. Nearly two years have passed since opening and it has taken some time to gauge the de-



mand for ale, but they seem to have settled on around five or six, which increases during festivals. The regular two ales, Greene King Abbot and Deuchars, are supplemented by local ales from Loch Lomond, Fyne Ales, Kelburn and an ever widening range from this sceptred isle. The pub also benefits from a patio area which does catch the sun!

Now, not 40 yards from the Henry Bell is a long established bar called the Ashton. This pub recently had a sympathetic restoration which has opened it up, exposed some historic tiles and generally underlined the fact that it is a most welcoming pub.

What is significant is that the pub only started selling real ale after Wetherspoon's moved into town. The landlord started with two pumps, one serving Belhaven supported

by a guest, and recently due to demand has added a third. I think this is due to the fact that he looks after his ale well, which encourages the drinkers and I think that due to the Henry Bell there are more ale drinkers in town who will pop in to try ale. Ales available recently have included brews from Fyne Ales, Loch Lomond and Inveralmond.

On a good day, especially when the Henry Bell has a festival on, you could have more than a dozen ales available in Helensburgh, and that doesn't include either the Ardencaple or the Rhu Inn – a pleasant stroll along the foreshore in the village of Rhu.

For many years I had to take a train to Glasgow to relish real ale. Now a walk into town is all I need to tickle my taste buds!

TIM DAVIES



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