



Malted Barley Appreciation Society

May, 2002 Newsletter

April Meeting

By Eric Freberg

April's meeting was held in the newly refurbished Mug's beer garden. Kelly Taylor from Heartland Brewery in Manhattan, was our guest speaker. Kelly took over as head brewer for Jim Migliorini who, last I heard, was on hiatus from the brewing business. Heartland's beer continues to be high quality as always. Kelly has made some changes lately, attempting more authentic styles, decreasing the traditional emphasis on the mid-America theme in some cases. There will be a doppelback out in May, followed by a Maibock brewed at the Chop-house. For the IPA, Kelly stepped up the malt and increased the hopping from 50 to 65 IBUs. In the fall we'll see the Pumpkin Ale, as usual, as well as their first ever Oktoberfest.

Kelly brought along some Indian River Light, a Belgian Blonde brewed with coriander and orange zest. It was crisp and fruity with some lactic notes and a yeast character from a Belgian Ardennes strain.

Kelly then gave a talk on brewing salts, complete with handouts (but no quiz at the end, thankfully).

We looked at water types across the US and Europe, specifically sulfate and carbonate levels and why they are important and what affect they have on regional styles. For instance, sulfates tend to acidify the mash, therefore dark grains tend not to be used as they have the same effect. They also bring out hop flavor. Areas such as Burton-on-Trent which have high sulfate levels therefore produce mainly strong pale ales. In the New York area the water is very soft and therefore can be manipulated for whatever style one wishes to brew by adding minerals. We often use gypsum (calcium sulfate) which not only acidifies the mash, but the calcium helps to improve the mash runoff, clarifies and enhances the stability of the finished beer. We looked at a variety of other minerals and learned their effects. Chloride improves mouthfeel; Kelly prefers using calcium chloride as a source, for the benefits of calcium de-

scribed above, as opposed to sodium chloride which if overused can lead to harshness.

It was an interesting and informative meeting.

This Month's Guest Speaker

UNKNOWN at press time

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 8th. Mugs is three blocks from the Bedford Ave stop on the L train.

Trip Report: Tap New York Festival at Hunter Mountain

by George de Piro, MBAS

What can enhance a beautiful spring day like nothing else? Beer! This past Saturday, April 27th, Hunter Mountain was one of the better places to enhance a beautiful spring day. The Hunter lodge was host to the Tap New York Festival, a small gathering of about 25 New York breweries (with one from New Jersey and another from Canada). Jenn and I were there pouring beer for the Pump Station.

The event started way too early for me, fatigue draping a thin veil over my eyes for the better part of the day, but I valiantly managed to try some beers and have fun. We arrived well before noon and set up our booth, prepared to serve a diverse little selection: Quackenbush Blonde (a Kölsch), Hefeweizen, and Dawn's Dry Stout.

The first revelers arrived before the official noon opening, and the crowd quickly grew. This was the third Tap New York festival at Hunter, and the attendance was higher than ever. We spent most of our time talking to beer geeks and pouring beers, but we also got to say hello to some of the brewers and sample their wares.

MBAS Newsletter is published almost monthly by the

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

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Ridgewood, NY

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Brewery Ommegang was present with their array of fine beers. Their brewer, Randy Thiels, spoke of a new low alcohol beer in the works, a Belgian-style white (to Ommegang, 5% ABV is low alcohol). I believe they are hoping to release it within the next couple of months. Brooklyn Brewery was offering their Blanche de Brooklyn, but by the time I got to their booth they had run out so I tried an East India Pale Ale. I was told by the sales rep that it was kegged only two weeks prior. It had much more hop aroma than the bottled version, but not nearly as much as most American IPAs. It had a touch of butteriness in the finish.

Greg Zaccardi was pouring his Ramstein beers. I've had his tasty Hefeweizen many times, but it's always worth trying. He also had a fresh batch of the newest addition to his portfolio, a Vienna lager. Dark copper and malty, it uses the Andechs lager strain to achieve its fine balance. Unibroue was present with their line of interesting brews, including my favorite, La Fin du Monde. The samples they poured tended to be murky, because they are bottle conditioned, but I don't mind a bit of yeast in my beer.

The diversity of breweries could almost make one forget that there is more to life than beer, but my stomach kept reminding me of other needs. Fortunately, there was food from area restaurants available for snacking, and servers cruised the floor with transient trays of hors d'oeuvres. There were also purveyors of beer paraphernalia, such as steins, glassware, and lamps made from beer bottles.



The two day festival concluded on Sunday, which was rainy and more sparsely attended, so we won't discuss it. Overall, it was a fun event, and I look forward to the other Hunter Beer festival in late September. In past years it is very similar to the spring fest, with many of the same breweries present. Check Hunter's web site for details!

be serving Belgian-style Witbier and the ever-popular Triple, and the Doppelbock should be on tap until early September. Such fun brewing!

British Beers in NY

By BR Rolya with Andrew Schlein

On the 18th of April, the British Consulate-General and British Beer Exports hosted a beer-tasting event to showcase the wide range of British beers. Through the kind generosity of **Dan Shelton**, we copped a couple of invitations. Fourteen breweries attended the event, giving American tasters only a small sampling of the 1200 different beers brewed in Britain; each brewery brought several samples of their products, however, so there was no shortage of beer. [It was clear to me from the introductory speeches and the brochures and promotions available that this was indeed a marketing effort. I was asked by one of the "unknown" breweries if I were an importer or had any interest in their products. It struck me that they were looking to bring in more British beers but needed help.

Some familiar, readily available products were present, such as Belhaven, Boddingtons, Fuller's, Greene King (Old Speckled Hen, Ruddles County),

and Newcastle but there were also some interesting selections from old Malted Barley friends. **Peter Scholey**, the head brewer of W.H. Brakspear & Sons, was there with many of their beers including Coniston's Bluebird Bitter. Other beers of theirs that are not yet available in the US included, among others, the agreeable Brakspear Bitter; Live Organic, a bottled-conditioned ale (while organic malt is not too much different taste-wise, according to Peter, organic hops are much more flavorful and aromatic and this is apparent in the ale); and Vintage 1999 - a bottle-conditioned porter-style beer (5.5%) bottled in a ceramic crock. The Vintage was a remarkably light-colored beer with an intense roast character; Peter said that he worked very hard to get the lightest possible color without sacrificing any roast character and he seems to have succeeded.

Derek Lowe, head brewer at George Gale was there as well, pouring strong favorites such as Prize Old Ale and Millennium Brew. He also managed to find one last bottle of Jubilee Ale, brewed in honor of the Queen's jubilee. This is an incredibly smooth 12% beer with fruity esters, a sweet and malty flavor that's not cloying, and a pleasantly bitter finish. Derek was kind enough to give me many details about the brewing of this beer but let us simply say that at this point the brain had become slightly porous and the notebook had been tucked away...

JW Lees' Moonraker and Harvest Ale were also present as was a firkin of Vintage Harvest Ale primed with Etienne Dupont Calvados; this beer is an amazing taste sensation: the richness of the Harvest Ale is admirably complemented by the complex apple flavor of the calvados. I was tempted to sneak off to a corner with the firkin and not share it with anyone.

New beers that I had never tasted included selections from the Federation Brewery which is one of the breweries trying to break into the US market. The High Level Brown Ale (4.5%) and Angel Ale (4.7%) were not bad but there was nothing exceptional about them. Their marketing department apparently thinks that clear bottles will appeal to the sophisticated drinker but that's not enough to take attention away from the mediocrity of the beer (and could work to the beers' physical detriment, a fact that their US representative is well aware of).

Hook Norton Brewery, which still uses a horse-drawn wagon for local deliveries, had a variety of

beers ranging from a best bitter to a double stout. As I recall, although nothing stood out, the beers were all pleasant and would be a welcome addition to some of our beer bars.

Frederic Robinson/Unicorn Brewery brought about 4 beers that aren't yet available in the US including a pleasantly balanced best bitter and Old Tom, an 8.5% strong ale with a rich malt flavor, a hint of port, and a bittering hop finish.

St. Peter's Brewery had an English wheat beer (closer to an American wheat than a German but still refreshing), several organic beers including a 4.5% English Ale and a Best Bitter (4.1%), and a ginger lemon concoction that I neglected to try. [The ginger-lemon was a interesting combination. I would have preferred less lemon, but the Brits do have an affinity for beer and lemonade (shandy) and this may be the market they are looking for -ANS] The beers fit into a category that seemed prevalent at this event: good but not exceptional. Although I had never heard of this brewery before, the representative informed me that they are available in New York, including Key Food grocery stores. And sure enough, the next time I walked into my Key Food, I saw the distinctive green flasks (a replica of an 18th century container).

[**Hook Norton** had a selection of bitters. The first one was called a Best Bitter (and was the best) was a 3.4% ABV brew which took a Silver at the British Beer Fest. It was as good a session beer as I've had in a long time. Some of the more potent bitters were light-damaged and I won't comment further. I hope that their whole line is as good as the Best Bitter when it gets to NY stores - ANS]

Overall, the event provided a good mix of safe standards, interesting newcomers, and some quality favorites. In a perfect world, there would have been more representatives from smaller craft breweries - aside from the collections of B. United and Shelton Brothers most of the participants appeared to be mid-sized or larger - but I would still be happy to find some of the beers that I tasted in local stores and bars. And I'm sure that we'll see some of them eventually: in 1697 Britain exported 7308 barrels of beer to the colonies; now they're up to over 1 million barrels and obviously don't plan to stop any time soon.

June 10, 229 The Shelton Brothers Take on the World (pairing up their beers with "world classics"); at dbam 41 First Ave., NYC. sort of a celebrity death match for beer, I suppose. [BR]

ANNOUNCING THE 2002 NEW ENGLAND HOME BREWER OF THE YEAR COMPETITIONS

Every year, a group of New England homebrew clubs join to sponsor competitions for:

New England Homebrewer of the Year

New England Homebrew Club of the Year

New England Cider Maker of the Year

New England Mead Maker of the Year

All brewers and clubs in New England are eligible to compete for these awards. Brewers and clubs from other areas are encouraged to enter, and their accomplishments are announced in the report of results. Determination of the recipients of the NEHBOTY awards will be based upon the competitions listed below.

Southern New England Regional Homebrew Competition

Danbury, CT, January 19, 2002.

Contact: Von Bair, 203-393-7257, ereetc@aol.com

Green Mountain Homebrew Competition

Burlington, VT, May 4, 2002

Contact: Anne Whyte, 802-655-2070,
gmhc2002@hotmail.com

Puddle Dock Homebrew Contest

Portsmouth, NH, late September to mid October, 2002

Scott Kaplan, 603-431-9984,
gr8scott@nh.ultranet.com

New England Fall Regional Homemade Beer Competition

Deerfield, MA, December 7, 2002

Jason Hunter, 413-519-1738,
hunter@postandbeam.com

For further details on the NEHBOTY competition, specific competitions, and rules and forms common to the competitions, go to the NEHBOTY website at