

British Guild of Beer Writers

Newsletter - July 2004

Chairman

Thanks to everyone who made it to the AGM last month. As the 30 or so who did will recall, it was all that a gathering of beer writers should be: sociable, lively, information rich (gossip and hard news) and at times controversial. Oh, and the beer and food was all you could wish for, too - cheers Mr Hardman and Young's. Generally, members seemed pleased with Guild progress, and the committee and myself were gratified by that. But on the issues of the Guild's website and the newsletter, there were concerns and I'd like to bring everyone up to speed on where we are with on these particular matters.

The new website has been too slow in arriving, we all agree that. No excuses, it's just been a lot fiddlier than we anticipated. Now, thanks to Tim Hampson and the good offices of Paul Nunny, we're almost there - and I'm confident it will be something we'll all feel proud of, and just as importantly, find useful.

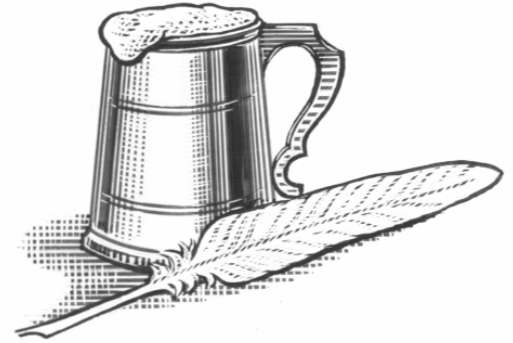
The Guild newsletter also attracted some criticism, I think unfairly. But views are views and if at least a handful of members feel it's not all it should be, we'll look for ways to develop it and build on what we've got. I think the important thing is for members to realise they are very welcome to contribute mini-articles, thoughts, perhaps letters. It's a communal thing, and myself and Peter would welcome your input.

As well as reviewing the year, the AGM looks forward and votes on who will have the honour of representing members on the committee. I'm delighted to say that all committee members who stood for re-election, including myself, were re-appointed. Thank you from all of us for that vote of confidence.

It's great to welcome on board three new members: Glenn Payne, drinks buyer at Safeway; Martyn Cornell, until recently editor of the M&C Report and now writing books and articles on a full-time basis and John White, a writer who organises beer tours. Their experience and wisdom will be invaluable, and I look forward to working with them over the next year.

We've also been very lucky to secure the services of Richard Morrice, he of the Tesco Beer Challenge and Fuller's Fine Ale Club, to help us with the Guild awards. As you'll know, after years of brilliantly organising our awards, Rupert Ponsonby, is standing down. We couldn't have got a better successor: Richard, I'm sure, will do a splendid job for us.

This year, as a special thanks to our corporate sponsors, the committee has invited senior members of all the companies who so gener-



Chairman

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Reminder

The Guild's yearly pre-Great British Beer Festival reception will take place at the White Horse on Monday 2nd August from 6.30pm onwards.

Special invitations are extended to our corporate members whom we would particularly like to see on this occasion, as it is our opportunity to thank them for their generous support.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this perennially jolly event.

Change of Email Address

Please note that my email provider has altered my email address which is now

peterhaydon@onetel.com and not net.uk as before.

Please could you amend your address books.

Peter

ously support us to be our guests at the traditional pre-GBBF reception Mark Dorber hosts at the White Horse, Parsons Green. From the replies I've received so far, it will be a very good turn out of the industry's good and great.

The good and great beer writers, too. You are all extremely welcome to attend: it's on Monday 2 August, upstairs, from 6.30.

Talking of top beer writers, I know we were all delighted to see Roger Protz walk away with the top prize at the Glenfiddich Awards the other day, and Alastair Gilmour won Regional Writer of the Year, as I mentioned in last newsletter. I mention it again apropos the fact that we finally presented with Roger his silver tankard at the AGM a few backs back (pictured right). He's been very patient waiting for it - thanks Roger!



Finally, thanks again to Peter Coulson, who's standing down from his long-held position as treasurer. His dedication and all-round contribution to Guild life was gratefully acknowledged at the AGM, and I think brought a little lump to his throat. Again, we have been very lucky with his successor - Paul Nunny, the Cask Marque chief executive and Guild committee member, who although you'd never guess it, is a qualified bean counter. Guild finances remain in safe hands. So sound, in fact, are finances, that the committee were able to freeze annual membership fees at £40, which I believe is extremely good value.

If you disagree, tell me so! Preferably in person at the August 2 reception. But I hope we'll have far pleasanter things to talk about. Look forward to seeing you there.

Andrew Pring - Chairman

AGM

AGM JUSTIFIES SUB

Members who were unable to make it to a disappointingly poorly attended AGM in June certainly missed a humdinger of a meeting that prompted virgin Chairman, Andrew Pring, to comment on closing the meeting, "Well, that was a baptism of fire, wasn't it!"

New member, Pete Brown - author of *A Man Walks into a Pub* - was moved to write the following.

"Any doubt I had about paying to join the Guild for only a month or so before the new membership year were instantly dispelled by the quality of the entertainment that was laid on - I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

Space precludes further elaboration, but members of a curious bent should make an extra effort to make it next year. Failing that the guild possesses an excellent grapevine.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The main item at this year's AGM was the resignation of Peter Coulson as a consequence of the workload generated by the dog's dinner of licensing 'reform' that is currently crawling towards realisation. Peter has had 13 years in Guild office and without him the Guild would not exist.

In true Coulsonesque fashion, however, Peter has ensured that we are left with a capable replacement in the shape of Paul Nunny, who brings his accountancy skills to the Treasurer's post.

Paul's elevation, plus the resignations of Jeff Evans and Alastair Gilmour (see Newsletters passim) there were three vacancies on the committee. We are pleased to announce that these have been filled by Glenn Payne, Martyn Cornell and, after an unprecedented election for final place, John White.

News

TONY MOLYNEUX

Tony Molyneux's death, last week, came a great shock to me as I had spent a good deal of time with him at the CAMRA annual conference in Southport and on a recent visit to Leeds for the local beer festival.

I knew him for almost thirty years – from the days when I had the job of Northern Regional Organiser for CAMRA while he was one of the pioneers of the Merseyside branch. Later we both served on the National Executive.

He was a big man in every sense of the word. Tall, well-made with a shock of ginger hair that made him stand out in any crowd. Not that he needed to be identifiable; his personality alone gave him charisma and his strident Scouse tones would have made him obvious in a dark tunnel.

Apart from beer his great loves in life were steam driven railway engines and folk music. He travelled the world to find the last steam trains operating: to India, South Africa and even East Germany in its old so-called 'democratic' days. And he would sing a song at the drop of a hat whether the audience was one or a thousand. He was in a group called Stormalong John which specialised in sea shanties and songs of Liverpool.

His tastes were catholic and I loved his entry in the directory of the British Guild of Beer Writers, particularly the last bit:

'Writer and broadcaster on beer, pubs and breweries. Tutored tastings, lectures, talks and after-dinner speeches with amusing anecdotes, serious polemic and beery songs, also pub walks and crawls. Former Mersey Drinker editor, current Robert Cain tour guide, and eternal optimist and activist.'

He always had a tale to tell and an hour of his company revived the spirits and gave one a simple and quixotic view on life. At the age of 62 he was far too young to leave us. I will miss him very much. **Barrie Pepper - July 5th**

AUTHORS WANTED

The Guild has a tangible opportunity to demonstrate that it can do for its members what it should be able to do, namely find them work.

In June an enquiry arrived at the Guild, via the good offices of Roger Protz, from Amber Books who were looking for two authors to produce a book on beers of the world for a major international publisher. The Guild were able to circulate the enquiry to members via email and pass on the encouraging number of expressions of interest. Hopefully two Guild members are busily working away on this exciting commission.

EMAIL POLL

One of the issues raised at the AGM last month was the means of distribution of the newsletter, with the various pros and cons of paper versus email delivery discussed.

The upshot is that Iain Loe suggested that we canvass members as to how they would prefer to receive the newsletter in future.

You are therefore cordially invited to express your preference on your membership renewal form. Naturally there are a few members who do not have email, and they need not worry, for they will receive their PDF files on paper in an envelope as usual. We await the results of this survey with interest.

Visits

Brakspears

On September 15, up to 20 Guild members are invited to Brakspears brewery in Oxfordshire, where Rupert Thompson will welcome us. There be a short talk on the setting up of Refresh and the background to the Brakspear deal then brewer Jeremy Moss will talk about developments at the brewery. After that there will be a tour, a tasting and sandwiches in the brewery tasting room.

The event kicks off at 11am and names please to Adrian Tierney-Jones at atj@onetel.com or 01643 851469. For those of us who haven't been this will provide an excellent chance to celebrate Brakspears' return to Oxfordshire.

Please note: parking spaces are very limited so if you can car-share that will be great.

St Austell

November 3 sees a trip to St Austell which is starting at 10.30-11am. It will kick off with a brewery tour in the morning followed by lunch in the Visitor Centre where we will be joined by a number of the management team. In the afternoon we will be ferried around in the brewery minibus on a tour of a number of SA's pubs (St Kew Inn, Golden Lion, Port Isaac etc).

We will then be booked into the Old Custom House in Padstow ahead of St Austell's 'Beer and Food evening'. If required SA can arrange accommodation in St Austell on the evening of 2nd November for any members coming from a long way away.

Tuckers Maltings

On November 4 I have provisionally arranged a visit to Tuckers Maltings and Teignworthy Brewery at Newton Abbot which is minutes from the mainline station taking everyone home & anyone who will be on the trip and is interested should let me know so I can confirm numbers with Tuckers.

St Austell is a fabulous tower brewery and one of our oldest family breweries. This will be a good chance to hear what SA are doing, how they are promoting beer with food and how Tribune has broken out east of the Tamar. Places are limited so if you think you can place a story from the visit, contact Adrian Tierney-Jones (01643 851469 or atj@onetel.com).

Members only need to find their own travelling expenses.

WHAT'S ON IN THE BEER BUSINESS

2004

August 2	Guild's Annual Pre-Great British Beer Festival Reception, White Horse
August 3- 7	Great British Beer Festival
September 16	ALMR Autumn Seminar & Debate
September 26 - 28	InterBev 2004, Orlando, Florida
September 30 - Oct 2	23rd Great American Beer Festival, Denver, Colorado
December 1	BGBW Annual Dinner & Awards Presentation, Ironmongers' Hall, London
December 10 (?)	Parliamentary Beer Group AGM & Christmas Party
December 16	ALMR Christmas Luncheon

2005

March 13- 16	IFE 05, ExCel, London
June 22	Guild AGM - Brook Green Hotel
August 1	Guild's Annual Pre-Great British Beer Festival Reception, White Horse
August 2 - 6	Great British Beer Festival
September 12 - 17	World Fair for Beverage Technology, Munich