

British Guild Of Beer Writers

Newsletter
May 2015



Building on sound foundations
Prior to our AGM on 16 June, an Extraordinary General Meeting of the British Guild of Beer Writers has been called. The Guild's committee is proposing to change the status of the Guild from a club to a charity limited by guarantee.

We think it is important to do this; it is a necessary and important step in our continual evolution as a group of like-minded people who want to improve the standards of beer writing and communication. We are now more than 25 years old and have continued to grow in the number of members, the size of our bank account and also our potential liabilities. Our current way of doing things, which has worked well, is no longer appropriate for an organisation of our size.

We are therefore proposing the adoption of some quite formal articles of association as the blueprint for taking the Guild forward.

These documents will be made available for all members to see and comment on, and our Treasurer Paul Nunny has prepared a version in plain English — to describe what is being proposed.

The articles state what we can do — events such as our awards and annual dinner. It also gives committee members — or board members as they will become known — powers to establish sub committees whose objects are the same as the objects of the Guild and to

delegate such powers as the board sees fit. It also lays out what would happen to the Guild's funds in the event that it ceases to exist. It also makes clear that an employee of the Guild cannot be a board member.

It does mean that some things will be organised differently — and nominations to the committee will have to be made well in advance of the AGM; according to the articles, 63 days. And in order to keep fresh blood running through the Guild's veins, the articles state that members of the Board should be re-elected every three years and that Board members should not serve more than three consecutive terms (ie nine years), and will need to stand down for one year before they can be re-elected.

The transition to the articles, if accepted by the membership, will undoubtedly cause a few teething problems and there are several issues which will need to be resolved. But I believe the ambition and objectives are right — to build on the original intentions of the founders of the Guild — and to improve and expand the quality of beer communication.

It's all about the people Good writing and journalism is about telling other people's stories well. The best commentators are able to take, what at first sight might be a dull subject and make it compelling reading. The story of the International Brewing Awards (IBA) is not one that immediately captures the imagination; after all it can be little more

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than a long, list of different beers? In *Brewing Champions* Adrian Tierney-Jones tells a story which amazes and galvanises. The narrative is underpinned by not just a love of beer but also the importance of robust historical analysis often from primary sources. And above all it tells the story of the ardent and dedicated people who are proud to call themselves brewers.

The International Brewing awards is the longest established brewing competition in the world and was first held in 1888 at the Agricultural Hall in Islington. Across three centuries the awards provide have provided regular snapshots into the world of beer — and an insight into how the once conservative and narrow spectre of British brewing has grown to embrace a multitude of styles, ingredients and continents.

But it is the brewers themselves who are the stars of this book — it is their triumphs and disasters, rivalries and friendships that turn what could be just be a stodgy list of beers and competitions into an illuminating, insight into our world.

As Bill Taylor, current chairman of judges for the IBA, says: 'Adrian in one book has created a history book, a storybook and a reference book. I feel that this book should be seen as the beginning of something and it is a work that begs to be continued in the future.' **Tim Hampson**

Brewing Champions – A History of the International Brewing Awards is published by the BFBi and for details on how to buy it please email info@bfbi.org.uk.

News

• **The Guild's Beerwriters of the Year** Jessica Boak and Ray Bailey are on the Fortnum & Mason Awards short-list in the Drinks Book category with Brew Britannia, with the winners due to be announced on 21 May. Fellow members Ben McFarland, Tom Sandham and Pete Brown are also being considered in other categories, the Guild wishes them all well. Further details from www.fortnumandmasonawards.com.

• **Guild member** David Muggleton has published three academic beer-related articles so far this year. Two articles on the history of Fuller's London Pride and Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter were commissioned for the encyclopaedia *Alcohol: Social, Cultural, and*

Historical Perspectives, edited by Scott. C. Martin for Sage publications, while David's chapter on the 1920s beer-drinking charity Ye Ancient Order of Froth Blowers appears in *Biographies of Drink: A Case Study Approach to our Historical Relationship with Alcohol*, a collection edited by Mark Hailwood and Deborah Toner for Cambridge Scholars Press. David situates the Order in the cultural context of its time to argue that it was a middle-class voluntary organisation that drew upon a centuries-old patriotic discourse to reconnect beer and Britannia so as to mobilise support in relation to such issues as public service, good citizenship, moderation, respectability, the improved public house, and the Drink Question in the wake of the First World War. For more details contact David at thequaffer@yahoo.co.uk.

• **Imbibe Live** launches its first beer competition Know any breweries seeking to sell to the on-trade? Imbibe Live has challenged British brewers to create a Beer for summer. Following initial judging chaired by Boudica Inns' Mark Dorber, five finalists will head to Brewers' Den at Imbibe Live on June 29 where the audience will decide. The winner scores a trip to Budvar Brewery, a seasonal listing at The Draft House, and a starring role in the 1 July Beer Club run by There's A Beer For That. Fuller's John Keeling joins Dorber and The Draft House's Charlie McVeigh on the judging panel. Online registration deadline: 21 May.

For further details visit imbibe.com/imbibe-live-beer-competition.

Beer Insider launch

AS IF THE WORLD needed another beer-related blog. Well, I didn't have one so I felt inclined to finally create one. Actually I prefer to call it a website. My existing online vehicle Retail Insider (www.Retailinsider.com) has been running for some time now and on occasion beer and pub content has been shoehorned onto the site. No idea what the

CALENDAR 2015

- British Guild of Beer Writers EGM and AGM, Finborough Arms, June 16
- British Guild of Beer Writers pre-GBBF event, London, venue TBC, August 10
- British Guild of Beer Writers awards and dinner, London, December 3

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

readers thought about this — not a lot probably. With the creation of sister site Beer Insider (www.Beerinsider.com) this issue has been averted. Yes, there are clearly lots of websites and blogs devoted to beer so the idea here is to be a little bit different and provide a platform not only for my voice but also a variety of other individuals.

The intention is for a mix including bar owners, brewers, the odd beer writer, retailers and pure-and-simple beer lovers. Guild members Chris Hall and Andrew Morgan of Bottle Shop will be featured along with Matt Gorecki, and others with suitably worthwhile opinions.

It's all about presenting interesting views, insights and opinions of people within the industry. Just as with Retail Insider the aim is to take a look behind the obvious with the hope of shining a light on the nooks and crannies of the beer world that people had maybe not thought about or considered.

There will also be words that do nothing other than simply celebrate good beer and pubs. That's it. **Glynn Davis**

The beer they didn't brew

AT 0241 ON MAY 7 , 1945 General Jodl signed the unconditional surrender that signalled the end of the European phase of the bloodiest conflict in human history. Winston Churchill was informed at 0700 and although word leaked out and crowds gathered outside Buckingham Palace during the course of the day, there was no formal public announcement thanks to interference by Joseph Stalin. By the evening Churchill had tired of the Russian tyrant's shenanigans and at 1940 the Ministry of Information made the following short announcement: 'In accordance with arrangements between the three great powers, tomorrow, Tuesday, will be treated as Victory In Europe Day and will be regarded as a holiday.'

The announcement, therefore, was sufficiently late that many had expected Tuesday, May 8, 1945 to be another working day, including the brewers at Whitbread, who had already prepared the brewing schedule for that day's beers.

Given the choice between mashing in and joining the rest of London in dancing in the streets the brewers of Chiswell Street chose to party. The brewing log for that momentous day is crossed through in red ink with one

simple yet poignant word: 'CANCELLED'.

A Head In A Hat will mark the 70th anniversary of VE Day by brewing 'the beer that was never brewed.' Nine gallon casks of this limited edition 3.2% IPA will be made available to existing A Head In A Hat regular customers and will be EMBARGOED until May 8, 2015 which this year is a Friday. To reserve your supply please contact Peter Haydon on 07973 465081 or email aheadahat@gmail.com.

Beer Academy news

THE BEER ACADEMY now has 84 qualified Beer Sommeliers, including the first from Finland, Maria Markus, who was accredited on April 2, 2015.

According to Dan Cannas at the Academy, 'journalist and writer Maria started to really discover the world of beer some five years ago while writing articles related to craft brewing. She has been working in the media sector in Nordic countries over a decade and she owns a media production company, which produces stories from all over the world. In addition to writing and making videos about beer and food, she likes to conduct tastings, learn more about innovative brewing experiments and home brewers' achievements, to then create new media concepts to promote beer culture and network with other beer lovers.'

The Bristol Brewhouse & Kitchen makes its Beer Academy debut with the following courses: May 6, How to Judge Beer; June 3, Foundation; June 4, Advanced.

Other courses in May:

- May 14: A: Beer Sommelier Assessment: 10:30-11:45, Beer Academy, London
- May 14: A: Beer Sommelier Assessment: 12:00-13:15, Beer Academy, London
- May 14: A: Beer Sommelier Assessment: 14:00-15:15, Beer Academy, London
- May 14: A: Beer Sommelier Assessment: 15:30-16:45, Beer Academy, London
- May 18: Foundation Course, 09:30-16:30, The Beer Academy, London, SE1
- May 19: Advanced Course, 09:30-16:30, The Beer Academy, London, SE1
- May 23: Foundation Course, 09:30-16:30, The Bull, London, N6

Details: www.beeracademy.co.uk/courses.