

Hooked ON ALE



FREE Magazine from
The Tayside Branch of
CAMRA
Winter 2024 / 2025



Issue 25

All the latest Real Ale News and features
from CAMRA Tayside Branch



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**Hello all and welcome to this, the
25th issue of the CAMRA Tayside
Branch magazine. Well done if you
have read every issue!**



For the second issue in a row, I must begin with the sad news of the passing of one of our members, this time former branch secretary and branch contact, Tom McLaughlan. Please read more about Tom on page .

The Member's Weekend, AGM and Conference (April 2024) is but a distant memory now, but all the feedback that I have seen suggests that visitors to the area had an enjoyable time, and that they ventured out from Dundee and Broughty Ferry in goodly numbers. I wish to say a big thank you to all the members of the branch who contributed to the event in any way, shape or form.

In connection with the 50th anniversary of CAMRA in Scotland, awards were made to members deemed to have made a significant contribution to the cause. To this end three branch members were presented with certificates at the recent Ayrshire Ale Festival in Troon. Congratulations to Forbes Brown, Richard Barnes and Jim McMahon; well deserved.

As the year ends, we turn our thoughts to the branch Pub of the Year awards. We are continuing the format of this year with separate awards for Angus, Dundee, Kinross-shire, Perth (City) and Perthshire. You can vote for a pub in all or selected areas (or even just one if you so wish) and your overall favourite but please only vote for pubs you have visited! Please include your membership number and email me by 8th February. You can also give a written or verbal choice to any committee member by this date.

The 2026 Good Beer Guide (GBG) entries will be being decided in February, so if your favourite is not in the current 2025 GBG then get beer scoring as this is our guide to selecting entries.

As ever this issue would not be possible without the advertisers, so wherever possible please give them your custom.

Enjoy your "Real Ale" drinking.

CHEERS THE NOO, Kenny Smith Branch Chair

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Disclaimer: The views contained within **Hooked on Ale** do not necessarily represent the views of CAMRA, the editor or the Tayside Branch.

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newsletter@tayside.camra.org.uk

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To find out more about Tayside CAMRA, visit either our website at tayside.camra.org.uk or Facebook page CAMRA Tayside

Tayside Pub News

Dundee and District

Both city centre real ale pubs run by the Justice Family have been celebrating anniversaries in 2024. Claimed to be Dundee's oldest pub, **Pillars** is now 160 years old, while the **Star & Garter**, just some ten years younger, has opened a whisky saloon with a choice of over 300 whiskies.

Real Ale is making a regular appearance in the **George Orwell**, often with Kelburn beers and occasionally from Law just up the Perth Road. The **Phoenix** has been under new ownership since August which seems to have resulted in a seamless transition.

A new feature in the **Royal Arch** (Broughty Ferry) is a screen displaying the train departures from the nearby station. Very handy for those visiting the Ferry taking the opportunity for a last pint or two before catching the train onwards. Is this the only Tayside pub with this service?

Perth, Perthshire & Kinross

The **Crees Inn** (Abernethy) is currently doing bed and breakfast only with the bar and restaurant still closed. There is no news as to when these might reopen.

Lynne, the new landlady at the **Well Country Inn**, Scotlandwell, is now settled in, and has re-opened the restaurant. Real ale continues to be supplied by Stewart Brewing. We were assured that the feature log burning stove will be regularly lit for the winter.

The former **Cyprus Inn** in Bridge of Earn has been resurrected as the **Tipsy Coo (right)** with Loch Leven real ale pouring from a single handpump in the new bar. Meals are promised after the new year break.

In Crieff, the **Tower** held two real ale festivals during 2024 each with seven casks on gravity feed. Almost like a mini CAMRA festival. Perhaps one to watch for in 2025.

The **Ben Lawers Hotel** opened briefly during the summer but without real ale. It is now closed with no sign of reopening. Not to be forgotten is **Uisge Bar & Restaurant** in Murthly. Handpulled beer is brewed by Wasted Degrees, while step-mashed live bottled beers are supplied by Abernyste. Open 7 days a week.



It's also good to see real ale available again in Alyth with the reopening of the **Alyth Hotel** after a major refurbishment.

It is now over a year since the **Ericht Alehouse** (Blairgowrie) reopened thanks to the dedicated team of volunteers who saved the pub from closure. It's great to see the Erich continuing to do well and long may this continue.

Sadly, the **Greyfriars** (Perth) remains closed. This pub is sorely missed as there used to be three to four real ales available. However, you could say that it's compensated for by the **Twa Tams**, **Bunker** and **Silvery Tay** each now having one real ale on. Recently Harviestoun's Haggis Hunter was available in the Bunker and Moulin Braveheart has made a welcome appearance in the Silvery Tay. So, for those who like changing ales you now must move from pub to pub unlike in the Greyfriars heyday when you could stay in the one place. However, an advantage of these pubs is that they are closer to the bus stops than The Greyfriars was. Just a pity that there aren't that many buses in the evening!

Broxden Farm, a Farmhouse Inns pub restaurant on the western fringes of Perth, closed its doors for the last time in November after operating for just six years. Part of the Greene King empire, it had sold several cask conditioned ales initially, but without much enthusiasm to keep them supplied. At least the **Cherrybank Inn** just down the road is still going strong.

Real ale is certainly not a success story in the other half dozen roadside pub eateries across Tayside, operated by Greene King and Marston subsidiary brands. Worse still are the beer choices within Whitbread's Premier Inn and Beefeater subsidiaries, where questions have been asked if our Tayside outlets are still actual pubs at all.

Standing out though in this eatery category across Scotland are real ale survivors Vintage Inns, part of the Mitchells & Butlers group. Tayside has just one such pub, the **Glover Arms**, just round the Perth Bypass from Broxden. Their website menu actually mentions real ale, and shows bar images dispelling the myth that the Glover is really just a restaurant - usually more than one cask beer on tap, and well worth a visit whether you are eating or not.

Meanwhile, Tina McLaren has now been at the helm (pardon the pun) of the **Old Ship** for fifteen years. She has taken it from a closed pub to a busy venue; from only one hand pull to three in regular use.

A former real ale hosltelry in Muthill was the **Village Inn**, which featured a massive highland bull's head above the bar. A good many years ago, it changed its name to the Barley Bree, and the cask beers soon disappeared, with the emphasis on dining. It has now changed its name again to the Coorie Inn, and is described as a Boutique Hotel. While they do still advertise bar opening hours, no mention is made of beer, let alone real ale.

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Angus

The **Osnaburg** (Forfar) taken over earlier this year is still serving real ale usually from the Greene King stable although Fyne Ales Jarl is often available on the second hand pull.

Sadly the **Hillside Hotel**, just north of Montrose, has had to close its doors; the premises are up for sale.

Current real ale pubs that we know of are listed on page 8. Full details of these pubs can be found on our website www.tayside.camra.org.uk

Remember, if you have any news about your local, please email: whatpub@tayside.camra.org.uk And finally, we are reliant on you, whether CAMRA members or not, passing on information about pubs and breweries in the Tayside area. So even if not having a beer, if you are passing a pub and it is convenient, why not just pop your head around the door and see what is going on.

Contributions from Jim McMahon, Bill Hoy and Richard Barnes

Tayside Real Ale Pubs **Dundee & District**

As at 1 January 2025, the following Pubs, Hotels and Clubs (in some cases members and guests only) are known to sell cask conditioned ale. Those known to serve real cider and perry are annotated C. Those known to serve real ale on a seasonal basis are annotated S. Those when real ale not always available annotated O. W denotes real ale usually served at weekends. K denotes keykeg dispense.

Angus

Arbroath

Corn Exchange
Old Boatyard

Brechin

Brechin Arms
Caledonian Hotel

Carnoustie

Station Hotel

Forfar

Osnaburg

Glen Clova

Glen Clova Hotel

Kirriemuir

Airlie Arms Hotel

Letham

Commercial Inn (C)

Memus

Drovers Inn

Montrose

George Hotel (O)
Market Arms

Broughty Ferry

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

Dundee

Bank Bar
Counting House
Frews (W) (O)
George Orwell
Maker (O)
Market
Phoenix
Pillars
Speedwell (Mennies)
Star & Garter

Kinross-shire

Cleish

Up In Arms (W) (O)

Kinross

Loch Leven Brewery Tap
Muir's Inn

Milnathort

Village Inn

Scotlandwell

Well Country Inn

Wester Balgedie

Balgedie Toll Tavern

Perth City

Bunker
Capital Asset
Cherrybank Inn
Craft Beer Bottle Shop (O)
Cullach (K)
Glover Arms
Old Ship Inn
Silvery Tay
Twa Tams (C)

Perthshire

Alyth

Alyth Hotel

Ardler

Tavern (O)

Auchterarder

Auchterarder Golf Club

Blair Atholl

Atholl Arms Hotel
Wasted Degrees (K) (W) (S)

Blairgowrie

Blairgowrie Golf Club (S)
Ericht Ale House (C)
Fair o Blair
Stormont Arms

Bridge of Earn

Tipsy Coo

Comrie

Melville, Royal Hotel (S)

Crieff

Quaich Bar
Tower

Dunkeld

Perth Arms
Taybank Hotel (S)

Dunning

Kirkstyle Inn

Kirkmichael

Kirkmichael Hotel

Meikle

Kinloch Arms

Meikleour

Meikleour Arms Hotel

Moulin

Moulin Inn

Murthly

Uisge

Pitcairngreen

Pitcairngreen Inn (C)

Pitlochry

Auld Smiddy
Old Mill Inn

Weem

Ailean Chraggan

If your local pub, hotel or even club serves 'real ale' or 'real cider or perry' and is not included in this listing please let us know.

Up to date information can be viewed on

www.whatpub.com

To find out which of the above pubs are listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2024, why not buy the guide or download the Good Beer Guide App. For more information, visit CAMRA's website

www.camra.org.uk



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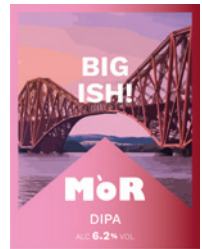
Tayside Brewery News



Abernyte Brewery - Strongly influenced by Bavarian brewery standards and styles, Ian Campbell and Donnie Meldrum set up Abernyte Brewery in 2016. Perhaps, for many Hooked on Ale readers, Abernyte has been off the radar with only bottled and keg beers being available in the local area. However, earlier this year, they packaged two x nine gallon casks of their Kinnoull Red for the CAMRA AGM and Members weekend in Dundee. By all accounts, it went down reasonably well at the Speedwell Bar (Mennies) receiving good feedback from CAMRA members.

Ian told Hooked on Ale that they haven't done any more cask ale since then as they are maintaining their focus on bottles and keg product for now. The Abernyte beer range splits roughly 50:50 ale to continental styles (Festbier, Helles, Pils, Weiss, Altbier) and most of their on-trade customers are hotels and restaurants who need beer with a longer "dispense" shelf life. Their biggest selling draught beer is the Ballo Blonde, which Ian believes would be very interesting to see served from cask via a beer engine. However, whilst they sell all that they make currently in keg, a cask or two would still probably be a special request. Ian suggested that if local members were interested in getting some for a local beer festival, they would just need plenty of notice.

MòR Beers - Dominic Hughes (owner and brewer) informed Hooked on Ale that a new brewhouse shed has been built to ease production pressures and provide much needed additional space. Since the COVID restrictions were lifted, MòR cask sales have more than tripled, but this had the knock-on effect that all the storage space was needed for casks, so he had to suspend bottling. The first phase of construction is now complete, and the brewery has relocated into its new home. The next stage, expected to be complete by Spring 2025, will involve renovating the existing premises and restarting bottling again.



In the meantime, Dominic has been releasing new monthly cask specials alongside the MòR core favourites. The most popular cask ale in 2024 has been Calcutta Comeback, brewed for the Six Nations but with so many pubs asking for a rebrew, it was re-released as Heroes of Hampden tying in with the next big pub sporting event of the year. It remains the only beer MòR has had fan-mail for asking when it'll be back, so it'll now be re-released as Heroes. Still the same 4.5% Hoppy Blonde, but hopefully this will be the last refresh! Check out the MòR Beers advert in this issue of Hooked on Ale to see some of the other new Real Ales being releasing soon.

Moulin Brewery - In addition to Moulin beers being available at the Moulin Hotel (Moulin, Pitlochry) and the Atholl Arms Hotel (Blair Atholl), Moulin ales have been available in the Silvery Tay Perth.

Wasted Degrees - Jack Low (Director) informed Hooked on Ale that Wasted Degrees has had another strong year during 2024, with production output exceeding 155% of 2023 and it being named The Courier's Brewer of The Year! Following consecutive years of double-digit growth, Wasted Degrees is comfortably the largest independent brewery in Perth & Kinross. From a homebrew hobby just eight years ago, this business is now also on the cusp of its largest ever development. Planning permission was granted in June 2023 for Wasted Degrees to construct its new home in Pitlochry, the first brewery in the town itself for over 155 years.



Planned to open in winter 2025/26, the new home for Wasted Degrees will be found just minutes from Pitlochry town centre. With a brew hall larger than its entire Blair Atholl facility, the new site will also

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feature a large taproom serving food and drink throughout the week, plus a dedicated cold store. Perthshire beer fans will have an exciting new venue to enjoy in the not too distant future!

Currently brewing & packaging up to 25,000 litres each month, Wasted Degrees recently announced that it has now saved in excess of 20 tons of carbon equivalents following its investment in a canning line two years ago. With each small pack unit now having a 20% lower carbon footprint than the bottles they replaced, this business continues to grow with sustainability in mind.



And the brewery's growth in the on-trade continues too, with 17 new fonts installed in Highland Perthshire during 2024. Wasted Degrees is actively seeking new draught customers (keg and cask) across Perthshire, offering free cellar installs where appropriate and free delivery to trade customers in Perthshire.

Hooked on Ale welcomes updates from all Tayside breweries producing cask or bottled conditioned real ale. For future issues, please contact:-

newsletter@tayside.camra.org.uk

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Tayside Branch members, **Richard Barnes** (Membership Secretary & Pub Data Coordinator), **Forbes Browne** (Committee member & former branch Chair) and **Jim McMahon** (Branch Secretary) proudly displaying their CAMRA service awards presented as part of the 50 Years of CAMRA in Scotland celebrations.

The awards recognising long standing commitment to the CAMRA cause were presented by Scottish Branches Director Stuart McMahon at the recent 2024 Ayrshire Real Ale Festival which was held 3 - 5 October in the Troon Concert Hall.

In the Summer / Autumn 2023 issue of Hooked on Ale, Forbes, a regular and welcome contributor to our branch magazine, wrote about his involvement with the foundation of the then Tayside and Fife CAMRA Branch in around 1975/76. If you have not yet read Forbes's article then back copies of Hooked on Ale can be found on our branch website.

Congratulations to all three recipients of this award and long may you keep up the greatly appreciated work you do for and on behalf of Tayside branch.

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Tayside CAMRA Branch Diary

For details of branch meetings and social events, please visit the branch website:

www.tayside.camra.org.uk

All Tayside CAMRA members are welcome to attend meetings and social events but please always check the Tayside CAMRA branch website or the branch Facebook page prior to meetings and socials to confirm venue and start time.

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Raising a glass to Tom McLaughlin

Long time CAMRA member and lifetime St. Johnstone supporter Tom McLaughlin sadly passed away earlier this year. During his time as a Tayside branch member, Tom held the post of Secretary & Branch Contact. He was also the Brewery Liaison Officer for Inveralmond and Moulin Breweries, both of which he did with dedication, and proudly taking the tours of Inveralmond during the 2019 Members Weekend & Conference.

My first encounter with Tom was at McDiarmid Park where he sat behind my right shoulder, enjoying and enduring many games involving the Saints. During half-time blethers we found out that we both enjoyed real ale. Many a time his son would come back with his half-time sustenance and say, 'Is that you talking about ale again?', which it invariably was.

Tom took great delight at finding real ale when in the Costa Del Sol and wrote an article for the branch magazine about it (Tay Ale as it was at the time).

I wasn't a CAMRA member when we first met, but when I did join, Tom was there to greet me at my first meeting. One of my fondest CAMRA related memories of Tom was a joint social with Forth Valley in Falkirk. After a cracking day visiting the pubs there, we went to the Falkirk Rugby Club Ale Festival to round thing off. Our last sight of Tom was as the train pulled out of Perth. He was swaying down the platform in the hope that his "Good Lady" (Gladys) would be there to meet him, and she was, otherwise it would be a taxi home --- A GRAND DAY OUT.

With regards to our joint love for St Johnstone FC, I recall walking down the road from Celtic Park after winning the Scottish Cup (for the first time) and encountering Tom and Gladys; I don't think I've ever seen broader smile on a happier face. We met up many times over the years, arranged and accidental either football or CAMRA related, although quiet spoken Tom was always good company. R.I.P. Tom.

By Kenny Smith

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Perthshire - 01738 476 476

The Ericht Alehouse - One Year On

The beginning of November 2024 marked the first anniversary of the re-opening of the Ericht Alehouse in Blairgowrie. The pub had shut following the sudden deterioration in the health of its landlord Kenny Fraser. However, the regulars of the pub were determined not to lose their favourite watering hole and collectively pulled together to ensure that its closure was only temporary.

The community contributed their time and skills to improve the environment, without changing its unique and well-loved atmosphere. The pub was deep-cleaned and repainted, with its fixtures and fittings being renovated and enhanced, making it more comfortable and welcoming. An operating fund was raised by the community to get started. Zoe Gulson undertook the necessary training and examinations to fulfil the licensing requirement to take on the operating licences for the premises.

On its opening in November 2024, cleaning rotas of volunteers were established to ensure that the improvements to the bar area were maintained, whilst Zoe organised the necessary training for others to work behind the bar.

On its re-opening, in addition to the return of the regulars, there was an initial rush of



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new customers, eager to discover the changes that had occurred. Some of these became regulars themselves and, although some may have never been seen again, other new customers and passing trade have allowed six handpumps of real ale to be maintained, together with a cask cider and a selection of speciality lagers. There is also an extensive selection of malt whiskies, gins and rums for those looking to drink shorts.

The ales have been predominantly from Scottish, and often very local, breweries, offering an ever changing range of session beers, IPAs, APAs, stouts, porters and other speciality beers, all kept it tip-top condition, to keep the fussiest customer happy. It must have been successful as footfall has increased, maintaining a healthy level even at traditionally more quiet times of the year.



The Ericht Alehouse is not a community pub in its strict definition, but Tayside CAMRA wanted to recognise the efforts of the community to save and revitalise the pub. Tayside CAMRA therefore used its one-year anniversary as a prompt to present of a special award to Zoe (pictured left with **Tayside Branch Vice-Chair Bill Hoy**) and all those who had supported her in contributing to the pub's success, whether by giving their time, skills or contributing in other ways, and also the clientele who continue to support

the pub and promote the availability of quality real ale by drinking there!

By Rae Taylor

Champion Beer of Scotland 2024

The final judging to select the Champion Beer of Scotland occurred during a blind tasting by a panel of judges during the 23rd Ayrshire Real Ale Festival on Friday, 4 October 2024. The results were as follows:

Gold	Cairngorm Black Gold
Silver	Five Kingdoms Dark Storm
Bronze	Cromarty Red Rocker

Discounts for CAMRA Members

The following Tayside pubs currently offer discounts on real ale for CAMRA members.

Perth- Glover Arms 20p per pint

Dundee - Speedwell (Mennies) 10%; Pillars 30p per pint; Star & Garter 10%

Broughty Ferry - Royal Arch 10%; Fisherman's 10%

Please show your CAMRA membership card and note that Landlords reserve the right to remove these discounts at anytime. And rememberwhen you join or renew your CAMRA membership, you receive £30 (60 x 50p) in Real Ale and Cider vouchers redeemable at over 1,550 pubs nationwide, including J D Wetherspoon, Stonegate, Brains, Castle Rock and Amber Taverns managed pubs.

Wetherspoon pubs in Tayside include **Counting House (Dundee), Jolly's Hotel (Broughty Ferry), Corn Exchange (Arbroath), Capital Asset (Perth) and Fair O'Blair (Blairgowrie).**

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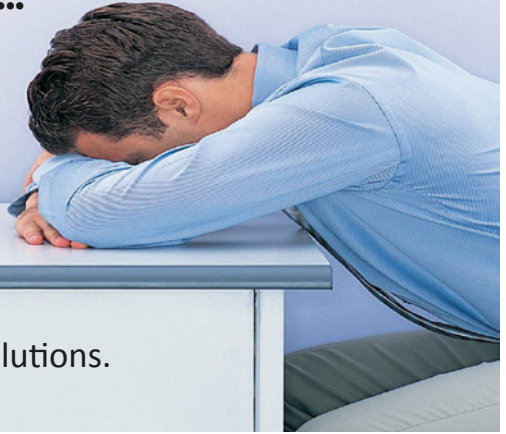
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Another Full Year of Thirstday Adventures

As well as active involvement in CAMRA's Member's Weekend and AGM during the early part of 2024, the 'Thirstday Group' ventured from our regular Bank Bar haunt on many occasions throughout the year.

In Dundee, regular visits were made to Mennies, Phoenix, Maker and Star & Garter whilst in Broughty Ferry, the Royal Arch, Anchor, Jolly's, Ship and Fisherman's were regular haunts. Tayside outings were arranged to Blairgowrie, Arbroath and Kinross.

Further afield, trips were made to St Andrews, Inverness, Wick, John o' Groats, Kyle of Lochalsh (though no real ale!), Edinburgh and surroundings.

We also attended several real ale festivals including Larbert, RNLI @ Fisherman's and Alloa.

Another good year was had by everyone, and we look forward to the same again in 2025 as well as welcoming more local CAMRA members to join us on our travels.

Kenny Smith

Three Thirstday Autumn Trips

The 'Thirstday' group once again attended the Dark Ale Rail Trail organised by Forth Valley CAMRA. Unfortunately, our itinerary for this year's trail was slightly curtailed owing to the lesser frequency of trains on Scotrail's temporary timetable. We opted to start out at Larbert's Station Hotel which had 2 interesting, unusual stouts. One was described as a mild (i.e. not bitter) but was well over 5% ABV.

We then took the short train journey to Stirling and walked up the hill to the Settle Inn but disaster! It wasn't open. The trail guide did warn about the opening times, but we thought we had allowed for that. So down to No3 Baker Street where we enjoyed 71's Heavy Lifting in good condition. We tried phoning the Settle but got no reply so more ale in Baker St then round to the Curly Coo which had on its usual Dark Island. On this occasion the somewhat eccentric lady owner was welcoming and chatty.

A hurried walk to the station for the train to Bridge of Allan and the quirky Allanwater Brewery. On my first visit some years ago the pub / brewery was struggling with no electricity as there was a dispute over access. A generator was used for the brewing while candles and oil lamps provided 'atmospheric' lighting. On one occasion, the sheet of thick plate glass which was used as the bar counter shattered into thousands of safety pieces when someone dropped a bottle on it. On another visit a customer asked if he could have a brewery tour, upon which mine host took him to the back of the room and

drew aside a curtain saying, "there it is"! This time there were the usual esoteric ales on offer including Pot Black.

Catching a train on to Dunblane and a walk up to the Tappit Hen opposite the cathedral. Another disappointment – the pub was very busy (stowed out in the vernacular) so we beat a retreat down to the Village Inn for last pints of the day before the train back to Dundee. It must have been a good day out as I cannot remember the names of most of the ales we had!

Bo'ness's Beer Festival and Railway Steam Fair

This year provided a 'two birds, one stone' opportunity: the Bo'ness beer festival coincided with the Bo'ness Railway steam fair, An early start from Dundee enabled me to attend the steam festival in the morning and the beer fest in the afternoon. The 909 bus service from Stirling deposited me at the western end of Boness for a walk down the very pleasant Snab Lane path towards the foreshore area. This provided a good place for a photo of the steam train as it started up the gradient on its trip to Birkhill and Manuel. **(photo opp page)**. The area was the site of the extensive Kinneil colliery. A board provides information about the colliery, the vain efforts of miners to prevent its closure, and how there was a tunnel under the Forth bringing coal from Valleyfield to use the preparation facilities at Kinneil. The area is now fully accessible to the public with scrub

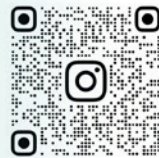


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woodland and large grassed areas well apart from roads - a walkers' and dogs' paradise. A roe deer sauntered across the path.

Continuing along the foreshore brings one to the former harbour, the Scottish Railway Museum and the station, yards and buildings of the Boness and Kinneil Railway. The railway put on a good show with 5 locomotives in steam, shunting movements with a short goods train, a regular passenger service with

real ale (!), and a display of classic cars and other road vehicles. So, the morning was spent train spotting and twice getting soaked in heavy showers. The lunchtime train departure was eagerly awaited by enthusiasts standing on the platform-end and on the footbridge all wanting photos with a good steam display. What they got was all too much! The driver opened the cylinder cocks wide in order to clear any water from a long stationery period with the result that the locomotive disappeared behind a huge cloud of steam which also then enveloped all the spectators . **(photo below)**

Up the very steep School Brae to the Town Hall for the beer festival. This was the 22nd festival organised by the Bo'ness Real Ale Appreciation Society; it should have been the 24th but for covid. This friendly fest is a nicely sized event with the afternoon sessions having plenty of seating available. Several acquaintances were regular attendees including one who had come all the way from Dunoon for the event.



The programme noted the sad loss of local breweries Tryst and Hybrid. However, there was one new local one – Strangers Brewery from Linlithgow and altogether there were 14 breweries represented plus one cider maker. They provided a good range of ales from stouts to amber golden and pale ales and even a Bavarian style lager from Fyne Ales. Of note was Inveralmond's Caribbean Rum Cask at 6.8% ABV with interesting flavours but rather too easily drunk for its strength! This contrasted with Devon 70/-, a fine traditional session ale. One of my favourites – Black Galloway from Sulwath was disappointing having not travelled well and getting sour notes, but Stout Jock from Broughton was fine and Loch Lomond Silkie Stout excellent as ever.

The return home was a bit of a challenge as the 909 seemed not to be running so my journey involved a local bus to Falkirk, a train from Grahamston and another from Stirling.

By Mike Jarron

Alloa Real Ale Festival

The train crawled along from Dundee to Perth – presumably there was a slow one in front. This was worrying as we had a tight connection to make in Stirling. However, it speeded up after Perth and we arrived at Stirling in time to meet with various CAMRA acquaintances from Edinburgh. The Alloa train had some familiar Glasgow faces already aboard. Remembering previous long queues outside the venue, your reporter 'horsed' up to the town hall to secure a place in the already lengthy queue leaving the others to follow at a slower pace. It seemed to take ages before the doors opened and the queue slowly entered the building for each person to show membership card, pay for entry and then get a programme, a payment card and a glass, followed by a frantic rush into the hall to secure seats.



The programme showed a bewildering range of nearly fifty ales and twenty ciders / perries. There was a great choice of styles of beer through session to strong bitters, milds and stouts, lagers, golden and speciality ales. Local breweries were well represented (although curiously Inveralmond failed to supply) along with those from much further afield. A great attraction of beer festivals is you get to try drinks not normally available locally. The Thirsties particularly enjoyed Harvey's Dark Mild from the England's south

coast, Isle of Man beers - Kaneen's Dhone and Odin Manx Mild, Docks Forged in Fire Porter from Grimsby, Cafe Con Leche stout from Castle Rock Nottingham and Abbeydale Daily Bread bitter from Sheffield. Of the more local ales, Devon Original 70/- and Williams Bros March of the Penguins were singled out. Our cider expert (Garry) particularly liked Sanford Slack -me-girdle and Ayrshire Riviera Egremont Russet. Some of the descriptions in the programme waxed lyrical e.g.

'Dark and luxurious coffee stout celebrating the caffeinated dream that is the Spanish latte.'

'..luscious jet-black porter infused with an ungodly amount of cinder toffee.'

'...a tropical storm of flavour..a whirlwind of citrus, pine, and stone fruit aromas enveloping your palate in layers of juicy goodness...electrifying taste adventure.'

'flavours of fresh-cut grass, brown sugar, lychee and green mango.'

All in all, a most enjoyable day out. Forth Valley CAMRA must be congratulated and thanked for putting on a superb festival.

By Mike Jarron

(pictured with Kenny Smith - Branch Chair (left) and Garry Sharp (right))



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The Pillars and The Star & Garter: Two Historic Dundee Pubs

The Justice family, John and son Thomas, currently run four Dundee pubs, the Bush, since 2022; the Pillars and adjacent Salty Dog, since 2011; and the Star and Garter, since 2023. They have developed these establishments sensitively, retaining and enhancing historical features as well as displaying work by contemporary artists.

To commemorate several anniversaries, they have produced a short but impressive pamphlet called "Legacy", compiled by Sandro Paladini, on which I have largely drawn for this account of the two which serve real ale and are therefore of particular interest to CAMRA members and cask beer drinkers. The booklet is available from the bars.



The Pillars (**left**), in Crichton Street, was established in 1864 and at 160 years, is arguably Dundee's oldest pub. Crichton Street was created around 1782 to establish a link between the High Street and the Fishmarket (later Greenmarket) and was named after the family who sold the land to the Council. They had a connection to the Fraternity of Maltmen, the Brewers of Beer, significant contributors to the city's wealth, which may have been why the Council agreed to

the family's stipulation that the street, when completed, should be named after Captain David Crichton, with his mother, the current landowner.

Records show that there was a licensed grocers at 9, Crichton Street in 1849 and with an extension of the license to spirits in 1864, to one Thomas Skene, it seems likely that this is when the address became a public house. There is reference to a new landlord in 1865, William Parker, and adverts have been found during renovation of the pub for his own whisky: Willy's Blend.

The street was widened with the demolition in 1932 of tenements and, to the outrage of many, the old Town House, for the building of new City Chambers. The Town House, which stood across what is now the entry to City Square, was designed and built by William Adam in 1732-34. The front consisted of a colonnade which enclosed a piazza and several shops. The interior of one of these is replicated in Braithwaite's tea & coffee shop in Castle Street to which the business moved. "The Pillars" was the nickname for the seven-arched colonnade, which was a popular rendezvous point.

The pub's name was changed from the Lyceum to commemorate this loss, and the distinctive sign was created: a model of the old Town House created in metal:

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Despite the lack of a tradition in Scotland of inn signs, this unique feature was recognised as something special and it avoided the fate of other projecting signs which were ordered to be removed by the Council during the building operations.

The interior of the pub has changed little at first glance from the Victorian era: the bar, spirits gantry and main saloon are pretty much as they would have been and there are some striking stained glass panels. The traditional atmosphere is enhanced by paintings of historic scenes by 20th century artists: Mary, Queen of Scots visiting Dundee, Bonnie Prince Charlie at a ball, both by Thomas Hutchison Peddie; The Siege of Dundee, 1651, by Graham M. Miller; and, in the middle lounge and functions room, Dundee’s four castles, by contemporary and local artist, John Bell.

There is also a replica of William Wallace’s broadsword (as seen in “Braveheart”); a bust of Winston Churchill, Dundee’s M.P. from 1908-22; and a portrait sculpture of Mine Host, John Justice, by the late local sculptor, Anthony Morrow (also responsible for the Dragon and Desperate Dan statues not far away).

Not forgetting the beer: while the most obvious sign of modernity is the row of assorted keg beers and lagers, there are two handpumps, usually one operating, serving products from such breweries as MòR, Loch Leven and Harviestoun.

The middle bar and functions room links the saloon bar to the Salty Dog, a separate establishment, awarded the accolade of “Best Gay Bar in Scotland” in 2019, which has lively DJ sessions.

Just two streets away, the Star and Garter (right), 42 Union Street, celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. Like the Pillars, this pub seems to have started as a wine and spirits business, round about 1835 and was definitely a pub by 1874. It also has a fine Victorian bar and gantry, and has retained much of its original frontage. It has always been the Star and Garter, apart from a brief period from 2018 to 2023 when it was called Dynamo and sold Belgian style craft beers brewed by 6 Degrees North in Stonehaven.



The jewel in the crown here is the rear lounge, which has been lovingly restored with gleaming panelling and with a wide range of whiskies, is now known as the Whisky Saloon. Regular tastings are held and it can be hired for small functions – even CAMRA ones! In the bar there are two handpumps with a similar range of cask ales to the Pillars.

As to the name, the probability is that the earlier licensees were staunch royalists, given that it refers to the Most Noble Order of the Garter, the highest order of knighthood in Britain which is limited to the sovereign, members of the royal family and 25 knights!

Founded in 1348, by Edward III, the story goes that at a court ball, he picked up a garter that had slipped from the leg of the Countess of Salisbury, receiving some knowing looks from bystanders. He then placed it round his own leg, saying, "Honi soit qui mal y pense" (Shame on him who thinks evil thoughts). Allegedly inspired by stories of king Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, he stated he would make the garter the symbol of his closest friends and went on to create the Order of the Garter, the Star being part of the insignia.

There are few pubs of this name in Scotland, rather more in England, notably one in Richmond, where Edward III died, in 1377.

By Forbes Browne

References: **Legacy: Raising A Glass To 500 Years : A Story of Dundee and Four Iconic Pubs**

Researched and Compiled by **Sandro Paladini**

Wordsworth Dictionary of Pub Names



Can you help CAMRA Tayside Branch?

CAMRA Tayside Branch is run by a small number of active volunteers who give up a small amount of time throughout the year to help promote CAMRA in our branch area, Tayside. We are always looking for local CAMRA members to help support us whether by undertaking pub surveys, contributing articles to this magazine, beer scoring (see page 38), delivering Hooked on Ale to local pubsnothing too onerous.

Even just attending our regular branch meetings and sharing news and views would be a great help. We certainly welcome and encourage involvement from members living in the more rural areas of our branch even if it is just keeping us updated on real ale news in your area and helping deliver Hooked on Ale when it is published, usually twice per year.

If you can spare a few hours, please do not hesitate to come along to a branch meeting or contact us at chair@tayside.camra.org.uk.

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Editor: The following article was due to appear in the previous issue of Hooked on Ale but unfortunately there was insufficient space with the main focus being on CAMRA's Members Weekend and Conference in Dundee. It's a long time since I was last in Glasgow, but Kenny's account of this Thirstday Group outing suggests that it's well worth making the effort to go through given the wide variety of real ale to be had from local and other Scottish breweries, in addition to those from elsewhere in the UK. Several of the pubs visited are listed in the GBG2025 so why not buy a copy to find out which ones are in it?

The Thirstday Group go adventuring on the 'Clockwork Orange'

Early November 2023, the Thirstday Group undertook a trip to Glasgow that had been planned about a year beforehand but was postponed due to industrial action on the railways. Knowing of my desire to have a hurl on Glasgow's subway, fondly known as the Clockwork Orange, Gregor worked out an itinerary that involved said mode of transport alongside normal train and bus services.

Catching the 11:15 from Dundee, we (Gregor, Mike, and myself) had a relaxing and convivial 1hr 40min journey (with sustenance provided by Mike) to Glasgow Queen St. This was my first visit since a major refurbishment and very impressive it was.

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Exiting through the main door we headed to Drury St and the Horse Shoe (**left**). On tap were Eternal 4.1% ABV (Northern Monk), Jack Back 3.7% ABV and 80/- 4.4% ABV (both Stewart) and Landlord 4.3% ABV (Timothy Taylor). With more pubs to visit, I opted for the 80/-. The Horse Shoe interior is full of horseshoes and horseshoe related items. Stand out though is the horseshoe shaped bar and not surprisingly the pub is on CAMRA's historic pubs list.

Next port of call was Sloans, located within the Argyll Arcade where security guards are dressed in top hats and frock coats due to the number of jewellery shops in the vicinity. The pub started out as a coffee shop in 1797 and is well worth a visit for its interior. Deuchars IPA 3.8% ABV was on tap.

A short walk from Sloans to St. Enoch for the 'clockwork orange' to Kelvinbridge for a visit to the Doublet on Park Road. Just a short five-minute walk from the station, we opted to take a scenic route through the park next to the Kelvin River which was flowing well after the recent storms. With Dark Island 4.6% ABV and Island Life 3.7% ABV (both Orkney) and Wee Jock 4.6% ABV (Broughton) available, I opted for the Wee Jock.

Returning to the Kelvinbridge station, we continued our adventure on the 'clockwork orange' to Hillhead. Emerging from the station onto Byres Rd, turn left and a few hundred yards along on the other side of the road is Tennent's (**right**). With a good selection of ales available (national and Scottish), I opted for half pints of Red Giant 5.0% ABV (Dark Star) and Roadie 4.3% ABV (Signature).



Leaving Tennent's, a twenty-minute walk took us to Dumbarton Rd and the Three Judges (**photo page 36**). Another excellent selection of Scottish ales featuring Carte Blanche 5% ABV (Kelburn), Island Life, Outlaw King 5% (Loch Leven), Red MacGregor 4.6% ABV (Orkney), Schiehalion 4.8% ABV (Harviestoun) and Stewart's 80/-. Carte Blanche and Island Life were my selection this time round.

Making our way to Kelvinhall station we continued on the subway to Partick, where we swapped to a conventional train heading to Charing Cross. From there we headed

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to North Street to the Bon Accord, the Glasgow 2022 branch Pub of the Year. Another excellent selection of Scottish and national ales including my choices (halves) of Autumn Drop 4.3% ABV (J W Lees), Whisky Chaser 4.5% ABV (Kelburn) and STF Pale 5.5% ABV (Simple Things Fermentations). Ossett, Theakstons, Orkney and Spey Valley ales were also available on tap.



Leaving the Bon Accord, we returned to the Horse Shoe for a final round (Eternal this time) before catching the train back to Dundee where we finished off another cracking day out at the Bank Bar with March of the Penguins 4.9% ABV (Williams Brothers).

By Kenny Smith

Editor: Pub photographs kindly provided by Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch. (I've mislaid email but think it was Robbie Pickering (Publicity/Newsletter) who forwarded the photos but if not then thank you to whoever did.)

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In Tayside, our GBG quota is only 30 entries. We must whittle down our selection from all the real ale pubs and hotels in our area, many of which are worthy of GBG selection. It's important to note that just because a pub is not listed in the GBG that doesn't mean it isn't worth a visit.

Beer scoring on WhatPub is easy, just log in as a CAMRA member and get your opinions known with scores from 0 being No Real Ale to 5 the perfect pint! It's very useful for your local branch as the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is fully integrated with WhatPub and the branch can review the results from the NBSS and see which pubs are doing well or indeed badly.

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