



The Barleycorn Press

Monthly Newsletter Published by the Green Mountain Mashers of Vermont

February, 2003

Volume 14 Issue 2



The Newcastle Experiment by Anne Whyte (Featuring Tim Cropley)

The preliminaries (by Anne): A few years ago I learned that Newcastle was a blended ale. I think that I read about it first in one of Michael Jackson's books. I found other references but not many specifics. When the AHA Brown Ale book came out I saw an actual recipe for a blended Newcastle type of brown ale. The reference for the recipe in the book is Colonel Porter's Pride & Joy, pages 156-159, AHA Brown Ale, R. Daniels & J. Parker. I remember thinking that was cool and probably worth trying but I put it on the back burner. This fall I thought I might like to try this, but with a partner. So I asked Tim Cropley, a good English ale brewer, and got him interested in the project. Since Tim brews 10 gallon batches we decided that would

be the size of each ale. Since I brew 5 gallons, the brews naturally directed themselves. I can brew a 10 gallon mild with my mash/sparge set-up. (gee, next time I need 10 gallons of mild I'll be good to go). Initially we thought we'd use Tim's brewpot and cooker on my deck.

The recipes were adjusted a bit to make it somewhat our own. Both used Wyeast London III.

Brew day at Tim's – 11/11/02 (by Tim):

A somewhat chilly Veteran's Day. Plus we had a Steering Committee Meeting that night so we needed to make sure we moved along.

Beer #1, "Strong" Ale 8 oz. Chocolate Malt 600

- #2 Caramel Malt
- #2 Dark Crystal 90
- #2 English Mild Malt
- #20 2-row
- 20 oz. Lyles
- 3.5 oz. Kent Golding Pellet 6.2 AAU @ 60 mins.
- 1.5 oz. Kent Golding Pellet 6.2 AAU @ 30 mins.

Mashed @ 152F for 60 mins.
OG. 1.068
FG. 1.013

Brew Notes: The original recipe's specific gravities seemed a bit off (1.070 OG with a 1.010 FG just didn't seem right) so we adjusted the recipe to target the alcohol by volume approximated by that recipe. Unfortunately it didn't work as I planned. We used pretty old grain that I brewed a test batch with a couple months before to ensure it would still



give me decent beer whenever I use it. At that time, it worked out well with only a slight increase in the amount of base grain for the target OG, so we only added a little more 2-row. We were shooting for an OG of about 1.080 but we were way off. At first I felt kinda bad about it since I didn't want to screw up a beer that Anne had been looking forward to doing for a while but hey, no big deal. Since this is only one part of the final product, we can just make Beer #2 a little bigger to get what we want for a final blended beer. The "strong" ale didn't ferment down as far as we expected and Anne informed me that the London III needs high 60s for temperature and since my apartment is a bit cool, I brought them to her place on the "mild" brew day.

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NEXT MEETING at Anne and Matt Whyte's in Essex Monday Feb 3rd

The next meeting of the Green Mountain Mashers will take place on Monday, February 3rd at the home of Anne and Matt Whyte.

The focus of the February meeting is brewing equipment, especially the brewing equipment (and/or processes) that is not off the shelf, but rather something a homebrewer uses that he or she has discovered/invented/learned about from a friend that is useful in the process of homebrewing. Example: Monk uses an aquarium air pump to pump air through the cold water in the fermenter while he is boiling an extract brew, so that when he adds the cooled wort to the water in the fermenter it already has plenty of dissolved oxygen.

Please bring along some gadget or piece of equipment or process description to share at the meeting. If we all share our tricks and trappings, we may each become better brewers – or at least more knowledgeable and have more choices.

Directions:

From Burlington take route 15 into Essex Jct. The last right before 5 Corners is School St. Take that right and it is on the right, #10. It's the 2nd house and the porch light will be on.

From Williston: Driving into Essex Jct. on Route 2A you will take a left onto Park Terrace, the road between Ming's Chinese Rest. and The Chittenden Bank. As you drive up Park Terrace you are looking at our house at the top of the hill. Park anywhere on the right side of School Street.

If you have any questions, call Vermont Homebrew Supply at 655-2070 or Anne and Matt at home (879-6462).



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)
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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

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

<http://www.mashers.org>

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Brew day at Anne's (by Anne):

Very blustery, cold and the snow was steady. I had brewed a bitter with the London III yeast a week prior and had a slurry of yeast ready to go.

Beer #2, "Mild" Ale

#12 English pale malt (Thomas Fawcett from 3 Needs)
#1.4 Crystal 40 (caramunich I)
1.5 ounces of UK chocolate
#1 amber candi sugar
1 ounce Target @ 60 minutes
1 ounce N. Brewer @ 30 minutes

Mashed @ 153F for 60 minutes
OG 1.042
FG 1.006

Brew notes: During the mild ale brewing we decided that the weather sucked too much to brew outdoors. So we only col-

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**Don't Forget to
Bring Some
Snacks and three
Homemade
Beverages to the
mtg. If You Don't
Have Any
Homemade Bevs,
Please Bring
Three Good/
Unique
Commercial
Beers**

Green Mountain Masher Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Information
2/3/03	February Mtg - Equipment/Gadgets Show and Tell - Anne and Matt Whyte's.	Anne and Matt Whyte (h) 879-6462 (w) 655-2070 (email) vtbrew@together.net
2/8/03	Trub Trek to Albany, NY	Rich Evans (h) 899-3006 (email) monk@together.net
3/3/03	March Mtg - Belgian Beer Tasting - Erik Sandblom's	Erik Sandblom (h) 434-3493 (email) sandblom@gmavt.net
4/7/03	GMM April Mtg - Masher Challenge (Kölsch) and Hoops & Hops	Tom Ayres and Anne Barrett, Winooski (h) 655-5587 (email) tom.ayres@verizon.net
5/3/03	Green Mountain Homebrew Competition	Anne Whyte (h) 879-6462 (w) 655-2070 (email) vtbrew@together.net
5/?/03	GMM May Mtg - Location TBA	TBA
6/?/03	GMM June Mtg - Barbecue at Monk's house - Grillables and pot luck dishes made with beer. Last meeting until Fall.	Rich Evans (h) 899-3006 (email) monk@together.net

Please contact Tim at the phone # or email address noted below to add items to the Masher Calendar

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.


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lected about seven gallons of wort and we topped off in the fermenters with water. I think it was after we had the Samiclaus that we realized that we forgot to add the candi sugar. Since we hadn't topped off the fermenters enough (after having a barleywine) I waited until the ferment was slowing down, boiled the candi in enough water to top off the fermenters and added it then. No worries. Initially the strong ales seemed stuck at 1.030. I warmed and added some slurry to one. They both worked down completely. The milds had about three weeks in secondary and were crystal clear.

Blending/bottling day (by Anne)

We had 10 gallons each of mild and

strong ale. We blended 1 part of strong ale to 2 parts mild. We ended up with 2 cases of 12 ounce bottles and 2 kegs of "Newcastle" and 5 gallons of strong ale. We also bottled a single growler of the unblended mild for the February meeting. The approximated gravities of the blended beer are: OG 1.050 FG 1.008

Tasting notes: We plan to serve all three ales at the February meeting. I will try to remember to pick up a couple of Newcastles as well. I think they all turned out pretty well but I'm sure the Mashers will let us know. 

Attention Mashers! Trub Trek Final Details and Itinerary by Monk

Bring your friends on the Trub Trek! There are extra seats on the bus, but please

make your reservations as soon as possible. This year's Trek goes to the Albany area with stops in Glens Falls, Troy, and Latham NY. The bus leaves Burlington from in front of the Biltmore Grill (where Carburs used to be) at 8:00AM.

First stop is Coopers Cave Brewery, which is not much larger than some of

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the Masher's home brewing setups.

Next it's on to Davidson Brothers Rest. & Brewery also in Glens Falls, which is an Allen Pugsley/Peter Austin setup. Then we will move on to Albany to a spectacular piece of architecture tucked away along the river called the Albany Pump Station/C. H. Evans Brewery for a fantastic lunch and conversations with Master Brewer George DiPero (world renown expert of Homebrew Digest fame). After lunch, we ride to Troy Brewing where we will be able to once again sample award winning beers and fine foods. The last stop is Malt River Brewing in Latham for supper and of course beer before our ride back to Burlington where we will arrive at 8:00PM. We will get tours of the breweries and will have a chance to talk to the brewers at each stop. Every place on the agenda has beer to go in growlers and bottles as well as glasses, tee shirts, etc. etc. You will be able to order anything you want for lunch at


C.H. Evans and for supper at Malt River, or for that matter at any of the places we are going, except for the first stop at Coopers Cave where they don't serve food but they have a very large selection of gourmet jerky and other unusual snacks, homemade soda and ice cream, and gift baskets. Every place we are visiting sells their beer to go, tee shirts, glasses, etc. etc.

We will arrive back into Burlington around 8:00PM.

I have added Malt River as requested and removed the Bighouse from the itinerary because I have not been able to contact them (perhaps they are not open?) but if you really want to go there you could walk over to it (it's only four blocks away from the Albany Pump Station). This will be the best Trub Trek the club has ever taken this year!

The cost is \$20 per masher or guest, and \$25 per person for non-mashers. The date is February 8, 2003. The club will supply a bus and bagels. If you want

anything else you must bring your own. Email Tim Cropley at tim_cropley@yahoo.com or call him at 434-7293 for your reservation and bring your money to the February meeting or pay at the bus. Get your reservations in now!

As of now, the following 16 people are signed up: Ruth Miller, Ernie Kelley, Melissa Levy, Jim Silvia, Dan Hament, John Leak, Rich and Linda Evans, Tim Cropley, Steve Featherstonhaugh, Dave Clark, Glenn Taulton, Bob and Mitzi Proctor, and Marteen and Sarah Van Rykevorsel. 

New England Homebrewer of the Year Update by Anne Whyte

The 2003 New England Homebrewer of the Year (NEHBOTY) competitions have been announced.

The Worts are the organizing club this year. They will compile the results and keep track of points earned by individuals and clubs. There will be four competitions this year. The Boston Homebrew Competition will be held on March 8. If anyone in the club will be driving to the Seven Barrel before the 21st of February, someone will pick up the entries there to take to Boston. Please let Anne Whyte know if you can help out. Our competition is next and then there will be the Puddledock competition. I am not sure if a date has been announced for this yet. Finally, the Yahoos of Northern CT will be holding the final qualifier in late October/early November.

Details/links for the four competitions will be found at:

<http://www.wort.org>



Green Mountain Homebrew Competition by Anne Whyte

Our competition will be held on May 3, 2003 at the Ethan Allen Homestead. Committee assignments/responsibilities are as follows:

Competition Organizer: Anne Whyte. Next vacancy: 2004 This person is responsible for registering the completion and securing the competition location. Also responsible for fulfilling DLC and insurance requirements. Makes sure committees are filled. Makes sure adequate forms are available. Logs in entries and makes information available to judge coordinator. Provides pull sheets for stewards. Orders ribbons for brewers. Records the scores and organizes for Best of Show round. Procures calibration

beer. Makes sure Darrell got enough cups. Other minutiae as it happens. Provides results to web master/mistress for posting on web site. Answers stupid emails (how come the results aren't posted? It's been 3 hours!, etc) Responsible for collating/sending back score-sheets/ribbons to brewers. Get to walk around with clipboard.

Judge Co-ordinator: Lew Judge-ette co-ordinator: Steve Lefebvre Responsible for signing up judges. Will send out postcards or emails to previous/prospective judges. Makes judge assignments. Schedules pre-judge flights. Signs in judges on comp. day. Makes wake-up calls to sleepy judges. Judge if needed. Discipline wayward judges.

Steward co-ordinator: Darrell? Responsible for signing up stewards. Help Brooke set up judge tables. Help with take-down. Mediate steward squabbles.

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Sponsor co-ordinator: Terry Hunt? Identifies prospective sponsors. Mailing to sponsors in March/April. Follow-up. Maintain list of monies/prizes received. Sets up the "What doesn't Dan Hament win?" raffle. If Terry doesn't do this again, we'll need a volunteer and probably a second person.

Facilities: Brook Anderson? Responsible for setting up judging tables. Has pitchers, slop buckets, openers, pencils, sharpeners, and any personal hygiene needs for judges. Organizes the pick up/garbage detail at end of day.

Web site master/mistress: Lew : gets stuff posted on the masher web page.

Food co-ordinator: Ruth? (can't remember if this is a yes or not) Designs menu for breakfast/lunch buffets; solicits food from club members. Set-up buffets. Shops for food.

Important dates:

Deadline for entries: April 25.
 Logging in of entries: April 26, Saturday @ Rich Frog
 Sort entries into styles, pull pre-judge beers: April 28, Monday
 Pre-judging of beers/ciders/meads: April 28, 29, 30, May 1, 2
 Move beers to the Homestead: April 30, Wednesday or May 1, Thursday (rain day)
 Competition: May 3, Saturday
 Scoresheet party: TBA but probably within 1-2 weeks after competition

If you can help out with logging in of entries, sorting of entries, moving of entries or helping at the scoresheet party (drinking of entries) then please let me know.

We had 300 entries last year. Since there are fewer NEHBOTY competitions this year it will be interesting to see what that does to our number of entries.



January's Beer & Food Tribute to The Bard

January 25th is Scottish poet Robert Burns' birthday, and many people of Scottish heritage celebrate it in the form of "Robbie Burns Night" (look it up on the web - it really is a big deal!). There are many traditions associated with it, including readings of his works, the bagpipe-accompanied entrance of the much-maligned meal of Haggis, and a fair amount of drinking. As for myself, I am actually related by birth to "The Bard" as he is fondly referred to, although due to his well-known ways with the lassies, exact lineage is a bit sketchy! However, he is an entry on our family tree along with other members of the Burns lineage. His love for the ladies was as strong as his love for single-malt Scotch and poetry.

Since I am not a Scotch fan (and believe me, I've tried under the tutelage of Nancy Noonan at VT Pub & Brewery's annual Robbie Burns Night) I make do with a nice bit of Scottish-inspired food and some great Scotch Ales. If you can locate them, try Belhaven, McEwan's, Orkney Island, and Skull-Splitter Scotch ales. For the more adventurous, the Heather Ale Brewery in Craigmill, Strathhaven Scotland makes traditional style brews such as their Fraoch (heather ale), Kelpie (seaweed ale), Ebulum (elderberry black ale) or Grozet (gooseberry gruit). I've tasted all of them and they are quite delicious. Also, a growler of VPB's 80 Shilling on right now would be perfect, too.

Lamb is a dish of great Scottish significance, and the lamb stew below is much tastier than the oatmeal-innards-onion-stuffed sheep stomach that real Haggis is comprised of, I swear! The dessert is from a Michael Jackson book and is a traditional sort of Olde English spice

cake, similar to gingerbread. Of course, a wee nip of single-malt to top it all off would be well-endorsed, for certain!

Slan! (Cheers!)

Lamb Stew With Scotch Ale

Serves 4

- 3 lbs. boneless lamb leg, cut into bite-size chunks
- Flour, salt & pepper
- 3 leeks, sliced into discs (white part only & cleaned of grit)
- 3 carrots, roughly chopped
- 10 small new potatoes, halved
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 bottle Scotch Ale (room temp)
- 1/2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 1/2 cup sour cream or creme fraiche

Use a heavy-bottom stewpot or dutch oven. Put meat pieces in a bag with some flour, salt & pepper and shake to coat thoroughly. Take out & shake off

excess, then brown in pan with some pre-heated oil over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté with meat about 10 min. Open Scotch ale & pour in - should just cover (add more if needed). Stir up browned bits off bottom of pan, add a 1/2 tsp. of thyme leaves & bring to a simmer. Cover & simmer at least 1-1/2 hrs. or until meat is fork-tender. Add carrots & potatoes the last 1/2 hr. and uncover if a thicker consistency is preferred. When tender, take off heat & stir in mustard and sour cream. Adjust salt & pepper to taste & serve.

Yorkshire Parkin

- 2 cups sifted flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. allspice
- 1/2 cup oats, ground fine in a blender

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- 1 cup molasses (blackstrap if you can find it)
- 1 stick butter
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup Old Ale or Wee Heavy

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease & lightly flour a 9" round or square cake pan. Mix all dry ingredients in a bowl. Melt butter & add molasses and brown sugar, stirring over low heat until smooth & dissolved. Take off heat & beat in the egg & beer; then mix into dry ingredients. Pour into pan & bake for 45-55min., or just until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean (don't over bake, or will be dry). Serve warm with English clotted (Devon) cream, or whipped cream.



Ask Mr. Lager

Every month (give or take) Greg Noonan will answer one or two questions from members of the Green Mountain Mashers. Anyone who has questions for this column should email them to me at t_cropley@yahoo.com.

1) I brew with the municipal water in Chittenden County. Can you describe its characteristics as they relate to some other classic brewing waters, i.e. Munich, London, Dortmunder, Pilsen, Dublin, Edinborough? I brew all-grain without adjusting my water and I have no complaints but I would be interested in hearing if I we're close to some cities but way off from others. By the way, I got a c+ in college chem, so please keep it simple ;-). Signed, all wet.

Dear All Wet,

If they taught us how to brew in Chemistry class, we all would have paid more attention.

The water in Chittenden County varies from place to place. In some place it has more 'Hardness' than others. Generally speaking, in the Champlain Valley and from municipal sources that obtain their water from Lake Champlain, the water is very soft. Although the lake's mineral content varies a little bit seasonally, it averages about 70 milligrams per liter of Hardness, 35 mg/l of Alkalinity, and 25 mg/l of Chloride. With a pH of just over 7 (averaging 7.2), it is slightly alkaline.

Lake Champlain water is 'soft', but slightly 'harder' than Pilsen water, and significantly softer than most other European waters, which percolate through limestone. For brewing a wide variety of beer styles it is an excellent water, because brewers are beginning with soft water that they can add minerals to and

emulate the characteristic profile of the waters of Edinburgh, Dortmunder or London.

From a chemistry standpoint, there is no need to add mineral salts to Lake Champlain water to make beer. It will generally give a mash pH of about 5.4. That is within an acceptable range (the range is 5.0-5.6) to stimulate enzyme activity. However, to more closely duplicate particular beer styles, adding a couple of teaspoons of gypsum (calcium sulfate) for heavily hopped beer styles or a half teaspoon of table salt (sodium chloride) for malty beer styles will generally accentuate those flavors.

At Vermont Pub & Brewery, we add mineral salts to most ales and some lagers to compliment the style that we are brewing. More importantly, we add tiny amounts of lactic acid, or make up a partial sour mash, to acidify the mash to pH 5.1-5.3, which some brewers perceive to give the finished beer a brighter fin-

ish than a more alkaline mash (5.4-5.6) does. We feel that acidifying the mash makes a significant flavor difference, more so than most mineral additions. Dark malts themselves are more acidic than pale malts, so the amount of acid to add depends on the grain bill. For a light amber colored beer, one milliliter of 85% lactic acid in 6 gallons of water is enough, but two milliliters is generally too much, so be careful if you choose to acidify your brew liquor with lactic acid.

2) How does mash thickness, the ratio of mash water to grain weight, affect the result of the mash?

Mash thickness impacts brewing in two ways. First, malt enzymes are better protected in a thick mash, and more quickly degrade in a thin mash. So if you are using malts with low enzymatic strength (for instance, if your grain bill is mostly Munich malt), a thick mash will favor more complete conversion of starches to sugars.

Secondly, thicker mashes favor alpha amylase, and thinner mashes favor beta amylase. This means that a thick mash favors less breakdown of starch to fermentable sugars and suits sweeter beer styles, while in a thin mash beta amylase will be more active, breaking down 'sweeter' complex polysaccharides to fermentable maltose.

It is a good idea to adjust your mash liquor-to-malt ratio to suit the style of beer that you are brewing, using from one to one-and-a-half quarts of water per pound of grain.



Blast From the Past Barleycorn Press Feb 95

Cloudy Runoff from the Cranial Lauter Tun by I.M. Quaffing

P On Balance

ooling our resources together, we put our common wealth to good use and rented a large (and perhaps somewhat ostentatious) vehicle to transport our group in comfort and style to the Commonwealth. The purpose of our trip? The most noble of all purposes. To search for truth, light, and great beer.

Truth and light are easy. But what exactly is great beer? Good question. And a difficult one. Indeed it is a question that has commanded much of my attention over years, and to which I still give serious consideration. In college, the definition of great beer was any beer that was free and plentiful. I spent a lot of time trying to find great beer in college. Life was simple then. From what I remember of it. Fortunately, as we grow older (and hopefully wiser), our tastes also become more mature (or at least our financial situation becomes more secure) and we become more selective. For some, identifying one or two beers that are “good” or at least “good enough” provides a satisfactory answer to the question. For others, it is not enough.

Homebrewers, by nature, are people who have not given up on the original question. In fact, because of our fascination with the beer-making process and our desire to be as good at it as

**Member Dues were due
by the end of January.
Please pay Lew
Greitzer either at the
February meeting or
mail it to him at:**

**33 Harbor View Rd #1201
So. Burlington, VT 05403
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lewis@together.net**

**Make checks payable to
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Mashers.**

possible, we usually transform the question to: What makes great beer great? It is with this question in mind that we each apply our accumulated knowledge and practical experience with different kinds of malts, hops and yeast (and even fruits, vegetables and other

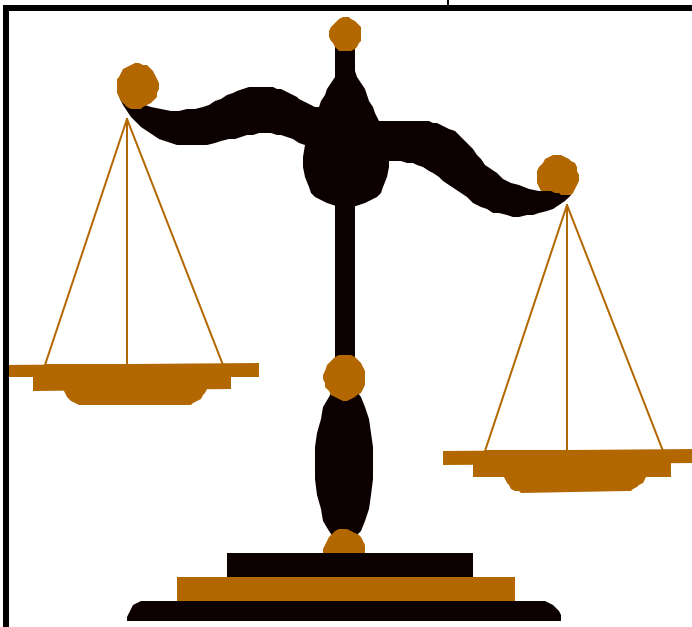
“adjuncts”, to use a dirty word) to continually come up with creative and unique brews on our never-ending quest to make better beer (and if we are lucky, the occasional great beer). But we should not be limited by our own experiences. Outside information

should be sought. Ever vigilant, we should always be on the lookout for ideas on how to achieve the lofty goal of making great beer. Reading can provide some additional knowledge, of course. But nothing replaces good field work. Hands on data-gathering in the natural environment of the object of interest. So in the name of

science, we should devote much effort to finding and sampling as many beers as we can, homebrewed and commercial, in the hopes of running across that occasional world class “great beer”. So we can appreciate and admire all the fine qualities of a well crafted brew. And, of course, so we can try to emulate those fine qualities in our next homebrew. Which brings us back to our question. What makes a great beer great? What is that elusive characteristic that makes some beers stand out from all the rest, and (even more importantly) how can I achieve it?

We gained some insight into this on last year’s Trek to the Commonwealth, where we found an uncommon wealth of interesting beers. We found malty beers, hoppy beers and beers so unusual that they defy description. But greatness often manifests more subtly. Of the beers I sampled, I was most impressed by the Commonwealth Brew-

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ery's Burton Bitter. Not because a particular component of the beer stood out strikingly in the taste. But because none did. Clearly the flagship beer in a fleet of well crafted brews, this extraordinary beer impresses with its subtleness. Indeed, I believe that this particular beer epitomizes the meaning of the word "balance". And goes a long way toward answering the question of what makes great beer great.

So, what is balance? Well, it is hard to describe, and even harder to achieve. Webster defines balance as "equilibrium or parity marked by cancellation of all forces by equal opposing forces". Applied to beer, this definition might mean that the sweetness of the malt is exactly offset by an appropriate amount of bitterness from the hops. But this is too narrow a view. Some beers should be malty and sweet and others should be hoppy and bitter. I am not sure that a full "cancellation of all

forces" is always desirable. (The concept of opposing forces does provide a useful paradigm, however). Perhaps more relevant to beer is Webster's second definition which states that balance is a "harmonious or satisfying arrangement of parts of elements". Although this definition seems more general at first glance, I think the word "harmonious" gets more specifically at the essence of truly great beer. Balance is more than just the equalization of the sweetness-bitterness parameter, or any other parameter for that matter. It is selecting the malts to complement each other, matching the hops together, and combining everything in just the right proportions. Balance is when all of the components of the beer work together to manifest as one well integrated whole. And that is what ultimately distinguishes a really great beer. Many things may contribute to making a great beer, but in the end it is not the types of malts or the variety and complexity of the hop schedule that makes a great

beer great. The thing that makes a great beer great is how all of the components interact together. The balance.

So off we go again. To search for truth, light, and great beers. The quest continues. Of course, by the end of the trip the truth may be lacking in much of our story-telling on the bus. And few of us will be in any condition to tolerate strong light. But I am sure that Dan "call me the Trekmeister" Hament will provide a well balanced itinerary. And we will once again find some truly great beers.



**Barleycorn Press
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c/o Tim Cropley
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