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FOR
REAL ALE

NORTH SEA ALE

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The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) is proud to announce that 2016 Champion Beer of Scotland is Raj IPA from the Tryst Brewery in Larbert.

Raj IPA, an India Pale Ale was chosen as Champion Beer of Scotland today (Thursday) in a blind tasting competition by a panel of expert judges at CAMRA's flagship event in Scotland, the Scottish Real Ale Festival held at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange.

Ray Turpie, CAMRA director for Scotland and Northern Ireland said: "Raj IPA is a fine example of a traditional strong bitter at 5.5 per cent alcohol by volume.

"Congratulations to everyone at the Tryst Brewery on being worthy winners of this most prestigious of CAMRA's awards in Scotland."

India Pale Ale was developed in colonial times and was originally brewed with a high enough alcohol content to survive the long voyage to India where it refreshed troops.

John McGarva, owner of Tryst Brewery said: "We have been making Raj IPA since 2005. It is brewed exclusively with traditional British hops and Scottish pale malt which give the beer a perfect balance between the hop and malt flavours and a fresh, hop aroma.

"As well as being a great drink on its own, it's the perfect companion to any curry dish. It has already won awards from CAMRA for being the best strong bitter in Scotland but to win overall Champion Beer of Scotland is a crowning achievement."

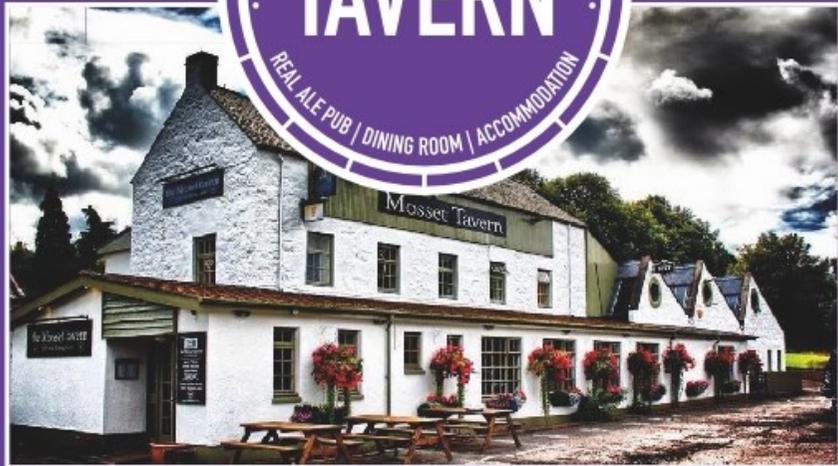
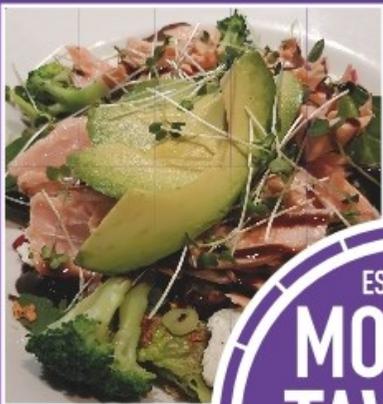


John McGarva, owner of Tryst Brewery celebrates winning Champion Beer of Scotland with CAMRA director for Scotland and Northern Ireland, Ray Turpie at the Scottish Real Ale Festival

The views expressed in this publication are those of the contributors, and do not necessarily represent those of CAMRA, or of the editor

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When	Where	Why
Thu 24th Nov	8pm Queen Vic	Branch & Committee
Wed 28th Dec	1pm Prince of Wales	Social wander
Tue 17th Jan	8pm Glentanar,	Branch & Committee
Wed 15th Feb	8pm Cults Hotel,	Branch & Committee

GORDON BRAILSFORD — MOSSET TAVERN

Where were you born and brought up and when?

I was born and raised in Perth in 1977, with a short spell in Kinloch Rannoch. My dad was the local bobby so we went where he was posted.

A brief resume of your education (Schools, University. College, Evening Classes etc.)

I attended Perth Academy until 1995. I did intend becoming a music teacher until the call of catering and the licensed trade kidnapped me.

Brief resume of career before joining the Licensed Trade

I have always been in the trade. Starting at the age of 16 as a part time waiter in the local pizzeria in Perth

History of your career in the Licensed Trade

I joined the Littlejohn's restaurant chain as a manager in 1996 enjoying a varied career at many different locations all over Scotland. My favourite being spells at St Andrews and Aviemore. It was a fantastic grounding, learning the nuts and bolts of the trade. I joined TGI Friday's in 2000 as general manager of their Aberdeen store, then a move to Edinburgh before running their flagship store in London's Leicester Square. I moved to Forres 10 years ago to take over the family business which we later bought – The Mosset tavern.

What is your favourite food?

Anything Italian

What is your favourite drink (beer, preferably, but any others)

It would start with a pint of Ale 9 by the Swannay Brewery or Happy Chappy by Cromarty. If not on offer then it would be a

peppery red wine. Usually a Cabernet Sauvignon or a Malbec

Hobbies outwith the pub trade

Anything with the family. We try to do something different every week.

Tastes in music

All things 70's! Fleetwood Mac, ELO, James Taylor, Billy Joel

Favourite films?

Godfather films (not no 3), new James bond films are excellent, any Adam Sandler film and Anchorman

Favourite TV programmes?

Peaky Blinders, American Horror Story

Marital Status/Children/Dogs etc.

Married for 11 years to my beautiful wife Melissa – we met working together at TGI Friday's in Edinburgh. A charming son Leo 7 and a hellraiser of a daughter Francesca 3

How do you think CAMRA is doing in supporting Real Ale, pubs and breweries?

It's the only credible voice that understands the industry and is proactive in it's campaign.

Do you think that Real Ale is on the up or is it suffering from the 'craft beer' revolution?

I think they are working pretty well together.



LOCH NESS BREWERY

Following the sudden closure and liquidation of the original company behind the Loch Ness Beer brand two well-known Highland firms have come together to rescue the brand and many of its beers.

Cobbs Group Loch Ness, based in Drumnadrochit, close to the original home of the Loch Ness Brewery at the Benleiva Hotel, and Cairngorm Brewery based in Aviemore say they hope to get the core range of five products back on the shelves soon.

Cobbs run seventeen outlets including three hotels, coffee shops and a bakery in the Loch Ness area.

Cairngorm Brewery formerly bottled part of the Loch Ness Brewery range. Shortly after securing a deal to supply supermarket chain Asda this year, the Loch Ness Brewery went into liquidation, with the loss of a number of local jobs. The business was formally wound up at Inverness Sheriff Court in July. Ironically the last beer Loch Ness brewed was 'Beer today, Scone tomorrow' using scones from Cobbs bakery.



Rory Cameron & Sam Faircliff

In a joint statement Cairngorm and Cobbs said they felt the brand was “too important to lose”. They added that they had decided to pool resources and rescue it to “ensure it continued as a strong Highland craft beer brand.”

Financial details of the deal have not been released, but this week Cairngorm acquired the Loch Ness trademarks and 20 recipes from the failed company’s administrators Johnston Carmichael.

The Loch Ness Beers will be brewed and bottled at the Cairngorm Brewery and marketed separately from the company’s other products.

Cairngorm’s managing director Sam Faircliff said she was delighted to be able to confirm an “iconic Scottish brand” was now “firmly in safe hands” Ms Faircliff said her brewers would be working over the next few weeks to “resurrect” the five core Loch Ness products. She added she was hopeful of re-gaining the brand’s retail contracts. “The Loch Ness brand is so well known globally that it will be a great opportunity for the export market as well as here at home,” said Ms Faircliff. Loch Ness Beers will also be available at Cobbs’ outlets.

Cobbs’ managing director Rory Cameron said: “We are delighted to join forces with Cairngorm Brewery and we look forward to bringing Loch Ness Beer products to our 17 Cobbs outlets.” Gordon MacLure, restructuring partner at Johnston Carmichael, welcomed the brand’s rescue.

He said: “It’s pleasing to see a well-known brand like Loch Ness being given a new lease of life under the ownership of Cairngorm and Cobbs”.

FINANCIAL CORNER

CAMRA MEMBERS INVESTMENT CLUB (“CMIC”)

Total funds held in breweries etc. have risen again and now stand at over £20.6m., having risen by almost 7% in the last 6 months – a period that included the initial uncertainty following the Brexit vote.

The Club organises brewery tours for the members every year, one of them overseas. The Club is open to all CAMRA members, each of whom is allowed to make monthly, quarterly or annual payments to the Club. Each member can invest a maximum of £2,000 p.a. (£166 per month). The minimum investment is just £5 per month. More details available at <http://www.cmic.uk.com/>

Investments are currently held in the following drinks-related companies:

Adnams	Hop Back Brewery
Anheuser-Busch InBev	Hydes Anvil Brewery
The Beer Consortium	Marstons
Black Eagle Brewery	McMullens
Bell & Co	Mitchells & Butler
Black Sheep Brewery	NewRiver Retail
Brasserie Cantillon	Punch Taverns
Carlsberg	Restaurant Group
Diageo	Shepherd Neame
Enterprise Inns	Thwaites
Fuller Smith & Turner	Wadworth
Greene King	West Berkshire Brewery
Heavitree Brewery	Wetherspoon
Heineken	Whitbread
Holt, Joseph	Young & Co

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Forename(s) _____	(UK & EU)			
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____	Joint Membership	£29.50	<input type="checkbox"/>	£31.50
Address _____	(Partner at the same address)			
_____ Postcode _____	For Young Member and other concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201 .			
Email address _____	I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association			
Tel No(s) _____	I enclose a cheque for _____			
	Signed _____	Date _____		
	Applications will be processed within 21 days			

01/15

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 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd 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.

30TH GREAT GRAMPIAN BEER FESTIVAL

CAMRA would like to thank all of those of you who attended the 30th Great Grampian Beer Festival held at Pittodrie Stadium 19th – 21st May, 2016. We hope you enjoyed the event, found some beers, cider and perry that you enjoyed and will be back for more next time. Please don't forget that Real Ale is not just for beer festivals, get down to your favourite pubs and clubs and hustle the licensees to get some of your favourite beers in all year round.

With the football season finishing earlier than usual to accommodate the European Championships we were hoping that our event would be before the end of term these days. Not being as busy as usual made it an ideal opportunity for those who do not want to take part in what can be a hectic Friday crush or if you are travelling from further afield.

The organiser's highlight of the week came on the Thursday evening when for the second consecutive year all 100 beers were on at one time. Never let it be said there isn't enough choice. We opened on the final day with 96 beers and despite some steady drinking it was only whittled it down to 43 beers left at the close with a really good spread of beer styles. So much

for the persistent reputation of "they always run out on the last day" which hasn't been the case for many, many years. However we'd love you all to come along and try to drink us dry next time. And with free re-entry if you bring back your commemorative glass why not come for more than one visit?

The next festival, the 31st Great Grampian Beer Festival is being planned – see

www.aberdeencamra.org.uk

for details.



Getting Ready for 2016

A hardy band of perennial volunteers and a smattering of new hands arrived very early at the Richard Donald Stand in the Pittodrie Stadium ready to receive all the deliveries and build the festival prior to the onslaught of the drinkers. It's perhaps as well they arrived early as so did many of the deliveries of beers and glasses. Over the rest of the day almost everything turned up and without any prolonged delays for once. It meant the day did not finish with any frantic activity, in fact it was probably the earliest Tuesday finish in many years, if not ever. 2016 saw the repeat of bottled beers after reasonable sales again last year along with a cider and perry range to match last year's sales volumes. As is traditional there was the end of day treat of a few pints for the set-up crew although they were so tired sadly there were few takers. Mind you we now know "who ate all the pies".

Two physically less demanding, but very long, days of preparation followed including the small matter of testing all 100 beers before unleashing them on the discerning drinker! It's a hard job but somebody has to do it.

Thanks to the hard working team who spent hours soaking towels in icy-cold water and wrapping up the casks. They battled against hard against frost bite whilst the beers were kept at cellar temperatures during the set up and throughout the event. Such are the efforts required to keep the beer at an ideal drinking temperature.

Beers from far and wide

Beers were sourced from all over the UK, Shetland in the north to Cornwall in the south, Isle of Skye in the west to Suffolk in the east. Grampian was repre-

sented with beers from Burnside Brewery and six°north both based in Laurencekirk together with Spey Valley from Mulben, Deeside of Banchory and the breweries at Keith & Rothés.. The Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles CAM-RA branch area also has four breweries in the Northern Isles who brew cask beers, namely Valhalla from Unst, Lerwick Brewery from the Shetland Mainland, Orkney from Quoyloo and Highland from Swannay on Orkney, who all had beers on the stillage. Once again there were a lot of enquiries as to why there were no beers from the brewery in Ellon. To keep the records straight, beers were requested but once again they declined to sell us any, in fact they haven't replied to any of our enquiries for several years.

There were 100 beers from 72 different breweries, including 75 beers and 20 breweries which had not been seen at the beer festival before. Scottish breweries having a first outing at the festival were John O'Groats from way up north, Lion's Lair from Brechin, Keith from Keith & Rothés from Rothés.

Whilst we do not select beers for the benefit of "tickers" it is an opportunity to try out the wares of the newer producers and with so many new breweries, particularly in Scotland, who are willing to supply to the festival, why not?

Festival Featured Brewery

The festival's featured brewery was supposed to be Loch Ness from Drumnadrochit but unfortunately for all concerned the brewery had got itself in difficulties and so no beers were available.

Visitors

The festival also attracted a large response from the licensed trade, both local publicans and the not-so-local

PUB & BREWERY NEWS

Three Kings, Cullen. The owner, Campbell Sime, has decided to call it a day and retire from running this GBG listed small pub, the only real ale available in Cullen. The pub is currently closed and is on the market at the moment. We hope that when it gets sold it will continue to sell decent ale and possibly regain a spot in the GBG.

The Queen Vic in Rosemount Place goes from strength to strength selling excellent ale with two guest ales often being served in addition to the regular Deuchars IPA and Landlord. Recently they have had Deeside Blonde, Rye and Swift. Also have had Osset Spellbound and Sadlers Worcester Sorcerer on one of the pumps - obviously the bewitching season is upon us with Cairngorm Witches Cauldron also appearing in some pubs.

The newly opened Dyce Farm at International Avenue, ABZ Business Park has three handpumps serving Old Speckled Hen, Belhaven Pale and a Dyce Farm house beer. As you can guess, it is owned by Greene King.

Rothés Brewery has added 2 new beers, Blackhall Bitter & Rothés Porter to their range.

Burnside owners Dave and Gary have initiated 'Brew Days'in 2017. This is, essentially, an invitation to brew with them for a full day. The first two dates, arranged for February, have been oversubscribed and as a result they are looking to do more during the year.

Deeside Brewery has recruited Steve Crossland as Managing Director and George Wotherspoon (in a consultancy role) as Development Director, both having formerly been founders of Loch Ness brewery. Their principal focus seems to be to expand Deeside's share of the cask ale market. The brewery had recently invested in some new conditioning tanks to enable this. The range of ales will no doubt be added to and modified in the coming months, but already Deeside Blonde has been spotted locally.

Windswept Werewolf is appearing in some outlets again. It is 6% abv and is standard Wolf with the addition of chillies. The recipe has been revamped and it is not quite so severe as before. It is still not a pint for the faint hearted!

Spey Valley Brewery have their new brewery up & running. The visitor reception area is nearly completed & brewery tours will be available soon.

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Aberdeen Arms Hotel

Tomintoul

Glen Avon
Richmond

Gordons (Balfour Manor)

Westhill

Shepherds Rest

Whitehills

Seafield Arms

Orkney

Burray

Sands

Birsay

Barony

Evie

Mistra

Harray

Merkister

Holm

Commodore

Hoy

Stromabank

Kirkwall

Albert Hotel

Auld Motor Hoose

Ayre Hotel

Helgis

Orkney Hotel

Reel

Shore Inn

St Ola

Torvaugh

Ophir

Noust

Rousay

Taversoe

Stenness

Standing Stones

Stromness

Ferry

Stromness Hotel

Sanday

Kettletoft Hotel

Shetland

Lerwick

Captain Flints

Grand Hotel

Scalloway

Scalloway Hotel

Weisdale

Westings Hotel

brewers. Overseas visitors from the USA, Denmark, Norway and even England (some bits of which are further away than some parts of Norway) made themselves known.

Beer of the Festival

As usual we had our own competition for the punter's favourite beer. This year's winner was **Rudgate's York Chocolate Stout** whilst Cromarty's Whiteout, which was the fastest selling beer, was runner up. In 3rd place came Tryst's Choc & Coconut Porter.

It was very encouraging to note once again the number of votes cast. Sadly as always there were several attempts to cheat by casting multiple votes.

Charity

As usual the festival played host for a local charity to raise funds. This year it was the turn of Aberdeen Lions who

were collecting on behalf of Instant Neighbour and Befriend A Child and raised nearly £1,000 in cash and unused beer token donations, to be spent helping all those in need. On their behalf we would like to thank all those who generously donated.

Thank You

The Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles branch of CAMRA would particularly like to thank the following organisations for their help with the festival: Our hosts at Pittodrie, Aberdeen Football Club plc. Also Flying Firkin, all the supplying breweries, Hallam Cider and Deeside Drinks Emporium who supplied the bottled beers, cider and perry. Also thanks to Gordon at Arrow-dawn for the beer vouchers, Cegal for the volunteer shirts, Alan at Grampian Scaffolding who support us both liter-

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ally and figuratively with the scaffold- Nick Marshall, Greig Martin, Dave ing, Paul at Ceva & Dave at Metcalfe, Eric Mills, Ian HSS for storage, transport and equipment loans Milne, Peter Morrison, and Richard at APAL Ian Mullin, Bill Mutch, for the bags. We Arthur Newton, Jim would also like to thank all those individuals, far too many to list individually, who gave their time, help, knowledge, experience, energy and passion to enable this festival to go ahead.

As well as the festival and show-case brewery logos each glass was printed with the message "Don't Drink & Drive" as part of our joint campaign with Grampian Police road safety division. After all we want you to have a good time, get home safely so that you can come and join us again and again

Whilst we're thanking people we'd like to acknowledge all those of you who put up posters to advertise the festival particularly those pubs who allow us to "borrow" their customers for the weekend.

Volunteer Heroes

The following people put a lot of time and effort into making the festival a success. Without volunteers like these there would be no festival. On behalf of CAMRA we thank you and hope there are even more volunteers next time.

Iain Andrew, Neil Andrew, Steve Armstrong, Tessa Armstrong, Jas Bhagrath, David Bowden, Ron Buchan, John Burns, Mike Burton, Martin Calder, John Campbell, Ian Chapman, John Corral, Marie Donald, Richard D'Souza, Neil Evans, B. Fergusson, Arthur Findlay, Euan Fraser, Bob Frost, Alex Fyfe-Johnston, Bruce Goldie, Connor Gray, Vince Hilton, Derric Hood, Michael Hopkins, George Howie, Paul Johnston, Sean Johnston, Steve Kinnaid, John Little, Norman MacKenzie, Dougie MacKinnon, Sarah McKeever,

Members of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) are being given a final chance to influence the group charged with reviewing its future direction and purpose.

The committee responsible for carrying out the review is now finalising its proposal - due to be submitted to CAMRA's National Executive (Board of Directors) in December - and has launched a third and final survey of members. The CAMRA survey includes details of the proposals likely to be made and provides the last chance for CAMRA members to influence the recommendations. Visit <http://bit.ly/CAMRARPSurvey3> to have your say

Sheldon, Emma Sheldon, Jim Sheldon, Chris Simmonds, Andrew Southworth, Chris Southworth, Ian Stewart, Jim Strachan, Ian Stuchbury, Lesley Thomson, Nicole Thomson, Stuart Tyrie, Jim Watson, Scott Wilson, Terry Wood & the man with 22 years' of planning now behind him Richard A. Jones.

Daviot

Smiddy

Dufftown

Commercial

Royal Oak

Stuart Arms

Dunecht

Jaffs

Dyce

Dyce Farm

Granite City

Spider's Web

Elgin

Drouthy Cobbler

Muckle Cross

Sunninghill Hotel

Ellon

Station Hotel

Tolbooth

Fettercairn

Ramsay Arms

Findhorn

Crown & Anchor

Kimberley Inn

Fochabers

Gordon Arms Hotel

Grant Arms

Forres

Carisbrooke Hotel

Knockomie Hotel

Mosset Tavern

Ramnee Hotel

Red Lion

Fraserburgh

Elizabethan

Saltoun Arms

Garlogie

Garlogie Inn

Garmouth

Garmouth Hotel

Gourdon

Harbour

Glenlivet

Croft Inn

Huntly

Gordon Arms

Inverbervie

Queens Arms

Inverurie

Black Bull

Edwards

Gordon Highlander

Johnshaven

Anchor

Ship

Kingswells

Four Mile House

Village Hotel

Kinloss

Abbey Inn

Lossiemouth

Beach Bar

Clifton Bar

Coulard Hotel

Skerry Brae Hotel

Luthermuir

Sauchieburn Hotel

Macduff

Old Moray

Maryculter

Maryculter House

Marykirk

Marykirk Hotel

Methlick

Ythan View

Monymusk

Grant Arms Hotel

Muir Of Fowlis

Muggarthaugh

Netherley

Lairhillcock

Newburgh

Newburgh Inn

Oldmeldrum

Redgarth

Pennan

Pennan Inn

Peterhead

Crosskeys

Portlethen

Mains of Balgharn

Portsoy

Boyne Hotel

Shore Inn

Station Hotel

Rothies

Seafield Arms

Rothiemay

Forbes Arms

Below is a list of outlets that sell real ale which are known to the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles branch of CAMRA.

CAMRA is in no way recommending all of the pubs in this list. If you want a list of recommended pubs you will need to buy the Good Beer Guide. The pubs are placed in alphabetical order by location and then pub.

If you know of any pubs that sell real ale, in our area, which are not on this list, or any pubs on this list that no longer sell real ale please contact the editor. Your help is much appreciated

New Outlet *Seasonal*

Aberdeen	Old Blackfriars	Ravenswood Club (British Legion)
Adam Lounge	Prince Of Wales	Scott Skinners
Aitchies Ale House	Queen Vic	Tor Na Coille
Archibald Simpson's	Six degrees North	Banff
Atholl Hotel	Slains Castle	Aul Fife
Blue Lamp	St Machar Bar	Market Arms
Bobbin	Stag	Ship Inn
Cameron's (Ma's)	Triple Kirks	Braemar
Carriages	Under The Hammer	Moorfield House Hotel
Dutch Mill	Wig	Brodie
Ferryhill House Hotel	Aberchirder	The Old Mill
Foundry	New Inn	Catterline
<u>Ghillies Lair</u>	Aboyne	Creel Inn
Glentanan Bar	Boat Inn	Charleston of Aberlour
Globe	Alford	Aberlour Hotel
<u>Grays Inn</u>	Forbes Arms	Mash Tun
Grill	Haughton Arms	Corgarff
Illicit Still	Ballater	Allargue Arms
Justice Mill	Alexandra	Craigellachie
Krakatoa	Balmoral Bar	Craigellachie Hotel
Mariner Hotel	Glenaden	(Copper Dog)
McGinty's	Balmedie	Highlander Inn
McNastys	Cock and Bull	Cults
Noose & Monkey	Banchory	Cults Hotel
Northern Hotel	Burnett Arms	
Number 10	Douglas Arms Hotel	



We are on the look out for on and off trade retailers to join us in stocking our beers. If you think you might like to give us a try please get in touch.

beerplease@speyvalleybrewery.co.uk
speyvalleybrewery.co.uk

f t i

So what did you think of the "Keeping It Real" logo? Do you think you can do better? If so then send your entries to beerfestival@aberdeencamra.org.uk Entries will need to be in something similar to jpg, tiff, gif file format, a single colour and have sufficient clarity when reproduced no bigger than 3" on a glass. As a rule of thumb a bad pun in the strap line and a sheep always seems popular

LICENSING HOURS

A report from NHS Scotland has suggested that licensing hours should be cut, particularly for off-sales, and that alcohol should only be sold from a separate area at the rear of stores. One of the report authors Elizabeth Robinson—NHS Shetland principal said she thought that alcohol should not be sold until four or five o'clock in the afternoon. Shetland Isles Area Licensing Board will consider the report after next years local elections. The reduction in hours would cause problems for anyone working afternoon shifts, and does not form part of current Scottish Government policies.

BEER OF THE FESTIVAL TRIP 2016

In a close run thing the winner of the drinkers' vote at the 30th Great Grampian Beer Festival was Rudgate's York Chocolate Stout. This is only the fourth time the winner has been from a brewery outside Scotland (Beartown, Dark Star & Dunham Massey being the others) so it meant it was a longer journey than usual to make the presentation. The branch social secretary Terry was charged with making the necessary arrangements and informed us that the brewery's preferred dates just happened to coincide with the York CAM-RA beer festival. It's a hard life.

Yorkshire capital which was basking in glorious late summer sunshine. Over-dressed or what? After a quick check-in and bag drop at various lodgings (not the easiest place to secure reasonably priced accommodation at any time of year) the stalwarts met up at the nearest city GBG entry to the festival venue; Brigantes. After the warm walk to and from the accommodation the delicious beer barely touched the sides. Dilemma, stay for another or head down to the race course and check out the festival?

Mercifully not too far to walk and no



Reasonably early on a Thursday morning a small but hardly band headed foggy Aberdeen and arriving in the

long queues. The venue was a massive marquee with a bar running all down the long length with some 250+ beers, but not one from Scotland. Probably

READERS LETTER

I've been reading North Sea Ale for a number of years but felt compelled to write after reading your latest column "Keeping It Real". There has been a lot of news as of late from CAMRA about changing the focus of Real Ale to saving pubs and it seems the craft/keg beer is a divisive issue but it is very clear from your editorial which side of the fence you are on. Personally, I find the beer scene in the country thrilling right now. There are more breweries than ever and more choice both in supermarkets and in pubs, as well as a rise in bottle shops around the country too. There are new flavours and experiments being done with beer, brewers are becoming more creative and this can only be a good thing. However, your thoughts very dismissive of any pub/brewery that is choosing to do this with keg beer.

Don't get me wrong, I love cask ale but I think there is room for both styles and feel the best pubs (North Bar in Leeds, Cask and Euston Tap in London, Drygate in Glasgow to name a few) cater for both tastes. Naturally, the success of craft keg beer has led to larger brewers (including the likes of Belhaven/Greene King) jumping on the bandwagon and dishing out their watered down versions of these beers but some of the best beers in the country (Wild Beer co, Magic Rock) are most commonly found in keg. I found your comment "any pub that isn't selling real ale isn't worth going to" a bit old fashioned. I find it hard to believe that the majority of pubs in Aberdeen selling cask ale (and most in this city, offer limited selection and is looked after poorly) are more worthy of a visit than the Brewdog (I know there is no love loss between CAMRA and Brewdog) bars and Casc. I would prefer to see some hand pumps here too but there is still much to enjoy, more so than a pint of bland, off, Greene King IPA.

I also found your comments dismissive about other beer festivals too. I attend the Aberdeen beer festival at Pittodrie every year and have a great time. It's a brilliantly organised event with a fine selection of ales but would say the Stonehaven event is fantastic too, featuring an interesting mix of keg and cask beers you won't find anywhere else in the North East of Scotland and I felt your comments seemed to be more "don't go there event, come to ours" (something that has really irritated me when Brewdog has done the same in the past) instead of encouraging people to check out their event.

So I think what I'm saying is, please do continue to champion cask ale, but please consider that cask ale isn't the only way people enjoy quality beer and that there are bars, breweries and beer festivals in the area that still deserve credit for getting people interested in beer and I felt your editorial may alienate many readers/drinkers.

thanks for reading.

Kirk

meeting point where the Rudgate BLO, Steve Cobb, scooped them up and drove out to the brewery. Perhaps as well really as it was actually much further out that it appeared on a map and in an area lacking much in the way of public transport. The brewery is located in Tockwith on an industrial estate occupying land at the edge of the former Marston Moor aerodrome. All the units were uniformly decorated.

A quick look round the brewery, a presentation of the award to owner Craig Lee, a quick drink and some beer & brewery chat before making the return journey straight back for another visit to York beer festival. The festival starting to show signs of being popular and some of the beers had run out but there was still so much choice only the most churlish of punters would think to complain of the range still available. Almost like homing pigeons the team occupied the same seating as on Thursday and again the entertainment was not too



loud but we could all have done without the man making continuous announcements on the tannoy. Almost as audible as announcements at a railway station. Wrong kind of beer on the lines?

In need of sustenance and having sampled most of the festival food offerings it was time to head back into the centre and try out the pizzas in The Hop; good call followed up by another pint in the Blue Bell

Sunday was another scorcher and as pre-agreed it was some tourist time. For some it was the delights of the National Railway Museum whilst others preferred to make the most of the weather and circumnavigate the city along the walls by way of an attempt to work off yet another heart-attack breakfast. As the train time approached it was time to meet up at the final city centre GBG outlet the York Tap right at the station. This was the only time all weekend a Scottish beer, even at the beer festival, had been spotted and ironically it was a Cromarty offering who had come a close second in the Great Grampian beer of the festival competition. Just enough beer to ease the pain of the long journey home taking one of those bizarre Sunday engineering works routes.

A trip to York was good but what would it be like if Maldives Mild, Seychelles Stout or Bahamas Best Bitter won next time?

about 175 on gravity and the rest on handpulls. Running at right-angles along the short length were the other drinks namely cider, perry, wines, meads and even some key keg offerings. Give that lot a wide berth. Plenty of seating inside where the Aberdeen stalwarts were now sheltering from the sun but there was also plenty of al fresco seating and all the food stalls were outside too as well as the soon to be needed conveniences. Only downside was the glasses were plastic ok that polycarbonates. A license requirement.

With so much beer choice along with the options to have pints, halves and even thirds everybody had to come up with their own strategy to pick their selections. Given that there were a lot of beers from Yorkshire the Great Grampian festival organiser decided to choose one beer from as many of the breweries from his home town as he could cope with. He coped well but it took quite some time to work through them all including all the ones that pretend to be from the various villages outside his town but are actually wholly integral to the borough. And no thirds!

A chance meeting with some old friends and CAMRA colleagues led to some mixing and matching of conversation groups but despite all this the group, probably showing some signs of age, retained their seating as a col-

lective base and mercifully when the entertainment struck up in early evening it was at a level when normal conversations could still be had. Take note you would be festival entertainers.

It must have been a very convivial day's drinking as they still had the wherewithal to go find the Rudgate BLO (Brewery Liaison Officer – CAMRA's main volunteer contact for each brewery) to make the necessary logistics arrangements for the presentation visit on Saturday morning.

A final pint on the way into the city centre at the Falcon Tap before calling it a day particularly as one of the number had a bit of a trek back to his interesting choice of accommodation.

It looked like summer was over on Friday morning as the heavens opened. A bit of solo time in the morning mostly spent indoors avoiding the worst of the rain. Nick and George ventured through the drizzle to the city centre, Nick seeking out bookshops for collectable first editions and George seeking out a long lost record shop in the Gillygate and a second hand shop in the Monkgate. Both now sadly gone. Then a pilgrimage in the now heavy drizzle to the Layerthorpe to lament the loss of the classic John Bull pub several years ago. As the weather cleared the travellers regrouped at the delightful Blue Bell.

This tiny pub has a sign on the door “no groups, no stag parties, no hen nights”. Having said that it was pretty quiet being only noon but it might have been best that the group arrived one at a time. So what to do with the rest of the day?

The planner/researcher/organiser decided that an amble to as many city centre GBG outlets was in order. Armed with a list and a home-made map; no reliance on technology for this campaigner. Would he have the stamina and would anyone else be foolish enough to join him? Well yes they

would and they did manage to hit the vast majority of outlets in a very civilised day. Leaving the intelligentsia to search for yet more collectables the next stop was literally across the street The Hop. A pub with its own pizza oven. The afternoon and early evening continued with some wonderful and eclectic outlets continuing with the Duke of York, the one in the shadow of the Minster as opposed to all the others of the same name. Next stop was the unusual Pivni with a stack of casks and the beers squeezed in behind the bar with beer delivered by using a flexible riser.



Time for some exercise and a walk to the south west of the city centre having escaped the confines of the walls. Rewarded with two GBG outlets opposite each other. No hanging around outside the Rook & Gaskill (named after the last two people to be publically hung in the city) and a chance to try a coconut milk stout which we later learnt won the York beer of the festival. Our unhappy barman was the son of the owners, he was unhappy as his parents had taken the whole weekend off to go and volunteer at the beer festival. Across the road to the Waggon & Horse with was resplendent with the new Bateman pump clips.

Time to meet up again with the others so a brief amble to the south of city where again there were two GBG pubs in close proximity. The delightful Slip Inn which is just on the outside of the city walls followed up by the Swan Inn with its West Yorkshire drinking corridor (no, not even the chap from West Yorkshire was familiar with what that was but then he is so young most pubs had been desecrated into open plan by the time he was starting to appreciate pub architecture). The final new pub of the day (have you been keeping count?) was the Golden Ball which was pretty close by but this time just back inside the sanctity of the city walls before the group sallied off to their respective domiciles.

Saturday morning and all on fine form and no late comers to the pre-arranged

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