

# **SINCLAIR BREWERIES LTD PRESS RELEASE**

## **PORTMAN RULING ON SKULL SPLITTER ALE WELCOMED BY BREWERY**

Sinclair Breweries Ltd has today (Tuesday 23 December) welcomed the decision by drinks industry watchdog, the Portman Group, not to uphold a complaint against its Skull Splitter ale.

The future of the award winning ale - produced by the Sinclair owned Orkney Brewery – was in doubt after a report claimed its Viking branded bottles had an “aggressive” theme.

The report, by management consultancy PIPC, was commissioned by the Portman Group to investigate compliance with an industry code of practice on the naming, packaging and promotion of alcohol.

Skull Splitter, an 8.5 per cent ale created over 20 years ago and sold internationally, had been highlighted in the PIPC report because its name “implied violence” and the potential impact of the strength on the drinker.

Fearing one of its longest established and most popular ales could be withdrawn from sale in the UK, Sinclair Breweries Ltd launched a campaign to save Skull Splitter, a former Champion Winter Ale of Britain.

Already commended for leading the way with efforts to increase awareness of sensible drinking, the brewery stressed to the Portman Group that the ale was in fact named after Thorfinn Hausakluif, the Seventh Viking Earl of Orkney - nicknamed “Skull Splitter”.

The brewery’s campaign received support from around the world and had the backing of several politicians.

Responding to the Portman Group’s decision not to uphold the complaint against Skull Splitter, Norman Sinclair, managing director of Sinclair Breweries Ltd, said: “I’m absolutely delighted by this announcement and very relieved that Skull Splitter can continue to be enjoyed here in the UK. It’s been a long process but, as responsible brewers, we accepted it was something we just had to undergo if we were to save our ale. Our campaign was vigorous, but we tried to cooperate with the Portman Group as much as possible, recognising that they also had a job to do. Clearly they’ve listened to what we’ve said and I think that’s very encouraging for the drinks industry as a whole.”

According to Mr Sinclair the level of support the Skull Splitter campaign received had been “overwhelming”.

“We’ve had representations from all over the world,” he said. “We knew Skull Splitter was popular, but the response to the news that it was under threat was simply staggering. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the UK and overseas who gave us their backing. It’s the best Christmas present we could have received and some much needed festive cheer during what is a difficult period for the brewing industry.”

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