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BABB's News

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A Serious Pub Crawl: Part One

Back in June 2011, I spent three weeks in England walking the Thames Path, a 294 kilometre walking trail which follows the River Thames along its serpentine course from the heart of the Cotswold Hills to the Thames Flood Barrier in East London.

The Thames Path is the only one of Britain's nineteen National Trails to follow a river for its entire length and is also the flattest, with no hills to climb and only descending a little over 100 metres between the source and the sea.

The lack of hills means that there aren't many panoramic views along the path, but there is certainly plenty of interest, including a wonderful variety of pubs and several interesting breweries.

My walk started in the village of Kemble in the county of Gloucestershire, a quiet settlement full of houses built from the plentiful local Cotswold stone. The official source of the Thames lies about two kilometres north of the village, marked by a large stone under the edge of a grove of trees surrounded by grassy pastures.

For most of the year the source of the Thames is dry, though there had been water here in the winter months at the beginning of 2011. To find the first water in the river, I had to follow the dry riverbed across fertile farmland for five kilometres to the village of Ewen, where I passed nearby the first pub of the walk, the Wild Duck Inn, though it was still too early in the day for the pub to be open.



Your Editor at the official source of the River Thames in Gloucestershire.

Beyond Ewen the river started as a series of small puddles in the stony riverbed, gradually building up into a shallow stream over the next few kilometres to reach the small town of Ashton Keynes, which sits at the centre of the Cotswold Water Park, a large system of lakes created by flooding old gravel quarries.

Here I stopped for lunch at the White Hart Inn, where I was able to renew my acquaintance with a pint of Wadworth 6X before returning to the Thames Path, which soon passed by a Saturday afternoon cricket match being played on the village green.

Another couple of hours following the trail as it twisted and turned between more of the man-made lakes took me to the town of Cricklade and the end of the first day's walk with just under twenty kilometres completed. Cricklade was established in the 9th century to defend the ancient kingdom of Wessex against invading Vikings. Today the four

thousand residents are blessed with no fewer than six pubs.

My first choice was The Old Bear, a cozy old pub serving ales from the Arkells Brewery from the nearby city of Swindon.

While the first day of the walk had glorious sunny weather, the following day was a complete contrast, cold and rainy, and I decided to stay indoors and visit the Great Western Railway Museum in Swindon, which gives an interesting look back into the golden age of steam railways.



The Old Bear, Cricklade.

With better weather the next morning, I headed off from Cricklade on what is probably the loneliest section of the Thames Path, passing only one small village in the next fifteen kilometres as the river wound its way through crops and pastures to reach the highest point of the river that is navigable by powered boats.

Here the character of the river changes dramatically with a lot of small boats moored by the river's edge for the next couple of kilometres into the small town of Lechlade, where dozens of large white swans were swimming around near the town's stone Halfpenny Bridge.

About a kilometre beyond the town I reached St John's Lock, the first of 45 locks on the River Thames. This was as far as I had planned to walk for the day, around 19 kilometres walk from Cricklade.

On the north bank of the river stands the Trout Inn, a cozy stone pub dating back to 1472. I had made very good time on the walk and it was still not even one o'clock, so I was able to stop here for a nice lunch before heading back into Lechlade.

On the High Street I found the Crown Inn, where the Halfpenny Micro-brewery has been making local ales since 2009. The Four Seasons Bitter was so good that I felt obliged to order a second pint, just to be sure.

The third day of the walk headed through more open countryside downstream from Lechlade, passing through only one village during the next 25 kilometres. Despite this, the path didn't feel nearly as isolated as the previous day due to the regular passage of narrowboats along the river and the presence of locks roughly every hour along the path. The locks ensure that water levels in each section of the river remain sufficient for boats to travel safely.



The Trout Inn, Lechlade-on-Thames.

After nine kilometres, I passed the first pub of the day at the small village of Radcot, where the 12th century Radcot Bridge is the oldest on the Thames. The riverside Swan Inn was yet to open, so I continued another six kilometres to Tadpole Bridge where the Trout Inn (pubs in England don't generally try too hard to choose unique names) stands alone by the southern end of the bridge. Fortunately, I reached the pub just as it began to rain and the rain stopped again just as I was ready to leave after a superb lunch. The Trout Inn has won numerous awards for its food. The home-baked bread was the best I've had in a long long time.

With the sun shining again, I headed off along the riverbank at a leisurely pace for another ten kilometres beside open farmland to reach the end of the day's walk at the next bridge, Newbridge, where two large pubs sit on their own at either end of the isolated bridge. Being the only river crossing on a twenty kilometre stretch of the Thames, there is enough passing traffic to sustain the two large pubs, the Maybush and the Rose Revived.

Choosing at random I crossed to the northern end of the bridge and made myself comfortable with a pint of Morland's Old Speckled Hen under the weeping willows in the riverside beer garden of the ivy-covered Rose Revived.

Returning the next morning, I found that the Rose Revived was also open for breakfast, a great start to the day, but perhaps not a good time for a pint, so I saved my thirst for later.

About five kilometres along the path I passed by The Ferryman, which stands by an ancient ferry crossing of the Thames, which is now disused. Once again, I was passing by well before opening time, so I continued downstream, with the traffic on the river getting steadily busier over the next fifteen kilometres as I approached the famous university city of Oxford.

Just inside the ring road that encircles Oxford, a third pub called the Trout Inn stands just across the

river from the ruins of the medieval Godstow Abbey.

For the next three kilometres the Thames Path follows the riverbank beside ancient meadows and woods with the towers and spires of university buildings in the distance before emerging quite suddenly into the bustling centre of Oxford.

The path follows the riverbank as it winds its way through the city, where the Thames is known locally as the Isis. This part of the path was very busy with walkers and cyclists heading home in the late afternoon, quite a big contrast to the lonely path earlier in the day. After a couple of kilometres the path heads back out into relatively quiet countryside, though Oxford's southern suburbs are actually quite close by.

An hour and a half further along the path, I reached the end of the day's walk at the village of Lower Radley which lies just beyond the southern fringes of Oxford, around 31 kilometres walk from Newbridge.

Being a large university town, Oxford has many pubs which mainly cater to the town's large student population. One could easily spend several days exploring them, which is exactly what I did on the following weekend when some very British weather (five degrees and driving rain in the middle of summer) forced me indoors once again. Each landlord in Oxford seems to have a bucketload of tales of the drinking exploits of former students, including our famous beer-swilling ex-PM, Bob Hawke, whose reputation seems to precede every Australian visitor to Oxford's inns.

Oxford is also a short bus or car ride from the busy market town of Witney, which is home to the Wychwood Brewery and its famous Hobgoblin Ale (see article in the June 2011 edition of *BABB's News*).



The Rose Revived, Newbridge, Oxfordshire.

January Meeting

The next BABB's meeting will be held this Thursday, February the 23rd.

This month's meeting will feature the second mini-comp of 2012, for American Ales.

Entries must belong to one of the following BABB's Competition styles: 4.1 American Pale Ale, 4.2 American IPA, 4.3 American Brown Ale, 4.4 American Amber, and 4.5 American Stout.

January minutes

Brewmaster's Welcome: Brisbane is experiencing a growth of quality craft beer venues in recent times. Plenty of potential for a club outing in the near future.

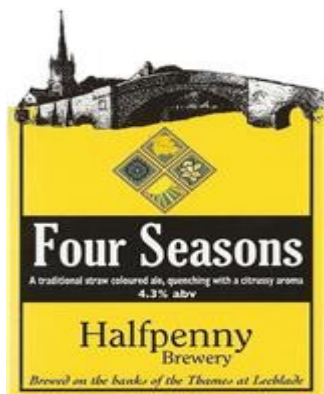
Previous minutes: Approved.

Visitors: Marco Grigall
Cary Macdonald
James Richards
Alex Hyde
Will Brock

ANHC and October meeting: ANHC will be in Melbourne – 25th to 27th October.

As per the Calendar, the October meeting is likely to be moved, though not yet sure when.

Fox Hotel Beer Festival: Australia Day craft beer festival tomorrow. Free entry. Use promo code CRAFTBEER to book free tickets to education classes. Tickets available via thefox.com.au.



Mash Paddle comp announcement: Fruit Beer! Whole fruit of fruit extract – no essences, and no loose fruit in the boil.

Once again, Archive Bar will be judging the beers, and the winner will have a batch of their recipe brewed by Bacchus and put on tap at Archive.

When designing your recipes, you will need to consider that should you win, enough fruit/other ingredients will need to be readily available to brew 50-100L of the winning beer. Also keep in mind that the beers will most likely be judged based on what will sell commercially.

Entries will be due at the April meeting (26th) and you will need to provide 1 unmarked 750ml bottle of each entry. You are also encouraged to bring your beer to the May meeting, where the winner will be announced and we can taste everybody else's beers.

Treasurer's report: As per newsletter.

Deputy Brewmaster's Report: BJCP classes update: Still waiting for the new exam format to become available. Once online, David will take the exam and classes will be planned from there.

Secretary's update: After last year's Queensland Homebrew Conference, BABBs received some new hops to experiment with (Aramis and 013 from Bintani and Hop Products Australia respectively). Some beers have been brewed and are available for tasting at tonight's meeting. Other beers will be available at future meetings. See Kris for more details if interested.

Librarian's update: No new books, but some new magazines. The full list of books is available on the BABBs website. If you have any book requests, email Howard and he will bring them to the next meeting.

Please return overdue books!
Reminder emails will be sent out.

Storeman's update: BABBs shirts are available in all sizes. See Chris if you are interested.

Webmaster's update: The calendar of events is published on the website. New members should expect to receive their site login details from Ben. If you are not receiving the monthly newsletter or other announcements, please email Ben.

Chief Steward's update: Reminder of next month's American Ales mini-comp.

Treasurer's report: January 2012

Income:	(cash/chq)	(dir. dep.)
Subscriptions:		\$ 45.00
Raffle:	\$ 171.00	
Store:	\$ 30.00	

Sub-totals:	\$ 2011.00	\$ 45.00
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Total Income:		\$ 246.00
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Expenses:	(cash)	(cheques)
Food:	\$ 61.00	
Rent:		\$ 70.00
Prizes & Raffle:	\$ 41.00	
Sub-totals:	\$ 102.00	\$ 70.00

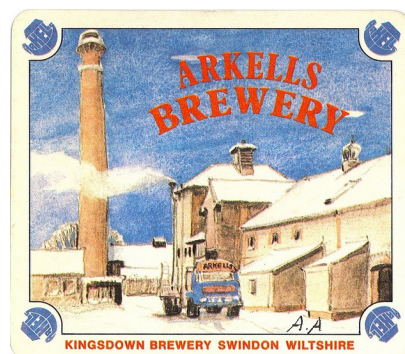
Total Expenses:		\$ 172.00
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Profit/Loss:		\$ 74.00
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Bank Reconciliation for January 2012

Opening cashbook balance:	\$11348.10
Add Profit/Loss:	\$ 74.00
Closing cashbook balance:	<u>\$11422.10</u>

Bank balance @ 31/Jan/11:	\$11492.10
Add outstanding deposits:	\$ 0.00
Less outstanding cheques:	\$- 70.00
Reconciled bank balance:	<u>\$11422.10</u>



NZ brewery goes digital

Norman Miller, maconch.com, 19 Jan 2012

To better connect with its fans, New Zealand's Yeastie Boys brewery is taking advantage of how almost everyone nowadays seems to have a smartphone.

If you buy a bottle of the Yeastie Boys Digital IPA, you can scan in a code from the bottle onto your smartphone, and it will immediately send you to a website where you can see the recipe for the IPA.

If you are a homebrewer, this is a great feature. You can try to recreate this beer in the comfort of your own home. If you are not a homebrewer or do not have a smartphone, it doesn't matter because the beers from this brewery are pretty much awesome.

Yeastie Boys — as an early fan of the hip-hop group the Beastie Boys, I love the name of this brewery — was founded in 2008 by brewer Stu McKinlay and Sam Possenniskie. As part of their research, the pair tried more than 2,000 beers from 50 countries, with the hopes of taking all of what they learned and putting it into their creations.

The results have been fantastic. Pot Kettle Black was the first beer from the Yeastie Boys. It is either a black India pale ale or a hoppy porter. Whatever it is, it is fantastic. The beer is hoppy, with a pleasant bitterness. It is also dark and robust, with a full-bodied, roasty character, and even some chocolate flavors. The combination of the citrusy hops and chocolate-like malt flavor makes this an excellent beer. And, at 6 percent alcohol by volume, and 50 IBUs, it won't be too overwhelming.

Yeastie Boys' Digital IPA is also worth seeking out. It is very bitter, but in a good way, because there is enough of a malt body to give it a backbone. Too many IPAs often overload on bitterness without balancing it out with malts.

The hops give it a grassy flavor, mixed with citrus flavors. The malts had a slight sweetness in the background and provides it with a decent body.

January Mini-comp - Pale Ales & Bitters

by Ben Connery

The winner of the January mini-comp was Mark Davies. Here's the recipe in his words.

Style: Special/Best/Premium Bitter, All Grain

Recipe Specifications:

Boil Size: 26.61 l
Post Boil Volume: 22.62 l
Batch Size (fermenter): 20.80 l
Bottling Volume: 20.80 l
Estimated OG: 1.044 SG
Estimated Color: 18.6 EBC
Estimated IBU: 31.9 IBUs
ABV: 4.4%
Brewhouse Efficiency: 80.00 %
Est Mash Efficiency: 83.7 %
Boil Time: 60 Minutes

Ingredients:

3.70 kg	Pale Malt (2 Row) UK (5.6 EBC)	96.4 %
0.02 kg	Black (Patent) Malt (1300 EBC)	0.5 %
0.12 kg	Caramel/Crystal Malt -120L (240 EBC)	3.1 %
28.00 g	Styrian Goldings [3.4 %] - Dry Hop	0.0 IBUs
20.00 g	Styrian Goldings [3.4 %] - Boil 10 min	3.3 IBUs
8.00 g	Challenger [7.0 %] - Boil 60 min	7.4 IBUs
12.00 g	Fuggles [7.7 %] - Boil 60 min	11.1 IBUs
18.00 g	Goldings, East Kent [4.3 %] - Boil 60 min	10.2 IBUs
1.0 pkg	Thames Valley Ale (Wyeast Labs #1275)	
1.00 tbs	PH 5.2 Stabilizer (Mash 60 mins)	
0.50 tsp	KoppaFloc (Boil 10 mins)	
0.50 tsp	Yeast Nutrient (Boil 10 mins)	

Mash Schedule: Single Infusion, Medium Body, Batch Sparge

Total Grain Weight: 3.84 kg

Name	Description	Step Temp	Step Time
Mash In	Add 10.01 l of water at 77 C	66 C	60 min

Sparge: Batch sparge with 3 steps (5.03l, 9.19l, 9.19l) of 90 C water

Notes:

Combination of the Wheeler recipe for T.T. Landlord and DrSmurto's Landlord from AHB.

Trying Thames Valley Ale as a yeast because Yorkshire yeast not available.

Bittering hops were a mix of English hops I had on hand. 10 minute hop addition was put in cube, not into boil.

No chill, the cube was not quite filled.

OSG was 1.043, FSG was 1.009.

Dry hops were added as a hop tea after fermentation largely finished using a french press.

Polyclar added and filtered prior to kegging.



SEQ Water Quality Data

After a good deal of chasing from BABB's Deputy Brewmaster Dave Clarke, Queensland Urban Utilities have published water quality statistics for their treatment facilities in Southeast Queensland.

Information can be downloaded in PDF format from the following link:

http://www.urbanutilities.com.au/your_home/water_quality/Water_Quality_Data/

So far, the published information covers the period from July 2010 to June 2011. With luck, and perhaps a little more encouragement from BABB's members, this data will hopefully be updated regularly so that we can see how last year's floods impacted the quality of the local water supply.

A beer trail is brewing in New York's Finger Lakes

BBC Travel, 17 November 2011.

Winemakers have a saying: "It takes a lot of beer to make good wine." But no matter how many lagers and ales built upstate New York's Finger Lakes wine industry, the region's world-class rieslings have made it hard for its microbrews to receive much attention.

But lately, the tides seem to be turning, and the Finger Lakes' brewpubs and breweries are flourishing among the area's picturesque, more-established vineyards and chateaux. This spring, locals even went so far as to launch the Finger Lakes Beer Trail (<http://fingerlakesbeertrail.com>), a guide to more than 40 breweries, brewpubs, tap houses and specialty beer stores that competes with the area's many wine trails. From classic small-town beer bars to cutting-edge microbreweries that are dabbling in bold and unusual styles, the Finger Lakes beer scene is good enough to leave any beer lover satisfied — and maybe convert a few wine lovers too.

Roosterfish Brewing

Nestled among antique shops and craft stores in Watkins Glen, at the

south end of Seneca Lake, Roosterfish Brewing, which released its first beer in 2004, is based out of the Wildflower Café and its neighbouring Crooked Rooster Brewpub, both owned by brewmaster Doug Thayer. Embrace the classic pub vibe at the Crooked Rooster, where beers are kept in a vintage wooden icebox behind the bar and live music is featured every weekend, or head to the Wildflower Café for pizzas, soups, salads and sandwiches made with local ingredients. There is also a full list of New York wines, mostly from the vineyards around Seneca and Keuka Lake.

The main draw, though, is the beer itself. The light, slightly fruity Firehouse Blonde and the malty English-style Dogtooth Pale Ale are sure to please, while the spicy, high alcohol Belgian-style ale called Tripel Witch and the intense Hop Warrior Imperial IPA are better suited for more adventurous drinkers. (The latter's tagline? "Watch out, the Warrior will get you.") The best approach: opt for a flight of four-ounce tasters, \$1.75 each.

Two Goats Brewing

It is hard to imagine a better Finger Lakes brewpub than Two Goats. Just up the road from Roosterfish on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake, the tiny one-room tavern sits on a hill that falls sharply toward the water, an ideal place to laze on the porch and enjoy the view. Alongside an impressive selection of brews from abroad and throughout the US, Two Goats pours a handful of easy-to-drink beers, including a smooth cream ale, a rich oatmeal stout and the Headbutt!, a blend of the two.

There is another attraction, too: the roast beef sandwich. The only dish Two Goats serves is made from moist, hand-carved beef, piled on a roll from a local bakery and topped with horseradish mayo. It is unusually good — a pleasant reminder of the well-executed, rustic simplicity that is so characteristic of the Finger Lakes region.

Wagner Valley Brewing Company

Founded in 1997, Wagner Valley Brewing is the beer-centric offshoot of Wagner Vineyards, one of the Finger Lakes region's oldest

wineries. The two companies share a sprawling facility in Lodi, complete with tasting rooms and retail areas, making this one of the few spots where the area's two premier beverages can be sampled under one roof. The brewery also sets itself apart through its emphasis on European-style beers, many of which adhere to the German Purity Law of 1516, which allows only high-quality malts, hops, water and yeast to be used for brewing. Its line-up includes a refreshing pilsner, an amber Vienna lager and a dark, syrupy doppelbock. Do not miss the seasonal releases, such as the Sugar House Maple Porter.

Ithaca Beer Company

"The Spirit of the Finger Lakes" is the motto of Ithaca Beer — an appropriate slogan for what is almost certainly the region's most acclaimed brewery, located in the college town of Ithaca, New York. (In recent years, it has regularly medalled at the prestigious Great American Beer Festival.) With its strip-mall-style architecture the brewery does not look like much, but head inside for some of the most varied, flavourful beers the region has to offer. Regular tours are followed by free tastes of the brewery's five year-round beers and a handful of limited releases.

Start with the Ithaca Beer's bestseller, its mellow and fruity Apricot Wheat, before progressing to stronger offerings like the Flower Power IPA, packed with tropical fruit flavours. For a souvenir, pick up a big bottle or two of Ithaca's Excelsior series — its hard-to-find limited releases range from AlpHalpHa, brewed with New York-grown hops and local honey, to Brute, a complex and funky American sour ale.

