



WHAT'S BREWING

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE BRITISH COLUMBIA VOLUME 22 NO.4 JULY- AUGUST 2012

BC LDB PRIVATIZATION IMMINENT

Hi. We're selling off another public asset: your input not required, thanks.

When the BC Liberals introduced HST after assuring us they would not, they paid the price for ignoring the people. In fact, many people thought a blended tax system would be a good thing, but it was thrown out because of the contemptuous display of arrogance by the government in dismissing the concerns of the people. You'd think they'd learn. Apparently not.

The government has presented no business case for the sell-off of the LDB. There was no public consultation on the privatization of the LDB and none is planned. According to the BC Government Employees Union president Darryl Walker, "The mix



are private liquor store owners and some craft brewers who say the sell-off will lead to higher prices for consumers.

Don Drummond, former Chief Economist with the TD Bank, conducted a review of government operations in Ontario and rejected the sell-off of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario. Instead, he called for the opening of additional public liquor stores and the full utilization of the LCBO's purchasing power to improve profits and create additional revenue.

Next door in Alberta, privatization has spelled disaster for consumers. Matt Phillips, founder of Phillips Brewing Co. - tells us the per case of beer distribution cost is \$1.53 in Alberta versus just 78 cents in B.C. -- almost double. Guess who will pick up the tab for that? Yep, you.

Read more from Wandering Paddy: eastsidebeer.blogspot.ca/story.html#ixzz1yg5amqZ3 then email your concerns to [Rich Coleman](#) and LCLB General Manager [Karen Ayers](#). Tell 'em CAMRA BC sent you. §

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of rural agency stores, privately operated neighbourhood stores and government liquor stores with consistent province-wide prices, all supported by central distribution, works well for consumers. The LDB system should not be fractured."

But it's not just the union that can see the folly in the sell-off. Also opposing the privatization of the LDB

Corporate Members

Thank you **Corporate Members!** To join these professional beer lovers, (first-time members get a free 1/4 page ad!) Contact **CAMRA BC** today: **250 388 9769** or camrabc@shaw.ca

The Campaign for Real Ale BC has more than 1,400 members in British Columbia. If your company is in any way looking to market to people who know and love beer, you should join us. If you're not a member, you're missing out on the opportunity to reach the very people you need to reach. For ad prices please email camrabc@shaw.ca. You'll never buy a cheaper ad and you'll know it is going to exactly the people you need to talk to.

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Have friends who don't know their
weiss from their Hellesbier?

Buy them a membership in CAMRA BC



Campaign for Real Ale British Columbia

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CAMRA BC

Web sites

CAMRA BC: <http://www.camrabc.ca>

CAMRA Fraser Valley: <http://www.camrafraservalley.ca>

CAMRA Vancouver: <http://www.camravancouver.ca>

CAMRA Victoria: <http://www.camra.ca>

E-mail camrabc@shaw.ca

CAMRA BC: to join discussion group send request to:

CAMRA_BC_Discussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

to post a message to the list, send to:

CAMRA_BC_Discussion@yahoogroups.com

What's Brewing regular contributor and intrepid traveller Laura Kotler got strange looks when she produced her CAMRA BC membership card and asked for the 10% discount on a pint of Real Ale in England (see below for the policy on discounts). Laura brings up an oft-asked question this issue; what exactly is our relationship with CAMRA in the UK? Brief answer is 'not a lot.' I'm sure you'll all remember that wonderful Jan. 2010 *What's Brewing* essay *A Potted History of CAMRA BC ...* No? OK, you can read it again here: <http://camrabc.ca/history/> and in addition there's an article explaining our relationship with our namesake in Britain.

Next issue will precurse the 20th Great Canadian Beer Festival. Yep, 20th! Look out for some special ways to

celebrate the landmark anniversary. Following that, the second B.C. Craft Beer Month will be upon us in October. I urge all those retailers who take advantage of the event to sign up as an official sponsor:

craftbeermonth.ca - it's not expensive and it shows your support for the promotion of B.C. craft beers. In our close community - CAMRA BC, craft brewers, pubs and restaurants - your support does not go unnoticed. §

Phil Atkinson

Discounts from Corporate Members

Please note, discounts are neither a requirement nor an expectation of corporate members when they sign up with CAMRA BC. Such discounts are benefits offered by individual CAMRA BC corporate members as a way of saying thank-you to CAMRA members for their support. These discounts are totally at the discretion of the corporate members who offer them and are subject to change without notice. Please clarify with the corporate member representative, ahead of your purchase, if they offer a discount, and what that discount is, so there are no misunderstandings.

If misunderstandings do occur, please respect the corporate members and their representatives and contact CAMRA BC directly at communications@camrabc.ca

Thank you for understanding and for supporting our corporate members.

Tapping into Beer's Agricultural Roots

BY [BRIE MAZUREK](#)

A version of this piece originally appeared in the [CUESA Newsletter](#)

Wendell Berry has said that eating is an agricultural act, but what about drinking beer? A thirst for fermented beverages may have inspired the world's first farmers to plant crops some 13,000 years ago, yet today beer is rarely part of the larger conversation about where our food comes from.

A handful of local craft brewers are starting to tap into that primitive connection. Taking up the motto 'Beer is Agriculture,' Almanac Beer Co. works directly with local farmers to source specialty ingredients for their seasonal brews. "For most people, beer is what shows up in the bottle or can," says Almanac brewer Damian Fagan. "We're trying to create a foundation that beer is rooted deeply in agriculture."

Fagan founded Almanac with Beer & Nosh blogger Jesse Friedman last year, after they met in a home-brewing club, where they traded brewing experiments. ("I'd show up with a fig beer or a puréed turnip beer. Not always great ideas," Fagan admits.) The two instantly bonded over their interest in San Francisco's farm-to-table food culture. "We saw a real opening to think and talk about the brewing process using that same vocabulary and ideology," says Friedman.

No stranger to farmers markets, Friedman launched SodaCraft last summer, offering naturally carbonated

sodas using fresh produce from his fellow vendors at the Ferry Plaza. He has since sold the business to turn his attention to Almanac, where his sourcing and brewing ethos remains the same. "Both businesses were born out of the idea that you can take farmers market produce and make something special out of it," says Friedman.



From the Farm to the Barrel

While the term *terroir*^{*} is usually reserved for fine wines, Almanac has found creative ways to "infuse a sense of time and place in each brew," as Friedman says, by integrating fresh produce into the mash.

Since last summer, Almanac has collaborated with Sebastopol Berry Farm, Twin Girls Farm, Hamada Farms, Marshall's Farm Natural Honey, and most recently, Heirloom Organic Gardens. For each of their beers, made in small batches and released seasonally, Friedman and Fagan meet with the farmer, tour their farm, and feature it prominently on the bottle's label and Almanac's website.

Like the Farmer's Almanac, each brew serves as a record of the season. The Autumn Farmhouse pale

** ... feel free to punch anyone who uses this word about beer - Ed.*

ale celebrated the last of Twin Girls Farm's fall plums, while the Winter Wit preserved the end of December at Hamada Farms, with a mix of Cara Cara, navel, and new blood oranges. "If we'd brewed two weeks earlier or later, the mix of oranges would have been different," Friedman notes.

Their most recent release, *Bière de Mars* (March beer), is a French-style farmhouse ale highlighting baby fennel from Heirloom Organic Gardens. While fennel might sound like an unexpected choice for beer, farmer Grant Brians thought it made a lot of sense when *Almanac* approached him. "The flavors in fennel are carried in an oil and slightly alkaline base," he explains. "It's perfect to mix into the brewing process."

The goal with each brew is to provide a distinct but subtle accent that does not dominate the flavor profile, but adds depth and pairs well with seasonal dishes. "We want the ingredient to be an integrated part of the beer," Friedman insists. "It should not be a fennel cocktail."

How's the finished result? "It's good!" says Brians. "I'm generally a wine drinker, but I enjoy full-bodied and well-balanced flavors in beers. And it was nice to taste the end result of our collaboration."

Bottlenecks for Local Brewers

While *Almanac* has sourced some local grains for their brews, including wheat from Massa Organics, brewing a truly Californian beer is fraught with challenges when it comes to hops and barley malt. "Unfortunately, the beer world is defined by the big American brewers," says Friedman.

California was once home to a thriving hops industry, but by the 1950s, the mechanization of hops harvesting, outbreaks of downy mildew, and changing beer tastes wiped hops growers out. Today, [most] U.S. hops are grown in Washington and Oregon.



Sourcing specialty malt poses another obstacle, since there are no malt houses in California, and out-of-state industrial malting facilities prefer to work with large brewers. "You can grow high-quality barley here, but the issue is malting," says Ron Silberstein of Thirsty Bear Brewing Company. "Part of the problem is that local growers are competing with commodity growers who can grow and malt their barley very inexpensively." Organic malt from locally grown barley is even rarer.

San Francisco's first and only brewery to carry the California Certified Organic Farmers seal, Thirsty Bear experimented with brewing a 100-percent local and organic beer in 2010, collaborating with Eatwell Farm in Dixon and Hop-Meister in Clearlake. Since there are no local malt houses, Eatwell had to ship its barley to Colorado Malt Company, which hand-malts in small batches.

In launching the Locavore Ale, Silberstein had hoped to enlist more local craft brewers to commit to purchasing organic malting barley from Eatwell Farm, but the buy-in wasn't there, and Eatwell has since abandoned the project.

“You have to get enough brewers who want to tell a story, who want to have an heirloom varietal of the barley, and are willing to pay a premium for that,” Silberstein says. He is hoping to build momentum to start a small artisan malting facility, which would make local, small-batch malting more feasible.

While the process of reconnecting local brewers and beer drinkers with local farms still has a long way to go, Silberstein and Friedman are optimistic that the farm-to-bottle movement is growing. “We need to build larger systems to support local brewing, and that's a challenge we're excited to tackle,” says Friedman. “In the meantime, we've contented ourselves with highlighting specialty ingredients from local farms.” §



Photos courtesy of Almanac Beer Co.

Mine's a Pint. I think.

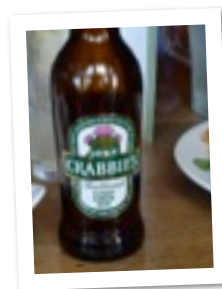
pint (pt) [1] - a traditional unit of volume equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ [quart](#). There are three different quarts in use in Britain and the United States, and hence there are three different pints: [i] the U. S. liquid pint, equal to exactly 28.875 cubic inches, 16 [fluid ounces](#), or approximately 473.176 millilitres; [ii] the U. S. dry pint, equal to 33.600 cubic inches or approximately 550.611 millilitres; and [iii] the British Imperial pint, equal to 20 British fluid ounces, 34.678 cubic inches or approximately 568.261 millilitres. The origin of the word pint is unclear. It may come from the Latin *pincta*, painted, referring to a marking at the one-pint level on a larger container.

pint (pt) [2] - a traditional unit of volume in Scotland equal to 2 choppins or 4 [mutchkins](#). The Scots pint varied with time and locality, but it was eventually standardized as the volume of the Stirling jug, a vessel holding about 104.2 cubic inches or 1.708 litres. This is almost exactly 3 Imperial pints or 3.6 U.S. liquid pints.

pint (pt) [3] - a unit of volume used in South Australian pubs. A pint of beer is generally 425 millilitres in South Australia, or roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ Imperial pint (15 fluid ounces). In Queensland a pint glass typically holds 560 millilitres, very nearly an Imperial pint.

pint (pt) [4] - a British unit of volume, known as the reputed pint, equal to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the standard Imperial pint. This is exactly $\frac{13}{3}$ fluid ounces, 23.12 cubic inches, or 378.841 millilitres.

Commit to memory. There may be questions ... §



Ginger Beer and Other Preferences

BY KAREN LEESON

with notes from Claudia and Terry Boorman and Roy Leeson

Although I have been associated with CAMRA BC for more than 20 years, I don't drink beer. I know this is sacrilege, but I can't drink any other alcohol either, because sometimes it makes me very ill and I never know when that will occur. The pleasure is not worth the pain. So I don't drink beer. That being said, it's a bit boring to go into English pubs and ask for a cuppa', although they are generally happy to make you one. Ginger ale or orange juice are usually available, but quite pricey. On one of our trips to England a few years ago I decided to start trying ginger beer, something two of my uncles used to make for us when we were kids. There are several non-alcoholic varieties available in the UK today. Many places stock Fentiman's, which has



Claudia and Terry at the Green Tree pub

a bit of a gingery bite to it (also available locally in Victoria at the Root Cellar). I find it quite sweet, however. BritVic and Schweppes ginger beer are widely available but not preferable to me. For one thing the bottles are very tiny - and more than the cost of a pint of beer in some cases. Also, they both have an aspartame aftertaste. Yetch. The only well-known English craft-brewery name that I found making ginger beer this time was at the Lamb and Flag pub in Oxford. They sell Palmer's, which is smooth and tasty - almost creamy. I also liked Francis Hartridge's Celebrated Ginger Beer, which I found in Durham and then in some of the Wetherspoon chain of pubs in London. Two of

the best ginger beers I had on our latest trip were John Crabbie's Traditional Cloudy Ginger Beer at the Glover Arms, near Dundee and Bundaberg Ginger Beer in York, which is made in Australia. Go figure!

Roy and I spent a day at Kew, near London, taking the tube and visiting the National Archives to look for the WWI medal card records for my grandfather and his brother. Having located those, we then spent several hours touring the wonderful Kew Gardens. Outdoors, we particularly enjoyed the rhododendron and azalea gardens, in the prime of their bloom at the beginning of June and the Xstrata Treetop walkway, where you view the park from the canopy above. The variety of trees and plants at Kew is amazing and the tropical greenhouses are breathtaking. Our



Karen and Roy at the Lamb & Flag

favourite place was The Princess of Wales Conservatory, where 10 climatic zones were bursting with blooms, from cacti to carnivorous plants, orchids and water lilies, etc. Afterwards, heading for our boat ride down the Thames to London, we discovered The Botanist Brewery and Kitchen. On Kew Green, adjacent to the famous gardens, the name is perfect for this cozy establishment. A finalist in the "Best Pub-Operating Micro Brewer 2012" (Publican) awards, their beer is named for plants, people and places in the gardens: Q Gold (their Jubilee ale); Humulus Lupulus (a hoppy fruity ale); Nemophila (dark, smooth stout), etc. Roy spent quite a while tasting and talking to the brewmaster, Conor Donaghue, who had lived and worked in Vancouver a few years ago. One of the brewery assistants had worked at Dead Frog brewery in Vancouver! The Botanist is a very small brewery with 4 HL capacity and a schedule on the wall of what's brewing each week. They are just beginning to get their bright pink kegs into some of the pubs in London (check out their website, which includes a map of London pubs where their brews are available). They didn't have any ginger beer...

Terry's favourite beer on our holiday was Piston Broke ale, made in Wiltshire by Box Steam Brewery. He found that it had the most flavour of the many beers they tasted during the trip. He located it first in Bath and again in Salisbury. At the Harp pub, near Covent Garden in London, he enjoyed talking to some British CAMRA members who were on a pub crawl and were most surprised to find themselves seated near some Canadian members of the same group. * (*see pg 4 - Ed*)

In the centre of old town Bath, Terry and Claudia were exploring one day and found the Volunteer Rifleman's Arms pub. It is tiny, mostly standing-room-only, with just a few seats in the corners. The people were very friendly and welcoming and offered

some ideas of places to visit in the area. They seemed to have an ongoing trivia contest and lots of laughter ensued as they joined in. One couple, Simon and Bert (short for Roberta) were eager to provide samples of local ales to taste. A week or so later, the Boormans bumped into them again in Salisbury at (of course) a CAMRA-approved pub. They marveled that with all the pubs in all the towns in England they would happen to meet each other again.



Roy and brewmaster Conor Donaghue

Claudia likes wheat beer, as she doesn't care for the taste of malt or hops. As this is generally a seasonal offering, she usually resorted to drinking lagers on our holiday. However, in Oxford, at the Lamb and Flag pub, she found a wheat beer made by Cotswold Spring Brewery, which was very much to her liking.

So, all in all, we had a merry old time, sipping our way around Britain. Despite the doom and gloom that one often hears about the beer industry there, what with the economic downturn, pubs closing, binge drinking, etc., we certainly visited some great establishments and some of us quaffed some very good beers throughout England and Scotland. The beer scene appears to be changing (ie more emphasis on food, pub chains, experimental beers) just as we have observed here at home. You can usually find something to your liking in a British pub. §

Patience is Often Rewarded: Beer Cellaring

BY IAN LLOYD

We all store beer correctly. It is placed in the fridge and drank within a week – problem solved. While this is true, I was referring to the idea of storing beers long term. Most of us have heard about storing wine for a long time. Prolonged aging of wine can mellow harsh flavours to produce a richer and more complex sip. Did you know that the same is true for beer? Hopefully, I can open your eyes to the endless possibilities of beer cellaring.

My first experience with beer cellaring happened by accident. Many great discoveries tend to be accidents. I forgot about a bottle of Fullers Vintage Ale on my basement shelf; I thought the box was empty. With some trepidation, we opened it. The result was heavenly; richer plumy malts and the beer had developed a port like flavour. Now allowing certain beers to age is a regular part of my beer geek activities.

The first step in beer cellaring is to find a safe location. It should be an area that does not experience great temperature changes and one your friends cannot find. Basements are perfect for this. Beer likes to be cool, dark and undisturbed. The best temperature is between 10 and 15C. To find the perfect spot, place a few thermometers around your basement. You can find them cheap on eBay. Record the temperatures at various times of the day during the year. Refrigerators don't tend to be the best places to age beers, as they are too cold. If the temperature is too cold, there is little chance for residual yeast to alter the flavours.

The second step is to make sure this area does not get direct sunlight. Beer is photosensitive and UV rays can negatively affect beer taste. Cardboard wine boxes are

great for this. Not only do they block light, they also offer some insulation to help prevent temperature changes. In contrast to wine, beer should be stored upright. This will allow the yeast and sediment to settle on the bottom of the bottle where it is less likely to be disturbed when pouring. It also minimizes air contact with the precious slumbering fluid.



A peek into Ian's [Chigo 96 bottle wine cellar](#) picked up for \$750. This guy is seriously serious.

The third, and most fun, step is to choose beers to cellar! There are no firm rules as to which beers will age well, but here are a few guidelines. Hoppy beers do not age well and are best enjoyed fresh. Hops are pungent and aromatic but this is lost with aging. Drink your pale ales and IPAs asap. Higher alcohol brews tend to age better, look for 8% abv or higher. The enhanced alcohol content acts as a preservative and

the harsh alcohol flavours tend to soften with time. Generally, maltier and sweeter beers tend to age well. The residual sugars give lots of food for the yeasts to slowly digest and produce new flavours. Look for imperial stouts, barley wines and old ales. It also helps if the beer is bottle conditioned, unfiltered or used exotic yeast (*Brettanomyces*).

So where to begin? The undisputed ruler of age-able beers in Victoria is Driftwood's Old Cellar Dweller. This brew is strong, volatile and bracing when fresh. These flavours mellow even after six months of aging, but one or two years will do wonders. Local beer geeks have had some luck aging VIB's Hermmmanator. If you can find some Lighthouse Belgian white (or black) they might age well. Purchase three or four bottles, sample one right away and store the others for

later. Be sure to mark the bottle with the month and year in which they were purchased. Make notes about the beer you just tried. Revisit the same beer in six months and compare the taste experience against your old notes. Did the flavours improve or just go flat and bland? If things got better, try the other bottles every six months. If things went south, drink the rest soon.

This is not a definitive guide for beer cellaring, but it is a good starting point. Experiment with aging good craft beers to add a whole new dimension to your fluid enjoyment. Things can only get better. Currently, my climate controlled, wine cellar fridge contains many previous years of Old Cellar Dweller, Fullers Vintage ale, Chimay Blue and a nine year old lambic. I am looking forward to sampling them with good friends, who luckily have their own beer cellars. §



Beer porn ...

Meet the Beer Bloggers

BY JEN REIHER

Follow Jen's excellent blog at

<http://victorianfood.blogspot.com/>

Beer Blogger: Colin Hamilton www.beergeek.ca



Favourite beer: free beer! (as seasonally appropriate)

Beer is important because: "Beer has buoyed the spirits of people for centuries. Accessible, steeped in history, and flat-out delicious."

Colin's blog, **Beer Geek** is aptly named. The topics seem to flow between intense geek-outs on a particular style or theme, to specific beery geeky topics and musings. "Although I am not a member [of CAMRA BC] I share many of the same goals that CAMRA does," says Colin, "particularly the appreciation of traditional beer styles, and the promotion of craft breweries." Examples of recent posts include a round up of 2011

beers, and the top ten reasons beer is better than wine (reason #10: In the beer making process, at no point does anyone step on the ingredients with their bare feet.) Future topics he teased included beer label art, the resurgence of older styles and, possibly, a piece on craft beer 'elitism.'

Blog excerpt: "Forget about the bountiful fruits and grains produced out here, 2011 was the year of the pumpkin. The big orange squash showed up all over the place this year. Possibly due to the success of Phillips, Howe Sound and Red Racer pumpkin ales in previous years, or maybe based on a bumper crop of pumpkins, everybody threw some in the mash tun. While those are some fantastic beer, I would be remiss if I didn't mention a couple of newcomers. Fernie Brewing had a great pumpkin ale (Pumpkin Head) based on their popular brown ale recipe, a true session brew with just a hint of pumpkin. Kelowna's Tree Brewing created a great sipper in more of a winter ale style with Jumpin' Jack Pumpkin Ale."

His answer to why beer was important delved deeply into the historical evolution of beer. "Beer has been part of the fabric of society as far back as recorded history goes," he notes. "Styles evolved from available ingredients and adapted to changing tastes. And throughout all its incarnations, it was enjoyed by every level of society - kings and paupers alike enjoyed it." However nerdy that answer was, he does note that he keeps his technicality focused on beer, no quantum entanglement. Or spiders. §

Colin's website can be found at www.beergeek.ca and you can follow him on twitter [@beerkgeekdotca](https://twitter.com/beerkgeekdotca)

Oxfordshire Pub Crawl

BY ROY LEESON

Photos Terry Boorman

One Friday in May during our recent tour of the UK, in the Far From the Madding Crowd pub in Oxford, my wife Karen was perusing the local CAMRA newsletter, the *Oxford Drinker*, and noticed a message about an upcoming pub crawl to rural pubs



Part of the Anglo-Canadian CAMRA Expedition into darkest Oxfordshire

south of Oxford. "Too bad you didn't know about this," she said. "I'm sure it's fully booked." Ever hopeful, Terry Boorman and I showed up at 11am the next day at the appointed meeting place, the Lamb and Flag pub (incidentally, directly across the street from the Eagle and Child where Tolkien and C.S. Lewis regularly met). When the van pulled up, Chris Hunter, dedicated driver and organizer, was happy to report that the trip was undersold and that for a grand total of five British pounds each (plus the cost of our own beer), we were welcome to join the CAMRA group for the day.

After picking up a few more CAMRA members near Abingdon, we were on our way. The eight places we visited over the next seven hours represented a cross-section of rural English pubs, ranging from the traditional village local to upscale gastro-pubs. All had a good selection of beers, though it was difficult to sample them all. Terry and I resorted to half-pints as a strategy for trying a variety of beers. Our CAMRA comrades were usually spot on with their recommendations. I particularly liked the Railway

Inn in Culham which was unpretentious and offered a very good selection of draught beers. The Barley Mow in Hampden dates back to the 1300s and is mentioned in Jerome K. Jerome's famous Victorian novel, *Three Men in a Boat*. In Headington Quarry, the Mason Arms is the home of the renowned Old Bog Brewery, which was unfortunately not in operation when we dropped in. Notable beers tasted during the day were West Berkshire Brewery's Good Old Boys and Mags gold; Box Steam Brewery's porter; Salopian Brewery's Shropshire gold; and Rudgate's Ruby mild.

Thanks very much to CAMRA Oxford, especially Chris Hunter. They went out of their way to show us a good time in Oxfordshire, even dropping us off in front of our B&B in Oxford at the end of the day. If you are travelling to Britain, I recommend that you contact local CAMRA branches to see if any beer related activities are planned while you are there. Also, an indispensable resource is the *Good Beer Guide*, which lists each CAMRA branch's top voted pubs, as well as the current year's award winning beers. §

Out and About with Scottie

... Cause for concern

I travel a fair bit on the islands around here and it never ceases to amaze me what I learn from folks about their beer worlds and their stories. Once you mention beer, it's game on.

After all, it's individuals who purchase beer and I do notice what they are buying. Here we are right now in beer. Why does one person still insist on the old ways whilst the newest consumer goes totally opposite, going out to experience as many good craft products as possible. Mostly that's all us, the adventuresome beer folk. We run it, make it fly. The more we do to support small breweries, the more possibility unending choices will continue.

Some countries didn't have the fight Canada had to get any good beer nationwide, to start with. That should be phrased to get any good beer *back*. We did, as a nation, have fabulous styles of beers in our pioneering days brought by the people

who came to Canada from brewing nations. Somehow individual styles and breweries disappeared culminating in the 1960s with one choice. All the same. Inheriting this legacy on the coast and islands, provincewide, and nationwide, is how our CAMRA movement began its work. It has been a good job, seeing today the size and scope of our group.

Right now in the beer scene, I can imagine almost anything related to beer and it's out there. I can have all of it, beer dinner, a tasting, a festival, a tour, an event, a sampling, a music venue, food and beer pairing, the list goes on with a strong and varied list of breweries and beers and they're all good, all individual, all have taste, flavour, and appeal to me.

From a retail point of view our provincial and private stores do a good job for the small brewery. In the major urban centres there are good mixes of private and government establishments. The choice in beers is seemingly endless and far-reaching.

In the outlying regions of this grand province, in the local town, village or small community the beer lovers many times rely on the government store or agent to bring in their craft beer choice.

I received a one-page information sheet recently out in front of a government store in Victoria from a store manager informing me what is going on in regards to government plans on privatizing the warehouse and distribution system. As a What's Brewing correspondent I had a look into it. It looks like it's moving forward.



I'm sure we will see something in the way of change in the consumer marketplace choice, what beer gets where, depending on costs involved. I did a Google search to see who's saying what, and local brewers have indeed commented. I mention it because it's happening right now, and many small brewers use this system, also many consumers rely on the system.

Summer is here and there's a grand choice of beers hitting the marketplace for the season. Whilst out enjoying your beers and converting your friends, revel in our well-respected beer movement work we have all contributed towards.

Good beer, and its presence everywhere, was hard earned by all of us. Let's keep continued vigil on all things beer. It looks like there's ongoing work to do in the movement and with all the younger members and breweries coming on board, let's be a voice to ensure good beer is available to all consumers on demand.

In May I attended **Crofton Kiwanis Firefighters Beer Fest**. Tickets \$100. The hope was to sell 100 tickets, but only around 40 actually sold. Organizers did their best to make this event happen but as is the case in many such first time events it's a learning curve. Crofton community centre was well decorated in a cowboy western theme; bales of hay, horseshoes, a mechanical bull, and home-cooked food prepared across the street at the fire hall by volunteers. 50-50 tickets and door prizes all in the name of charity fund raising. The energy was strong amongst the local group. Small town Canada, pride.

What's Brewing attended to get a beer pulse in this quaint and sleepy island community. We noticed a very small consumer real ale choice. Some reps attended but many volunteers were pouring on behalf of brewers and agencies. Beers of CAMRA interest were Lighthouse, Howe Sound, Granville Island and Stanley Park and Merridale Cider. All the rest were

big brewers and there were more volunteers than attendees. The original intent was to make it an import and craft festival. Their heart was in the right place. Months before CAMRA did offer a list of brewers, contacts and suggestions to help it on its way, help being a phone call away type of thing.

Everyone had a great time and organizers realize from this year's event some things have to change, but the spirit to win for charity was there throughout and as always we offer our input any time you wish. A very polite group of people all round. Great effort Crofton, B.C. Looking forward to next year.

Cowichan Bay Spot Prawn Festival - May



CAMRA attended this fresh and local event where the whole community gets involved. The town was humming with activity. This Vancouver Island precinct is full of local artisan foods, small wineries and award winning chefs. It was a real mix of activity, it was happening. Of course prawn was the food of choice; fresh, fresh, fresh.

Local farmgate wineries were offering two-day tastings in the museum centre upstairs which went on continually. Chef tents offered cooking demonstrations and food pairings. Entertainment was live and upbeat family-themed music. Down behind the main street near the docks, What's Brewing encountered a spontaneous craft beer event going on with locals sampling a wide selection of local Island beers amongst themselves. This soon turned into an impromptu beer forum and discussion from locals who knew their stuff. Local beers are available in the restaurants and bars along the strip and what a wonderful time in an upbeat local atmosphere. §

Wales and more of England

BY LAURA KOTLER

The month of March saw me travelling counter-clockwise around the wonderful country of Wales. Not only does Wales have gorgeous green scenery and many, many castle ruins, nice beaches, mountains for hiking and friendly people who speak English with an attractive Welsh-accented lilt, it also has some young craft breweries creating good beer. I see almost a hundred breweries listed for Wales on ratebeer.com.

Some notes on pubs and breweries in **North Wales:**

Great Orme Brewery, Colwyn Bay, produces a good range of beers, from lager to stout.

The Cottage Loaf pub in Llandudno is in a former bakery, with the oven doors still in place. For the interior they used the masts and booms from a schooner wrecked off Llandudno's coast in 1936. The food is local and free range whenever possible, and there are four cask taps, two being for local Conwy Brewery.

Purple Moose Brewery, Porthmadog, won the Great Taste Award London for its Dark Side of the Moon. There's also a mild-tasting Snowdonia ale at 3.6% abv.

Fat Cat pub in Llandudno, part of a chain, had two cask ales and several vegetarian items on the menu.

Kings Head is the oldest pub in Llandudno and sported several CAMRA *Good Beer Guide* decals in the window. It's a warm, friendly place with a big, old fireplace and archival photos. They had only two small-brewery casks, not especially local, and the others were Greene King.

Conwy Brewery uses water from the mountains of Snowdonia for its bottle-conditioned ales.



Kings Head is the oldest pub in Llandudno

Within the historic town walls of Caernarfon is the Black Boy Inn, built in 1522. Imagine the stories its walls could tell. The pub's interior is adorned with dark wood, antiques and curios.

Mid- and South Wales:

The university town of Aberystwyth bustles with activity. At the rail station is a Wetherspoon's pub called Yr Hen Orsaf (The Old Station), and it was holding a week-long beer festival when I was there, with "five international ales, 45 groovy ales from around the UK and 10 ciders." Claiming to be The World's Biggest Real-Ale Festival – I suppose because it encompassed their whole chain of pubs – the trouble was that if a cask wasn't used up on the first day, the same six beers were available on the second day. Three third-pint glasses cost £2.05 (C\$3.30). Over the four days, I tried 11 different beers and one Welsh perry: Gwynt Y Ddraig Two Trees perry, 4.5% abv. The beer I liked best was a bitter brewed at Batemans, Lincolnshire, by Norway's Nøgne Ø.

A few of the bottled Welsh ales that I came across included those from:

Pen-lon Cottage Brewery, Llanarth, West Wales: family run; all beers are hand crafted in small batches, bottle-conditioned and vegan.

Preseli Brewery, Tenby, Pembrokeshire: bottle-conditioned, unfiltered, all nautical names for the beers. I especially liked Baggywrinkle, 4.5% abv, a hoppy bitter with wheat and barley, and Powder Monkey, 4.2% abv, a full-bodied bitter.

Gwaun Valley Brewery, Fishguard, Pembrokeshire: “The Gwaun Valley is well known for its home brew making traditions.” Their bitter and their St. Davids Special were hazy and nice.

Brecon Brewing, Powys, was founded only in 2011 but is distributing all over Wales now.

Kilverts Inn in Hay-on-Wye, the town known for its hundred booksellers and Literary Festival, was formerly a doctor’s house, built during the Edwardian period, and became a hotel in the 1980s. The pub has received several CAMRA awards. It maintains a close relationship with local brewers and offers a selection of rotating guest taps and three cider taps.

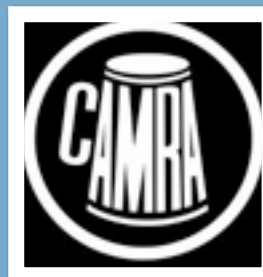
Tintern, famous for its ancient abbey ruins and access to Offa’s Dyke Path and Wye Valley Path, is home to Kingstone Brewery: “Unfiltered, Uncompromised & Unashamedly Real.” I tasted Kingstone Gold, Humpty’s Fuddle IPA and the special 1503 Tudor Ale. “The beer is unfiltered and bottle-conditioned to



develop a fuller flavour, finer bubble and more subtle texture.” The story about the 1503 beer is interesting: “In the year 1503, six years before Henry VIII ascended the throne and some 42 years before the sinking of the *Mary Rose*, Richard Arnold chronicled this recipe, one of the first recorded uses of hops in English brewing. At 4.8% abv, it contains pale malted barley, brown malted barley, chocolate malt, smoked malt, wheat malt, malted oats, Fuggles hops and is a deep ruby red, lightly hopped and full of complex malt overtones. Do not refrigerate. Good with food.” They don’t fine their bottled beer but do the casks, because pubs return them when patrons say they want clear beer!

(Do I need to start a global educational campaign in support of hazy beer?! Surely I am not the only one who likes cloudy beer.)

Friends don't let friends
drink rubbish beer. Buy them
a membership in CAMRA BC



Cardiff: Zerodegrees is a microbrewery, pub and restaurant whose specialty is gourmet pizza. The bar menu includes a description of the brewing process: “Yeast is left alone to mature and complement the flavour; unfiltered, no colours, preservatives,



sweeteners.” I paid £2.50 (C\$4) for seven samples: pilsner, pale ale, black lager, wheat ale, mango wheat ale, a mead-style lager and a cider. The Mediterranean pizza with fresh rocket on top (we call it arugula) was good.

The unfortunately named Brains beers – the name makes me queasy, especially when I saw “Steak and Brains ale pie” on a menu – are brewed at the Cardiff Brewery and claim to be Wales’s most famous drink. Still owned by the descendants of the founders in 1882, the Brains name appears above the door of over 270 pubs across Wales and the West of England.

On a Saturday late afternoon, The Cottage pub was packed with drinkers and diners, its walls covered with framed vintage photos of the area and decorated with Welsh flags and bunting.

Back in England again, I was pleasantly surprised by **Manchester.** Besides the interesting architecture and museums, the CAMRA branch appears to be very active. They publish a *Manchester Pub Guide* and *Manchester Pubs by Tram*. I also saw a book called *Pub Walks in Lancashire*. The Manchester tourist office website has five pub walks that can be printed out, called CAMRA Pub Stagers. I noticed in a late-

March newspaper that a single-day real ale festival was being held at the Museum of Science and Industry, all proceeds going to maintaining and developing the museum: 75 beers, with some specially brewed beers inspired by their surroundings, such as Thirsty Engine by Outstanding Brewing Co.

Oxford is home to a university, of course, and also several historic pubs. Other CAMRA-BC members were recently in Oxford and may write about it, so I’ll just quickly mention these five:

Turf Tavern is a 13th century ale house with small inside rooms and large courtyards. It’s a Greene King pub but with several guest taps listed on the blackboard outside.

The White Horse is in a historic building famous as a filming site for the Inspector Morse and Lewis series and *The Oxford Murders* movie in 2008.

The Eagle and Child (“Bird and Baby,” to the locals) is owned by St. John’s College, part of an endowment belonging to University College since the 17th century. It has associations with the Inklings writers’ group which included J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis.

The Bear dates from 1242, the oldest pub in Oxford. Its walls and ceilings are covered with glass cases displaying over 4,500 cut-off neckties of sports club members, university students and visitors, a strange tradition that started in 1952. I had a pint of Oxford Scholar by Shotover Brewing, 4.5% abv, a fairly hoppy bitter.

Far From the Madding Crowd pub was CAMRA-Oxford City Pub of the Year in 2009 and 2011. They hold real-ale festivals each season.

While on a walking tour along the Thames path, the section between **Windsor** and **Henley**, I encountered a number of breweries and pubs. One was Windsor & Eton Brewery. “For over 300 years, Windsor Ales were famous throughout the country.



CAMRA UK members Tracey and Anneli took Laura to the Euston Tap

Seventy-nine years after the closure of Windsor's last brewery, we are delighted to have brought craft brewing back to the heart of Windsor." Their beers include Guardsman best bitter (oak-crafted) and Knight of the Garter golden ale, 3.8% abv.

Marlow Brewery and Rebellion Beer Co. produce Rebellion IPA with just 3.7% abv, not what we're used to here on North America's west coast.

The Bounty pub is on the towpath along the River Thames near Bourne End. It's a fun place to be on a sunny spring day: cask ales, good menu and picnic tables.

Then I hit the big city of **London**, where I met up with new friends made on the Christmas walking tour I'd been on in the Lake District. Fellow beer aficionadas, they wanted to show me a few of London's great pubs. We visited three, all good:

The Market Porter, with up to nine constantly changing, traditional ales, is "a beer festival every day of the week." Its setting in the historic Borough Market district of London saw it transformed into the Third Hand Book Emporium in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, situated next to The Leaky Cauldron.

Euston Tap is a popular Craft Beer House situated in a narrow, Victorian lodge, a remnant of the original Euston rail station. There's standing room, a few bar stools and some seating up a spiral staircase. They offer a wide array of international and UK beers. Across the road, they recently opened Cider Tap, London's first dedicated cider bar. More than 100 ciders on draught from farms in the UK and France.

The Bree Louise offers a discount to CAMRA members. (There was some skepticism about CAMRA BC's legitimacy as an organization. I need to find out what relationship or understanding there is between us and CAMRA UK, if any.) [** see page 4 for clarification - Ed.*] The pub has 11 gravity ales, six other pumps and 11 real ciders and perries. Britain was marking the 100th anniversary of the sinking of *RMS Titanic*. I had Titanic Brewery's Nine Tenths Below, an IPA at 5.9% abv.

I visited two of London's historic pubs: Ye Olde Mitre dates from 1547 when it was built for the servants of the Palace of the Bishops of Ely from Cambridgeshire. Both palace and pub were demolished in 1772. The current tavern still technically belongs to Cambridgeshire and is not officially part of the city of London, and the police can only enter if invited by the commissionaire.



Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese is “one of a number of pubs in London to have been rebuilt shortly after the Great Fire of 1666. There has been a pub at this location since 1538. While there are several older pubs which have survived because they were beyond the reach of the fire, or like The Tipperary on the opposite side of Fleet Street because they were made of stone, this pub continues to attract interest due to the curious lack of natural lighting inside, which generates its own gloomy charm.” The pub is aligned with Samuel Smith Brewery. I had an organic wheat beer with a nice foamy head.

At the Whole Foods Market in Kensington I bought bottles of The Kernel beers, with their distinctive plain brown labels. My new favourite beer in the world is The Kernel’s pale ale with Columbus and Citra hops. Next time in London I will definitely go to The Kernel’s brewery. “We make pale ales, IPAs and old school London porters and stouts. Bottled alive, to give them time to grow.”

CAMRA is coordinating a campaign to raise the profile of beer and pubs during this summer of the Diamond Jubilee and Olympic Games, featuring the Ealing Beer Festival and culminating with the Great British Beer Festival in August. The London City of Beer website lists about 24 breweries in Greater London and has an excellent leaflet describing beer styles: londoncityofbeer.org.uk/. There are also lists of events, brewery tours and pub crawls, such as Camden Town Toddle and Marylebone Meander. §

Sidebar: CAMRA in the UK

Whenever I saw a local CAMRA branch’s magazine in a pub, I read it cover to cover. They were filled with interesting information, advertisements for many, many festivals and breweries, and current news. These are some tidbits I noticed.

A book review of *Mud, Sweat and Gears*, by Ellie Bennett, about cycling around the British countryside, sampling local beers, and with notes about history and geography. “Intelligent, adventurous and very, very funny...for any real ale lover...whether you enjoy cycling or not.”

A letter to the editor talked about diversity in CAMRA’s membership: “CAMRA has achieved considerable success in attracting women and younger members, but has some way to go with other indicators of diversity. In a multicultural metropolis, we in London should be leading the way. And what about disability? Do we consider wheelchair access and special needs adequately? Sexual orientation? Maybe all diversity issues could be given more serious attention at all levels of CAMRA, with ‘promoting diversity’ being more explicitly a CAMRA objective.” (Trudy Davies)



CAMRA launched a scheme called LocAle to help local breweries and pubs promote locally produced real ales. Benefits include improving consumer choice, enabling local breweries to sell more ales so they can expand and benefit the local economy, reducing “beer miles” and increasing local identity and pride. I noticed the logo attached to taps and posted in pub windows. The UK parliament has an All-Party Parliamentary

Beer Group! Its purpose is to “promote the wholesomeness and enjoyment of beer and the unique role of the pub in UK society; to increase understanding of the social, cultural and historic role of brewing and pubs in the UK and their value to tourism; to broaden recognition of the contribution of brewing and pubs to employment and to the UK’s economy; to promote understanding of the social responsibility exercised by the brewing and pub industries; to support the UK’s brewing industry worldwide; and to promote a positive future for beer and the pub.” Wow!



The Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW) has voted the **Royal Oak** in Borough (44 Tabard Street) as London’s best pub of 2012. “The pub has won the award twice before, in 2004 and 2006. It is a traditional two-bar establishment, free from

distractions such as television, piped music and electronic machines. Conversation is king here, with top-notch beer and food to help it along. Open all day every day. The highly trendy Borough Market is just a short walk up the road, with a selection of noted pubs. Runners up were Harp (Covent Garden) and Ye Olde Mitre (Holborn).”

An e-petition is circulating (June 2012), called Stop the Beer Duty Escalator. “Every year, the beer tax escalator increases the tax on beer by 2% above the rate of inflation, thus adding considerably more pressure on the British pub, the cornerstone of many of our communities. Removing the beer duty escalator at the next budget will help keep beer more affordable and go a long way to supporting the institution of the great British pub.

Going to the pub is a core British tradition and so is

enjoying great beer. If you want to continue enjoying your fresh pint in your local pub then it’s crucial that you support our campaign to grind the beer duty tax escalator to a halt.

If we don’t show our support for the great British pub, we risk losing more pubs and more jobs within our local communities.

Support great beer in the great British pub and sign our e-petition now. British Pubs Need You.”

One CAMRA branch made an excursion to a brewery in Ghent, Belgium. It’s so easy to nip over the English Channel into France and Belgium. (For example, I took the 7:30 a.m. Eurostar train from Ashford International, south of London, and arrived in Brussels an hour-and-a-half later.)

CAMRA Members’ Investment Club – for those who want to own part of a brewery or one of the many pub chains. “For a minimum of £5 per month (or single annual payment of £2,000 max.) you could start making an investment in the many companies in which the Club owns shares. The Club operates like a unit trust. As of May 2012 the funds of the Club were about £10.6 million. By holding a growing share in particular companies, the Club’s votes at the AGMs could make a difference to either a takeover bid or other hostile actions. Having a voice in the boardrooms of the pub-owning groups could help influence their guest beer policies, which is becoming increasingly important in the market where the smaller breweries are competing with the giants. For the members, the Club organizes tours of the breweries in which it has shares, both in the UK and Europe. These visits often present the opportunity of meeting the Directors of the companies as well.” The website lists the upcoming and recent tours and other shareholder perks. Looking at the unit values since 2007 and currently, they’re not spectacular; yet, this kind of investment evidently attracts many people. §

Ullage and Spillage

BY J. RANDOM

So one day I get this e-mail from my mate Robin in Auckland to say he's just couriered me eight 500ml bottles of New Zealand craft beer, all but one are from 8 Wired Brewing Co. of Blenheim. That's when life got complicated. No customs broker would touch it. I had to go through 'self clearance' but *"Personal or casual importation of alcohol through the courier stream is not permitted in accordance to the Importation of Intoxicating Liquor Act and Memorandum D2-3-6. To qualify as a casual importer, the product must accompany the purchaser at the point of entry."* Short of taking a flight to NZ and getting myself couriered back here, that was not going to be possible. The courier, the BC LDB and Canada Border Services were very nice about it, but I was in fear of arrest at every step. As it was, due to the limited opening hours of all three, I

had to take the day off to traipse around getting reams of paperwork.

First stop was the Liquor Distribution Branch on Rupert St. in Vancouver to pay the \$29.92 provincial liquor fee to Excise and Customs Special Services and get a stamped Form B3. Thence to the courier to pick up their paperwork and on to Canada Border Services to pay \$8.11 customs duty and get a stamped Form K21. Finally back to the courier to pick up the beer. What with the import fees and a day off, these were going to be some of the most expensive beers I had ever drunk.

This called for a very special tasting and, with just one 500ml bottle of each, it had to be for a select few. We started with 8 Wired's Rewired brown ale



A good evening's work

(5.7% abv), a rich malty/roasty ale with just the right hop level to avoid any tendency towards the cloying. This was a pretty impressive start to the evening. We immediately proceeded on our one diversion to a different brewery. Tuatara APA Aotearoa pale ale (5.8% ABV) was not the American pale ale I had tried when I was in NZ in June 2011, but an offshoot of that beer caused by difficulty in obtaining American hops. This variant employs Pacific Jade, Cascade, Sauvignon and Wai-iti hops giving more tropical fruit than citrus. I detected a hint of Marmite, which must have been from yeast autolysis, but gave this beer a pleasant, slightly meaty flavour. Back to 8 Wired, we segued into Hopwired IPA (7.3% abv) brewed with pale malt and hops, all grown in NZ. According to the label it was rated best beer in Australia and New Zealand 2011 by RateBeer.com and who are we to disagree. This is a world class IPA with big hop and good malt back-up, reminiscent of Driftwood's Fat Tug. One of our number (mentioning no names) said he preferred it to FT. Next was Tall Poppy India red ale (7.0% abv), less hoppy than an American red ale, but more hoppy than an Irish red with no detectable diacetyl and not overloaded with caramel.

I, for one, loved the Ø for Awesome imperial amber ale (9% abv) which I described as a light barley wine. Others were not so keen. This was a collaboration between 8 Wired Danish brewer Søren Eriksen and Kjetil Jiklun the brewer from Nøgne Ø in Norway. That ubiquitous no entry sign is pronounced something like a cross between eu and ur, in case you were wondering.

Slotting the Big Smoke smoked porter (6.2% abv) into the sequence was probably the biggest challenge but this seemed to be around the right place in terms of alcohol content and flavour intensity. Brewed with an addition of Bamburgh Rauchmalz, this had, to my taste, just the right amount of smoke. I do

appreciate a smoky undertone but I can't take some of the true Rauchbiers. If I wanted someone to stub out an evening's worth of cigarettes in my beer, there are still a few remote bars I could probably go to, even though Rauchen ist verboten. I thought I even detected a note of bacon in this one but that was probably a deep-seated association caused by too many bacon beers recently. The next logical move was to iStout (10.0% abv) a robust imperial stout with plenty of rich roasty coffee and chocolate over a deep malty base. This was probably my all-round favourite but, as regular readers will recall, I am a sucker for Tsarist beers. Batch 31 imperial stout (11.0% abv), brewed with jaggery (unrefined sugar) and coffee and aged in oak barrels, was even bigger and went beautifully with dessert.

We had decided on New-Zealand-themed elegant simplicity for the food so as not to compete with the beers. I thought the slightly meaty flavours of two of the beers was a perfect appetizer for my dad's recipe lamb/lentil stew or, for the non-red-meat eaters, black-bean/lentil stew. Dessert was kiwifruit and raspberries soaked in Triple Sec.



Let's hope we see some of these beers legally imported into B.C. in the near future. They are already available in California. Until then, *"If you would like to purchase alcohol product that is not available at the BC Liquor stores, you may arrange a special order with the BCLDB for the product to be purchased on your behalf."*

See <http://www.bcliquorstores.com/special-orders> §

Calendar

- Details on Vancouver area events at <http://camravancouver.ca/events/>
- Details on Fraser Valley area events at http://camrafraservalley.ca/?page_id=89
- Details on Victoria area events at <http://camra.ca/events/>

**Got an opinion? Share
it with CAMRA BC
members!**
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CAMRA BC Membership Application Form

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Enclosed is my cheque for: Individual \$25.00 _____
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