

ULLAGE AND SPILLAGE

by J.Random

The rumour was that DIX Barbecue and Brewpub would close as soon as the playoffs ended. So once the Canucks were out of contention it was just a matter of time. DIX shut without prior warning on Victoria Day 2010. The locks were changed and the only indication was a notice on the door telling former staff where to pick up their pay cheques. It seems that is the way business is done these days.

On the following Sunday, The Whip Gallery and Restaurant tapped a cask of Derrick's IPA and everybody who's anybody turned up to the Wake for DIX. The Whip gave their own employee discount to all former DIX staff and the crowd showed their affection with toasts and cheering. I spotted Derrick and Christina, Mark, Lucas, David, Matt, Derek and Chris in the crowd, plus others whose names I never learned or sadly forgot. We all got a little tired and emotional.

DIX first opened its doors in 1999 with one larger brewed on premises. Ian Hill set up the system, Stephan Aranson took over as the first dedicated brewer. Mark Andrewski was there behind the bar from the early days. They soon added a Dark Lager modeled on a Bavarian Dunkel which was my default beer when I first started going there. Tony Dewalt was the name synonymous with DIX for many years and the beer menu gradually shifted towards ales and stouts with the occasional Belgian thrown in. It was Tony that made DIX IPA justly famous giving other brewers in BC the courage to brew aggressive PNW style IPAs. When Tony left to pursue an idyllic lifestyle in the valley, Derrick Franche took over where he left off, brewing some memorable IPAs, ESBs and Imperial Stouts and a much loved Grand Cru alongside the standard Vancouver brewpub fare. Lucas took over as bar manager when Mark moved to Yaletown.

The role of DIX in the origins of CAMRA BC's Vancouver branch was documented in the March-April edition of this journal. DIX was the spiritual home of the Vancouver branch, just as Spinnakers was the spiritual home of the Victoria branch. One might drift away, fall out, or move on

to new places, but home is still home. There have been many stories in this column that revolved around DIX events over the last four and a half years: Caskival, Hopmadness, The Xmas Xtreme beer festival, Timmy's slimathon, New Year's Eve parties with Derrick as DJ, and Mardi Gras complete with all the necessary elements.

It may sound trite but DIX was Vancouver's equivalent of Cheers but with characters rather than caricatures. It seemed whenever you dropped in you would see the same faces bellied up to the bar. I swear the corner of the bar near the door relied on Jamie for support. Warren (not that War-



The bier at Four Beers and a Funeral

ren) would be quietly sipping his pint at the other corner. Jason would be wandering about drinking from his red skull mug, and Julian would be somewhere unexpected. One of the barmen would flash an eyebrow of recognition and your beer would be on its way. I swear there were occasions when I got so delayed greeting the assembled masses on cask night, Lucas would come around the bar to place a beer in my hand.

I think it speaks volumes for the depth of feeling CAMRA Vancouver members had for DIX,

that one of the main events at Craft Beer Week was Four Beers and a Funeral. The Funeral on May 15th anticipated the final demise, but only by a few weeks. There was a cask on a bier carried by DIX current and former staff, a New Orleans style funeral band and a couple of New Orleans ladies in costume, plus a cortège mostly dressed for the occasion. We grooved up the streets from Steamworks to DIX to the astonishment of construction workers, tourists, residents and passers-by alike. Inside DIX the staff were ready for us, as always, with dozens of glasses of cask ale lined up on the bar. The next stop was Yaletown and the final destination was Docksider, but there was a sense of anticlimax once we left DIX.

We even wrote a song for the occasion. Graham suggested somebody should modify the [St. James Infirmery Blues](#) so the wife and I had a go (see below). If you don't know the tune, there are dozens of versions on iTunes. If you don't know the original lyrics, the revised lyrics won't make as much sense. But then neither did closing DIX. §

Cheers-DIX

Those DIX Funereal Blues

I went down to Yaletown bar room,
On the corner by the square.
Well, the cask was bein' served as usual,
And the CAMRA crowd was there.
Well, on my left stood Lundy,
And her eyes were bloodshot red.
When she told me this sad story,
These were the words she said:
I went down to Beatty,
I saw DIX Brewpub there.
It was closed and silent as a graveyard.
None of the staff were there.
They let 'em go, let 'em go,
Where will we get our fix?
You can search this world over,
never find another pub like DIX.
They never made much profits,
But quitting was such a shame.
No more peanut buckets.
Thursday's never gonna be the same.
Well, now you've heard my story,
Well, have another round of booze
And if anyone should ever, ever ask you,
Tell 'em I've got those DIX funereal blues.