

# Politicians 'failed the pub industry'

MP backs trade at Beer Group dinner

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Politicians have failed the pub and brewing industry, admitted Andrew Griffiths, MP for Burton-on-Trent, and the chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group (APPBG).

Speaking to MPs and members of the trade at the annual APPBG dinner last week, he claimed that it was time for politicians to do "much more".

He said: "We love British beer and love the pub industry. We want to see the renaissance of the pub and bar industry. "British beer is something we should be proud of. We should do more to celebrate the best British products. We, as politicians, have let you down. Whilst we



Address: Andrew Griffiths

all support the beer industry and pubs, over successive years the Government has, in many ways, made it difficult for you to trade.

"We have to recognise this in Westminster and, more importantly, in No 10."

He said the Government's

'Big Society' policy was encapsulated by the community pub, saying: "We talk about binge-drinking and the scourge of alcohol in society. The community pub is not the problem, it is the solution to solving binge-drinking."

He also claimed the shift towards people buying alcohol from supermarkets rather than pubs has "caused the breakdown in society".

Griffiths asked MPs to pledge to do something for local pubs and breweries in their constituency.

He also called on MPs, when they volunteer in their community, to consider working a shift in their local.

"Not only would you learn something, you would demonstrate your commitment to community pubs," he added.

■ **Would you like your local MP to work a shift in your pub? Email michelle.perrett@wrbm.com**

## Sharp's man hailed as Brewer of the Year

Sharp's head brewer, Stuart Howe, was handed the accolade of Brewer of the Year 2011 at the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group's (APPBG's) annual awards dinner.

The panel of judges from the Institute of Brewing & Distilling (IBD), based its decision on Howe's commitment to education and development of technical competence.

Dan Rogerson MP, vice-chancellor of the APPBG, said: "Stuart has established a reputation for developing new brands and for evolving existing ales.

"He has played an important part in encouraging publicans and consumers to recognise that beer is the perfect accompaniment to food, working to brew

bespoke products that have become well-known brands in their own right."

Howe said: "I owe a vast debt of thanks to the team at the brewery for all their hard work and commitment in making the beers and the business what it is today."

Past APPBG Brewer of the

Year winners include Steve Wellington, of Molson Coors, and Stefano Cossi, from Thornbridge.

Beer Drinker of the Year was Sriram Aylur, chef at Indian restaurant Quilon. Kelham Island's David Wickett received a lifetime achievement award.



Cheers: Howe, left, receiving the award from Nigel Evans, MP for Ribble Valley and APPBG member

## Guv'nor

Steve Haslam



## Don't under-estimate the power of iDraught

Almost five months ago we were offered a trial of the new iDraught monitoring system.

I hasten to add, this was after I had asked about the possibility of it becoming available. Once agreed, it was installed swiftly and efficiently within a week.

Having informed all our staff it was now in place, we agreed with our teams an eight-week period that any data collected would be used for training with no repercussions.

That period has now gone and we are now well advanced into working with everybody to use what I have to say is the most compelling training tool you are ever likely to come across.

From head office, the feedback is brilliant, and the data we are now producing is quick and easy to turn round into a cost-saving conversation.

When I say cost-saving, a more accurate description would be a saving against waste.

Poor practice by staff or in some cases, just a reminder that staff need additional training, has led to amazing results.

One member of staff in one shift on average cost us 60p per pint on bad practice, just on the Peroni they sold.

Needless to say, this was identified very

quickly with iDraught and rectified through additional training immediately.

So why are so many people against the power of this training tool?

I guess it's the Big Brother eye-in-the-sky syndrome. But if you've got nothing to hide, then embrace it.

For us, this is a tool that can potentially save many thousands of pounds every year.

So if you think you could improve your yield, your quality, your loss of products (theft), your bottom line, then this, I have to say, is guilty of being able to assist on all levels.

In an industry beset by margin erosion this can give you back margins. Why wouldn't you want it?

And, as a footnote, a quote from one of our managers when cleaning data showed a lack of chemicals used, and too much water pulled through: "We never had a problem before."

Answer: "We never had a way of knowing before."

Upshot: cleaner lines, better quality, less water used (and water costs money) and outside of this, yields are consistent and on the up.

So my advice (for what it's worth) is: if you're looking to improve and protect your margins and have a great training tool, it's well worth a look.

Also, on the flip side, waste less, buy less and if everyone saved a barrel a year, then that's one hell of a lot of barrels that somebody's not selling.

**Steve Haslam is founder of award-winning multiple operator TLC Inns**

**“In an industry beset by margin erosion, this can give you back margins. Why wouldn't you want it?”**