

# Tay Ale

'let's keep it flowing'

**FREE** Newsletter from the CAMRA  
Tayside Branch



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**Summer 2015**



## Inside Issue 15

Tayside Pub & Brewery News

Tayside Real Ale Pub List

Festival Reports

Real Ale Cycle Trail (Perth to Bankfoot)

Vive La Biere!

Real Cider & Perry

My Favourite Pub

Low ABV Beers

And as always much, much more....

## Tayside CAMRA

### 'Pub of the Year' 2014

**Winner:** Bankfoot Inn,  
Bankfoot

**Runner-up:** Cherrybank Inn,  
Perth

**Best Newcomer:**

George Orwell, Dundee

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## A warm welcome to the latest issue of Tay Ale View from the Chair

### Real Ale's triumph over Euro-fizz

As the number of real ale outlets just grows and grows, it's tempting to think that 'the war has been won'. Almost any independent outlet which comes under new management these days seems to be putting in the good stuff, whilst the pub-chains are making a pretty fair effort as well (although there are exceptions). And it is common now for existing real ale establishments to increase the number of handpulls and the range of ales offered.

CAMRA can take much credit over the decades for having kept the flame alive for real ale, especially through organising real ale festivals during years when there were far fewer real ale outlets in the country. Today, the drive for good beer is part of a wider movement for quality (versus mass-production) — as manifested by the rise of farmers markets and other food initiatives. This trend has also led to ale festivals being staged by charities and sports clubs, which again help to introduce real ales to a wider audience; the number of people who know quite a bit about ales & breweries nowadays is far greater than it was even 10 years ago.

As can be seen from the lists in this magazine of real ale outlets in Tayside, there is scarcely a community of any size where real ale is not now available. There are even places (e.g., Dunkeld) where *every* watering-hole offers real ale. It is also true that the condition of real ale served has improved over the years — driven by improved publican expertise and by technical developments in the cellar.

Meanwhile the number of new breweries also continues to rise impressively, most of them driven by energetic and imaginative people who are bringing new ales and new ideas to the beer market.

All in all, it's an amazing success story: the war really *has* been won... enjoy!

**Alan Lawson** *Tayside Branch Chairman*

**Trading Standards Offices:** For issues such as consistent short measures or no price lists, contact:

**Angus** - 01241 435600 **Perthshire** - 01738 476476 **Dundee** - 01382 434000

# TAYSIDE REAL ALE PUB NEWS

## ANGUS

**Old Boatyard, Arbroath:** An attractive bistro on the waterfront, where one handpull has been installed, usually serving one of the Greene King ales.

**Hillside Hotel, Hillside, by Montrose:** Real ale has been getting served here for a couple of years, but we confess we hadn't picked up on this! The hotel's operator and long-time real ale enthusiast is Norrie Braes. One handpull on the bar, usually serving local ales.

**Old Reid Park Bar, Forfar:** An establishment which has gone through quite a number of different names in recent times, but has now reverted to an older name. Strathbraan ales are the regular offering from the one handpull.

## DUNDEE & District

**Frews (Coldside, Dundee):** The good stuff did appear here about 5 years ago and then disappeared again. But now it's back on, so let's hope it does well this time.

## PERTH

**The Green Room, Perth:** 6 handpulls have been installed here as part of an attempt to turn the place into a serious beer establishment, with bottled beers from all over the world.

## EAST PERTHSHIRE

It's good to welcome back **the Anglers Inn at Guildtown**, on the Perth to Blairgowrie road. The place had been closed for a couple of years, but has now been resurrected by business partners Phil McKenna and Ian Cooke, with local ales being served.

## SOUTH PERTHSHIRE

**The Abernethy Inn:** A modest start to real ale has been made here recently, with pins of Inveralmond's ales being served.

**The Crees Inn, Abernethy:** It is very sad to report that the long-time owner and CAMRA member, Brian Johnstone, died a few months ago. A larger-than-life figure, Brian seemed to be always on duty, serving good ale from the 6 handpulls on the bar, as well as running a busy restaurant. The place had won many CAMRA awards, including Tayside Pub of the Year. Brian had been at the Crees for many years, and prior to that had the Muirs, Kinross (much more of a real ale place under his stewardship than it is today). At time of writing, the Crees is closed, awaiting a new owner.

**If you have any news about developments at your local or other real ale pubs in Tayside we would like to hear from you. Please contact us at:**

**[newsletter@taysidecamra.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@taysidecamra.co.uk)**

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## New Breweries Just Keep Coming...

20 years ago the number of real ale breweries in Scotland was about 10; now it's about 75 and rising. All this is wonderful, of course, especially as they all seem to find enough trade to keep going, and usually expand. Here is a quick summary of some of the recent and pending arrivals...

**JAW BREW, Glasgow** - Started in 2014, with a 5-barrel plant, and quickly started to win prizes for bottles (bottle-conditioned). Based at Hillington Ind. Estate. The JAW name came from the name of Mark (the owner's) cottage, but a shark and ocean connections are used in the various beer-names. Bottles can be bought via the website. Cask customers are mostly in the Glasgow area, although Drymen and Kilbarchan are also mentioned. Full info at [www.jawbrew.co.uk](http://www.jawbrew.co.uk)

**FREEWHEELIN Brewery, Peebles** - Owner is Richard White of West Linton, who set up the brewery in Peebles in late 2013. The cask ales are available at various Peebles watering-holes and in the surrounding area.

**DRYGATE Brewery, Glasgow** - A joint venture between Tennent's (of lager fame/infamy) and Williams Brothers of Alloa, the brewery is at Tennent's Drygate premises in central Glasgow. Several young brewers have already joined the venture from other Scottish micro-breweries. Drygate are hosting a couple of 'cuckoo' breweries, Monolith ( <https://www.facebook.com/monolithbrewing> ) and Heidrun ( part of Valhallas Goat - <https://www.facebook.com/ValhallasGoat?fref=nf> ), brewing on their smaller Studio Kit.

The premises include a restaurant, bar, beer-hall and outdoor terrace. The three early products are Gladeye, Bearface Lager, and Outaspace Apple Ale; these can be bought online in bottle via their website. Full info at [www.drygate.com](http://www.drygate.com)

**KIRRIE ALES, Kirriemuir** - Set up in 2014 by local man Colin McIlwraith, this is a very small brewery (a shed, in fact) selling casks to local watering-holes, and also producing bottles. Some of the beer-names use 'Thrums', the fictional version of Kirriemuir which appeared in books by JM Barrie. Further info from <https://www.facebook.com/kirrieales>

**LOLA ROSE Brewery, WANLOCKHEAD** - Opened in 2014 by the McKelvey family, long-time owners of the pub in Wanlockhead. The village sits at 1531 feet above sea level, and its ale-names (red, blond, stout) contain '1531'; their strap-line is 'Ales with Altitude!' Further info at <http://lola-rose-brewery.co.uk/>

**DRUMMYGAR, Redcastle, Angus** - Planning permission is currently being sought for a new micro-brewery in the Angus coastal area between Arbroath and Montrose at Drummygar Steading, Drummygar, Carmyllie, Angus, in the name of Redcastle Farms.

*By Alan Lawson*

\*\*\*\*\*

Ed: You can read more about Colin McIlwraith and Kirrie Ales in our new 'Meet the Brewer' feature on page 8

## ADAM SHAFI: real ale blogger extraordinaire



**Adam Shafi**

Adam Shafi, originally from Monifieth but now living in Glasgow, writes an extremely well-informed and well-written blog about real ale (and all related matters). Adam's blog can be found at:

<http://walkingandcrawling.blogspot.co.uk>

Adam undertakes one or two special journeys per month, and the back-numbers can all still be accessed via his site.

He not only writes about the ales which he finds/samples, but also tells you about food, people, buildings, architecture, paths, and public transport (his usual means of reaching watering-holes,, although sometimes he cycles). And he takes lots of excellent photos.

This site is strongly recommended, especially as it contains links to many other informative websites.

The Brewer's Tap (right) in Paisley, visited recently by Adam on his real ale travels.



**Brewer's Tap, Paisley**

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## THE CORN EXCHANGE

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With up to 8 hand pulls offering regular and ever changing guest ales, The Corn Exchange has been a been a regular entry in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

Located just off the High Street, this Wetherspoon pub was built as The Corn Exchange, in 1854. It later became the Olympia Picture House and then Olympia cinema. The building now bears its original name.

Food is served between 8am and 11pm.

### Meet the Brewer: Colin McIlraith, Kirrie Ales

Colin McIlraith started up Kirrie Ales in 2014. Martin Fox, Tay Ale Editor, caught up with Colin at the Forfar Farmers' Market in May (2nd Saturday every month) to chat about this latest addition to the Tayside real ale scene and perhaps one of the smallest commercial breweries in the country.



**What is your brewing background?** I was a self-taught home brewer to begin with for about 10 years then I did a course with Brewlab in 2012 and have since basically built on what I learned from them.



**'The Kirrie Ales Shed'**



**Inside 'The Shed'**

**How did Kirrie Ales come about?** It was just an idea that I had talked about with friends for a while then a friend asked me to supply some beer for his wedding and the positive reaction made me think there's maybe something in the water in Kirriemuir. After that a few tasting parties at the house and I then built a shed and off it went. Bonfest (annual music festival in memory of the late Bon Scott, former AC/DC frontman) last year was a real turning point; selling out on the Saturday was just amazing. I'm trying to favour local pubs etc. because I've always wanted it to be a local thing first and foremost.

*(Continued on page 10)*



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Glenisla Hotel is set in the tranquillity of Glenisla which is located at stage 4 of the Catheran Trail a fully way marked walk of 64 miles running through the heart of Scotland. The trail takes its name from the feared cattle thieves that raided the rich lands of Glenshee, Strathardle and Glenisla.

Located nearby are several mountain cycle routes within the Glenmarkie Forest area.

The Glenisla Hotel is the ideal stop for Tourists, Hill walkers, Mountain Bikers, Shooters and Skiers. The hotel can provide secure storage for cycles and hill walking equipment for guests visiting or staying at the hotel.

*(Continued from page 8)*

**How many types of ale do you brew?** At the moment the range consists of....

**Thrums Best** - Best bitter 4.5 abv the comments I get are really smooth, hints of orange on the finish, well balanced.

**Fruity Wee Blonde** - An American style IPA 3.8 abv, lots of grapefruit and other citrus but not overly dry and bitter.....probably my favourite of them all.

**Red from the Shed** - Scottish Red 4.5 abv the closest I have to an 80/- with a little hopefully subtle fruity note on the finish it's the newest addition to the range but is going down well at the farmers market.

**Hoppy Daze** - Classic IPA 4.0 abv oldest along with Thrums Best....well balanced IPA great summer evening beer.

**Thrums Lager** - Czech Pilsner style 4.5 abv. One of my mates asked if could brew a lager and I thought I've no idea but I'll have a go. I've always liked Pilsner Urquell so tried to get a sense of that without copying.....proved to be really popular and it conditions really well in the bottle.

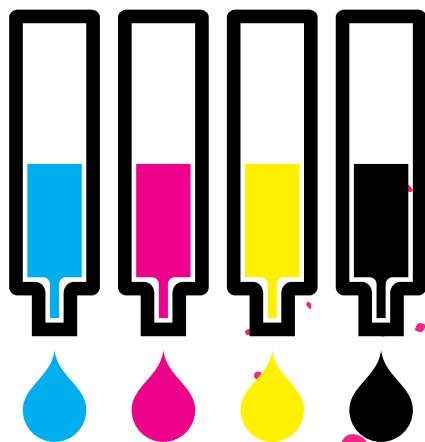
**Big Mouth Stout** - Oatmeal Stout 4.5 abv. I've always really liked dark beers and I used to love Younger's No 3 when I was a student in Edinburgh....anyway thought I should have a crack at a stout and I really like the silkiness you get from oatmeal without the heaviness and it works.

That's the basic range. I did a chocolate ale last year which proved pretty popular and I'm working on a new seasonal blonde at the moment.....I'm also just about to bottle the first batch of an ale made with an amazing Orkney Island malt I managed to get my hands on which is looking interesting.

**You have a full-time job so how often do you brew?** Usually I brew 2 to 4 batches of between 75 and 90 litres per batch at the weekend so typically 200 to 300 litres a week. The day job gets in the way mind you so I'm not producing that every weekend.

**Where can Tay Ale readers sample Kirrie Ales?** The Drovers at Memus fairly much all the time, the Glenisla Hotel from time to time, the Roods (Kirriemuir) often have Thrums Best on, and occasionally the Caledonian in Brechin. I'm hoping to go for a guest slot somewhere in Dundee over the summer. If I have sufficient stock I attend the monthly Forfar farmers market (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month). Peel Farm (by Loch of Lintrathen) is also a fairly regular outlet. Pubs are generally supplied with pins or firkins and

*(Continued on page 13)*



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**Tayside CAMRA Newsletter**

01/15

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*(Continued from page 10)*

occasionally bottles. I'm not able to do kegs yet so the lager is only in bottles. All the bottled ales are bottle conditioned so they have that gentle sparkle that only bottle conditioning gives in my view.

**Do you have any plans for expansion?** I'm currently working on finding a Kirriemuir based site and building a larger brewery; the capacity will depend on the site.

**Are there any challenges running a small microbrewery?** Lots...! The biggest is running it while having a full time job. It's a huge amount of fun and it gives me great pleasure to see people enjoying my beer but I don't have much time for watching TV. My background is manufacturing which has been a huge help but for me it's about making something that I'm proud of and that I'd be happy if I had bought it.



*By Martin Fox*

**Colin at Forfar Farmers Market**

### **Tayside CAMRA Facebook Page**

If you're interested in keeping up-to-date with all the latest news from the Tayside CAMRA branch, why not "Like" our new Facebook page? We list details of all the upcoming events and meetings, and it's a great way to stay in touch with us. You can find us at;

<http://www.facebook.com/TaysideCAMRA>

or scan the QR code. See you there!

And if you're not into Facebook don't forget our branch website:

<http://www.taysidecamra.co.uk/>



## **Tayside Branch Contacts (Web address: [WWW.TAYSIDECAMRA.CO.UK](http://WWW.TAYSIDECAMRA.CO.UK) )**

**Chair (& webmaster):** Alan Lawson - 01382 732613  
( [aylawson@btinternet.com](mailto:aylawson@btinternet.com) )

**Vice-Chair:** Forbes Browne - 01382 731563

**Secretary & Branch Contact:** Tom McLaughlan  
( [secretary@taysidecamra.co.uk](mailto:secretary@taysidecamra.co.uk) )

**Treasurer:** To be confirmed ( [treasurer@taysidecamra.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@taysidecamra.co.uk) )

**Membership:** Richard Barnes ( [membership@taysidecamra.co.uk](mailto:membership@taysidecamra.co.uk) )

**Newsletter:** Martin Fox - 01241 870248  
( [newsletter@taysidecamra.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@taysidecamra.co.uk) )

**To make sure your membership details are correct, please visit the CAMRA website where amendments can be made on-line.**

### **Tayside Real Ale Pubs**

The following Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale. Please let us know about the quality of real ales on offer (see page 39), particularly if you think Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited. We make no claims as to the quality of the beer and you should note that some pubs listed may only stock real ale on a seasonal basis (annotated S).

#### **Angus**

##### **Arbroath**

Corn Exchange  
Corner Bar  
Lochlands Bar  
Old Boatyard

##### **Brechin**

Brechin Arms

Brown Horse / Stables  
Caledonian Hotel  
Dalhousie Bar

##### **Carnoustie**

Aboukir Hotel  
Kinloch Arms Hotel  
Stag's Head  
Station Hotel

##### **Finavon**

Finavon Hotel

##### **Forfar**

Dunnichen Stone  
Old Reid Park Bar  
Osnaburg  
Plough Inn  
The Stag

##### **Glen Clova**

Glen Clova Hotel

##### **Hillside (by Montrose)**

Hillside Hotel

##### **Kirriemuir**

Airlie Arms Hotel  
Roods Bar

##### **Kirkton of Glenisla**

Glenisla Hotel

##### **Memus**

Drovers Inn

##### **Monifieth**

Milton Inn

##### **Montrose**

George Hotel  
Market Arms

### **Dundee & District**

##### **Barnhill**

Cambustay

##### **Broughty Ferry**

Anchor  
Fisherman's  
Jolly's Hotel  
Royal Arch  
Ship Inn

##### **Dundee**

Bank Bar  
Braes  
Campbeltown Bar  
Capitol (Lloyds)  
Cask and Cork

Cerberus  
 Clark's  
 Counting House  
 Drouthy's  
 Duke's Corner  
 Frews Bar  
 George Orwell  
 Gourdie Croft (Beefeater)  
 Kingsway Farm  
 Nether Inn  
 Nicoll's  
 Pillars  
 Phoenix  
 Playwright restaurant  
 Speedwell (Mennies)  
 Star and Garter  
 Taybridge  
 Trades House Bar

**Invergowrie**  
 Doubletree by Hilton

**Panmurefield**  
 Bell Tree

**West Ferry**  
 Taychreggan Hotel

### **Kinross-shire**

**Kinross**  
 Green Hotel  
 Kinross Curling Club  
 Kirklands Hotel  
 Muirs Inn

**Milnathort**  
 Village Inn

**Scotlandwell**  
 Well Inn

**Wester Balgedie**  
 Balgedie Toll Tavern

**Perth City**  
 Abbotsford Inn  
 Bridgend Bar  
 Capital Asset

Cherrybank Inn  
 Christie's  
 Dickens  
 Foundry  
 Glover Arms  
 The Green Room  
 Greyfriars  
 Kirkside Bar  
 Lovat Hotel  
 The Maltings  
 Old Ship Inn  
 The Sandeman  
 The Tavern

### **East Perthshire**

*(north of Perth and east of the A9)*

**Alyth**  
 Airlie Street bar  
 Losset Inn

**Ardler**  
 The Tavern

**Balbeggie**  
 Macdonald Arms Hotel

**Birnam**  
 Birnam Hotel / Tap

**Blair Atholl**  
 Atholl Arms Hotel

**Blairgowrie**  
 Ericht Alehouse  
 Fair o Blair  
 Royal Hotel  
 Stormont Arms

**Blairgowrie (Ratray)**  
 Old Cross Inn

**Bridge of Cally**  
 Bridge of Cally Hotel

**Dunkeld**  
 Atholl Arms Hotel  
 Royal Dunkeld Hotel  
 Perth Arms  
 Taybank Hotel

**Errol,**  
 Rattray's Restaurant  
**Glenshee**  
 Dalmunzie Hotel

**Guildtown**  
 Anglers Inn  
**Kirkmichael**  
 Kirkmichael Hotel  
 Strathardle Inn

**Meigle**  
 Kinloch Arms

**Meikleour**  
 Meikleour Hotel

**Moulin**  
 Moulin Inn

**Pitlochry**  
 Auld Smiddy  
 Craigvrack Hotel  
 Festival Theatre  
 Kingfisher (Fisher's Hotel)  
 McNabs  
 McKays  
 Old Mill Inn

**Scone**  
 Scone Arms  
 Wheel Inn

### **West Perthshire**

*(north of Perth and west of the A9)*

**Aberfeldy**  
 Black Watch  
 Schiehallion

**Aberfeldy/Weem**  
 Ailean Chraggan

**Bankfoot**  
 Bankfoot Inn

**Crieff**  
 Murraypark Hotel  
 Quaich Bar  
 Tower Hotel

*(Continued on page 16)*

**Fortingall**

Fortingall Hotel

**Grandtully**

Grantully Bar / Cafe

**Kenmore**

Kenmore Hotel

Courtyard Restaurant

(Taymouth Mains)

**Lawers**

Ben Lawers Hotel

**Muthill**

Barley Bree

**Pitcairngreen**

Pitcairngreen Inn

**Strathtummel**

Loch Tummel Inn

**South Perthshire***(south of Perth)***Abernethy**

Abernethy Inn

**Aberuthven**

Smiddy Haugh Hotel

**Auchterarder**

Craigrossie Hotel

Auchterarder Golf Club

**Bridge of Earn**

Cyprus

**Dunning**

Kirkstyle Inn

**Glendevon**

Tormaukin Hotel

**Glen Farg**

Bein Inn

Glenfarg Hotel

If your local serves 'real ale' and is not included in this listing please let us know.

Thank you.

## Branch Stalwart, Kenny Smith, implores you to ...GET OUT AND EXPLORE!

Are you a CAMRA member living in Dundee? Do you usually drink in just one pub? WHY?

With The Campbeltown, Frews, The George Orwell & The Kingsway Farm joining the list of Real Ale establishments in our fair city, is it not about time you got out there and explored some of the pubs you haven't been in for a long time (if at all).

Perhaps you joined CAMRA just for the Wetherspoons vouchers! If so, fair enough, but if all that is left are Wetherspoons outlets will we not be the poorer for it? What if we all picked one day a week to visit a hostelry at random? With the exception of The Kingsway Farm (Green King/Belhaven) these new/renewed pubs are run by independent licensees who should be getting our support.

If you are more adventurous, why not try a 'Tayside Dayrider' on Strathtay busses to go explore further afield. A trip to Blairgowrie would let you try out the 4 pubs there plus 1 in Rattray then on to Alyth (2) and if you are still ok there is Meigle (1). Another option could be an Angus circular; Forfar, Brechin, Montrose and Arbroath.

And if you're feeling adventurous and prefer a proper day out, why not try a train trip to Dunkeld & Birnam or even Blair Atholl & Pitlochry.

Ed: Kenny not only visits and supports real ale pubs throughout Tayside but he is often out and about beyond Tay Ale territory attending real ale festivals.



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**Sat 22 Aug**  
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**Sun 23 Aug**

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## **My Favourite Pub: The Cherrybank Inn** **By Tom McLaughlan (Tayside CAMRA Branch Secretary)**

Your local community pub is often your favourite pub. The Cherrybank Inn (Glasgow Road, Perth) has long been the local for the upper Craigie, Viewlands, Cherrybank, and Oakbank areas of Perth, as well as being the traditional meeting place for the folks from the hinterland to the southwest of Perth.



**Cherrybank Inn**

As a resident of Craigie, then Cherrybank, and then Oakbank, before a move out to the sticks beyond the race-course six years ago, I always looked on the Cherrybank Inn as my local. The custodian of this establishment for the last sixteen years, Jack Findlay has now been joined by son Scott as landlords. The number of handpulls have increased from one in 1999 to six, with real ale now outselling lagers, making the Cherrybank Inn, Perth's undisputed top real ale pub.

Although the small public bar provides limited seating there is a standing area which usually accommodates a wide range of friendly drinkers putting the world to rights or glued to the big match on satellite TV. The large lounge with views of Buckie Braes and Craigie Hill golf course provides comfortable seating and where meals are available. In addition to the normal menu, there are regular themed nights, for example, Burger Night (Tues), Curry Night (Wed), Steak Night (Thurs) and Sunday Roast (obviously on a Sunday), all of which a drink is included with the meal. A local quality butcher supplies the Cherrybank's meat. At the time of writing, Jack and Scott were awaiting a Building Warrant being approved for an extension and balcony, evidence of a thriving and successful local.

Finally and most important, back to the beer; The Cherrybank's six handpulls showcase a varying range of ales mainly from Inveralmond and Scottish micros, and all priced at £3-30 a pint. And The Cherrybank is doing 20 casks a week nowadays.

My former local continues to be my favourite pub and I think well worth a visit. And if you do happen to drop in then I'm absolutely sure you'll be back!

# Bankfoot Inn

18<sup>th</sup> Century Coaching Inn right in the heart of Perthshire

Real Ale
Great Food
Open Fires



## Summer Beer Festival

### Aug 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> 2015

(see website for details)

### CAMRA "Pub of the Year 2014" Tayside

Traditional inn dating back to 1760, located in the heart of Perthshire just south of Dunkeld on Cycle Route 77. Serving Real Ales and a large range of malt whiskies.

Enjoy locally sourced, home-cooked food, complete with open fires.

Fishing parties, cyclists and bikers welcome. We're dog-friendly too. Accommodation available.

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**Beer Garden**

**Folk sessions every Wednesday**

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**Ensuite rooms**

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Tel: 01739 787243
www.bankfootinn.co.uk

## Real Cider & Perry News



The final round of judging for CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Championships 2015 took place at the popular Reading Beer and Cider festival held 30 April - 3 May. The competition featured ciders and perries from across the UK, with each cider and perry judged on its individual taste, aroma, flavour, after-taste and overall appeal. The top awards were selected by a specially chosen panel of experienced judges, drinks writers and CAMRA members.

**The joint winners of the Cider Gold medal** are White Jersey by Orgasmic and Janet's Jungle Juice by West Croft. White Jersey was described by judges as being *'fruity' and 'easy drinking', with 'a slight sweetness balanced by an excellent tang',* and having *'balance without too much acidity'.* Janet's Jungle Juice was described as having a *'mature and woody aroma' with 'an initial sweetness and a smooth finish',* and a *'full mouthfeel with a resinous aroma'.*

**The winner of the Perry Gold medal** is Two Trees Perry by Gwynt y Ddraig (meaning 'dragon's breath' in Welsh) which the judges described as being *'initially sweet with a refreshing, dry aftertaste', 'complex yet well balanced with a poached pear flavour and aroma' with a 'slowly developing finish'.*

**Cider GOLD** (joint) - White Jersey, Orgasmic Cider Company & Janet's Jungle Juice, West Croft; **BRONZE** - Medium, Three Cats

**Perry GOLD** - Two Trees Perry, Gwynt y Ddraig; **SILVER** - Snowy Owl, Raglan Cider Mill  
**BRONZE** - Perry, Snails Bank

### **CAMRA Campaign: "Protect Small Cider Producers"**

The European Union (EU) is proposing to ban the UK's small cider producer duty exemption. This exemption supports very small cider makers, such as hobbyists or farm-gate producers, for whom such small scale production is an integral part of rural culture.

The proposed action would see very small cider producers landed with a tax bill of up to £2,700 each and every year. We call on the Government to reject the EU's request and put UK cider producers and consumers first.

Support CAMRA's campaign by signing the petition available at the following link:

**<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/protect-small-cider-producers-1>**

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ness  
brewery



Loch Ness Brewery - Drumnadrochit - IV63 6UH  
Tel 01456 450726 or visit [www.lochnessbrewery.com](http://www.lochnessbrewery.com)

## **Tayside Pub Recce: Focus on Birnam and Dunkeld**

On a gorgeous sunny day in late April, myself and fellow CAMRA Tayside Branch member, Garry Sharp plus Garry's black Labrador, Zoe, headed for Birnam and Dunkeld to check out the five pubs that sell real ale and make sure that information for WhatPub is up to date.



**Birnam Inn**

First stop was the **Birnam Inn**, convenient for both bus stops and the station. We got there just as they were opening up for the day so there was a chance to chat to the barman whilst he set things up. The one handpull at the Inn offered a very good pint of Strathbraan Brewery's Head East and we were told that the lounge in the Hotel itself normally

has a real ale on offer from Cairngorm Brewery.

A short stroll across Telford's bridge over the Tay into Dunkeld and you're spoilt for choice with all four pubs in a very small area offering at least one hand pulled real ale!



**Atholl Arms Hotel**

**Listed in every CAMRA Good Beer guide from 1975 to 2012 and making a welcome return in 2014**

### **Fisherman's Tavern**

**10 - 16 Fort Street**

**Broughty Ferry**

**Angus DD5 2AD**

**Tel: 01382 775941**



**19th century hostelry full of character and boasting many original features in the public bar and snug and with a real coal fire in the lounge**

**Six cask conditioned ales and a fine selection of malt whiskies**

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**Annual beer festival every May in support of the RNLI**

**[fishermans.broughtyferry@belhavenpubs.net](mailto:fishermans.broughtyferry@belhavenpubs.net)**



...where all who enter as guests, leave as *friends*.

Set in the idyllic serenity of the Angus Glens, Glen Clova Hotel is the perfect get away. Our country hotel dates back to the Drovers Inn of the 1850s. The hotel has carefully modernised and we provide guests with accommodation where they can relax and escape.

The hotel offers a range of freshly prepared food, including Bar Lunches & Suppers. Quality local fish, game and home reared Beef, Venison & Lamb are available, together with delicious homemade desserts. Along with the hotel we have our 8 Luxury Lodges that have their own hot tubs and saunas, as well as our 32 bed bunkhouse which is perfect for an alternative to camping.

After an active or leisurely day, relax in our Climbers Bar and mull over the day's activities in front of a roaring fire. We are a pet friendly location and for a small cleaning fee all of our accommodation accepts your 4 legged friends.

Our regular hand pulled ales include selections from Inveralmond & Burnside Brewery



**17th – 19th July  
2015**

See [www.clova.com](http://www.clova.com) for  
more information

For more information visit our website:- [www.clova.com](http://www.clova.com) Or contact us at:- Glen Clova Hotel,  
Glen Clova, Nr Kirriemuir DD8 4QS Tel:- 01575 550350





**Perth Arms Hotel**

had both Cairngorm Trade Winds and Arran Red Squirrel on offer which we enjoyed in a very sheltered sunny beer garden.

Our final port of call was the **Taybank**, which is in the final stages of a major refurbishment.

We took the easy choice and headed straight into the bar of the **Atholl Arms Hotel**, where Strathbraan's True North and Inveralmond's Ossian were on offer. Their support for real ale was clearly demonstrated by posters for a Strathbraan tasting and 'meet the brewer' session that evening.

Next stop was the **Perth Arms Hotel** in a side street heading towards the square. This offered both Head East and Due South from Strathbraan and a hearty bar lunch.

Back on the main street, the **Royal Dunkeld Hotel**



**Royal Dunkeld Hotel**

The two handpulls were again offering Head East and Due South from Strathbraan, so we never quite made it to all four points of the compass!

All five pubs offered a range of food and were very dog friendly with some offering water bowls or even dog biscuits.



**Taybank Hotel**

*By Bill Grigg*



### **MòR Brewing News**

MòR Brewing have been busy getting ready for the summer and are delighted to be featuring in several beer festivals over the coming months. If you missed the Paisley Beer Fest, Perth Beer Fest, or Cambolicious in Fife then don't worry, you will still be able to sample our ales at several other events! In June we will have MòR

Scode (4.0%) and MòR...ish! (4.2%) at the Great Grampian Beer Fest in Aberdeen, MòR Please at Currie's Beer & Curry Fest, and MòR Calm & Wise at the Midsummer Beer Happening event in Stonehaven. Later in the year, we have been confirmed for the Alba Real Ale Festival in Broughty Ferry and also Angus Brew Fest, an exciting new event to be held in Forfar (Sat 17<sup>th</sup> October at Strathmore Hall, John Street) showcasing the best of local produce.

We have again been included in Aldi's Summer Ale Festival where you will find bottles of MòR Tea, Vicar?, available nationwide following a very successful response last year.



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BREWERY.....PERTHSHIRE

**TRADITIONAL CASK ALES. WORTH SEEKING OUT.**

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FURTHER**



**DUE SOUTH**

3.8% ABV Classic Pale Ale  
Golden colour in the glass  
Slight citrus flavours with a bitter finish

**LOOK WEST**

4.0% ABV Refreshing Blond Beer  
Straw colour in the glass  
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4.2% ABV Traditional Bitter  
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Malty character and pronounced floral aroma

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PERTHSHIRE, PH8 0EB

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Mob : 07747 857908

strathbraan.bry@btinternet.com



A photograph of the interior of The Caledonian pub and restaurant. The scene is dimly lit with warm, yellow light from lamps. In the foreground, a round clock with a white face and black numbers is visible. The background shows a bar area with stools and a counter, and a large window looking out onto a street. The overall atmosphere is cozy and traditional.

# the caledonian

Brechin's foremost real ale pub and restaurant

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Guest beers from Scotland and Hampshire's Itchen Valley brewery

In CAMRA's Good Beer Guide since 2005

Aspall cyder and St Mungo lager on draught

Belgian beers on draught (Leffe, Hoegaarden) and bottled

Large selection of malt whiskies

Great food freshly prepared by our award-winning chef

Special discount on food for CAMRA members

Live folk music on the last Friday of the month

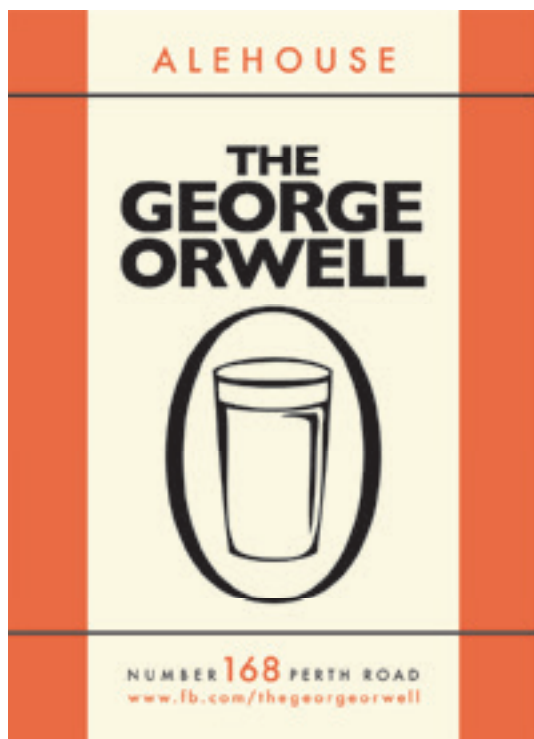
## **Kenny's Travels...Finavon & Memus**

So...I'm sitting at home reading the Courier and having a cup of tea (note...real tea, no teabags) when the phone rings. "Hi! It's Garry; do you fancy a wee hurl in the country?" As Mother was going out for lunch (dinner in our house) I was going to be at a loose end so said "yes". "Good. I'll be round in half-an-hour". Sure enough half-an-hour later Garry (& Zoe) arrived on my doorstep.

We headed out of Dundee passing Forfar on the way north to the Finavon Hotel, (sharp left off A90 dual carriageway). On entering the hotel, we turned right into cosy wee L shaped bar; eating areas are away from the bar so we felt comfy standing there. Inveralmond Ossian on (1 handpull) and in cracking condition. The friendly communicative bar staff were happy to talk about Real Ale; highly recommend a visit.

Onward to Memus ... "ROAD CLOSED" whoops, with no diversion signs good use of the sat-nav by Garry got us round the problem and we came up the road the Drovers is on. Parking in the carpark we walked through the beer garden (due to hailstones there were no takers in it), entering we turned right into a modernised bar with eating area at the bar, not comfy standing there, so we have a seat and something to eat (look out for the Geo. Younger & Sons of Alloa mirror) with 2 handpulls serving 1 normally from Kirrie Ales, and the other rotating Scottish beers. First time I've had a Kirrie Ales beer, THRUMS BEST 4.5% (toffee flavour); the other was NORTHERN LIGHTS from Orkney. Another great wee pub to visit!

***By Kenny Smith***



Tayside CAMRA Newcomer Pub of the Year 2014

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## 2017 GOOD BEER GUIDE PUB SELECTION

Have you wondered how CAMRA selects pubs for the annual Good Beer Guide? Each CAMRA branch is responsible for the entries in its area within the county and each listed pub must consistently serve real ale (and real cider if offered) of good quality.

To help us do this, we collect beer quality information through CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) in which members are asked to contribute scores for pubs throughout the year. It is easy to score your beers in NBSS. Log in to CAMRA's online pub guide, WhatPub ( <http://whatpub.com> ) using your membership number and the same password that you use to enter the CAMRA national website. Search for the pub and enter a score for each **cask conditioned ale** that you drank in the Submit Beer Scores panel on the right of the screen. There is plenty of help and information about NBSS on the Beer Scoring tab.

A version of WhatPub optimised for use on a smart phone was launched in August 2014 and a downloadable app will appear later, so you can score your real ale in the pub while you drink it! If you don't have online access at all, then ask your NBSS Coordinator at a branch meeting for paper forms and we will enter your scores for you. We ask members to score the pubs continually not just once or twice. NBSS works across the country not just in our branch. If you are not a member but would like your opinions of beer quality in pubs to count, then join CAMRA!

## TAYSIDE CAMRA BRANCH DIARY

Weekday meetings are usually held on a Monday or Tuesday and start at 7.30pm. Next scheduled meeting:

**12 noon Saturday 22nd August 2015 Craigvrack Hotel Pitlochry**

**NB: This meeting precedes the Scotland & Northern Ireland Branches (SNIB) meeting commencing at 1pm (same venue).**

All Tayside CAMRA members are very welcome to attend branch meetings and social events. We would especially welcome new members.

Please check either What's Brewing, our website ([WWW.TAYSIDECAMRA.CO.UK](http://WWW.TAYSIDECAMRA.CO.UK)), Facebook page or contact Branch Secretary for details of branch meetings and social events during the remainder of 2015.

### **For The Attention of all CAMRA Members**

To ensure your CAMRA membership details are correctly recorded, please ensure you notify CAMRA HQ of any change of address or other contact details.

This will ensure you continue to receive your monthly copy of What's Brewing and the quarterly Beer magazine as well as other CAMRA communications.

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**CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2015**

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**[www.royal-arch.co.uk](http://www.royal-arch.co.uk)**

**Advertising in Tay Ale**

Tay Ale could not be produced without the support of our advertisers many of whom have supported us since our first issue in 2008. With 2250 copies of Tay Ale printed and distributed twice yearly throughout Tayside and beyond, why not raise the profile of your pub, hotel or brewery by placing an advert in our next issue due November 2015

We are always seeking to improve Tay Ale and this issue is our third full colour publication. Providing we continue to maintain the support of our advertisers it is our intention to continue to print future issues in the same format and also look to increase our circulation.

If you would like to place an advert in the next issue of Tay Ale, please contact Martin Fox on 01241 870248 (or via our branch email address) for more information and details of our rates.

[newsletter@taysidecamra.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@taysidecamra.co.uk)

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- thank you to all for our nomination -



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## Vive La Biere! (Part 1)

Beer drinkers, like most other groups, can be susceptible to fashion. Real ale itself has become "fashionable" though "craft beers" seem to be taking the spotlight currently, and one remembers with a shudder the craze for inferior, British-brewed "lager" that started in the '60's. But it's interesting to discover that the term "craft beer" was taken by the Americans from the French "*bieres artisanales*"- which, like the more widely-known Belgian beers, were available for a while in most supermarkets back in the '80's/90's.

Although France is considered a country of wine, the Alsace region produces a massive amount of beer, mainly in the Carlsberg and Heineken owned megabreweries around Strasbourg. A fair number of microbreweries have also sprung up in the departement and there has long been the *biere de garde* (beer to keep) tradition in the former mining and industrial zone of the Pas de Calais-Nord - French Flanders, Artois and Picardy. Barley and hops are still grown in this area, adjacent to the hopfields of West Vlaanderen across the Belgian border, and hop vines can be seen in Alsace not far from the vineyards of the Vosges.

*Bieres de garde* were traditionally strong, tasty unfiltered beers varying in colour from gold to dark red, and stored to mature. They were top-fermented - many still are - since bottom fermentation did not really arrive in this region until after the First World War, which also led to the closure of many smaller breweries and the introduction of brewing

on a huge industrial scale. Some brewers survived, though, notably the Brasserie Duyck, near Valenciennes. Shrewd marketing of "*La biere de garde de la Brasserie Duyck a Jenlain*" simply as *Jenlain*, made it popular with students in Lille and gradually further afield. It comes in a heavy, Champagne-style bottle with wired cork.

Having read of these beers in Michael Jackson's column in "*What's Brewing*", I looked out for them, probably in the old Safeway in Broughty Ferry or Tesco in Monifieth - which responded for a while to the aforementioned fashion - and *Jenlain* was the first I encountered. Another I remember trying was Castelain *Ch'Ti ambree* (*Ch'Ti* being local dialect for "*C'est toi*" (It suits you) or, alternatively, "Northerner" and *ambree*, copper-coloured). I was amazed at their rich flavours, especially since my previous experience of French beers had made me believe they were all "*pisse d'ane*" ("*ane*" is a donkey).



*Bieres de garde* are examples of *bieres de specialite*, that is, interesting beers. *Bieres speciales* are strong beers - over 5.5% ABV - and while there are some pleasant and interesting beers of lower strength, which would be *bieres de degustation* - to be sampled and savoured - most would be classed as *bieres de soif*: thrapple dousers or thirst quenchers. With the greater interest in beer of all kinds that has affected Northern France as much as any other beer-drinking country, microbreweries have increased in number - as implied above, they also started here - and most pubs will have one or two *bieres de specialites*, seasonal beers being increasingly common.

In France, two such examples refer to times of the year: *bieres de mars* (March/spring beers) and *bieres de Noel* (Christmas beers). There is a long brewing tradition behind these, developed from times when there was no sophisticated technology to assist the processes of brewing and storing. Barley was harvested between July and August, hops were dried and prepared and brewing began on 1<sup>st</sup> October. The best beer was made just before Christmas and stored until March (*Mars*) but *biere de Noel* was a stronger brew made to be consumed at the festive season. March beer was considered the best beer having been made from the finest ingredients and stored for the optimum time.

*By Forbes Browne*



## Inveralmond Brewery News

New for 2015 was our Fair Maid brew named after the Perth lady made famous by Sir Walter Scott. Pale, straw-coloured highly quaffable ale at 3.6%; citrus and spicy aromas from Williamette and Mandarina hops are matched with fruity pear and blackcurrant flavour. Fair Maid is permanently available in cask.

Inkie Pinkie is back again for the summer. This brew features the traditional East Kent Goldings and Fuggles hop varieties. While supplied in cask to the pub trade, you might be lucky and find it available from the brewery, packaged in 5-litre mini-casks and ideal for drinking at home in the garden.

Rascal London Porter is an exciting addition to our Inspiration Series. It's a 5.6% dark mahogany brew, coloured dark mahogany from the Chocolate, Black, Munich and Crystal Malts along with Roasted Barley, which combine to produce a sumptuous mocha flavour. Rascal in cask won the Wetherspoon's Champion Beer of Britain at their spring beer festival, and you should look out for it at your local Wetherspoon's and ask them for Rascal if they do not have it on tap. Also available in craft keg and 330ml bottle, Rascal featured recently as the Beer of the Week in The Herald.

Inveralmond are the exclusive world distributor of Barney's Beers, brewed at Summerhall, Edinburgh. Apart from a range of wonderful cask-conditioned ales, Barney's produce the same beers (Good Ordinary Pale Ale, Volcano IPA, Red Rye & Extra Pale Ale) bottle-conditioned, available in the Tayside area from selected ScotMid Co-ops, as well as the Inveralmond brewery shop.

Andrew Usher & Co - our associated pub brewery in Edinburgh - is now brewing exclusive ales on site. Graham the brewer has decided to move across the pond to brew in a new venture in Fort Collins, Colorado. His place will be taken by Inveralmond's very own Digger (brewer), who plans to pop in to see us regularly for supplies of yeast and anything else that's not locked away! We wish them both well in their new ventures.

## Beer Festivals

For information about those in Tayside and further afield visit the following:

[www.taysidecamra.co.uk/beerfestivals](http://www.taysidecamra.co.uk/beerfestivals)

[www.camra.org.uk/beerfestivals](http://www.camra.org.uk/beerfestivals)

Please refer to page 42 for other Scottish branches web addresses

# **Tayside CAMRA Pub of the Year 2011**

## **The Cherrybank Inn**

**210 Glasgow Road, Perth PH2 0NA**

Booking and Information

**Tel: 01738 624349 Fax: 01738 444962**

The Cherrybank Inn, with its large car park, can be found easily. When entering Perth from the A9 down the Glasgow Road, take the 2nd right then immediately left - and there it is!



Situated at the western entrance to Perth (from the A9), The Cherrybank Inn has been a popular venue for passing travellers for over 200 years.

Featuring well appointed rooms with en-suite facilities, good food, excellent staff and a high standard of service, suitable for tourists or business people alike - also ideally situated for golfing parties.

We are regularly listed in the Good Beer Guide and always have a minimum of five real ales on draught including several from the award winning Inveralmond Brewery in Perth.

Ample car parking available.

## Real Ale Bike Rides on Tayside – Perth to Bankfoot

Many of the Tayside real ale outlets lie on quiet country roads that are ideal for cycling. For the second in our series of Tay Ale Bike Rides we have chosen a 23 mile long circular route from Perth. But first, a reminder that we are not condoning 'cycling under the influence', just the moderate consumption of good beer whilst getting healthy exercise and enjoying the Perthshire scenery.



Sustrans' National Cycle Network '*Salmon Rurl*' route, the NCN77 from Dundee to Pitlochry, runs through the centre of Perth and can be joined at the North Inch after it crosses the Tay via Smeaton's bridge. Our route starts by following a very pleasant traffic-free section heading north along the banks of the Rivers Tay and Almond. About 2.5 miles from the start, just after the route goes under the railway line and main A9 carriageway, leave NCN77 and take the

signposted cycle route to Luncarty that uses the old A9 bridge over the Almond. This crosses over NCN77 and the river, then drops back under the bridge of the new A9 carriageway before climbing up to follow the A9 north for about a mile on a cycle path between the road and railway. At Denmarkfield farm turn right over the railway on a small lane that continues through fields to Luncarty.

At Luncarty, keep on the lane until it reaches the B9099 then turn right heading north through the village. This is the only busy section of road on the route so care is needed, particularly on the series of bends just before it enters Stanley. The **Tayside Hotel**, which is signposted off to the right just after the Police Station in Stanley' appears to currently only sell 'craft' or bottled versions of beers from the Inveralmond Brewery but it may be worth checking as real ale has been available in the recent past. There is also the option to drop down to the Tay and visit Stanley Mills, which is in the care of Historic Scotland, but be warned it's a very steep climb back up!

On the outskirts of Stanley take a narrow undulating lane signposted to 'Airtnully' and then after about 2 miles turn left (west) at the tee junction. This straight road leads past the café/farm shop at Stewart Tower, where you might be tempted to stop for some of their home-made ice cream – particularly if cycling into a headwind! At the foot of a fast descent take care joining the slip road and turn left under the A9 then right into Bankfoot. You will find a warm welcome and three changing beers at the **Bankfoot Inn** (right), Tayside CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2014, an



**Bankfoot Inn**

old coaching inn a short distance to the right in Main Street. Opening hours vary and can be checked on the WhatPub website.

The return to Perth is 11 miles following the well-signed Sustrans NCN77 route on quiet roads and traffic free paths. Retrace your route to where you entered Bankfoot but turn right on an undulating unclassified road which with good views of the Perthshire countryside takes you through Moneydie to Pitcairngreen. The **Pitcairngreen Inn** (right) on the edge of the village green has two or three changing beers, often including from the local Strathbraan Brewery, and usually some real ciders.



**Pitcairngreen Inn**

At the bottom of the descent to Almondbank make sure that you follow the NCN77 signs and turn right just before the bridge over the Almond. After a short stretch of lane the route crosses the Almond via a footbridge and is then on level traffic-free paths all the way back to Perth. Look out for the recently restored medieval weir across the Almond which feeds the 4 mile long lade that supplied power to Perth's City Mills.

All three pubs have outside drinking areas and serve food but opening hours can vary so it's worth checking, particularly if you intend to eat. There are also small shops in Luncarty, Stanley, Bankfoot and on the descent between Pitcairngreen / Almondbank.

*By Bill Grigg*

### **Tay Ale Pub Quiz no.5 [ 20 points available ]**

1. Name 4 Tayside real ale establishments whose name contains 'bank'.
2. Unravel the following five anagrams of Scottish micro-brewery names:  
LLLVHAAA : ALLAN CHALET : MY CHE ALE : WEPT WINDS : AIR QUART
3. Inveralmond Brewery recently retired one of their famous standard ales and replaced it with a new one : can you name both?
4. Where are these new-ish micro-breweries located:  
JAW BREW : KIRRIE ALES : DRYGATE : FREEWHEELIN : 6° NORTH
5. Dunkeld is a 'real ale town', as all 4 of its watering-holes serve real ale: can you name them?  
(Answers on Page 42)

## **We'll Take the Low (Alcohol) Road ...**

The reduction in the Scottish driving limit on blood alcohol at the end of last year has not been received favourably by many in the licensed trade nor by most beer drinkers. While the vast majority do not condone driving after drinking to excess, the message has gone out that, if you have the car, then the only safe amount to drink is nil, and even if you walk to the pub, you must be thinking about your driving next morning and beyond. This has put a blight on the prosperity of many rural licensed premises in particular.

So what responsible measures can we take if we want to enjoy a few drinks in our local? We can obviously hire a taxi, or persuade a friend or relation to drive us - sometimes easier said than done! Some rural eating establishments offer a transport service to diners, yet this is rarely provided to drinkers. The other solution is the "designated driver" who sits with a coke miserably in the corner while friends party away. If pubs would serve interesting soft drinks and cocktails, and were able to sell them at non-rip-off prices, then the designated driver might be prepared to take a second turn at this task!

For those who do not care for soft drinks and cocktails, there is a small choice of alcohol-free beers. In the UK, "alcohol-free" is defined as less than 0.5%, and notable



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### **A Date For Your Diary...**

**On Saturday 22nd August 2015  
Tayside CAMRA Branch hosts  
the Scotland & Northern Ireland  
Branches (SNIB) meeting at the  
Craigvrack Hotel Pitlochry.**

**The SNIB meeting commences  
at 1pm following the monthly  
Tayside CAMRA branch meeting  
at 12 noon.**

**Attendance at the meetings is  
optional but all CAMRA members  
are invited to come along and  
support the Craigvrack Hotel  
which will have several extra  
ales available on tap especially  
for the SNIB meeting.**

survivors in this category are Guinness's Kaliber and several offerings from the German brewer Clausthaler. There are also de-alcoholised ciders such as Sidona and Stowford Press LA Cider. I remember similar cider products as a child, when I could legally buy Cydrax at "less than 2% proof", sold as a soft drink, and not too bad a flavour. Apparently, Cydrax is still produced in Trinidad. However, there is nothing for you in cask-conditioned form. The main reason for this is the de-alcoholising process, which might be by dialysis or reverse osmosis. Without going into the technical details, you can imagine that these techniques suit a chemical factory more than a cask cellar, with the poor conditioning yeast and finings challenged at every turn. A wider range of alcohol-free bottled beers is available online from The Alcohol Free Shop ([www.alcoholfree.co.uk](http://www.alcoholfree.co.uk)). One of their suppliers is the Bernard family brewery from Humpolec in the Czech Republic, who also produce an alcohol-free craft keg lager, filtered but unpasteurised. First prize to anyone who can find it in Scotland!

Eisbock is produced by an alternate technique involving the fractional freezing and thawing of beer to concentrate the alcohol. Budwar Budweiser have reportedly used this method to supply Eisbock in minikegs, while freezing technology has apparently been used by Brewdog to prepare some of their stronger bottled products. The reason I mention this here is for cryogenic brewers to consider whether they might also use the weaker residues as a base for lower alcohol beers, rather than wasting them.

Another technical challenge for draught low alcohol beers is that of microbiological stability. Alcohol is a natural preservative; without it, bacteria and wild yeasts can grow more easily, leading to a reduction in shelf life, unpopular with both brewer and licensed trade.

No real ale so far! Those walking or cycling to the pub may still wish to go for a lower alcohol beer, when considering the journey home, particularly if driving to work next day. What suitable beers can we hope to find at our local? In the old days, Customs & Excise levied excess duty on any beer lower than 1030 gravity, or around 3.0% ABV (alcohol by volume). There was a total change of heart behind a move in 2011 which halved the duty payable to HMRC on beers of 2.8% ABV and below, at least for some larger breweries. This brought about a lot of hype at the time, with 2.8% trial brews promoted as healthy drinking for sporty types. Adnams head brewer published a blog asking "would you drink a 2.8% beer?" and on the back of a favourable response, Sole Star was launched at that ABV soon afterwards. It was listed in the 2014 Good Beer Guide, but is deleted from the current GBG. Like many of the other low alcohol real ales, Sole Star probably did not really catch on as a pub session beer in England at that time, and is now only available in bottle. Fullers announced similar developments in the press at the time, but no outcome can be seen on their current website. Perhaps a price reduction to reflect the halved excise duty might have raised the profile?

In Scotland, the newspapers and trade press reported a rise in supermarket sales of lower alcohol beers immediately after the reduction in the alcohol limit for driving. Yet

*(Continued on page 40)*



## Ale Distribution

With the rise and rise of real ale consumption, the need for good distribution channels increases too. Barrhead-based organisation Alesela now tours the country providing quality cask ales and bottles to pubs & hotels.

Alesela began life in 2011. Initially Alesela was an on-line only concern with the aim of making the best of as many Scottish breweries' beers available in bottle nationwide and making some bottled American, European and English beers available in Scotland. When sourcing the Scottish beers it was decided a hands-on approach was best and this led to road trips the length and breadth of Scotland to collect the beers from the brewers themselves. As things progressed it was noted that some of the smaller and emerging breweries were struggling to find a "route to market" via some of the bigger distributors. Smaller volumes meant that some of the larger distributors weren't interested. Alesela started distributing cask beers (and bottles) for one highland brewery. This arrangement worked well and as time went by, further breweries were added to the list. These include Alechemy, Atom, Black Metal, Brass Castle, Fallen, Jaw, Top Out, Valhalla, Windswept and quite a number of others.

From start-up in a 150sq ft lock up in a local storage facility, Alesela have now expanded their lists of breweries they distribute for and the areas they distribute to.

Deliveries of cask, keg and bottled beers now extend as far north as Aberdeen and as far south as Dumfries & Galloway and all points in between. Customers include pubs, restaurants and several Scottish beer festivals. Alesela's "lock up" is now a 4000sq ft warehouse.

Although the main focus is on Scottish breweries, some Northern English micro-breweries are finding favour with Scottish drinkers and breweries such as Brass Castle and Atom (both based in Yorkshire) are recent additions to Alesela's list. With the recent acquisition of larger premises, it is hoped that more English breweries will be added.

Alesela's website and online shop can be found at [www.alesela.co.uk](http://www.alesela.co.uk) from where Facebook and Twitter info can also be found.

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*(Continued from page 37)*

all these beers are bottled. However, some readers may remember a Caledonian Brewery ale called "2.8", served at pubs including the Milton in Monifieth at the time of our branch AGM in 2012. This has possibly developed into Caledonian's Gentle Giant (also 2.8% ABV), brewed as their March cask beer and described as "gentle in manner but giant in flavour; bronze ale, long citric nose, heavy on the hop, smooth gentle finish". Our Hon. Editor reports that he sampled a pint in the Corn Exchange, Arbroath and found it to be really flavoursome. Could Caledonian make this a regular offering? There are maybe just one or two lower alcohol real ales available in Scotland throughout the year. Information is scarce and not well presented.

The CAMRA website lists a category of Light Bitters at 3.4% ABV and below, but these are predominantly in the English West Country, and unpopular these days. The Good Beer Guide is not easy to scan for lower alcohol beers, either in the pubs or breweries section, and does not list seasonal beers. WhatPub has no facility to search for beers at all.

Yet there are cask-conditioned beers at less than 3% ABV; I found just 15 of them the hard way in CAMRA's 2015 Good Beer Guide. Two were from Greene King with Belhaven 60 shilling listed at 2.9% and Tolly English Ale at 2.8% ABV. However, the Belhaven

product does not even feature on their company website, and if still produced will not qualify for reduced duty; do you know any Greene King supplied outlets in Tayside supplying either 60 bob or Tolly, and if so , are they cheaper?

Here is the list of 2015 Good Beer Guide regionals - all English.

Alnwick: Canny Bevy (2.8%)

Barrowden: Pilot (2.6%)

Brentwood: BBC2 (2.5%)

Buxton: Jacobs Ladder (2.7%)

Clouded Minds: Catholic's Choice (2.8%)

Hook Norton: Hooky Mild (2.8%)

Hop Back: Heracles (2.8%)

Mobberley: CropCutter (2.6%)

Newark: Phoenix (1.8%)

Panther: Cub Panther (2.5%)

Strands: Pied Piper (2.7%)

Verulam: Half Nelson (2.8%)

Weltons: Pride 'n' Joy (2.8%)

In addition, Harvey's of Lewes in Sussex produce a 2.8% ABV cask-conditioned ale simply called R (not in the GBG yet). Harvey's can also supply several bottled beers at 2.8% and de-alcoholised versions of stronger beers at 1.0% ABV. Realistically speaking, your best bet of finding any of these as guest beers in Tayside might be the Hop Back and Hook Norton brews.

So that's your lot - not much Scottish contribution at all. Having said that Kieran at Inveralmond tells me he designed an experimental ale which he has called "Designated Driver". It is only around 2% ABV but brewed with plenty of rye and wheat malts in the grist, and lashings of aroma hops, to give a full flavour. I have been promised a bottle once it has conditioned. If we wish to carry on moderate drinking, and driving next day, confident of keeping our licences, surely we should be lobbying the Scottish breweries to produce local draught ales of a similar strength and specification to Kieran's. We must also push CAMRA regionally and nationally to campaign for publicans to be allowed and encouraged to stock alcohol-free and lower alcohol cask beers and ciders. In the meantime, keep asking your Belhaven publican to get hold of Tolly Sassenach Ale, and let's see what it tastes like; otherwise you will have to wait until next March for some more Cally Gentle Giant.

*By Richard Barnes*

## STOP PRESS: TAYSIDE REAL ALE PUB NEWS

As we went to print, we heard that the Dalhousie Bar, Brechin had re-introduced one hand-pull; The Airlie Arms Hotel, Kirriemuir due to re-open at the end of May has confirmed that it will be offering real ale; Kirkside Bar, Perth has just started cask ale and is being supplied by Inveralmond and Alechemy.

## Tay Ale Pub Quiz 5 Answers

1. Bank Bar (Dundee); Bankfoot Inn (Bankfoot); Taybank Hotel (Dunkeld); Cherrybank Inn (Perth).
2. Valhalla (Shetland); An Teallach (Wester Ross); Alechemy (Livingston); Windswept (Lossiemouth); Traquair (by Innerleithen).
3. Independence; Fair Maid.
4. Glasgow; Kirriemuir; Glasgow; Peebles; Stonehaven.
5. Perth Arms; Taybank Hotel; Atholl Arms Hotel; Royal Dunkeld Hotel.

### Real Ale Pubs throughout Scotland

If you are travelling around the country and looking for real ale pubs, the websites of all the Scottish CAMRA branches have full listings, as indicated below.

#### Aberdeen Grampian & Northern Isles

[www.aberdeencamra.co.uk](http://www.aberdeencamra.co.uk)

(list by sub-area, with short notes on each)

#### Ayrshire & Wigtonshire

[www.ayrshireandwigtownshirecamra.org.uk](http://www.ayrshireandwigtownshirecamra.org.uk)

(list of pubs, by sub-area, with beers stocked)

#### Dumfries & Stewartry

[www.dumfriescamra.org.uk](http://www.dumfriescamra.org.uk)

(list of outlets by sub-area)

#### Edinburgh & South-East Scotland

[www.edinburghcamra.org.uk](http://www.edinburghcamra.org.uk)

(list of outlets by sub-area)

### Forth Valley

[www.camra-forth-valley.co.uk](http://www.camra-forth-valley.co.uk)

(listing by town/village, with photos & notes)

#### Glasgow & West of Scotland

[www.glasgowcamra.org.uk](http://www.glasgowcamra.org.uk)

(list of outlets by sub-area)

#### Highlands & Western Isles

[www.highland.camra.org.uk](http://www.highland.camra.org.uk)

(all pubs named from map)

#### Kingdom of Fife

[www.kingdomoffifecamra.org.uk](http://www.kingdomoffifecamra.org.uk)

(listing by town/village)

#### Renfrewshire

[www.renfrewshirecamra.org.uk](http://www.renfrewshirecamra.org.uk)

(listing by town/village, with beer notes)

#### Tayside

[www.taysidecamra.co.uk](http://www.taysidecamra.co.uk)

(listing within sub-areas, with photos, beer-notes and descriptions)



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