



The Barleycorn Press

Monthly Newsletter Published by the Green Mountain Mashers of Vermont

February, 2002

Volume 13 Issue 2



Beer Drinkers Fail the Bar

by Digby Anderson

Wall Street Journal - January 3, 2002

LONDON -- Christmas was not quite Christmas this year. There was no Christmas Ale.

My local brewery, like many of the smaller English ones, used to brew a special beer to help get through the dreary depths of winter and to celebrate Christmas and New Year. It was called Christmas Ale. Others had names such as Winter Warmer. They were darkish, and quite strong in alcohol. I'd buy a barrel, let it settle -- these beers were "live" beers with live, bottom-sinking yeasts -- then "tap" it on Christmas Eve at the lunch after the Christmas Eve shoot. After tramping for miles over fields, through frosted hedges and across frozen ditches after pheasants and hares, it was back to a roaring wood

fire and a few pints of Christmas Ale.

But the brewery has stopped brewing Christmas Ale. "Booo!" you will chorus. "Bad brewery, fancy ending a centuries-old tradition, merely because of the lust for standardization and profits." There's worse. The loss of the ale roughly coincided with the news that the American brewing company Coors was to acquire a European rival, Carling. "It's a plot." Not that the two were actually connected, but you can see it, can't you, the relentless Americanization of the best of a rich and varied European culture, the McDonaldization of the pint?

What are they drinking to celebrate the new year in Prague, the home of the best pilsener in the world, in Dublin, the

home of Guinness, in Belgium, source of an amazing variety of beers, in England, the country of bitter, mild and old ale? Well, if "they" are under 30 years of age, the answer is Budweiser, and straight out of the bottle. Boo, boo, boo!

There is indeed reason to boo, but not at the brewers and certainly not at American commercial imperialism. It is true that England, especially, has seen a transformation in its beer drinking. English beer is traditionally very different from European lager beer. But it is the lager type that many Britons now drink, and for which they eschew traditional varieties. Furthermore, pubs used to sell the beers produced by the scores of breweries that owned them and this used to mean very different beers in

different pubs. Now the lager types are very standardized.

It's also true that many modern beers are dead not "live." There used to be prominent beers, not only draught but bottled, that continued fermentation until poured. It was the test of a skilled barman to pour the content of two bottles of Bass -- both bottles held in one hand -- into a pint glass, leaving all the sediment in the bottles. Keeping, "racking" and "tapping" traditional live barrels was an art. Not all publicans had the art and the consequences of badly kept beer were felt not just by the taste-buds but by the baser organs.

There has been a backlash, a Campaign for Real Ale, which has held the tide somewhat. But that has led to another novelty. Traditions are things done un-

thinkingly. Traditional beer was drunk as the norm. It was the norm. Drinkers knew who kept the best beer but, apart from that, they did not speak about it. What happens when a tradition is rediscovered, revived, and campaigned for is that it becomes a hobby and a cause. It is endlessly, boringly discussed. Aficionados compete to find the most traditional varieties. And, rapidly, it ceases to be a tradition.

This, to an extent, has happened with micro-breweries in the U.S. It is not uncommon for them to offer "sampler trays" or six different beers in thimbles to taste. Nothing wrong in this but it is the way of the connoisseur, the collector, not the traditionalist. In fact beer drinkers from England are often agreeably surprised by the beer they can find in such micro-breweries. But not by the

places themselves or the ways people drink there. The culture of the micro-brewery is not traditional beer drinking culture.

Nor, for that matter, is the culture of an increasing number of pubs in England. They are not like pubs used to be. They

(Continued on page 2)

In This Issue!


Beer Drinkers Fail Bar	Pages 1 and 2
Next Meeting Info	Page 2
Staff Box	Page 2
Masher Calendar	Page 3
Masher Blowout Info	Page 5

(Continued from page 1)

are cleaner -- even the lavatories are clean. They serve food. They are open at more convenient hours. Ladies are more welcome: At least they are now welcome in all areas of the pub, whereas they used to have defined zones in separate Saloon and Private bars.

Above all, many pubs have become young people's places. So they provide what young people want, raucous music, silly games, new and trendy things. I might as well be straight about it and say that oldies like me, at least the ones I know, hate these new pubs. We don't like the boring new beer, we don't like the compulsory vulgar music, We don't like the number of women. But most we loathe the young people with their pushiness, the ridiculous vanity, their competitive novelty and showing off.

So boo indeed, a thousand times boo. This sea change in the pub is not a change in the producers of beer, or the keepers of pubs and bars, but in the

culture that counts. Bars have always been good indicators of more general social mores. Look at them today and you will see nothing about the power of capitalism and everything you don't want to know about the state of our culture. 

Mr. Anderson is director of the Social Affairs Unit, a think tank in London.

Next Meeting at Robin Orr's in Burlington Monday Feb 4th

The next meeting of the Green Mountain Mashers will take place on Monday, February 4th at the home of Robin Orr in Burlington. Arrive around 7:30pm and the meeting will start shortly after that. As a special treat,

consumers. It is not a conspiracy by American or European brewers. They are simply providing what the new customers want. The beer is bland and standardized because the customers are themselves bland, people who like their products standardized and want to identify with them as marks of status.


Those who rail against globalization and mass capitalism credit it with too much power. It will only make money if it keeps up relentlessly with what the majority of customers want. It is sometimes said that we, the electorate, get the government we deserve. That is true in commerce too. Customers get the goods they deserve. Those who drink in bars get the bar culture and beer they deserve.

If discerning traditional drinkers are upset by what they have to drink and the ghastly places they have to drink it in, by all means let them be angry. But let them vent that anger not on the brewers but on their fellow customers. It is the

Greg Noonan will be there to run a tasting of doctored beers. This is intended to help beer tasters identify odors and flavors that can be present in beer.

Directions:

From I89 take Exit 14W and stay straight on Route 2 West (Williston Road, which becomes Main Street as you crest the hill and pass UVM). At the 5th light turn Right onto South Willard Street (also marked as Route 7 North). Stay straight through 2 regular traffic lights (street becomes North Willard here) and one blinking red light. At the next light turn Right onto North Street. 3rd house on the left -- white with green trim, on the corner of a dead-end street called Dans Court. DO NOT PARK ON DANS COURT -- it's a private street and you will be towed. Anywhere on North or North Willard is fine.

For directions from anywhere else -- call 863-4640. 

Staff Box



The Barleycorn Press is a monthly publication of the Green Mountain Mashers Homebrew Club. The Barleycorn Press appears in the final week of each month. **Contributions are due by the 25th of the month of publication or two Thursdays prior to the next meeting (which ever comes first).** Please send contributions via e-mail (preferable) or send on a 3.5" IBM compatible diskette (hard copy as a last resort) to:

Tim Cropley
 235 East Main St., Richmond, VT 05477
 (802)434-7293 (hm)
 t_cropley@yahoo.com

Contributions on any subject even remotely associated with the brewing and/or enjoyment of beer and related beverages are happily accepted by the editors. The editors reserve the right to edit any contribution as a function of available space, while making every attempt to maintain its integrity. The views expressed by contributors to the Barleycorn Press are not necessarily those of the editors or of the Green Mountain Mashers Homebrew Club.

This publication is made available free of charge to all dues paying members of the Green Mountain Mashers. Subscriptions are available to all other interested parties at \$7.00 yearly (US funds).

Note: The yearly dues of \$10 should be paid by the end of January. Please mail your check or money order made out to the "Green Mountain Mashers" to Treasurer Lewis Greitzer at the following address:

Lewis Greitzer
 33 Harbor View Road #1201
 South Burlington, Vermont 05403
 (802)658-2621
 lewis@together.net

Advertising space is available to non-profit and for-profit organizations wishing to offer beer related items or services to the readers of this publication. The editors reserve the right to accept or reject any advertiser. For advertising rates, availability and deadlines please contact the editor.

No rights reserved. Any part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise. No prior permission, written or otherwise, is needed from anyone.

View the Official Web Page of the Green Mountain Mashers at:

<http://www.mashers.org>

Officers not listed above:

President - Rich Evans, Ph # (802) 899-3006
 "Evans, Rich" <evansrj@us.ibm.com>
 Secretary - Ernie Kelley Ph # (802) 434-3674
 "Kelley, Ernie" <epopmafs@together.net> OR
 "Kelley, Ernie" <erniek@dec.anr.state.vt.us>



Green Mountain Masher Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Information
2/4/02	February – Robin Orr (if meeting held) topic: mead	Robin Orr 863-4640 (h) or email at robin.orr@state.vt.us
3/4/02	March – Anne and Matt Whyte topic: hops	Anne and Matt Whyte 655-2070 (w) 879-6462 (h) or email at vtbrew@together.net
4/1/02	April – Dan Hament – topic: Hoops ‘n Hops and the Masher Challenge	
5/6?/02	May – hosted by Andy Hunt topic: brewing Oktoberfests	
6/3?/02	June – hosted by Monk topic: BBQ and wheat beers	Rich Evans, Ph # (802) 899-3006 email - evansrj@us.ibm.com

Please contact Tim Cropley at (802) 434-7293 or by email at t_cropley@yahoo.com if you have any beer events that you think the membership would like to know about. It is our hope that we will also list other regional competitions as they are announced. We also hope to list AHA sponsored Club Only competitions in an effort to remind people to consider bringing beers that fit the competition style to club meetings so that the membership can pick one for entering.

Help Needed at Vermont Homebrew Supply by Anne Whyte

We need help running the shop from Tuesday June 25 until Sunday July 7th. We will close on July 4th, Thursday, and can close for the Wednesday before as well. Store hours are 10-6 during the week and 10-5 on Saturday and 11-5 on Sunday. We hope that Cliff will be able to help us out on the Saturdays so that the Masher would be the helper.

We will have time to "train" and plenty of written how to sheets. It is a lot of fun and you never know what you'll be talking about. The right person should be a brewer and able to listen. It's like

talking to kids about sex, answer the question they ask, you don't need to tell them everything you know. We would like to arrange a barter of hours for merchandise. Here's your chance to get some supplies/equipment!



VHS is a Boston Homebrew Competition Entry Drop off Site

Vermont Homebrew Supply is a drop off site for entries for the Boston Homebrew Competition. Have your entries packed for transport (including all paperwork and a return

envelope) and at the store by Friday February 1st. We close at 6:00 pm. This is the second competition for the New England Homebrewer of the Year.

By the way, in smoke and fruit styles last year there were only 3 entries! Although it's hard to predict there are usually some styles that are under represented. We could probably send down some cherry wee heavy and let the judges in Boston do the challenge....actually it would be pretty funny....they wouldn't easily figure out why they have all these cherry what ever we want to call them....



Words to Live By

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks, rocks about 2" in diameter.

He then asked the students if the jar was full? They agreed that it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The students laughed.

The professor picked up a box of sand

and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

"Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this is your life.

The rocks are the important things - your family, your partner, your health, your children - things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car.

The sand is everything else. The small stuff. If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical

checkups. Take your partner out dancing. There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal.

Take care of the rocks first - the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand

But then... A student then took the jar which the other students and the professor agreed was full, and proceeded to pour in a glass of beer. Of course the beer filled the remaining spaces within the jar making the jar truly full.

Which proves:- that no matter how full your life is, there is always room for a beer and your life will not be completely full without one.



**Masher Dues are due by the end of January
and have been reduced to an extremely
inexpensive \$10 per year.**

**Please pay your dues at the February meeting
or send a check made out to the
Green Mountain Mashers to Lew.**

See the Staff Box on Page 2 for his address.

Green Mountain Mashers

2002 Blowout

Saturday February 2nd

We have the Knights of Columbus hall located at 2 Berard Drive in S. Burlington (same place as last time off Airport Parkway near Pizza Putt) booked for Saturday night, 2 Feb from 4pm to midnight. Entertainment has been set up by Tom "Wolfman" Ayres. He scheduled a terrific band called the "Starline Rhythm Boys." Every person who attends should bring some sort of food: appetizers, dinner-type stuff, deserts, etc. We will have one main course pasta-thing catered.

Rich has expressed an interest in keeping it homebrew only, so bring kegs, growlers, bottles, and buckets of your efforts.

Bring your Family and Friends!! The more the merrier!!! Bring your homemade beverages and dancing shoes.

Jer and Beth need to know how many people are coming so they can arrange for the catered main course. Please email them back at the address below to let them know how many people you will be bringing and what food item you intend to bring. If you have any questions call them at 860-5087.

BHalloc@email.msn.com



**Barleycorn Press
Green Mountain Mashers
c/o Tim Cropley
235 East Main St.
Richmond, Vermont 05477
U.S.A.**

Place Stamp Here
Post Office will
not deliver
without sufficient
postage