



The Barleycorn Press

Monthly Newsletter Published by the Green Mountain Mashers of Vermont



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Volume 18 Issue 1

Beautiful beer lost in the vaults since 1869

By David Derbyshire, Consumer Affairs Editor, UK Telegraph

It was brewed in the year that the Suez Canal opened, Charles Dickens embarked on one of his last literary tours and the Cutty Sark was launched in Scotland.

But the recently-discovered cache of 1869 ale should have been undrinkable, given the conventional brewing wisdom that even the best beers are supposed to last no more than a couple of decades. Beer experts, however, say the 137-year-old brew tastes "absolutely amazing".

The Victorian beer was part of a cache of 250 vintage bottles found in the vaults of Worthington's White Shield brewery in Burton-on-Trent. The bottles will not be sold and have yet to be valued.

According to Steve Wellington, Worthington White Shield's head brewer, said: "It was always rumoured that there were some vintage beers on site but no one had bothered to taste them because it was assumed they wouldn't be drinkable.

"Uncovering such an interesting collection is fantastic, the most exciting discovery ever made in British brewing. I assumed they would taste awful. But they had the most astonishing, complex flavours."

The bottles were sealed with corks and wax and stored in even, cool temperatures, in the dark and placed on their side to stop the corks drying out.

One of a handful of people to have

tasted the 137-year-old beer is Mark Dorber, a beer connoisseur and publican at the award-winning White Horse in Parson's Green, London, who has the largest range of bottled beers in Britain.

"It's amazing that beers this antique can still taste so delicious," he said. "Established wisdom would say beers this old should taste of vinegar, damp rags and Marmite. Instead, many show flavours of raisins and sultanas, baked apple and honey. The oldest – the 1869 Ratcliff Ale – is bright and luminous like an ancient Amontillado sherry and has a meaty character like smoked partridge with hints of molasses. It's amazing it tastes this good after 137 years."

The find includes ales brewed to commemorate royal events, including one made by the late Earl Spencer to mark the birth of Prince William in 1982. Another was brewed in 1977 for the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

The Ratcliff ale commemorates the birth of Harry Ratcliff into the brewing family which became part of the Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton empire. All the beers were bottle conditioned, which means they were allowed to develop and mature after they were corked, like a wine. They were also strong - around 10 per cent proof.

The high alcohol content, similar to barley wine, stopped them deteriorating.

George Philliskirk, the chief executive of the Beer Academy, which runs beer tasting sessions for the public, said: "It has always been known that beers with higher alcohol levels age far longer

than less alcoholic beers. As hops are preservatives, beers with a lot of hops in them, such as India pale ales, have long been known to have great ageing potential.

"But this is remarkable, especially since the oldest beer tastes so fresh.

"This shows a potential for vintage beers to be taken seriously. Some top restaurants have started providing beer lists. Perhaps they should start including vintage brews."

The beers will be recorked to preserve them and displayed at the Museum of Brewing at Coors Visitor Centre in Burton.

Reprinted from the September 12, 2006 UK Telegraph.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/12/09/nbeer09.xml>

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NEXT MEETING

Monday, January 8

Anne and Matt Whyte's,

Essex Junction

The next meeting of the Green Mountain Mashers is Monday, January 8 at Anne and Matt Whyte's. Arrive around 7:30pm and the meeting will start shortly after that.

Agenda:

First, enjoy some holiday beers as well as other beverages that are there.

- 1) Trub Trek Update.
- 2) Green Mountain Homebrew Competition Update (May 12?).
- 3) BJCP Study Group.

4) Old/New Business.
Lastly, enjoy some more beer.

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:

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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 \$20 should be paid by the end of January. Please mail your check or money order made out to the "Green Mountain Mashers" to Treasurer Anne Whyte at the following address:

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March Meeting Info By Brian Werneke

Happy New Year Masher's. As winter sets in, my thoughts occasionally drift to spring, and of course, sugaring at our family's farm in Milton. As you may know, we will be hosting the March meeting there, and hoping for a great sap run that day so we can enjoy some syrup right off the evaporator. It has been suggested that we move the March meeting to a Friday night or Saturday morning or afternoon – possibly the 2nd or 3rd – so that if you are planning to brew with maple, it'll be fresh. We'll settle on that at the January meeting.

In the meantime, get out your books or surf the net in search of a recipe that you might like to brew with some fresh maple sap or syrup. We will make available, at no charge, "raw" maple sap from the bulk tanks to those who want to try a sap beer (limit 10 gallons per person). You will want to either freeze the sap or brew with it within a day or so, unless you are shooting for a sour mash... That early in the season, the sap should be in the 1.5% to 2% sugar range, and we'll take hydrometer readings when we draw sap to confirm what you'll be starting with.

If you prefer syrup to brew with, it should be available in quarts or gallons, at "sugarhouse" prices (cash or checks, please). These prices are set once the season sets in and we have a better idea of what the yields will be for the year. In any case, you can be sure it is much better than the retail market price. Again, that early in the season, chances are it will be Fancy or Medium Amber. As such, you will want to use quite a lot of it to have the maple flavor come through in the finished product. Alternatively, you can add it to your secondary fermentation or use it as a priming sugar. And in any case, the flavor will come through more distinctly in lighter styles of beer. Personally, I will be experimenting this year with the use of maple in both mead and barley wine.

In the off chance there is not a run the day of the meeting, we will try to ensure that there is some sap available from a run earlier in the week. Similarly, we'll try to can some syrup from the first runs of the season so it will be available at the meeting. As such, for those who will attend and might want some syrup, please e-mail me what you might want, and how much, before the meeting, at bwernke@gmail.com. We'll work out any other details at the January and February meetings. See you there. For now, think snow...

Green Mountain Masher Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Information
1/8/2007	January Meeting—Anne and Matt Whyte, Essex Junction—Holiday Beer	Anne and Matt Whyte, (h) 879-6462 (w) 655-2070 (email) vtbrew@together.net
2/5/2007	February Meeting—Either Andy Ferko, Bolton or Dave Clark, Huntington	Andy Ferko, 434-6165 or Dave Clark, 434-2060 and DaveC@wpgate1.ahs.state.vt.us
3/5/2007	March Meeting—Brian Werneke, either at Father in Law's sugar shack or his home, Richmond—Sap Beer, Sugar/Beer on Snow?	Brian Werneke, bwerneke@gmail.com
4/2/2007	April Meeting—Tom Ayers and Anne Barrett, Essex Junction—Masher Challenge and Hoops n' Hops	Tom Ayers and Anne Barrett, 655-5587
5/6/2007	May Meeting— Tim Cropley, Waterbury	Tim Cropley, (h) 244-1683, (email) t_cropley@yahoo.com
5/12/2007	Tentative Date for the Green Mountain Masher Competition	Lew Greitzer, 658-2621, lewis@together.net
6/1 or 8/2007	June Meeting—Rich Evans, Underhill—Beer BQ, food made with beer.	Rich Evans, (h) 899-3006 (email) monk@together.net

Please contact Melissa at 482-7400 or melissa@vt.bitxbit.com to add items to the Masher Calendar

Dues for 2007 are due beginning in January 2007. Don't forget to pay your dues of \$20 per year. There will be a \$5 discount if you pay them in January. Please bring your checkbooks to one of the next few meetings so that we don't need to keep pestering members to pay their dues.

Also, please bring holiday beers and some munchies to the next meeting

December Meeting Minutes By Ernie Kelley

As usual, the December meeting of the Green Mountain Mashers was hosted by Magic Hat Brewery. A huge "Thank You!" goes out to the brewery's staff for doing this again.

Prez Tim opened the meeting with a reminder that 2007 dues are due, but emphasized once again that they will not be accepted until after January 1 in order to keep the IRS out of our life as much as possible. Dues are \$20, and there will be a \$5 discount if they are paid in the month of January.

Ruth Miller next provided an update on Trub Trek '07, a tour of breweries in northern New Hampshire. Because of the length of this tour, it was proposed that the first stop, Woodstock Station, be dropped from the itinerary, mainly because you can't get to North Woodstock, NH from here and still have any time for the remaining venues. The idea was accepted after a bit of discussion, so the Trek will pass on Woodstock Station until some future tour. There are 47 seats on the bus, and it appears that they will be all taken. Pick-up locations were discussed, and it was decided that trekkers will be able to board the bus in Burlington, the Richmond park & ride, and the Middlesex park & ride.

Ruth has also been hard at work planning another beer dinner. The next dinner, planned for Monday, January 8, will be hosted by the Bobcat Café in Bristol. The event will be limited to 20 persons, due to the limited seating at the Bobcat. Ruth will convey information as to the cost as soon as she gets it. (NOTE: THIS BEER

DINNER HAS BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF INTEREST.)

It was suggested that the January Mashers meeting, also scheduled to be hosted by Anne Whyte on January 8, be moved to Friday, January 5. This change will happen, provided it is OK with Anne. (NOTE: DUE TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE BEER DINNER, THE MEETING WILL BE JANUARY 8.)

Lew Greitzer, this year's competition czar, gave a short update next. He reiterated that it is important for our members to get out and judge at other competitions if we expect other judges to come and judge at ours.

Dave Blumenthal has provided him with a very complete checklist to assist in planning the event. Lew was not sure if the Senior Center is available on our date this year, but should know later in the week. Evidently there's a potential conflict with a salad bar for senior citizens on that date. (Secretary's note: why not just host a beer bar for the seniors?) The Knights of Columbus hall may also be available if the Senior Center doesn't work out. Dave Clark reported that there was no update on judge coordination, but did ask that judges respond promptly to an e-mail that he'll be sending out soon.

Tim Copley proposed establishing a BJCP Study Group to prepare for the beer judge exam. There appeared to be sufficient interest, and a sign-up sheet was passed around.

Ruth Miller gave a short report on Beer Night Specials at Flatbread Burlington.

Elections: Nobody in attendance at the meeting stepped forward. Tim indicated that he's willing to continue

as president, provided that a volunteer to serve as VP is found to assist him in his presidential duties.

Brian Werneke offered to host a meeting at his dad's sugarhouse in Milton for the Monday, March 3 meeting. It was noted that raw sap does not keep for very long without being boiled, and it would be difficult for anybody to brew with raw sap before the weekend. It was proposed that the meeting be held on Thursday or Friday of the week instead. Brian will make available, at cost, raw sap, reverse osmosis concentrate, pre-heater sap, and syrup. Choose yer poison.

The meeting concluded with a tour of the ever expanding Magic Hat brewery and the consumption of some truly delicious beers. Again, our hats off to Magic Hat.



'07 Trub Trek Rolls to New Hampshire & Maine on Saturday, February 3rd!

Mashers Members with 1 or 2 of their guests have first dibs at sign-ups, and then remaining guests fill it. We are presently at 17 people with some guests on the wait-list for now. Masher members should make a point of reserving their seats ASAP, so we can then open the remaining seats to the rest of our guests & walk-ups. (Commercial brewers and others who support The Mashers are automatically in.) It's looking like we could possibly fill the bus this year - woohoo! I'll have info on lunch options at Moat Mtn. later.

Please continue to RSVP by informing me: who is coming, how many guests you are bringing for now (by name please, for the payment checklist that morning) and where you would like to board - Burlington at 8am, Richmond at 8:30am, or Middlesex at 9am. The cost per person will remain at \$25-\$30 for members, and \$30-\$35 for guests, depending on the final headcount. (BTW, due to IRS tax rules we cannot accept new memberships until after Jan 1st.)

So, here we go! A reminder about each venue & contact info is at the bottom...

8:00AM Trekkers board bus in Burlington at corner of College & St. Paul.

Proceed to I-89 South - stop at Exit 11 (Richmond) Park & Ride to pick up more Trekkers.

8:45AM Depart Richmond via I-89 South to Exit 9 (Middlesex Park & Ride) to pick up more Trekkers

9:15AM Depart Middlesex Park & Ride via I-89 South. Drive to 1st stop via Rte. 2 or Rte. 302: Moat Mountain Brewery, 3378 White Mtn. Hwy. (Rte. 16)
Lunch Stop w/ tour & tasting - about 90 minutes.

1:30 PM Depart Moat Mtn.; drive to Tuckerman Brewing Co., 64 Hobbs St., Conway, NH
Will be a 45-min. stop for a tour & tasting.

2:30PM Depart Tuckerman's; drive to Ebenezer's Pub, 44 Allen Rd., Lovell, ME

Stay until bus must leave to make it back to Burlington by 10PM, including drop-offs in reverse order.

First stop: Moat Mountain Brewery in North Conway, NH, home of Will Gilson's fine German-style beers. There we'll have a tour, tasting and lunch around 12pm. Their smoked-on-premises items (chicken, fish, and BBQ) are outstanding, as well as several veggie options. Go to <http://www.moatmountain.com> to see the details.

Next, a short drive over to Tuckerman's Brewing in Conway around 1:45pm for a tour with owners Kirsten & Nick Neves and a tasting of their wonderful brews, only recently available here in VT. Lots of sweet stuff for sale for you schwag collectors, too - check out <http://www.TuckermanBrewing.com>

Finally, a few miles over the NH border into Maine, and on to Ebenezer's Pub for arrival around 3:00pm, with it's myriad Belgian & British taps and bottles, lovingly collected by proprietors Chris & Jeni Lively. This is our last stop for a reason - so I don't have to drag you all out kicking & screaming to get to another brewery! This one will be the end of the line 'til it's time to go home. For a bottle/draft list, go to <http://www.ebenezerspub.net/BEERLIST.html>

Tastings tend to be free, but lunch at The Moat may be a fixed-price deal (TBD) for efficiency's sake, and you pay for what you drink at Ebenezer's - food is also available there. Credit cards OK at all 3 stops. A (cash) tip for the bus driver will be \$5 minimum per person.

Guests of Mashers are welcome, but all riders must be of legal age to join us. Wait...we've had an infant along before, so they're fine guests too! Bus must be back in Burlington by 10pm latest.

Join us for a long-but-fun day on a 47-seat, DVD- & restroom-equipped, professionally-driven (hooray!) bus to the wilds of New Hampshire & Maine to meet the brewers and purveyors of some of their finest micros & imports. To reserve your seat, email or call me directly at the contact info below. Payment will be collected when you board the bus. (Cash in US funds and local checks only, please.) The exact price will be available as the date gets closer - the more people on board, the cheaper it gets! See you on The Trek.



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