



The RUBBER CHICKEN



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MARCH 2003

STOUT – THE LUCK ‘O THE IRISH

To the uninitiated, stout can be an intimidating thing. It is black, pitch black, and that is itself enough to scare off timid drinkers weaned on golden lagers and the like. Yet within that fearsome darkness lies also an element of intrigue, and human nature being what it is, we are all drawn towards a good mystery. Arguably, it is in large part because of this peculiar combination of intimidation and attraction that stout is currently experiencing a tremendous surge in its global fortunes.

Which is not to say that this is the first time that stout has enjoyed a high degree of world-wide popularity. Back in its nascent days in early 18th century London, stout was the hottest beer going and its fame quickly spread well beyond its city of origin to the far reaches of the British Empire. By the mid- to late-1700's, stout's admirers were legion..

Stout's original incarnation was as a beer called porter, reputedly named after the porters of the London docks with whom it first found favour. Its roots, however, may be found in a blended potation known as "three threads," for which the bartender would carefully mix equal parts of young and old brown ale and pale ale, the last also known as "twopenny" in deference to its high price. The drink became popular, marrying as it did the complexities of old ale, the cleaner taste of the pricier pale ale and the balance of the affordable young brown, but it was a complicated concoction for a busy bartender to prepare. The market veritably cried out for a single beer that would mimic the taste of the mix, and in 1722, a brewer named Ralph Harwood heeded that call and developed the world's first porter.

The beer Harwood invented was called "entire," short for "entire butt" because the beer was brewed in one vessel instead of three. (At this time, there were beers being sold as stout, but these were the strongest, or "stoutest," ales brewed by a given brewery and not the dark delights we know today by that name.) Harwood's beer took off, and was soon so preferred among the working hands of the docks that it came to be nicknamed after them, or so the story goes.

As porter's fame grew, so did the size of the breweries producing it. This led to strong competition and an interesting race for the bragging rights to the ownership of the largest porter aging vessel. These monstrous tanks, measuring up to 60 feet wide and 23 feet high, were inevitably launched with some sort of publicity-seeking event, such as the sit-down dinner for 200 once held inside of an enormous aging vat. Such lunacy came to a tragic end, however, when a huge tank burst at the Horse Show Brewery and eight people were killed in the resultant flood of beer. (But what a way to go!)

Over time, stronger porters became known as stout porters, and eventually just stouts, and began to dominate first the export and then the domestic markets. (As higher alcohol beer travels better than weaker brews, stout porters were what British brewers mainly sent overseas to the colonies.) When the industrial revolution made paler barley malts and the pale ales they produced more affordable, however, the popularity of both stout and porter began to suffer. Later, when the British government imposed energy-conservation measures that served to restrict the malting and roasting of barley during World War I, it sounded the virtual death knell for black beer.

What saved stout was politics. Because of the tense relationship between England and Ireland, British authorities were loath to place as strong restrictions upon beer and malt production there as they had at home, and so Irish stout and porter continued to thrive through two World Wars.

Today, largely due to the aggressive promotional work of the world's largest drinks company, Diageo, itself parent to the world's largest stout producer, Guinness, stout has reclaimed its prominent place on the world stage. In addition to many fine Irish stouts, including the wonderfully rewarding D'Arcy's Dublin Stout from the Dublin Brewing Company, the black beer of Ralph Harwood is now brewed the world over, from Japan to Canada.

- *Stephen Beaumont's World of Beer*

TEN *EASY* TIPS TO BETTER HOMEBREW.

Be Patient - Although many homebrewed beers can be "ready to drink" in a few weeks, wait a little longer. Homebrewed beer has natural yeast in the bottle that continues to work after bottling, adding a smoothness and richness to the beer. Many beers peak at around three months, while strong beers can take six months or more.

Use a Wort Chiller - After boiling, cool your wort as quickly as possible. This is recommended for two reasons: first, rapid cooling will minimize the time that bacteria and other contaminants can infect your beer. The sooner the beer is cooled and the sooner the yeast gets going the better the beer will be. Another reason is that quickly cooled beer is clearer and cleaner than slowly cooled beer. Wort chillers are easily made from a 30-foot length of copper tubing.

Use liquid yeast - Brewers have a choice of liquid or dried yeast. Although more convenient, dried yeast often contains several strains of yeast. Some dried yeasts are contaminated. Liquid yeasts, on the other hand, are pure cultures of yeasts from world-renowned breweries. Liquid yeasts are available from your homebrew shop or from the club yeast bank.

Don't Follow Directions on Homebrew Kits - These directions are designed to make "easy beer", not "good beer". Contrary to what the kit says, always boil the wort, and add malt extract instead of sugar. Your tongue will thank you. Ask your home brew shop about the many high-quality kits that are available.

Use Specialty Grains - Many brewers use liquid or dry malt extracts in their brewing. For extra character in beer, try using a cup or two of crystal, toasted, or dark malts in the beer. Add the grain to cold water, heat to 170 degrees and remove. Use this "grain tea" as the basis for your extract beer.

Use Glass Fermenters - Plastic fermenters are easily scratched and these scratches can harbor bacteria, which can ruin your beer. Plastic can also retain aromas that may be transferred to the beer. Closed glass carboys (3 to 7 gallon glass water bottles) are better fermenters and are available at your homebrew supplier.

Always Take Notes - Even if you change something minor in each batch you brew, keep notes of what you did. When you find a particularly good beer, go back to your notes and see what was done. If a batch is not as good as you thought it should be, check your notes to find out what could to be done differently. Note taking will result in more good beers and fewer bad beers.

Enter Competitions - There are several regional homebrew competitions. These events have certified "beer judges" who evaluate and comment on homebrewed beers. An objective opinion about your favorite recipe can be very enlightening. If you are unsure about how to improve your own beer, you can be sure that the judges will be able to give you some pointers. Contact your supplier or homebrew club for information, or contact the Beer Judging Certification Program (BJCP).

Read - There are many good homebrew books and magazines available. They range from basic, how-to advice to advanced beer chemistry. A couple of good books are "The New Complete Joy of Homebrewing", and "The Complete Handbook of Homebrewing". An excellent magazine is "Zymurgy", published by the American Homebrewers Association (AHA). These materials are available at homebrew shops and most bookstores.

Join a homebrew club - Homebrew clubs and their membership hold a wealth of information. Interaction with veteran club members will not only round out your brewing experience but also enhance your expertise.

- *submitted by Chris Sheridan*

Real Ale Festival 2003

Jeff Carlson

REAL ALE "A name for a draught (or bottled) beer brewed from traditional ingredients, matured by secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed and served without the use of extraneous carbon dioxide."

The pinnacle of real ale is represented by "cask-conditioned ale"-the usual draft format for serving such products. A cask is a stainless steel (or occasionally wood) barrel which is made to be laid on its side while the beer is served. Now with those terms in mind, picture 230 casks from 98 different breweries, 70 bottled beers from 25 different breweries and you've got the 2003 Real Ale Festival, the largest collection of Real Ale outside of The Great British Beer Festival.

My son Tony, Rich Gretz and I were able to enjoy this great festival over the last weekend in February. We had decided to take the train down to Chicago as Amtrak had a two for one deal going and the total for 2 of us was \$49.00 roundtrip, not bad seeing how parking at the hotel would cost \$22 a night. We arrived about 45 minutes late as some signal problems kept us stalled for a while. Hopped a cab over to our hotel, The Talbot, and was able to check in right away. The festival didn't start until 3pm so we had some time to kill. We walked about 10 city blocks to Rock Bottom for lunch. We tried their sampler of the 7 different beers they had on tap and I decided that the Amber was the best and had a pint with my lunch. Tony had a cask Scotch Ale with his. After lunch we headed back to our hotel just in time to catch the shuttle bus that would take us to the Festival site, Finkl Foundry, it was an old foundry complex that they turned into meeting areas for larger crowds. Once inside it was most impressive, the lower floor had the 16 British Ales and all of the bottled beers, the second floor contained the American casks laid out into 6 main groups with about 35 casks per group, a big board listing the Brewery and the style they had on cask along with a number. Your ticket to the session got you 5 tickets and a nice sample glass, along with a program guide that listed all the breweries and the particulars about each beer they had. Extra tickets were 5 for \$5. A ticket got you a 4oz sample, Tony and I had a method to our madness as we wanted to

taste as many beers as possible, so we would each get a different beer, drink half and swap glasses to drink the other half. Being only 22 years old, he had great ideas that we could try all of the beers, but that was easily put to rest the first night, after about 28 2oz samples he conceded he wouldn't be able to taste them all. In fact we cut out early that night to stop by Goose Island Brewery for dinner, the shuttle bus ran right by it on the way back to the hotel and they made stops going to and coming back from Finkl, buses ran every 30 minutes or so. Saturday had 2 sessions and again we sampled about 25 or 30 different beers each session. During the break between the morning and afternoon sessions we took a cab over to Piece Brewing Company, we had pizza and sampled their beers for lunch.

To describe all the beers we tasted would take forever, so let me just highlight a few that stood out above the others. Stone Brewing Co had their Arrogant Bastard Ale (oak aged), a beautiful Old Ale. Victory Brewing Co had Hop Devil IPA, Firestone Walker Brewing Co, Deschutes Brewing Co.

Another interesting thing was Boscos Brewing Co, out of Tennessee, they had their own booth and held a drawing every 3 hours or so to see who would tap their next firkin, the winner would have to pound the tap in with a big wooden mallet, usually they got a bath of fresh beer. Michigan was well represented with Arcadia Brewing Co, Dragonmead, Grizzly Peak, Zig's Kettle and Brew, Bells's, and Bonfire Bistro and Brewery. But the highlight for me was to taste the British ales direct from England. The best of the best was Sarah Hughs Dark Ruby Mild Ale, a mild ale brewed as it was hundreds of years ago, it came in at 6.0 abv, far more robust than modern examples, but it was wonderful. There were plenty of ordinary and special bitters also. All in all, a great weekend drinking beer. The place did get very crowded and it was nuts to butts most of the time, but that was OK when you had all that good beer to choose from. If it's not on your calendar for next year, put it on and do it, you won't be disappointed. Check out the Real Ale Website for info and winners in all the categories. www.realalefestival.com

PRIMETIME BREWERS COMPETITION PAGE

Club Only Competition Calendar

2002

September: Belgian Strong Ale (18)
October: Dark Extract Ale
November: Fruit/Spiced (21&22)
December: Christmas Beer

2003

January: Bitter & English Pale Ale
February: Jug Beer 3.79 L/1 gal.
March: Brown Ale (10)
April: English/Scottish Strong Ale (11)
May: European Pale Lager (2)
June: Best of Cellar

Individual Competitions can be found at:
www.beertown.org

2003 B.O.S.S. Competition Results

Dan Humphrey
1st American Pale Ale
2nd Traditional Bock

Jeff Carlson
1st American Wheat

Chris Sheridan
2nd American Wheat

February Jug Beer (1 gal.) Competition Results

1st Dan Humphrey – Old Ale
2nd Eric Fouch – Belgian Wit
3rd Dave Kilgore

Brewer of the Year Standings

Rich Gretz	12
Dan Humphrey	12
John Applegarth	8
Eric Fouch	8
Jeff Carlson	4
Dave Kilgore	4

February Meeting Minutes

Charlie Cope

Attendance: 14
New guys: Rich, Adam

reviewed notes from last month

Jeff looking for place to do off flavors training (off meeting night)

Treasury: bank balance is \$1566

John - GRB.. will sponsor a Brown Ale contest all sub categories of category 10 note that March is Brown/Mild - bring entries for this contest to March meeting. (two bottles, no markings, etc) the march meeting evaluation will be done separately. KLOB will also be included in the GRBC competition.

Arcadia, Tim Surprise want to sponsor the club. Jeff is following up

New Brewpub in Lowell - Flat River Grill

Founders - March 1st - Black party

Jug beer judging.....seven beers

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WHAT'S COOKING.....

Mike Winkler

Polish Vegetable Soup

6 cups water
4 tsp chicken bullion
6 medium potatoes peeled & cubed
2 cups baby carrots
2 tsp salt
½ tsp black pepper
1 tsp onion powder
1 tsp garlic powder
2 bay leaves
4 cups bite-sized cauliflower pieces
1 can drained green beans
4 tbsp (2/3 oz pkg) finely chopped fresh chives
1 ½ cups light cream or half & half
1 ½ cups milk
2/3 oz (1 pkg) finely chopped fresh dill
Bring water and bullion to a boil.
Add other ingredients up to and including the bay leaves, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Add remaining ingredients except the dill and simmer for another 10 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the dill and let stand for 5 minutes. Serve and salt/pepper to taste.
Note: This is a large batch but could be easily halved.

Polish Sausage

25 lbs ground pork (70% lean)
2/3 cup kosher salt
3 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp marjoram
15 ground or minced large garlic cloves
2 tbsp coarse black pepper
3 ½ cups water
In a very large stainless steel bowl, mix all ingredients by hand. Refrigerate overnight. Mix again briefly and stuff into casings or make patties.

WHAT'S ON TAP.....

Robert Thomas

Submitted by Brian Rice

-Roffey's Four Seasons
-Roffey's Forecaster Pale Ale
-Roffey's Overcaster IPA (Rice approved IPA!)
-Roffey's Lake Effect Stout
-King's Cross Porter

March 2003 Meeting

Thursday the 20th at Robert Thomas Brewery
2600 Patterson Ave SE
7:30 pm

Club Officers

President: Jeff Carlson
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Vice Pres.: Charlie Cope
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Treas.: John Applegart
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Secy & RC Editor: Jim Verlinde
(Jim_Verlinde@KoolToyota.com)

Webmaster: Dan Humphrey
(webmaster@primetimebrewers.com)

Yeastmaster: Eric Fouch

Foodmeisters:

Jason Gorman (odd months)
Art McLaughlin (even months)



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