



BABB's News

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Brewmaster: Ross Kenrick 3287 7225
Treasurer: Paul Hoeppe 3343 5078

Secretary: Mark Davies 3340 3800
Store Keeper: Chris Ossowski 3274 4095

News Editor: Dr. Jason McDonald 0434 130 324 news@babbrewers.com

www.babbrewers.com

A Pilgrimage Through Hop Country

In early March, on my way home from two months in Scandinavia, I was fortunate enough to have two weeks holiday in England. Having seen many of London's major sights on previous visits, this time I planned to do something a little different and headed out into the country.

England has many hundreds of kilometres of walking tracks that criss-cross the countryside through some of the most outstanding scenery that Britain has to offer.

Many of these tracks had existed for centuries, and were the main routes between towns before the modern motorways of today started to carry the vast bulk of England's traffic. Public access to many of these trails is guaranteed by British law, even though they often cross what would otherwise be private land. Thirteen of the long-distance trails are now designated as National Trails.

One of these trails, The Pilgrim's Way, runs almost two hundred kilometres west to east from Winchester Cathedral in Hampshire to Canterbury Cathedral in Kent. The path was followed by religious Pilgrims travelling to Canterbury to visit the tomb of Saint Thomas Becket, from the twelfth century until King Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in 1538.

The Pilgrim's Way is also mentioned in Geoffrey Chaucer's book, *The Canterbury Tales*, written in the late 14th century.

But what does all this have to do with brewing?

I'm glad you asked.



Chilham village square, with the historic White Horse Inn to the left of the church.

The concluding sections of the Pilgrim's Way pass through some of Kent's prime hop-growing areas, giving you an opportunity to see, first-hand, how well-known hop varieties such as Kent Goldings are grown and processed, along with the chance to sample fresh local beers that use those hops in some of the dozens of charming and interesting country pubs that can be found on or near the walking trails. And if all of this wasn't enough to tempt you, there's also the obvious benefits of getting some fresh country air in your lungs, some moderate exercise, some inspiring views of the English landscape, and the odd free history lesson.

I began my walk by joining the Pilgrim's Way in the small town of Charing, a comfortable 80 minutes train journey from central London.

From Charing, there's 29 kilometres of walking ahead of you to reach the ancient city of Canterbury. While it's possible to walk the entire distance in one day when conditions are good, I decided to do it over two days,

giving me plenty of time to enjoy the scenery and to stop off at any interesting places I found along the way.

This proved to be a wise decision, as conditions on the first day were a little less than good, with light rain and blustery winds persisting for most of the day. Although I was well-prepared with waterproof boots and clothing, the weather still made my progress a little slower than expected as much of the trail is not paved and a few sections were quite muddy.

Heading out of Charing via the medieval churchyard and castle ruins, the Pilgrim's Way crosses several fields (which in early spring were yet to be planted with crops) before climbing into woodland and following the edge of it for a few kilometres. From the elevated woods, the views between the trees and across the misty fields of the Kent Downs were quite spectacular.

Eventually leaving the forest behind, the path crosses several more fields,

including a hop farm (where several large patches of snow could still be seen), before following a paved road into the village of Boughton Lees.

The Flying Horse pub, at the edge of the village green is an excellent place to stop for lunch and a pint of something from Shepherd Neame, Greene King or Courage. The publican told me that in summer you can sit out the front of the pub and watch the cricket matches that have been played on the village green for more than two hundred years.

Leaving Boughton Lees, the Pilgrim's Way continues across more fields, passing the tiny hamlet of Boughton Aluph and crossing Soakham Farm, where a sign warns the visitor to be cautious due to "free range children and animals".

Beyond the farm, the path climbs a steep field (the top of which offers great views to the south in the direction of Wye) and enters the King's Wood. A little over three kilometres later, the path emerges from the woods onto a paved road. From here, it's a leisurely 20 minute stroll, following medieval castle walls, to the end of first day's walk at the White Horse Inn in the historic village of Chilham.

Many of the buildings in Chilham date from the Middle Ages, including the White Horse itself, a coaching inn, built in the 1400's and mentioned in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

After dinner and a few pints of Kentish brews such as Westerham, Hopdaemon and Whitstable at the White Horse, you can retire for the night in one of the Inn's guest rooms or one of a dozen B&B's elsewhere in the village. I can thoroughly recommend the Castle Cottage, a three hundred year old house located inside the high stone wall surrounding the grounds of Chilham Castle. How often can you say you woke up in an authentic castle?

Leaving Chilham the next morning via the churchyard, the Pilgrim's Way climbs gently past several hop farms along the aptly named Long Hill to the village of Old Wives Lees, before making a 90 degree right turn in the middle of the village. While not nearly as picturesque as Chilham, Old



One of Kent's many oast houses, at Nickle Farm, half way between Chilham and Canterbury.

Wives Lees is interesting for the aforementioned hop farms and the half dozen *oast houses* you pass on the way out of the town.

Oast houses, with their distinctive steep roofs and cowled chimneys, which rotate to face away from the wind, have traditionally been used to dry hops after harvesting. Hot air would pass from a fire or kiln at the bottom, rising through several floors covered in hops and out of the chimney at the top.

Modernisation has seen most oast houses fall into disuse, many having been converted into residences during the last few decades. From the 1750's until after World War Two, young workers from London would flock to the Kent countryside in autumn to work on the hop plantations, picking hops and carrying them to oast houses to be dried.

Leaving the oast houses behind, the Pilgrim's Way crosses more fields before descending through a large fruit farm, and under a railway line, then climbing past another large oast house (pictured above) towards the village of Chartham Hatch.

The Chapter Arms Freehouse – the first building you'll come to in the village – is a good place to stop for lunch. Here you can enjoy some very tasty (and quite reasonably-priced) pub food, washed down with a pint of Shepherd Neame Spitfire or Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter.

From Chartham Hatch, it's only a couple of hours walk to Canterbury. The path passes through No Man's Orchard (an apple orchard with a huge carved wooden snake hiding in the grass), over the busy A2 motorway and uphill to Harbledown on the outskirts of Canterbury.

Following the signs from here to the city centre, you pass through Westgate Gardens to the historic west gate of Canterbury's medieval city wall, which once encircled the centre of the city. The 20 metre high west gate is the largest intact city gate in England, with the archway being just large enough for the famous double-decker buses to squeeze through. Although the west gate itself still stands after more than 630 years, most of the rest of the western half of the city wall no longer exists.

From the west gate, it's just a short walk along the high street to the official end of the Pilgrim's Way at Canterbury Cathedral, though the selection of pubs on the high street have no doubt tempted many pilgrims to end their journey a few steps early.

In next month's BABB's News, my pilgrimage concludes with a tour of Canterbury's historic pubs and a visit to Britain's oldest commercial brewery.



February minutes

Visitors: Andrew Sydes
Paul Melloy
Neil Sylvester
Natalie Sands
Lyle Cowan
Jason W
Nathan Ross

New members: Matt Melloy

Minutes of previous meeting: As per the newsletter – approved.

Treasurer's Report: As per the newsletter – approved.

General Business: Kegs from USA trip: 2 beers will be launched at the Platform Bar on 5th March.

General Business: Barrel Project: Ross reported that 22 members had put a brew down. Once the fermented beers were put in a barrel it would be soured and the proposal is to draw off one Champion Bottle per member each Christmas.

General Business: QAAWBG: Paul reported on the AGM, where the committee was re-elected, the beer styles were simplified back to the 2008 styles, and our proposal to cap our contribution at \$650 was accepted.

General Business: QABC: Volunteers were sought to assist in the annual competition.

General Business: Sunshine Coast Brewery Trip: Will be on 17 April brewing a Best Bitter with members to select different yeasts. 9am – 4pm.

General Business: BABB's Newsletter: Ideas were sought and Nathan Ross expressed an interest in assisting.

General Business: 2009 Mash Paddle Comp: Tony presented a wooden Mash Paddle he has made to the 2009 winner Dave Clarke.

Treasurer's report: February 2010

Income:	(cash/chq)	(dir. dep.)
Subscriptions:	\$	62.00
Store:	\$	43.50
Library:	\$	40.00
Raffle:	\$	270.00

Sub-totals:	\$353.50	\$ 62.00
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Total Income:	\$	415.50
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Expenses:	(cash)	(cheques)
Snacks:	\$	60.45
QABC domain rego:	\$	39.80
Name badges:	\$	35.00
Rent:	\$	70.00
Bank fees:	\$	10.00
Sub-totals:	\$ 60.45	\$ 154.80

Total Expenses:	\$	215.25
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Beg. Float:	\$	150.00
Plus Cash Income:	\$	353.50
Less Cash Expenses:	\$	60.45
Equals Total:	\$	443.05
Less Float:	\$	150.00
Equals Banking:	\$	293.05
Actual Banking:	\$	0.00
Equals Variance:	\$	-293.05

Bank Reconciliation for February 2010

Opening cashbook balance:	\$	6389.55
Add Income:	\$	415.50
Less Expenses:	\$	215.25
Closing cashbook balance:	\$	6589.80

Bank balance @ 28/Feb/10:	\$	6401.75
Add outstanding deposits:	\$	293.05
Less outstanding cheques:	\$	105.00
Closing cashbook balance:	\$	6589.80

Locally Produced, Foreign Label Beer

thingsboganslike.wordpress.com, 29 Nov 2009

A Crown Lager used to be enough to make the bogan look sophisticated. The “golden microphone” was in the right hand whenever a birthday speech, awards speech, or other special occasion occurred. Crown was first released to the Australian public to commemorate the Queen’s visit in

1954, allowing the bogan’s ancestors to seem more classy for Her Highness. But globalisation (and, perhaps, republicanism) has meant that the new bogan needs more. It now wants to communicate its national sophistication by drinking beers from other countries.

Initially, the two main local brewers (Foster’s and Lion Nathan) were fearful. If the new bogan didn’t want to drink local beers as much, how would they make money? After much hand-wringing and whiteboard scribbling, an answer appeared. The approach was made: “Dear European brewery, can we please get permission to make beer in Australia, pay you so we can put your label on it, and sell it to our bogans?” If the price was right, the answer was often “Yes”. Or “Ja!”, as it were.

And so it happened. Soon the shelves of the local bottle shop were seeing more Carlsberg, Beck’s, Stella Artois, and Heineken than ever before. And cheaper than it previously was, too. Now the new bogan could get his hands on a slab of European beer for under \$45, and gain all of the credibility that a slender green bottle could confer. New bogan males wanted to be him, bogan females wanted to be with him. One night he was trying to pick up at a backpackers bar, and his international style caught the eye of a German girl. He bought her a stylish beer, which she spat out on the first sip, exclaiming “Zis is not Beck’s!” Correct analysis, Gretchen, the primary thing it has in common with the original product is the logo. The bogan looked at Gretchen quizzically, wondering whether she was having trouble reading the English alphabet.

Meanwhile, Foster’s and Lion Nathan were laughing all the way to the bank. European beers were generally sold in 330ml bottles instead of the Aussie standard 375ml. This effectively meant that they’d moved from selling 375ml slabs of locally made beer for \$35, to selling 330ml slabs of locally made beer for \$45. The licence fees only took up a small slice of this massive bogan windfall. But the new bogan is blissfully happy. He is now a man of the world, even when not wearing his Bintang singlet.

March Meeting

The next BABB's meeting will be held this Thursday, March the 25th.

The meeting will feature the year's second mini-comp, for American Ale. At time of entry bottles must be nominated into BABB's classes 4a (American Pale Ale), 4b (American Amber Ale), or 4c (American Brown Ale).

February Mini-comp

by Ben Connery

The winner of the February mini-comp was Liam Ahern with his Australian Pale Ale which scored 39 points.

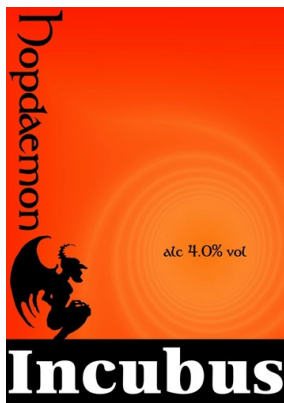
Liam's kindly outlined some details of his rig as well as the recipe of his beer....

"Gear used is an 80L cooler with stainless false bottomed dome as a mash tun.

My HLT is a 50L keg with a 240V heating element and my boiler is a 50L keg with a four ring burner. The system is designed for single infusion mashing and all liquids are moved around by centrifugal pump and a stainless ball valve manifold.

I underlet my mash with assistance from my pump and check mash temp with a Bi-metal weldless thermometer. My HLT is controlled by a temperature controller and probe.

If I'm not no-chilling, I use a copper immersion coil to cool my hot wort. Fermentation is controlled in a bar fridge by a temperature controller and probe, which gets its reading from the centre of the carboy."



Liam's brewing rig.

Liam's Recipe:

Batch Size: 25 L
OG: 1.040
FG: 1.008
ABV: 4.2%
IBU: 31 IBU

Ingredients:

3.50 kg. Galaxy Pilsner
0.30 kg. JWM Light Munich
0.15 kg. Crystal 60L
0.25 kg. Wheat Malt
0.25 kg. Cane Sugar Generic
15.00g. Pride of Ringwood Pellet 9.8% AA, First WH
10.00g. Pride of Ringwood Pellet 9.8% AA, 40 min.
10.00g. Amarillo Pellet 8.6% AA, 20 min.

Yeast was re-cultured from bottles of Coopers Pale Ale
Fermented @22C

Mash Schedule:

Saccharification Rest Temp : 64 C
Time: 60 minutes
Sparge Temp : 78 C

Had Simon Conlon trusted our judgement, or perhaps his own, he would have been the winner of the February mini-comp.

His Australian Pale Ale scored 40 points, but unfortunately he'd marked it as his feedback-only beer. As this was clearly a top-notch beer we've asked Simon to share the details with us.

Simon's Recipe:

Batch Size: 26L
OG: 1045
FG: 1007
ABV: 5.0%
IBU: 32

Ingredients:

4.50 kg. Pale Malt
0.30 kg. Wheat Malt
0.03 kg. Crystal 105L
26.50g. Pride of Ringwood Flowers 10.2% AA, 60min
6.14g. Willamette Pellet 4.7% AA, 15min

Yeast was re-cultured from 5 stubbies of Coopers Pale Ale
Fermented @20C

Mash Schedule:

Single Infusion mash of 63C.
Mash out – 77C

Notes:

Added 4g of Cal Sulphate and 2g of Cal Chloride to mash.



The economics of microbrewing

Neal Cameron, brewsnews.com.au, 15 March 2010.

There is an assumption that it must be profitable to make beer when you're selling it for upwards of \$65 a case. How can it be that craft beer is often twice the price of mainstream beer and yet we hear so often that brewers are making no money? Yet, evidenced by the number of breweries that come and rapidly go a short time later, the contrary is true. Do a straw poll of even our most well-known small craft beer producers as well as some of the newcomers and you will find that money is almost always in short supply, and businesses often marginal at best. The answer to this conundrum is both simple and complex, but it really all comes down to volume.

Lion Nathan and CUB produce or import about 90% of the beer that we drink, which equates to roughly 200 million cases of beer a year. That's a great deal of beer, produced in super-factories fermenting 300,000L of beer at a time, doing this 12 times a day and bottling at 50,000 bottles per hour 24 hours a day.

Think how cheap your boxes and bottles are going to be if you ring up a manufacturer and say that you want to buy a couple of million boxes a week or a few million bottles every day? That's the kind of volume that factories are made of. As a result, a case of macro lager will cost you \$42 odd bucks at a bottleshop, setting a pretty low benchmark—even though the brewery is still making a few dollars on every case.

Aside from the mighty Little Creatures and Matilda Bay with their big brewery tie-ins, consider your humble craft brewer who will deem himself fortunate to sell a few thousand cases a year, with 10,000 cases being a generous average (surprised?). They will find that rather than paying 30c for their boxes, they are paying 75c; 28c for bottles compared to 16c and \$1100 a tonne for their malt rather than the \$600 the big boys will squeeze out of the maltsters (and that's just for the big brewers' all-malt brews—a high cane

sugar content carries an even greater discount) . Even on the bottles alone, that represents an added 5 per cent better profit margin to a large brewer on every bottle of beer sold.

The cost of materials and scale of operation therefore make a huge difference to the cost make-up of the two beer types, take a look at this graphically and the differences between the small brewer and the macro brewer become startlingly apparent.

Clearly when you are buying beer, you are actually really paying the government a lot of tax, buying a lot of packaging, paying for the cost of production of the beer and actually spending not a lot on the beer itself, less than \$5 probably.

What is also apparent, is that selling 10,000 cases may theoretically net you \$100,000 a year, but out of that, there's tax, reinvestment in the business, loans to pay-off and any number of risks that running a small business entails. Setting up a brewery is an expensive business running into hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars. The question is, is the risk reward scenario there?

You can also see why the craft brewers advocate for reduced excise with the Government taking a huge chunk of the cost of the beer you buy. Small winemakers don't pay this tax which would go quite a way to explaining why they often go to work in a fancy four-wheel drive and many of your brewery owners take their bicycle.

Not that they're bitter though, they leave such things to the hops.



2010 BABB's Annual Competition

The 2010 Competition Schedule and Entry form is now available on the club website.

The judging will be held on July 24th.

Judges and Stewards will be required so please contact the committee at the meeting or via the website to indicate your interest in assisting with this year's comp.

Sunshine Coast Brewery Trip

Our next brewery trip will be on Saturday, 17 April, to the Sunshine Coast Brewery. The beer being made on the day is their award-winning English Best Bitter.

Seats on the coach are \$10 each (spouses and partners welcome), numbers will determine the size of the coach but your seat is not secured until you pay. There will be meals & beer available to purchase all day at the brewery bar.

Wort Cubes are \$25 each. Wort cubes will be offered to people attending the day first, with any remaining available to non-attendees. The number of wort cubes is capped at 30 - first in and PAID will qualify. Your wort cube is not secured until you pay.

If you bring your own 20L cube with you (which must be the same 20L cubes as used on previous brewery trips & will need to be clearly marked with your name) then a discount of \$7 will be given.

Yeast will be down to the individual brewer to supply, but must be a different strain to everyone else. Again, first in will get first choice.

Precise pick-up times and locations will be set once numbers are known, but main collection points will be the CraftBrewer Shop and the Holland Park Bus Way.

Payment will be collected at the March meeting, or if you are eager to reserve your seat and/or cube you can pay by direct deposit.