



# WHAT'S BREWING

The Magazine of the Campaign for Real Ale British Columbia

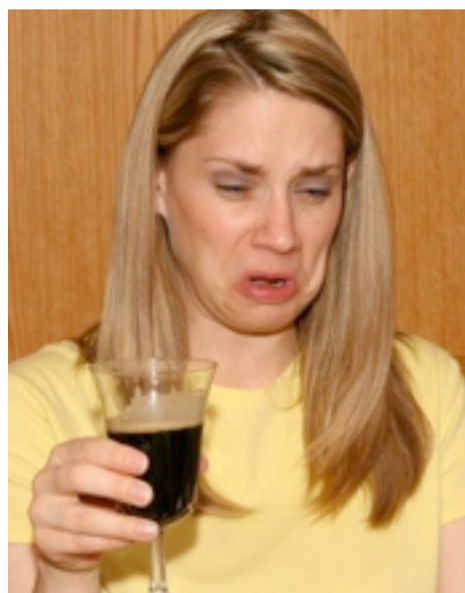
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May - June 2013

## *Hops for hops' sake, balance for God's sake*

I started drinking beer quite a while before CAMRA existed. In the dim old English pubs of my adolescence there were old gits, like I am now, complaining about beer, as I do, and lamenting the loss of what had gone before. As I will.

Don't get me wrong, I applaud the existence of the myriad beers on the shelves in B.C. these days. It's a far cry from what was available when I stepped off the boat, as it were. What has happened though ... continues to happen ... is that we're repeating the errors of the past as many beers become more and more alike. Perhaps it's an unintended side effect of



our society which believes more is better. Perhaps we have simply drifted inch by inch and not noticed the distance we have come from the path we started down.

Put bluntly, I'm finding many of our craft beers are too bitter. Never thought I'd type that sentence, but hey, call 'em as you see 'em. There comes a point when humans can no

longer appreciate the degree of bitterness in a beer and shovelling in more hops is just an exercise in futility. My hops are bigger than your hops. Fine for those who like that kind of thing, but don't be held hostage to the notion that more hops is better beer. The best brewers will tell you that the single most important ingredient to go into a beer is balance.

So, home brewers and neophyte pros, here's my challenge: before you are tempted to up the ABV to cover off the harsh profile you got when you brewed to an authentic 1935 recipe without taking into account the hops of those days had far less lupulin, try dropping the IBUs to come up with a session beer offering an impressive balance between the malt and the hops. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised with it. And so will those of you who are already formulating an injunction to have me sectioned. Once you've had a little time to detox of course. ☺ §

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# Campaign for Real Ale British Columbia

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to post a message to the list, send to:

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This is the last What's Brewing before British Columbia gets a new government. Barring disaster for the NDP, it will be their turn to rule. At CAMRA BC we have worked hard to arrange meetings with potential MLAs and soon, hopefully, Cabinet ministers to make them aware of some shortcomings in the B.C. beer system. I guess now we find out whether or not they were listening.

Summer is around the corner ... here come the wheat beers and pilsners. §

*Phil Atkinson*



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## *Out and About with Scottie ... Recent Island Events*

At What's Brewing we want to give fair coverage to everyone trying to bring good beer and its associated agenda into their community so we try to get around and give encouragement to these events. With this in mind here are some recent island beer events we covered.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Alberni Valley Hops Festival**

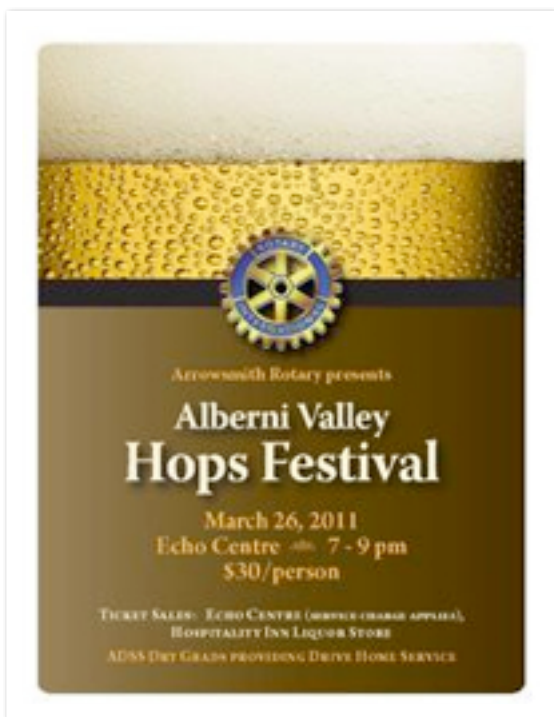
What's Brewing has attended for the last five years. The festival is for the Rotary Club charity with a huge silent auction table, a fully stocked beer fridge donated from OK Springs Brewery, various other donations. All to go towards the cause of fund raising.

Industry portion 6–7 pm where people from the hospitality sector of the community can come and meet the breweries and discuss the products and industry as a whole. General public 7–9 pm. Tickets \$30.00 inclusive of all beers, foods. Extra beer tickets available for purchase after the first free ones given at entrance are used up. Echo Centre was the venue and the Rotary volunteers do a great job helping brewers and food vendors in any way possible.

The idea is to take tickets thus generating more tickets sales to raise even more money for the cause. What's Brewing has observed not all vendors adhere to this mandate nor do Rotary put much policing into the cause ... way more could be generated, as an observation. Booth stewards would go a long way towards solving this issue.

Bring in the Spring with a  
membership to CAMRA BC





What's Brewing enjoyed seeing the following:

Dead Frog; Granville Island; Howe Sound; Lighthouse; Longwood (recently changed owners and expanded off site); Mark Anthony includes Hell's Gate, Stanley Park; Tofino, Vancouver Island, Tree, Whistler, OK Springs, Sleemans, Phillips, Parallel 49 and Pacific Western. As you can see there's a little mix of everything in the group, and the consumer will first and foremost get a chance at variety.

You never go hungry at Alberni Hops Festival and many thanks to Serious Coffee, Polly's Pub, Pete's Mountain Meats, Boston Pizza, Westwind Pub, and Pizza Factory for supplying a wide variety of fresh and locally prepared food fresh for this event.

Good job Port Alberni for embracing good beer in your community. Thanks to all the volunteers especially the unsung heroes the young ladies emptying the spills buckets and replenishing the water. Lots of interesting questions were posed by the consumer so that's a success in itself. It gets better every year. Cheers to all involved.

## Nanaimo Kinsmen Beer Festival April 2013

Again in keeping with the theme of charity the Nanaimo Beer Fest returns after a two-year absence to the Nanaimo Ice Centre. This is a different venue and different organizers involved with this new revised event. They were keen to make it go, and their effort is to be commended. They asked lots of questions trying to get on the beer festival learning curve. Tickets \$28.00 includes 4 oz glass plus eight tickets ... additional tickets \$1.50. No tickets at the door.

Breweries represented with assorted and interesting beers included Coal Harbour, Creemore Springs, Lighthouse, Vancouver Island, Phillips, Howe Sound, Whistler, Townsite, Parallel 49, Granville, Driftwood, Spinnakers, Longwood and Wolf.

Not all breweries had reps or brewers or owners. Some breweries had local liquor store Lucky's pour their beers, to save on expenses of doing an event and sending folks. For small breweries it can add up, with all the expenses involved. Lucky's has good people and offers a beer club where breweries come to their sample room and beer club members get a night of learning and tasting. Food was smokies, pretzels, smoked salmon, bread dip. Good show.



McClelland Imports brought eight imports in total, including Fruili from Belgium, Erdinger from Germany, and Steigl from Austria to name a few. He was by himself and had a huge line up from opening to closing. Mark Anthony group had Hell's Gate and Stanley Park as well as imports Grolsch, Holland, Peroni, Italy. Pacific Western was there and always supplies lots of swag.

The music was a live rock band. They kept the music in the range where presenters could talk easily with patrons. The crowd was an assortment from interested beer aficionados, tasting, swirling beer in the glass, to the new-to-the-scene youthful party-goers looking to see what this beer scene is all about. It seemed because it was a hockey rink the vibe was easier going; more room and personal space for folk.

What's Brewing realizes these events are for charities so to be honest there were lots of different messages being sent by the different presenters and the unsuspecting consumer can get their heads full of many bits of information; maybe not all true. Anyway, it's nice to see some excellent imports available for tasting. All the craft beer group are as always the genuine articles. They make it all worthwhile for the patrons and diligently work hard getting the message out at all the local festivals. Good effort on behalf of charity.

### **Crofton Firefighters Kiwanis Beerfest April 2013**

Crofton Community Hall. 100 tickets only at \$50 each. All in. No beer tokens or tickets.

This is truly a community based beer event, with a Mardis Gras theme. This year it was all craft brewers including Big Rock, Moon Under Water, Hoyne, Howe Sound, Lighthouse, Unibroue, Stanley Park, Merridale, Spinnakers, and Granville Island, Creemore Springs. What's Brewing attended this 2<sup>nd</sup>

annual event in the picturesque setting of the community hall looking over to Mount Baker.



Across the road the Firefighters worked all day preparing handcrafted jambalaya and delectable sandwiches for the event. What's Brewing pitched in giving a quick training session to two booths with no reps; helping the pourers to understand what they were doing and saying and why. The volunteers were more than helpful and the local community got a chance to get a beer education and taste extravaganza when it comes to good beer and cider. What's Brewing observed that many attendees were novice to the concept and lingo of good beer and aficionados were scarce.

It was intimate and offered the tasting portion of the festival 7 to 9 pm; followed by open bar and entertainment consisting of a blow up platform for gladiator fighting with rubber staves; to let it all out. Blackjack tables were set up, door prizes were plentiful and all in all it achieved its purpose of fundraising for a good cause and bringing craft brewing into the spotlight in the small community; also offering up a good night out for folk in the community. A good job, and strong effort by organizers.

What's Brewing does its best to make sure no one is forgotten in their community and local efforts to bring consumer choice and education to the public. §

# Welcome to the Revolution

*Excerpted from the Introduction to Craft Beer Revolution by Joe Wiebe (Douglas & McIntyre, May 2013).*

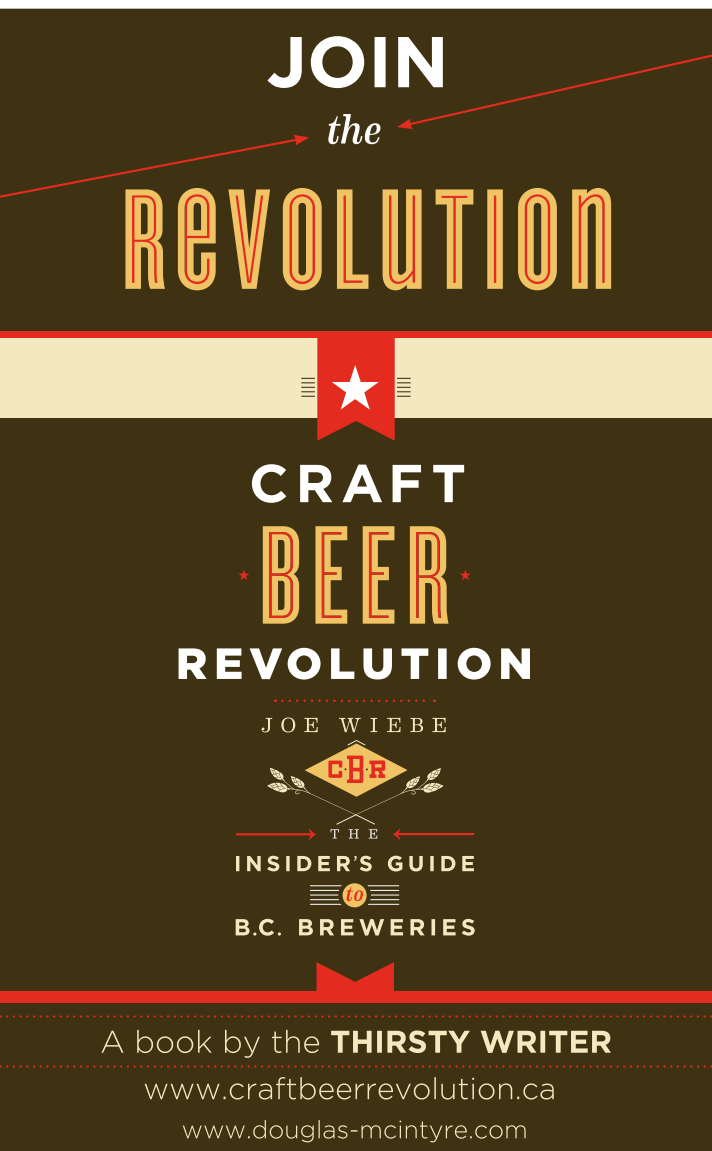
by Joe Wiebe

[www.thirstywriter.com](http://www.thirstywriter.com)

British Columbia's craft beer revolution began thirty years ago in the unlikeliest of spots: the tiny village of Horseshoe Bay, half an hour northwest of Vancouver, which is otherwise best known for its ferry terminal. Back in 1982, a couple of persistent—one might even say stubborn—beer lovers built a small-scale brewery using old dairy equipment and began brewing an English-style mild ale for the Troller Pub across the street.

The Horseshoe Bay Brewery was Canada's first modern-day microbrewery. Its very creation went against the tide of the preceding seventy years. Until then, twentieth century Canadian beer history had been bleak: the Great War, Prohibition (yes, we did suffer from that malady, too, although not for as long as our American neighbours did), the Great Depression, and another world war squeezed much of the life out of the beer industry in Canada. In the post-war era, big breweries monopolized what was left, leaving consumers with almost no choice in what sort of beer they could drink: mainly it was yellow, fizzy and bland.

Although the Horseshoe Bay Brewery only survived for a few years, by building it, Frank Appleton and John Mitchell started a revolution. Since then, Canada's brewing landscape has changed radically and irrevocably. Governments have reformed archaic liquor laws and brewing regulations, often because tenacious brewers pushed them to do so. Where once



it was nearly impossible to get anything other than a nearly flavourless version of Pilsner beer, there are now so many styles of beer available that many craft beer lovers are arguing for a return to simpler styles—like Pilsner.

The word “microbrewery” didn’t even exist before 1982, but it has since become an everyday term that

itself has undergone a revolution, or perhaps a rebranding, into “craft beer.” From an economic standpoint, craft beer has grown from nothing into a significant player in the marketplace—December 2012 sales figures from the provincial liquor distribution branch indicate that as much as 17 per cent of the domestic beer sold in B.C. comes from small- and medium-sized breweries—more than \$150 million annually. And the craft beer market here has been growing at a pace most hedge fund managers would drool over: expanding by more than 25 per cent each year with total sales more than doubling over the past four years. This during a so-called economic downturn.

The first twenty-five years of the microbrewing movement saw relatively steady growth. After Horseshoe Bay broke the ice in 1982, there was an initial burst in 1984 with the arrival of three more breweries that are still flourishing today: Spinnakers, Granville Island Brewing and Vancouver Island Brewery (originally named Island Pacific Brewing). New breweries arrived in waves over the next two decades—and there were many closures, too, as prospective brewers learned of the challenges associated with this brand-new industry.

And then everything exploded. In 2007 there were thirty-five breweries and brewpubs operating in B.C., but in the six years since then, another fifteen have opened, including seven in 2012 alone. Right now, there are fifty craft breweries and brewpubs in B.C., and by the end of the year, as many as eleven more are expected to open, mostly in and around Vancouver.

The craft beer revolution has also spread beyond breweries and brewpubs to include restaurants and bars that are entirely focused on craft beer: so-called

“taphouses” like the Alibi Room and St. Augustine’s in Vancouver that have more than ninety taps between them serving craft beer from B.C., the Pacific Northwest and Europe. Restaurants host beer-pairing dinners and hire certified cicerones (the equivalent of a wine sommelier in the beer world). You can find cask-conditioned beer on tap any day of the week in Vancouver and Victoria, and cask events occur in other communities around the province on a regular basis.



Beer festivals take place—and sell out quickly—in Victoria, Penticton, Vancouver and the Kootenays every year. Many private liquor stores showcase craft beer above and beyond anything else, and there are several specialty distributors devoted to sourcing difficult-to-find craft beers from around the world. And often the people buying these beers are not planning on drinking them any time soon; yes, cellaring can apply to craft beer as well.

### Book launches (open to the general public):

Celebrate with the Thirsty Writer, Joe Wiebe, as he launches his new book, *Craft Beer Revolution: The Insider's Guide to B.C. Breweries*, and speaks about B.C.'s extraordinary craft beer industry. The book will be available for sale for \$19.95 (includes one beer ticket) and Joe will be on hand to sign copies.

Victoria: Wednesday, May 29, 7:00pm at Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub

Vancouver: Monday, June 3, 7:00pm at Yaletown Brewing (part of Vancouver Craft Beer Week)

Watch for other events in other communities all around B.C. in June and July.

For more information follow @CraftBeerRevolu on Twitter or go to [www.craftbeerrevolution.ca](http://www.craftbeerrevolution.ca)

Hops were once a major agricultural crop in B.C. that drew thousands of migrant workers to enormous Fraser Valley farms at the end of summer for the annual harvest, but by the 1980s, that industry had all but died out. Now, a resurgence of interest has brought hop growing back to B.C., and brewers are happy to use these locally sourced products in their beers.

B.C.'s craft beer revolution has been an exciting adventure over the past thirty years, but it's far from over. Vancouver has only recently awakened to craft beer, and now its near-insatiable thirst is leading to the birth of new breweries as well as big expansions for extant operations. Craft breweries across the province from Tofino to Fernie are drawn by Vancouver's gravitational pull—if they brew good beer and can get it there, it will sell. And that, precisely, is what the craft beer revolution has been about from the start: good beer, crafted by folks who care about beer first and foremost, enjoyed by people who crave an authentic, delicious product.

Welcome to the Revolution. §

## CAMRA BC Amateur Brewing Competition 2013

Registration opens **April 29** and closes **May 30**.

Entries accepted **May 6** to **May 30**.

Judging will take place on June 1st and June 8th, if needed, at Vancouver Island Brewing.

New this year is the inclusion of cider and perry.

To register your beer head over to here:

<http://camrabc.brewcomp.com/>

The competition is BJCP registered and is also part of the Canadian Homebrewer of the Year.

[Phillips Brewing](#) will evaluate each category's first place beer and brew the best one in a limited release 650ml bottle. The winning brewer will be invited to the brewery to brew the batch with the Phillips team (no travel or accommodation costs will be covered if someone is travelling from outside of Victoria). The timing of the brew has yet to be established. If your beer wins its category, you'll be invited to submit another bottle for evaluation by the Phillips team.

Phillips Brewing and Matt himself have been very supportive of homebrewers and craft beer aficionados (such as CAMRA) in Victoria. We sincerely thank him and his generous team for this opportunity for homebrewers to live the life of a craft brewer for a day.

# Pilsner

by Ian Lloyd

At one time in North America, the word Pilsner evoked thoughts of green cans with white rabbits. Luckily those days are gone. Today the humble Pilsner is gaining popularity. This is mainly due to availability of imported brands and local brewers putting their own twist on this historic brew. Let us crack open the subject of the noble Pilsner.



You all know I like my beer styles. Depending on who you follow, there are either three (BJCP) or four (GABF) different styles of Pilsner. I happen to think there are more than that. To learn about this great style of beer, we must start at the beginning. In the early days of brewing, all malts were dried over wood fires. This produced beers with a slight smoky flavour; think campfire or bacon. In the early 1800s, the industrial revolution produced paler, cleaner malts suitable for making clear, light bodied beers. But the story of the Pilsner really gets started in 1842.

This editor doesn't give me much space\*, so I will be brief. In 1842, the citizens of Pilsen (Bohemia/Czech Republic) are ticked off by the town's lame beer. They build brewery, hire Bavarian brewer (Josef Groll) and he brews wickedly pale lager beer. It is served in clear glasses, the world freaks out and lagers dominate Europe. German migrants bring lagers to Americans and further domination ensues. World



Wars and Prohibition destroy most breweries, leaving accountants to brew beer. Awesomely full bodied and hoppy Pilsners are downsized to flavourless yellow liquids drunk at sporting events.

Luckily, this story has a happy ending. Some Victoria brewers are serving notable Pilsners. Hoyne has its Hoyner Pilsner all year round, Andrew Tessier releases Swans Trumpeter in the summer, but my favourite is Moon Under Water's unfiltered Pilsner. They all have similar flavours; surprisingly medium bodied with malts that remind you of crackers, straw and honey. Noble hops are appropriate to the style and give a clean, spicy tingle. Local versions might use local hops; so the welcome flavours of floral and citrus might be detected. For those looking for something more, try to find a bottle of Lighthouse Overboard Imperial Pilsner. At 8.5% ABV with a formidable IBU bitterness, this beer is one to be shared.



With such a light flavour, one would think no foods would pair well with the Pilsner. Nothing is further from the truth. The Pilsner has the amazing ability to cut fatty foods to release flavours and calm spicy foods. Every Thai restaurant should have a good Pilsner available to enjoy. The bright carbonation and crisp bitterness tempers the spicy oiliness of this cuisine. Ditto for Indian and Ethiopian food.

Light shellfish are also excellent pairing options with this lighter beer. The hop snap is clean and mild so it will not overpower the delicate nature of shellfish. Shrimp cocktail anyone? Pilsner also tastes great with any light flavoured fatty cheese. My daydreams are filled with Pavlovian images of baked brie covered with apple sauce and a tall glass of Pott's Pils. Maybe you have a craving for a prosciutto and Camembert sandwich in a bap bun. I must not forget my vegan friends: risotto with leeks and enoki mushrooms. Get really adventurous with a dandelion and fiddlehead salad. For a delightful end to a meal, try some white chocolate and a glass of Hoyner Pils. I'm sure you will be surprised how well the flavours complement each other.

In summary: drink more real, local Pilsners.

*\* Happy to set aside as much space as you like, Ian. Looking forward to your treatise next issue - Ed. ☺*



## Clams steamed in Pilsner



Bacon, onion, garlic, and Pilsner flavour the sauce for steamed clams.

4 slices bacon, chopped

1 small onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

1.5 kilos manila, butter or varnish clams, scrubbed

250 mL Pilsner

Fry bacon until golden, about 4 minutes. Add the onion and garlic and continue cooking until the bacon is browned and the onion is tender, about 4 minutes longer.

Stir in the clams and add the Pilsner. Cover the pot and steam the clams for 5 minutes, until they are all open. (Discard any that don't open.)

Serve immediately with crusty fresh bread.

Makes 4 servings §

# London: An Embarrassment of Riches

by **Laura Kotler**

*If a man is tired of London, he is tired of life.* So said Dr. Samuel Johnson, the second-most quoted Englishman in history, after Shakespeare. And he knows of what he speaks.

I've had the good fortune to spend six weeks in the past two years in London, and I'm sure I've just scratched the surface. I will be back! I took advantage of several London Walks, which introduced me to many of the neighbourhoods around Greater London as well as the Square Mile of the City of London itself. Besides learning the history of the area, we visited ancient churches and city buildings, strolled down narrow passageways and observed the juxtaposition of ancient and modern that is today's London. It's exciting! There are a few evening pub walks also: I did one along the Thames River near Blackfriars. I made good use of my Oyster card, the transit pass that gives discounted fares.

There are so many pubs in this city it boggles the mind. Many are run by pubcos and tied to a particular brewery, but there are plenty of free houses. My local friends are CAMRA UK members – one even has a Gold Card, a lifetime membership – and they've introduced me to a number of good craft-brew-serving pubs. Some I can personally vouch for are Bricklayer's Arms (Putney), The Old Fountain (Old Street), Holborn Whippet, Royal Oak (Southwark), Builders Arms (Kensington) and The Black Friar. The Prince Alfred in Maida Vale is a Victorian pub with beautiful wood and etched-glass partitions that you have to duck under to enter the different snugs. The George in Southwark is a



*Skittles pub game at Bricklayer's Arms, Putney*

medieval public house, the only surviving galleried coaching inn in London. It was frequented by both Charles Dickens and William Shakespeare. At the Brunel's Tunnel museum, I bought a little booklet called *A Historical Riverside London Pub Walk*, and I hope to visit sometime the four very old pubs described in it.

I've contributed photos of many pub signs towards 'A British Pub Signs Collection,' which Terry Boorman set up: [www.abritishpubsignscollection.weebly.com/](http://www.abritishpubsignscollection.weebly.com/).

There always seems to be a beer festival happening somewhere. (See <http://www.camra.org.uk/beerfestivals> for a listing.) I attended two. The first featured Yorkshire breweries and was held at Bricklayer's Arms in Putney. It was very cold that evening, and most of the casks were outside on the covered but open-sided patio, so unfortunately the beer was being served too cold. There were 66 choices, and we did the best we could to sample quite a few.

The second was the London Drinker Beer and Cider Festival, organized for the 29<sup>th</sup> year by CAMRA North London branch and held at Camden Centre, near Kings Cross–St Pancras station. I managed to snag a ticket to the trade session, so I hobnobbed a bit and tried free samples of five local beers, some very satisfyingly hoppy, to my taste. It was good to run into fellow British Columbian, Gary Lohin, award-winning brewmaster at Central City in Surrey. He noticed the Great Canadian Beer Festival t-shirt I was wearing. He's been over here brewing a collaboration beer with Shepherd Neame.

The festival venue has two rooms, and at 7:00 pm they opened the balcony for seating. Admission cost is just £3.50 or £2.50 for CAMRA members. This applies to the Wednesday and Thursday 5:00-10:30 pm sessions and Friday noon-10:30 pm session; it's free to enter the Wednesday and Thursday noon-to-3:00 pm sessions. Once inside, you rent or buy a glass, half-pint mug or pint mug, then pay cash to the servers for each beer you want to sample. The prices I saw ranged from £1.60 to £1.90 for half-pints and £3.20 to £3.80 for pints, according to alcohol content or rarity, I presume. Hot food – one meat and one vegetarian dish each day – is prepared by volunteers



*Anneli, Christina, Tracey, Laura, Jo at Bricklayer's Arms beer festival*

in the kitchen in the side hall. Also on the menu were samosas, bhajis, sausages/beans/mashed potatoes, bags of crisps (chips) and soft drinks. (GBP1 = CAD1.55)

The Mayor of Camden said a few words of welcome and admitted she's not a beer drinker yet; and the organizer, Christine Cryne, welcomed us also. Later there was an announcement of the CAMRA North London Pub of the Year winner and runners-up: The Pineapple, The Jolly Butchers and the Snooty Fox.

The kegs are stacked behind long tables, and the servers pour from all of them, so it doesn't matter where along the table you manage to squeeze in. The room became extremely crowded, and it was a challenge to thread one's way through the crowd, but once at the tables, it didn't take too long to get a beer, since there was a good number of servers. One table was set up for ciders and perries, and one area was dedicated to London LocAles – there are now more than 30 small breweries in Greater London. The side hall's bar offered imported beers, mostly bottled. Voting was taking place for the beer of the festival, and results were apparently dominated by dark beers. Five beers that I tried were from London brewers Clarence & Fredericks, Crate, Cronx, Redemption and Sambrook's; one from Windsor & Eton; and one from Liverpool Organic. My favourite of the evening was Crate's IPA.

The CAMRA booth was selling used books, pump clips, beer mats, key chains, memberships, t-shirts, etc. I learned that in the early 1800s there were 33,000 breweries in England, but with the coming of steam engines and rail service, making beer transportation feasible, the number dropped to 17,000 within 20 years.

Looking down from our prime front-row balcony seats, the crowd appeared to be 90 per cent men. Interesting. I know of some craft-beer-appreciating

women who have formed their own group, which selects a good pub around London to socialize at once a month. There is another group similar to CAMRA, with the name Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood, which I haven't checked out yet. The website says "our aims are similar to those of CAMRA, but because of our entirely voluntary set-up the emphasis is mainly on social activities within the local branches – brewery visits are particularly popular." This 50-year-old organization has branches throughout the UK and a large and active chapter in Baltimore USA. They support the brewing of beers which are naturally conditioned in the cask, made from traditional ingredients, without artificial additives.

The Market Porter pub, outside Borough Market in Southwark, has an early morning opening on weekdays, 6:30-9:00 a.m. Tracey and I arrived at 7:30, had two half-pints from their good selection and enjoyed the relative emptiness and quiet that is not the usual atmosphere in a pub. At 9:00 we crossed the street to Monmouth Coffee Company for amazingly good filter coffee and their all-you-want bread-and-jam deal. Strangely, the market itself (across the street) doesn't open officially until 11:00 a.m., but at 10:00 we found several booths already trading. It was a novel experience to be drinking beer at a pub so early in the day!

Around the corner on Southwark Street is the former Hop Exchange building. Opened in 1867, it served as the centre for hop trading. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century hops were harvested in Kent, brought to London by rail or up the River Thames, then stored in the warehouses in the Borough area. The glass roof allowed trading to occur under natural light. After a fire in 1920, the top two storeys were removed, and the building was converted into offices. It is listed as a historic building, and now serves as a sumptuous venue for parties, exhibitions, film shoots and receptions. The hop-



*The Market Porter, Southwark*

decorated frieze remains above the main entrance.

<http://www.hopexchange.co.uk/gallery.html>

I mentioned in my July-August 2012 article that CAMRA UK has a major campaign underway to stop the government's escalating beer duty, whereby every year the duty on all beers is put up by inflation plus 2 per cent. As of March 2013 I can now write that the campaign was successful! They're celebrating their activism: "Yesterday's end to the hated beer duty escalator plus a surprise cut in beer duty of 1 penny was a huge vote of confidence in beer and pubs ... The last time beer tax went down was in 1959!" They had over 108,000 signatures on an e-petition; 8,000 CAMRA members wrote to their local MPs; and they held a Mass Lobby day and met with 200 MPs. Well done!

I read this explanation of the origin of CAMRA UK:

It was founded in the most westerly pub in Europe, Druger's Bar in Dunquin, County Kerry, when four young men from the northwest of England were on holiday. Fed up with the increasing bad quality of beer in Britain that was too fizzy, lacked character and had no taste, they decided to form a Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale. The name was changed in 1973 to make it easier to say, to Campaign for Real Ale. Today there are over 140,000

members, and it is the most successful single-issue consumer campaign group in Britain. It campaigns to preserve traditional real ales and ciders and traditional pubs too. It has over 200 branches. There are now around 700 craft microbreweries in the UK, producing distinctive real ales, and still many good regional brewers who have survived the glut of takeovers by international companies.



*Laura at Market Borough's morning opening*

When you need a break from pubs, London has a limitless number of things to see and do: national galleries, historic buildings, live theatre, monuments with great views from their tops, fascinating smaller museums and all the other tourist attractions. I won't be tiring of London anytime soon.

I did travel around to other places in England and Wales, but I dare say London was the most engaging place and is foremost in my mind. Here are a few brief notes though, including mentions of some very historic pubs:

In **Newcastle** I did what one ought: I went to The Strawberry, ordered a Newcastle Brown Ale in a logo-embazoned half-pint glass and had fun saying, "I'm gannin' to see a man about a dog."

In **Brighton**, friends and I enjoyed the Evening Star pub, just down the road from the rail station. Dark Star Brewery began in its cellar but has now moved to

larger premises. The pub offers a wide selection of beers, including at least seven cask ales.

At the tourist information centre in **Nottingham** I picked up not only the local CAMRA branch's magazine but also a free, pocket-sized guide called *Real Ale Trail*, with a map showing 14 of the best pubs in town, and a CAMRA booklet called *Discover the Route to Real Ale*, with 46 recommended pubs in the region, the map showing public transit routes and Park & Ride points. You can buy a "Kangaroo ticket" to use all day on any bus, train or tram.



*Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem, Nottingham*

I visited Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem, its interior walls carved into the stone cliff on which sits Nottingham Castle, built 1068 for William the Conqueror. The brewhouse for the castle evolved into a pub. I was treading the path of Nottingham's venerable son,

Robin of Lockley, and his nemesis, the Sheriff of Nottingham. The pub claims to be the oldest pub in England. It was previously known as the Pilgrim and had a connection with the Court of St. John of Jerusalem. I heard also that knights would have a drink here before leaving on Crusade, hence the current name. This unique pub is full of character, history, caves and alcoves and, apparently, ghosts.



*The Eclipse Inn, Winchester*

Also in Nottingham were the Cock & Hoop, whose comfortable armchairs gave me a contented afternoon break, and Vat & Fiddle, where I sampled a tray of six Castle Rock Brewery beers.

**Coventry** has The Golden Cross, in a medieval timber-framed building from 1583, with jettied upper floors.

Two ancient pubs in **Salisbury** are The Chough (say *chuff*, it's a crow-like bird with red legs) and The Haunch of Venison. The Chough, dating from the early 14th century when it was a coaching house next to the marketplace, is said to be haunted by spirits of prisoners held in the building's dungeons before their public punishments or hangings. The Haunch of Venison housed craftsmen working on the now-famous cathedral spire in 1320.

**Winchester** is home to The Eclipse Inn, originally the rectory of 16<sup>th</sup>-century St. Lawrence Church.

So much to explore and savour in Britain! I'm a fan. §



On a completely different topic, I know many beer-lovers make the journey to Portland, Oregon, for the annual Oregon Brewers' Festival in July, but let's not forget the same city for the North American *Organic* Brewers' Festival, June 27-30. I wrote about it in the September-October 2008 newsletter. I think it's amazing that there are enough organic brewers to warrant a festival.

See <http://www.naobf.org/>.



# Ullage and Spillage

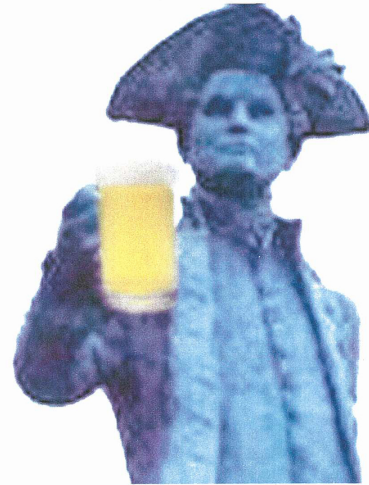
BY J. RANDOM

CAMRA Vancouver has always had a strong linkage with home brewing. In the year we started up, the spouse and I trogged around the few home brew suppliers (they mostly sold winemaking stuff and a few beer kits) asking them to display our primitive poster with the original CAMRA Vancouver figurehead, George Vancouver holding a beer. Our second president's moniker was and is 'homebrewboy.' These days there is considerable overlap between the membership of CAMRA Vancouver and the VanBrewers, of which more later.

There are several good reasons for home brewing. I have been influenced by three of them at various stages of my life. I first started for the same reason many do: to lower my bar bills. I did not have much disposable income as a student. Fortunately, I moved in with a bunch of other students in a flat in Acton, West London. They were already brewing their own beer and I learned from them. My brewing slackened off while I was busy with my PhD and getting married, but it then got its second stimulus after I was offered a job in Canada.

My second good reason for home brewing was moving to Vancouver in 1986 knowing that there was an extremely limited supply of beer that I would be prepared to drink. Granville Island Brewery was just producing a lager; getting to the Troller at Horseshoe Bay by public transit would be a long and involved trip; Spinnakers would be a day trip. I shipped my primitive full-mash equipment over from England not being sure what equipment I would find here. At first, we were living in the Vancouver underground where the temperatures were just right for fermentation, if a little cool for human beings.

## CAMRA BC VANCOUVER CHAPTER



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Contact information: Visit our web site at  
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*The first ever CAMRA Vancouver advertising poster.*

The female spouse started thinking about moving to anything-but-a-basement-suite because of the enormous spiders that would scuttle audibly across the concrete floor, and probably inaudibly across the bed, at night. I was not convinced we should spend the extra on rent – right up to the point where I found a banana slug half way up my fermenter. Thankfully it was not halfway down, laying a sinuous slime trail. That was it. We moved.

In the late '80s and early '90s, the exponential increase in the B.C. craft beer industry based on the success of those early pioneers (Thanks John Mitchell, Frank Appleton and Paul Hadfield) meant I had less and less reason to brew my own. I was also

earning better money in a real job so I could afford better beer. My home brewing slackened off again but I did anticipate getting back into it, so I put together a decent full-mash system, and created a dedicated space in the apartment. My plan was my third good reason for home brewing would be a productive hobby in retirement, not to mention lowering my bar bills. It was not to be. The spouse retired first, for health reasons, and decided we were going to re-start brewing right away. Well, it seems my skills are seriously rusty, out of date, and not at all up to speed with the increased availability of equipment and ingredients. Fortunately for us, there is VanBrewers, of which more later.



Home brewing basically led to the original incarnation of the English pub. Hundreds of years ago in England, many people brewed their own beer, some did it better than others. I am sure people

shared their beer with each other as the VanBrewers do today and eventually people figured out who brewed the best beer in the village. That person went from amateur to professional and their private house became the public house. The transition from home brewer to professional has been going on ever since.

When CAMRA Vancouver visited the Fat Cat Brewery in 2004, the home brewers among us immediately recognized that, bar the fancy mash tun, it was basically a giant home brew operation, even down to the copper pipe-in-pipe counterflow wort chiller. I don't think many people start home brewing with the express intent of becoming a professional but right now, VanBrewers seems to be

the farm team for the craft brewing industry in Vancouver.

Graham is lead brewer at Parallel 49 and Danny is set to join him when he finishes his Masters degree. Anders brews for Russell. Zak is at Central City. Tak is brewing at Steamworks where we really hope he will be able to showcase his skills in high-flavour low alcohol content English styles. There are probably others I am not aware of.

Craft brewery owners that came to the industry from engineering or finance might consider home brewing a threat to their market potential, but that is far from the truth. Dropping in at a VanBrewers meeting reveals that many of those familiar faces at cask nights and beer festivals are local home brewers.

Cheers!

# Calendar

- Details on Vancouver area events at <http://camravancouver.ca/events/>
- Details on Fraser Valley area events at [http://camrafraservalley.ca/?page\\_id=89](http://camrafraservalley.ca/?page_id=89)
- Details on Victoria area events at <http://camra.ca/events/>

**Got an opinion? Share  
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