

West Kingdom Brewers' Guild Newsletter

Issue V

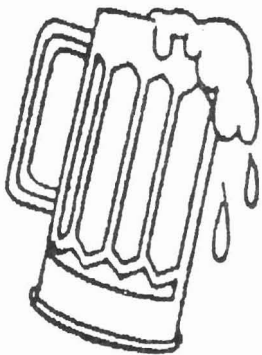
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Greetings and welcome !

Here we are just under the wire again. Nothing too much out of the ordinary for us, I suppose, but this issue was worth the wait!

Hiding in these pages you will find a wonderful article on period brewing, which, by the way, answers the question raised last time in Eoin's article on Krausening. Among other gems of information, Manfred discloses what it was that the English brewers used instead of hops.

Also, there is a recipe for a weak honey drink submitted by Laura Rydal of Grasmere called, appropriately enough, Weak Honey Drink. It's actually quite good - I tried it myself at Twelfth Night. Try it yourself!

On another note, you'll find a great period drinking song. If you're really lucky, I won't sing it at the next Brewer's Guild meeting, which as usual, is Saturday after evening court at March Crown.

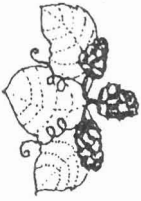
Other than the afore mentioned items, expect to find the usual pearls of wisdom from Morgan (just read Morgan's Corner, you'll understand why I hold his word in such high esteem), more of Gerard's Woefully

Incomplete Lexicon, etc. and the usual ramblings from Iamov.

Well, I've wasted enough of your time and besides that, my mug is empty. Enjoy the newsletter and I hope to see you all at March Crown, considerably drier than last year!

ERIK
ULFSSON





Morgan's Corner

Greetings !

First of all, I'd like to say that I'm truly amazed by this newsletter. It gets better with every issue (*I swear that I am not holding a sword to Morgan's head and making him write this -ed*) I wish to thank the editors for their hard work (insert applause here). They even manage to improve my articles without really trying.

I also wish to thank everyone for all the brew they brought to Twelfth Night for the tasting session. The one hour tasting session only lasted 3 and 1/2 hours! We stirred up lots of interest in brewing - not only in this kingdom, but possibly in Caid and Atenveldt as well. All in all, we emptied about a half case of brew and gave out 25-30 newsletters. We also made contact with several new brewers.

Now, on Eirik's behalf, I'm going to rant and rave. Eirik has been doing a wonderful job on the newsletter (*not alone! -ed*) but he needs lots of help (*he means with the newsletter -ed*). This newsletter is a useful forum for exchanging ideas, so let's all do our part. If you have some recipe, procedure or article you would like to share - send it to him. If you have a question and can't find the answer - ask him and we'll set

up a Dear Abbot column (after all, most of the brewing was done in monasteries in the middle ages). There were some excellent brews at Twelfth Night that I would like to see recipes for - like Frank the Fortunate's Cherry Beer, Gregory of Grandsea's Dry Mead or #19 from Chelgar. No pressure, no pressure, but just a little needling for Eirik's sake (that's sake with one syllable, not two).

Remember, the next meeting is at March Crown after Saturday evening court. Bring brew for our presentation at evening court. It promises to be a fun one (please see me before court and I'll explain).


One more note in closing - I'm still collecting brew from everyone for a Brewer's Guild donation to Ducal Prize in September. Please try to have your donations for a "Taste of the West" to me by June Crown.

Good day!

Drop o' Good Beer

Memorium

This song is dedicated to the memory of Morgan's Fire Dragon, which recently perished in a most heinous manner as it was squashed when an even larger Fire Dragon fell on it. We wish Morgan and family condolences in their hour of grieving. -ed



Come one and all both great and small with voi - ces loud and
 clear. And let us sing in praise of the Queen for 'bat - ing the tax u - pon
 beer. For I likes a drop o' good beer, I do, I likes a drop o' good
 beer. And damn his eyes who- ev- ver tries to rob a poor man of his
 beer his beer, And damn his eyes who- ev- er tries to
 rob a poor man of his beer.

1. *Come one and all both great and small
 With voices loud and clear
 And let us sing in praise of the Queen
 For 'bating the tax upon beer.*

Chorus: *For I likes a drop 'o good beer, I do
 I likes a drop 'o good beer
 And damns his eyes whoever tries
 To rob a poor man of his beer, his beer
 And damns his eyes whoever tries
 To rob a poor man of his beer.*

2. *Let ministers shake the duty on cake
 And cause port wine to be dear
 So long as they keep the bread in me teeth
 And give me a skinfull of beer.*

3. *In harvest fields there's nothing can yield
 The labor of such good cheer
 To reap and mow and to make barley grow
 And to give us a drop of good beer.*

4. *So long may Queen Elizabeth reign
 And to her subjects be dear
 And wherever we goes we'll wallop her foes
 If you'll give us a skinfull of beer.*

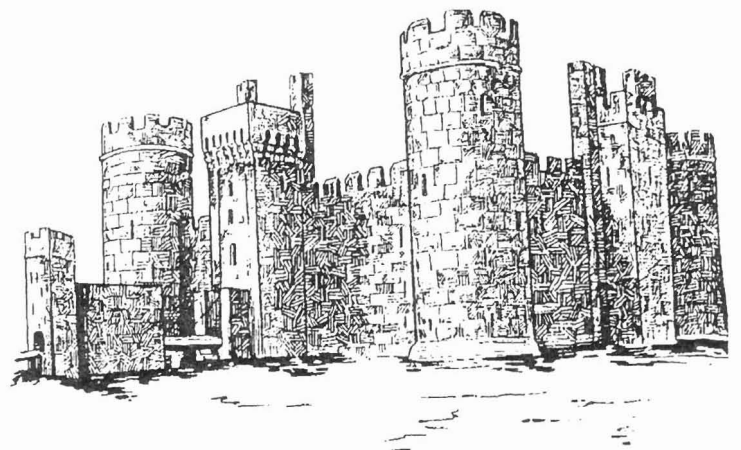
The Absolutely Incomplete Story of Brewing in the Middle Ages

We're all here because of pretty much the same reason; the love of beer, whether it's the brewing or the drinking. The common folk of Medieval England didn't have much choice; coffee and tea had not even been conceived of and the distillation process was as of yet unknown. Wine was, as it pretty much is now, a rich man's drink and harder spirits such as cordials were kept by ladies of great mansions and dealt out to only favored friends on special occasions by the dram. The drinks left to the commoners were basically water, cider and beer. The focus of this article is on medieval beer and what it consisted of.

The basic ingredient to beer and ale is the type of grain used. At the time, other additions were considered unnecessary. The historian Dr. Plot, in his history of Staffordshire, written in 1686, states that "the art of making good ale is nothing else but boyled water impregnated with mault." As to the types of malt used he describes a few: malted or unmalted oats, a malt of oats mixed with that of barley called dredg mault which Plot described as making "an excellent fresh, quick sort of drink" and French barley, a plant between wheat and barley. These are none too surprising but provide a good idea of what was popular.

Drinking old, boiled grain must not have been too thrilling because there were many experiments in flavoring the ale of the time. Plot describes the brewers of Burton (already renowned for their excellent beer by the Middle Ages, usually attributed to the quality of the water supplied by the nearby Trent) as having

"a knack of fining it in three days to that degree that it shall not only be potable, but as clear and palatable as one would desire any drink of the kind to be; which ... I guess they doe by putting alum or vinegar into it whilst it is working; which will both stop the fermentation and precipitate the lee so as to render it potable as when it has stood a competent time to ripen."

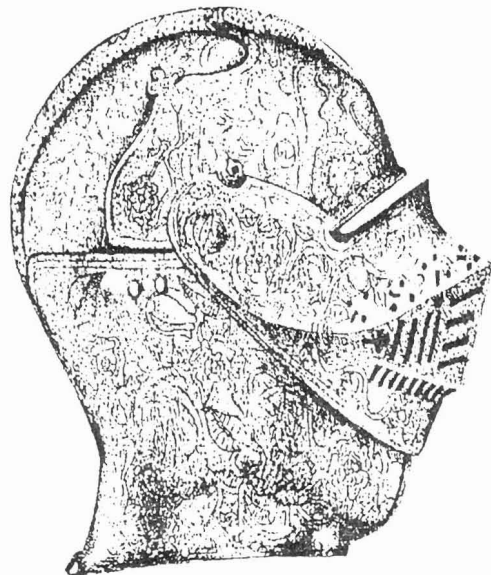


Experimentation ranged far and wide as to what was used to flavor ale, here are a couple more I found. Ale-hoof was produced by adding ground-ivy (not ground-up ivy, but ivy that grows on the ground) and costmary flavored a drink called Ale-cost. In regards to preservatives used at the time, a mention of *Erica vulgaris* (sounds like a name for one of Ulfsson's brews) heath, or Ling was used instead of Hops.

It is true that Ling, among a host of other things, were used instead of hops in medieval brewing.

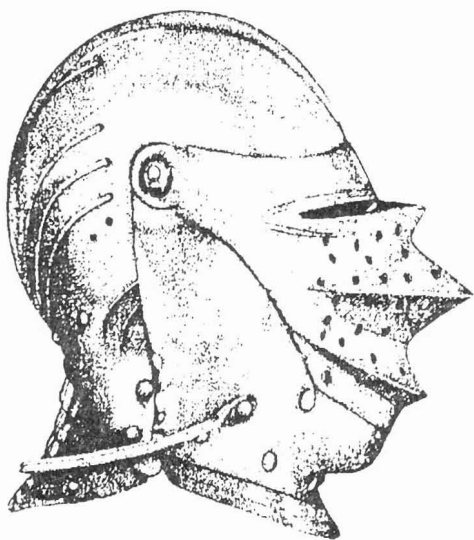
Hops was known to England at least by the time of Henry VI as he prohibited brewers from its use. This ban was repeated by Henry VIII, probably because he loved spiced ale (unhopped ale, this implies that ale was additionally flavored after the brewing). The date usually assigned to the introduction of hops to England is 1520. However, this date really doesn't mean much as England knew of hops almost a century earlier. Despite hops' "introduction" to England, its use was strongly disapproved. For a long time after, hops was considered an adulterant, called a "wicked weed" and its use was checked by legislation for about a century. This bias against it was formally presented to Parliament by the

Common Council of the City of London, asking that "the employment of hops might be prohibited, because they not only spoilt the taste of the drink but endangered the lives of the people." Eventually, the improvement that this new ingredient made to the staple of English life came to be recognized. However, for many years, the beer brewers kept themselves distinct from the ale brewers, who alone originally constituted the Brewer's

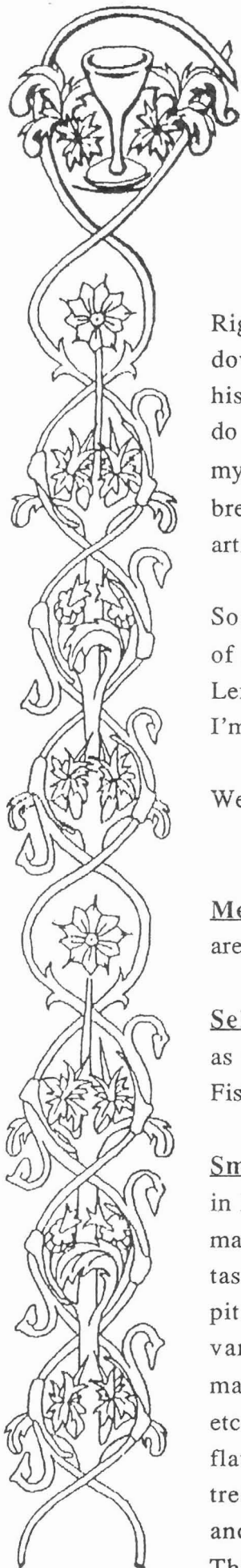


Company of London.

A quick note on the period use of the terms "ale" and "beer". Originally, the Anglo-Saxons used the term "beer" to describe the stronger brew made from the first mashing of the malt that usually sold at twice the price of ale. It seems to have been dropped from this use around the time that honey mead was popular and was revived to distinguish ale from hopped ale. That's all my limited research dug up on period brewing. Most of it was palgerised from Fredrick W. Hackwood's *Inns, Ales and Drinking Customs of Old England*, 1985, Bracken Books, London. It's a huge wealth of information which I will be passing on as I sift through it all. Hopefully, this piece will start a few experiments and maybe lead to some prizewinning ales. I haven't tried any of these yet as the only part of brewing I've been involved with so far is the drinking. When trying any of these out, remember, there is "no such thing as bad ale - there are some better than others."



-Manfred



A Woefully Incomplete Lexicon Of Brewing Terms and Phrases As Perceived by Gerard the Esoteric

Right out, I'll have you know that this Newsletter will go to copy tomorrow. I just sat down with the Scribe-in-a-Box to start my article. Eirik is standing behind me with his recently wrought mace (with a brand new basket hilt -oooooooo!), threatening to do me in unless I come up with something - *anything* - for this article (I'm still getting my armour together, so I can't defend myself). I have no list of terms, no sources for brewing paraphernalia, and a threat to have my space cut to make room for Iamov's article.

So, there is nothing left but to let the apologies fall where they may. There is no list of local, not so local, or far off brewing supply stores (next issue, I promise!). The Lexicon is far more incomplete than usual, and my pep talk is lacking. So, that's it. I'm sorry.

Well, enough groveling - onto the Lexicon:

Mead: O.K. Almost everyone knows what mead is. But in case you don't know and are afraid to ask: An alcoholic drink of fermented honey, water, fruits, etc.

Selection Pressure: The magnitude of evolutionary pressure, separately measured as the rate at which one allele replaces another; coined by J.B.S. Haldane and R.A. Fisher - nothing to do with brewing, but doesn't it sound great?

Smoke: This is not as strange as it seems. There are some traditional beers brewed in Bamberg, Germany, called *Rauchbier*, where they actually kiln-dry and smoke malted barley over open flames. The resulting beer is delicious, albeit unusual, beer tasting of smoke. As you may also smoke a portion of your grains in your barbecue pit (apple, mesquite or hickory wood works best) or use "liquid smoke." There are various brands of liquid smoke available in the barbecue section of most supermarkets (use only those containing no other flavorings, such as vinegar, salt, spices, etc.). Use it sparingly; only one teaspoon per five gallons give a well-perceived smoke flavor. Smoke flavored beers are traditionally brown in colour and are a wonderful treat with smoked foods. A smoke flavor may also be produced in a more natural and period manner by placing the malt in a fully pre-heated pot *before* the water. This method was discovered accidentally by Eirik and myself (*it's not horribly reliable -ed*)

Sterile: An impossible, but necessary, condition to achieve. There will always be micro-organisms in your wort (see last issue). Sanitation is the best situation that can be achieved.

In closing, I again apologize for the rush on this issue's article. Next month, I will do my best to make up for it.

Sources: *The Complete Joy of Home Brewing, Avon Books;*
Webster's Dictionary of the English Language

Gerard



efore I start, I'd like say that I was forced to begin this article with a "B" because Eirik only had two illuminated letters, "R" being the other.

The Dregs

by Jamob du Blous H'Origins



eally.

ridiculous! You can't expect written creativity to flow from a respected writer, such as my ever-humble self, when you restrict him to the limitations of an inadequate scribe with no respect for the finer aspects of the written word!

However, a true colleague must rise above the suppressions of the uninitiated masses that surround him. But what do you expect, when my article is cut short by a long-winded dissertation on, God knows why, Krausening, which goes on and on, until they're foaming at the mouth and falling over backwards (*Eirik, bring me a bleedin' Watney's Red Barrel*) And, God forbid, that Gerard put anything useful in one of his submissions. And Morgan; don't talk to me about Morgan - I have yet to read anything but mindless drivel from our "head of the Brewer's Guild".

I'd take over running this guild and writing this newsletter if it weren't for the fact that I were far too busy with more important matters. But for now, you will have to be satisfied with what I bestow upon you. Tar me with the epithet "loony", but I sometimes enjoy casting pearls before swine.



I didn't get a chance to review Jamob's article before going to print, but he assured me it would be of the usual outstanding quality. He said he would even clear up his comments from the last issue - ed

Weak Honey Drink

Materials -

- 11 pts water
- 16 oz white uncooked honey
- 1 tablespoon sliced fresh ginger
- 0.5 teaspoon dried orange rind
- 0.5 teaspoon ale yeast (Whitbread's)
- 0.5 teaspoon yeast nutrient



Procedure:

- 1) Clean up and disinfect. Remember, this is a fermented drink and we don't want any wild yeasts.
- 2) Heat the water and stir in the honey gradually. Digbie uses the term "laving".
- 3) Gently boil the honey/water mixture for about 2-3 hours. A white crust will form at the top of the solution; skim this off periodically.
- 4) When no more crust forms, add the ginger. Let the mixture boil for another 10 minutes.
- 5) Add the orange rind and boil for 5 minutes.
- 6) Take the wort off of the fire and allow to cool.
- 7) When the wort has cooled, add ale yeast and nutrient. Pour into one gallon jars and fit with a fermentation lock.
- 8) Let the mixture ferment for about 48 hours. A foam should form at the top at the top, this is normal as ale yeast is top-fermenting.
- 9) Rack into **champagne** bottles. Make sure that you use champagne bottles because the mixture is still fermenting.
- 10) Age for three days and drink. You might want to put this in the refrigerator after a few days to slow down the fermentation process and reduce the chance of broken bottles. This drink will keep for about a month.

This recipe is adapted from Sir Kenelm Digbie's book **The Closet Opened** (p.107 in my edition) which was published by his son in about 1600. This book contains many recipes for meads and wines and is considered to be a period reference. In my adaptation, I have taken some of the suggestions that His Grace, Duke Cariadoc of the Bow made in his book **A Miscellany**; specifically the use of more water.

-Laura Rydal of Grasmere



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