



Malted Barley Appreciation Society

December, 2000 Newsletter

English Pub Crawl

by Peach Raffel

In late October I went to England to visit some old friends and, while my main reason for going over was to see them, don't discount the pull of British beer. Despite being the butt of fierce teasing for both keeping notes on the beers I drank and lists of pubs I wanted to try, I persevered in order to share my experiences with you. Going to the pub was an exercise in their indulging their American visitor: my friend Tizzie, whom I was staying with, rarely drinks, and when she does, it's usually some sweet wine-coolerish thing, and Irene, my other good friend in London, prefers mixed drinks but I think the chance to make fun of me made them eager to be dragged around.

This Month's Guest Speaker

Roger Briess



Briess Maltings, Chilton, WI

and

Dan Shelton, Shelton Broers

Meetings are held at Mugs Ale House, on the corner of 10th St. and Bedford Ave in Brooklyn on the second Wednesday of each month. This month, the meeting will be on the 13th.

However, my first pub stop was alone, after a hard day of tramping around Chelsea. It was raining and I ducked into the **Chelsea Potters** just because I was tired and wet, and I needed a pick me up before fighting the masses on the Tube. The pub was fairly standard, with a short wooden bar, carpet, mirrors, a large bell for last orders, and pop music playing in the background. Since I'd only just sat down, I gave my table to two lost-looking women carrying cranberry drinks. They thanked me and declared me a "star." I found a stool near the window, close to the heat, and

began to dry out before trying a sip of my **Courage Best Bitter**. It was like coming home. The warm, smooth, balanced flavor that bordered on sweet was exactly what I needed, and so I happily sat and read my book for the length of time it took me to finish my pint.

A night or so later I found myself in Waterloo Station saying goodbye to Tizzie's mom and sister. After a full day of shopping and eating they were heading for the suburbs but had enough time for a quick drink. I don't remember its name, but it was a typical commuter's bar that could be in any city. The highlight certainly wasn't my beer, a watery and too-cold pint of **John Smith's Extra Smooth Bitter**. What made the place memorable was stealing a pint glass at Tizzie's request as a replacement for one that'd gotten broken. Some places just deserve to have their glasses stolen.

By this time I was in full tourist mode and I made the South Bank of London a full day excursion, having lunch at **Anchor Bankside** after going to the restored Globe theater and before heading to the newly opened Tate Modern.



The Anchor is a nice traditional pub on the South Bank very convenient to all the tourist sights, but it's more than just a tourist trap, there's a serious amount of history there: not only is it on a Roman gravesite, it was also the site of a plague pit in the early 1600s. The original Globe theater was only 60 meters southwest of it, and next door is Clink Prison, which may have also owned the brewery early on. The current

rent building is mostly late 18th century due to a fire

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that destroyed the original building. Samuel Johnson drank here, working on his classics and a bit of his Dictionary.

Besides the history to appreciate, there's good beer to be drunk and standard food to be eaten: the **Marston's Pedigree Bitter**, at 4.5%, had a very clean taste that I really enjoyed. The CAMRA guide calls it a "fine example of a Burton Bitter with fine balance between malt and hops." I also had a 1/2 pint of **Wadsworth 6X**, which was milder and less to my taste but still flavorful. Both helped to wash down my traditionally English sandwich of cheese and pickle (read: sweet relish). There were soups and a full Sunday roast available. As I ate and drank I amused myself by contemplating the pithy sayings painted on the ceiling beams, i.e., "There are 2 kinds of truth...real truth...and made up truth" or "Everything tempts the man who fears temptation" as well as taking notes on its history. There is outside seating by the Thames, and friendly staff. Guinness, Fosters, and Courage are all available. Small, chopped up rooms make for more intimacy than the largeness of the building would lead you to believe, but I suspect most of the clientele were tourists, not locals.

Hitting my stride, I spent the next afternoon with Irene, drinking in pubs on my list to visit and a few she knew of. She was abstaining, as she was recovering from a nasty bout of flu, but was enthusiastic about watching me drink. The **Cittie of York** was our first stop and something of a priority to me, being right by my old job. Try going around midday to avoid the suits and ties of the City workers (mostly lawyers and bankers) that appear after working hours. There are nice private booths and a high glass ceiling, making it one of the more visually unusual pubs in London, especially considering its age. If you get there at night, go to the downstairs bar. And you can't go wrong with the **Sam Smiths Old Brewery**

Bitter they serve.

We then walked over to **Ye Old Cheshire Cheese** on Fleet Street, another Sam Smith's pub, where the second 1/2 pint of the Old Brewery Bitter went down even smoother. Sam Johnson drank there as well, and it's a homier-feeling pub, with a friendly bartender.



Even so, we couldn't sweet-talk him out of the nice Sam Smith poster that was hanging on the wall, though he offered empty bottles instead in an effort to satisfy our desire for Sam Smith paraphernalia.

The next day I'd decided to take a walking tour of Westminster, and arrived early to have lunch before the

walk set out. I found myself at **The Red Lion**, drinking a **Benkins Best Bitter** (3.7%) which just seemed to be a mild bitter with little aftertaste while eating chicken soup with bread. Not surprisingly, this pub also had a fair amount of history: Built in 1732, it has a small dining room upstairs and outside tables. As I ate, Albinoni played in the background, and I read the plaque laying out the pub's history: it was rebuilt in 1900, but a pub has been on the site since 1434 (that one was cheerfully named "Hopping Hall"). Dickens apparently had this pub in mind when describing his childhood adventures in Westminster.



That night I was out with Tizzie and Peter, who were determined I hit some more places on my pub list. We started out at the Freedom Brewery, a micro-brewery in the heart of London which was not a pri-

ority for me, but happened to be convenient. The decor was standard American microbrew: Copper kettles behind glass, hardwood floors, and a minimalist, brushed steel decor that my British companions approved of. The beer was excellent, which certainly helped me to feel better about missing “real” British beer. Their **Pale Ale** (4.5%) was extremely fresh and delicious, well balanced and slightly sour. The Pilsner (5%) was also refreshing and fruity, and was declared to be “thirst quenching” by Peter. A classic, tasty beer that I would have been happy to drink all night.

We stopped in nearby Chinatown for plenty of food before continuing our drinking at **Green Man** and **French Horn**, where we later hooked up Irene and Kim. I started with the **Courage Director’s Bitter** (4.8%). Its full taste, creamy, well-balanced and smooth maltiness met with my enthusiastic approval. The CAMRA guide agreed: “Full bodied malty, fruity, hoppy flavor with deep bittersweet finish. Rounded, full drinking hoppy premium ale.” Next I tried the **Courage Best Bitter** (4.0%), which was watery in comparison to the Directors, but still had a tangy and dry flavor. Though thinner than the Directors, it was certainly drinkable, just milder and less sweet.



At this point in my visit Tizzie and I drove north for a few days to visit the Lake District, which is absolutely spectacular. Besides the scenery, the beer is worth the 4+ hour drive from London; having established ourselves in Windermere, one of the larger touristy towns of Cumbria, we quickly found **Hole Int Wall**, a CAMRA pub with a plaque declaring, “Hole Int Wall has appeared in the 1st 10 editions of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 1974-1983 and is therefore highly commended for the quality of its draught beer and is to be congratulated for its splendid contribution to the real ale cause.” I heartily agree, even 17 years later. We returned a second

night even after enduring the live music tribute to classic 60s artists that assaulted us when we walked in the for the first time, because besides the “quality of its draught beer”, Hole Int Wall is a really nice local pub with a friendly clientele of older people and occasional dog. Food is available, as is a nice selection of general Irish single malts, including a featured “malt of the month”. Ceramic pots of all kinds hang from the low ceiling, and stuffed animals hang from the walls - squirrel, pheasant, and heads of boar and ram. And as I was enjoying the beer, Tiz matched me with cranberry juice and lemonade made by the landlord’s mother, the last batch of the season. I stuck to the stronger stuff, trying a **Robinsons Best Bitter**, which was yet another good, balanced bitter with more flavor than most, and a **Frederics Premium Beer**, which was creamy, smooth, with good mouth feel, but lighter. The CAMRA guide notes that it’s brewed for thirst - quenching characteristics and hop-piness, which might explain why my American palate liked it so much. The **Hartley’s XB** (4%) was nicely balanced with a slight sour aftertaste. And the **Guinness** tasted excellent but was colder than it should be, due to the current (marketing?) preference in the UK.



Probably the highlight of my trip through England and English pubs was on my last night there, where we all met up at the **Flask**, a freehouse in the Highgate section of Northern London. It’s homey and warm (literally, we sat next to a fire, which was very nice seeing as we’d all been rained on to varying degrees) and serves just about anything you could wish for: **Old Speckled Hen**, **Adnams Bitter**, **Burton’s Ale**, **London Pride**, etc. I particularly liked the Burton’s Ale, with its strong malty taste. My English friends, by this time almost beyond teasing me for being square enough to take notes while drinking, were trying to help: Irene decided it reminded her of

Camembert, while Tizzie approved of it because it had little aftertaste. The London Pride was also very fresh and smooth with a nice balanced taste, but my notes become vague around here. I blame the company and the alcohol, but it was a great pub to spend the afternoon in.

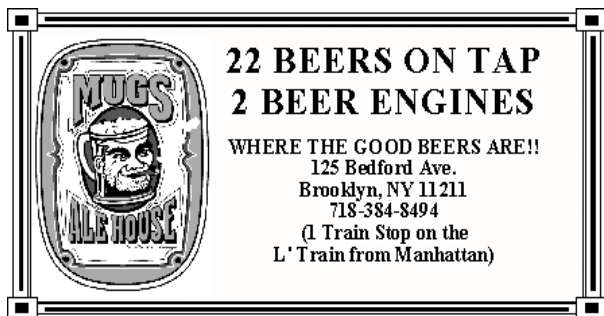
Adjusting to American beers was a bit of shock to my taste buds upon my return, but I think I've managed. After all, the thing that makes beer taste even better is drinking it with good friends, and you can do that no matter where you are.



A Couple of Rounds With a Heavyweight

by Bill Coleman

I've enjoyed the beers of Heavyweight Brewing of Ocean Township, NJ, since they first came out. A brewery specializing in big, robust styles is close to my taste in beer, as both homebrewer and consumer. They also have a great policy of guest brewers helping with specialty beers, resulting in some unusual brews. So I was happy to be invited by Tom Baker to be guest brewer for a session of barleywine, planned as Heavyweight's heaviest beer yet! My response was an immediate "yes!"



Armed with recipes from previous homebrewed barleywines, and bottles from two batches, brewed a year apart, I met with Tom and fellow homebrewer Warren Becker for a bit of research at Mugs Ale House in Brooklyn. We looked over recipes, sampled homebrew, and discussed the recipe we would make at his brewery. Aided by the well-stocked cellar at Mug's, we also sampled some excellent examples of English barleywines and old ales, such as Thomas Hardy, Gale's Prize Old Ale, and J.W. Lee's Harvest Ale. We decided to lean the beer towards the English end of the Barleywine spectrum, with strong malt character, and to name it Old Salty, inspired by a certain canine cartoon character I have had some dealings with.

Tom got back to me soon with his finished recipe.

Malts included British Crisp Marris Otter Pale Malt, and Belgian specialty grains (Caravienne, Caramunich, Biscuit, Aromatic and Special B), giving the beer a complex, rich malt character. The base hop was Challenger, a flavorful, but medium-high alpha ("8) acid hop, and additions of Styrian Goldings and other hops. There was also turbinado and regular sugar, to increase the gravity without adding body.

Tom has a 2-day brew schedule: his boiling kettle is 10 barrels in size, while his fermenters and mash tun are 15 barrels. He brews one 7-barrel batch on the first day (with lots of extra room in the mash tun for a high-gravity, grain-heavy brew), and the next day, brews a similar batch. With this system, he can always modify the recipe the second day if needed. This gives him a head start on his yeast, which begins fermenting a half-batch the first day, the second half added only when the first half is at full krausen. This is good for a brewery specializing in big beers!

We scheduled the brew days for Friday, September 1 and Saturday, September 2. Tom and his wife, Peggy Zwerver, who handles the business end of the brewery, generously put me up for the night at their home between sessions.

On Friday morning, Tom had to drive out to Danbury, CT, to pick up some London Ale yeast helpfully donated by Paul Saylor of Colorado Brewing for our Barleywine batch. After getting his yeast, Tom picked me up in Hoboken.

There were some delays in covering all this territory, so we got a late start the first day. Tom and I arrived at the brewery after noon, where we were greeted by Peggy, who arranged for our lunch and took some photos as we began to prepare the batch.

After measuring out specialty grains, Tom began pouring the grains into the mill hopper. Then, an auger carries the grain directly to the mash tun, where it is mixed with hot water before being dropped into the tun. My job at this time was to stir and mix the grain with the water some more. It was a hot



over the tun, but I was happy to avoid carrying the 55-pound bags of grain over into the hopper. Soon the grain was mixed in, and it was time for the mash rest.

During the rest times, like this one, I was able to sample the Heavyweight beers, and enjoyed them all. The full-time beers are Lunacy, a Belgian-style spiced pale ale at 7.7% ABV, and Baltus O.V.S., described by the brewery as a “hybrid” style, which it certainly is when you consider that is made with both English and German malts, and a Belgian yeast strain, to an ABV of 8.2%. The specialty beers are Perkuno's Hammer (8%), a Baltic porter; Two Druids' Solstice Ale (7.3%), a “gruit” beer made with spices, and Turbidity Wheat (6.8%), a weizenbock made with 98% wheat. Tom had just brewed a batch of the Perkuno's Hammer, so I was able to sample this rich, malty beer from the fermenter, only a week or so since brewing, a great pleasure. When the mash



was done, recirculating began, with a unique Rube Goldberg contraption Tom had rigged up from various plumbing parts.

Then the lautering began, and as it continued, we used a hoe to rake the spent grains into large trash cans, to be driven to a nearby pig farm. Now that's recycling!

Soon the lautering was done, and the wort began to boil. Then the sugar and the first hop addition was made. As we prepared to take the trash cans to the farm, we realized that the boil had stopped. The hogs were going to have to wait! It became clear that the water from the boiler was not making it to the brew kettle, where it provided heat. Tom had to crawl among the pipes to check connections and figure out where the problem was. After taking apart a number of different pipes and flushing them with water, he cleaned the part that was clogged, and the began water flowing.

The boiler started up again, and soon the wort returned to a boil. I got to measure out the various hop additions on the scale, and was able to add the next

couple of additions. Peggy returned around this point to see the progress we had made, and mixed the final addition, which was a combination of yeast nutrient, Irish moss, and other clearing agents.

Then the boil was ended, and the whirlpool began, at 8:30. A final hop addition was made at the time of whirlpool. Then, the wort was rested, and then was chilled and pumped to the fermenter, where the yeast was added. At this point, the gravity was a little low, but we would make a higher-gravity batch the next day to make up for it. When we left the brewery, it was after 10, and so we crashed out quickly, with plans to start early the next day.

We arrived bright and early the next morning for brewing. Happily, yesterday's batch day was already bubbling away in an airlock. Tom had me measure out the specialty grains for the milling, and I struggled as best as I



could to carry 55-pound bags up to the hopper of the mill.

After I stumbled through dumping a couple of bags into the hopper, Tom returned me to the job of stirring the grain in the lauter tun and put in the remaining grains, including a extra bag of pale ale malt, to increase the gravity. When the

mash was begun, we drove the grain to the pig farm. Some pigs were actually boars, large and impressive. The baby-sized pigs began eating quickly, but the grownups were asleep.

We returned to find the mash nearly done, and again recirculated and began lautering. This being Saturday, there were visitors to the brewery, including one who had traveled from Syracuse, NY (a five-hour drive). Pictures were taken for the brewery's website (<http://heavyweightbeer.com>). When we were done sparging, we began the boil. With an early start, we had time for a longer boil to get the gravity up higher to a desired level. Between visitors, we filled up many full-sized trash cans of spent wort for the hogs.

This boil worked out perfectly, with no clogged pipes. Again I had measured out the hops, and added

them. By the end of the boil, we had boosted the gravity substantially. The gravity of the full batch would be around 1.102, with 75 IBU's. We whirlpooled, rested, and ran the wort to the fermenter.

After cleanup, the brew session was ended, and we stopped in at **Helmer's** in Hoboken, and were happy to see that they had Heavyweight beer on draft for the first time; **Turbidity** wheat beer, which goes very well with the excellent German food served at Helmer's.

After a couple of beers and a bite to eat, I headed home tired, but quite happy with my first adventure in pro brewing. I look forward at any time to doing it again, and I thank Tom Baker and Peggy Zwerver for their hospitality and the opportunity to make a full-sized batch of beer.



Contests, Festivals, and Other Goings On **The Return Of The Son Of Spirit Of Belgium**

The Spirit of Belgium is returning to the Nation's Capital. Brewers United for Real Potables is proud to announce two days of beer, food, discussion and fun are scheduled for Arlington Virginia over the Martin Luther King Day Weekend, **January 13 -14, 2001**.

The third SOB will feature the best parts of the two previous SOBs. There will be tasting sessions, lectures on Belgian beer styles and the brewing process, a homebrew competition and the weekend will culminate with a Belgian banquet and award ceremony featuring keynote speaker Michael Jackson.

Saturday, January 13 will feature educational seminars followed by a reception and tasting of imported Belgian Beers. Sunday will feature the homebrew contest, a tasting of American-brewed Belgian-style beer, and the banquet featuring food prepared by a Belgian chef and an address by renowned beer writer Michael Jackson.

Saturday's events will take place at the George Mason

University, Arlington Campus professional Center, and Sunday's events will be held at the nearby American Legion Banquet Hall.

Tickets for the event go on sale November 1 and cost \$100. Beginning December 1 the ticket price will rise to \$120. One-day tickets will be available for \$70, which will increase to \$75 beginning December 1.

A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the Comfort Inn in the nearby Ballston area. Price is \$59 per night for 1-4 people and may be reserved by calling 703.247.3399. Please remember to mention BURP's Spirit of Belgium (group #1306) and make reservations by December, 31 2000 to obtain the special rate.

For more information please refer to the official Spirit of Belgium web site at

<http://www.burp.org/SoB2001/index.html>.

You may also call BURP President John Dittmann at 703.641.9760 or Steve Marler at 703.527.4628, or email SoBinfo@burp.org.

Boston Homebrew Competition

The Boston Wort Processors are pleased to pre-announce the Seventh Annual Boston Homebrew Competition (BHC7) to be held on February 10, 2001 in Boston Mass. Details will be posted here and on our website (<http://www.wort.org>) once they are firmed up a bit more.

However, most data, forms etc from last years competition (which is posted on our website) will still apply. The following are confirmed as of 11/27/00:

All BJCP styles will be judged including meads and ciders. The competition will be held at the Northeast Brewing Company (same venue as last year). Competition date is confirmed as **February 10, 2001**. Entry deadline will likely be set as **February 2, 2001** (this is a Friday). The competition will be part of the 2001 New England Homebrewer of the Year competition circuit (<http://mail.symuli.com/NEHBOTY>)

Help will be needed! Judges, stewards and competition assistance, etc. This is a registered BJCP competition and BJCP points are available.



Best of Brooklyn IV

The **Malted Barley Appreciation Society** will be hosting our fourth annual homebrew competition, Best of Brooklyn IV, at the Brooklyn Brewery on **February 24, 2001**. This AHA sanctioned event will continue the tradition of providing quality judging and rewarding brewers with a prize for first, second, and third place in each category.

There will again be a *First Time Contestants' Best of Show*. Entries will be due by **February 16**, and several local drop off points will be provided. Start brewing now! If you are interested in judging or stewarding at the competition contact Kevin Winn at krewbrew@mindspring.com.