

April 2006

The Newsletter of the Knights of the brown Bottle

Volume 12, No 4

# The Knightly News



I would give all my fame for a Pot of Ale...  
~ William Shakespeare

## ALES OF ENGLAND

# A Right Good Springtime to All!

I pray thee goode tidings, lords and ladies, in this moste joyouss season of Spryngtyme. April be upon us, and as she shews us her comely visage, thoughts of the motherland rush o'er our mind; aye, tis true, in this issue of thine owne Knyghtly Newes, our own club publication, we turn our eyes to Jolly Olde Englande in all her royal glory. That's right, by my troth, we pay homage to that Sceptered Isle, that Seat of Kings, that happy breed of men, that blessed plot, that realm, which has given us so much to celebrate. Shakespeare, Cheddar Cheese, Clotted Cream, The Beatles, Bridget Jones and her prestigious posterior--not to mention the very tongue in which I am now writing, and you, good reader, ply your current vocation.

Britannia has also, gods be praised, blessed us with a wide range of various beers and ales which we enjoy. Pale Ale, English Bitter, ESB and Porter are just some of the delectable drinks which we owe to the mists of the motherland. In this issue, Vince Turley explores the rare and oft misunderstood style of English Mild. We also explore some good watering holes in Shakespeare's home of Stratford-on-Avon, and explore the Sam Smith Brewery in York.

We must also note that the Bluebonnet Brew Off has come and gone, and the Knights were once again successful in bringing home some coveted hardware for their efforts. Congrats go out to Brad Berven, for taking home a first place Stein in the catagory of Strong Scotch Ale for his Black Dog Thunderpaw. Mike Haws repeated his second place showing from last year, this time taking the silver medal for his Sweet Stuff Melomel. Richard Graham rounded out our hat trick of medals with a third place bronze in the Extra Special/Strong Bitter category for his beer called Poor Richard's ESB. Congratulations, lads, that's a job well done.

So now, I must bit you a fond adieu, as we resolve the rest of this volume for it's best tidings.

~ Sir Chris Owen, Ed.

## A KNIGHT'S QUEST

by Vince Turley

This month's quest  
~ English Mild Ales!



Welcome Knights! This month's travels take us to England, with a particular focus on the elusive and retreating English Mild Ale style. Mild Ale is one of the oldest beer styles in England, and originally meant a young or immature ale. The word mild at the time meant "new" or "fresh". Due to the expanding population and demand for beer in the 18th century, some brewers began to sell their beer before it was ready, at a lower cost than fully matured ales which could require long term storage. This "immature" beer was somewhat harsh and sour compared to the finished product, and was often mixed with fully aged beer to increase the volume of beer to market in less time. In fact, the standard 9:1 ratio became known as "Porter's Ale", because it was inexpensive and popular with the working class.

During the 19th century porter developed into its own style, while brewers developed recipes for mild ales that didn't require mixing with aged beer to taste good. Chocolate malt, oatmeal, torrified wheat, and unmalted barley became standard ingredients for the style. New, less bitter hop varieties and new yeasts made the flavors less sour.

Today, mild is less bitter, lighter bodied, and may be darker in color than brown ale. Some traditionalists such as CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale – [www.Camra.org.uk/](http://www.Camra.org.uk/)) consider mild to be only a draft version of brown ale.

*Continued on Page 4*

# Drinking in: Shakespeare's England

Wherein we review some worthy drinking establishments associated with our friend of letters and poet extraordinaire, Whlm. S.

## Chapter One: Stratford-on-Avon

The Bard's Birthday falls on April 23rd, and that's as good an excuse as any to contemplate some of the finer drinking establishments associated with that great man. William Shakespeare was born on April 23rd in Stratford on Avon, a quaint, working class town 70 miles from London. Shakespeare spent his youth here, and his old age, and then, as now, Stratford was known for some good pubs, many of which the bard no doubt frequented. He mentioned ale many times in his plays, and he no doubt sampled his fair share in several pubs like this throughout his life:

### **The Dirty Duck**

Originally named The Black Swan, The Dirty Duck has been a popular watering hole for actors at the nearby Royal Shakespeare Theatre for decades. It is a popular pub with a cosy and welcoming interior and serves a good selection of cask-conditioned ales.

### **Pen And Parchment**

The Pen and Parchment is a bustling, lively pub in the centre of Stratford. Something of a tourist magnet and enjoying a lovely riverside setting, the Pen and Parchment offers a decent range of cask ales, keg beers and bar meals.

### **The Garrick Inn**

The Garrick Inn is an atmospheric timbered

*Continued on Page 7*

# Competition Corner:

by Michael Porter



Dear Knights, Mike Porter here; thanks for approving the changes in the Club's Bylaws concerning the Competitions and Awards.

Don't forget our second intra-club competition is coming up in April. It will be held during the April meeting. I like to think of it as the perfect Celtic Brew-off Comp. primer. The categories will be: pale ale (not IPA) and bitters, porter, stout, brown ale, scottish ales, Historical styles (i.e. Heather ale, Irish Red), Meads and Bocks. Also if you don't have any entries I do need judges.

the San Antonio brew club (SAAZ) will be starting up a homebrew competition of their own it will be called Alamo City Cerveza Fest, to be held on August 11 and 12. More information can be had at <http://www.bluestarbrewing.com/bsbc/>.

Also National will be coming quickly upon us, with first round to be held at St. Arnold's in Houston on April 22nd and 23rd. Entry deadline is 3-14 of April, more info. at [www.beertown.org](http://www.beertown.org)

And lastly the May club-comp. for the AHA will be Extract Brews. They can cover categories 1-23 in the BJCP guidelines and must contain at least 50% extract. Long ago the Club did this club-only comp. and it would be nice to restart it.

~ Sir Michael Porter

# A Knight's Quest

*continued from Page 2*

Traditional mild had a higher alcohol content than today, which has dropped over the years to avoid higher excise taxes. Milds are still popular in the West Midlands, Wales, and Northwest England, but are less popular than bitter in the rest of the world.

The English Mild Ale is sweeter and lighter colored than Porter, with a significant emphasis on malt, keeping in mind that it is a very low alcohol beer. The reference "Mild" refers to bitterness, but not necessarily flavor – and therein lays the challenge for the brewer. Emphasis is on malty sweetness, with little hop bitterness or flavor. Hop aroma is generally very light; there is little (if any) detectible diacetyl flavor contribution. The yeast used should contribute some level of fruity esters, but not over-powering. The style ranges from light to dark, with the lighter Milds being more common to the South and darker milds a style more associates with the North of the region.

The original approach to brewing Mild Ales is an excellent example a very common brewing method known as the "Party Gyle" method. This was one of the original brewing methods well before the practice of sparging was known. In the Party Gyle method, a loose mash was drained for the first runnings of a strong beer, usually some sort of Porter. Then the mash was rehydrated for a second running and a second style of beer, usually a Brown Ale. And finally rehydrated a third time for the somewhat humble (at this point!) English Mild. In fact, in the earliest days of this style, it was not even given a formal name – it was simply referred to as "ale" (!).

Put simply, a mild is all about the malt; not unlike a Scottish ale, but more complex and diverse vs. the richness found in the Scottish style. The malt should reflect caramels, light roasts, coffee, and in general almost a level of "chewiness". Many recipes include a small amount of cane sugar to differentiate it from its larger cousin, the stronger brown ale. Milds are easy to brew, not requiring any sort of complicated ingredients, mash steps, or special handling. Because they are low in alcohol, they can be fermented and served quickly – literally within weeks vs. the traditional conditioning and/or lagering required by bigger beers.

From the BJCP style guidelines we find the following description:

## **Style: 11A – Mild**

**Aroma:** Low to moderate malt aroma, and may have some fruitiness. The malt expression can take on a wide range of character, which can include caramelly, grainy, toasted, nutty, chocolate, or lightly roasted. Little to no hop aroma. Very low to no diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Copper to dark brown or mahogany color. A few paler examples (medium amber to light brown) exist. Generally clear, although is traditionally unfiltered. Low to moderate off-white to tan head. Retention may be poor due to low carbonation, adjunct use and low gravity.

*Continued on Page 5*



*Continued from Page 4*

**Flavor:** Generally a malty beer, although may have a very wide range of malt- and yeast-based flavors (e.g., malty, sweet, caramel, toffee, toast, nutty, chocolate, coffee, roast, vinous, fruit, licorice, molasses, plum, raisin). Can finish sweet or dry. Versions with darker malts may have a dry, roasted finish. Low to moderate bitterness, enough to provide some balance but not enough to overpower the malt. Fruity esters moderate to none. Diacetyl and hop flavor low to none.

**Mouthfeel:** Light to medium body. Generally low to medium-low carbonation. Roast-based versions may have a light astringency. Sweeter versions may seem to have a rather full mouthfeel for the gravity.

**Overall Impression:** A light-flavored, malt-accented beer that is readily suited to drinking in quantity. Refreshing, yet flavorful. Some versions may seem like lower gravity brown porters.

**History:** May have evolved as one of the elements of early porters. In modern terms, the name “mild” refers to the relative lack of hop bitterness (i.e. less hoppy than a pale ale, and not so strong). Originally, the “mildness” may have referred to the fact that this beer was young and did not yet have the moderate sourness that aged batches had. Somewhat rare in England, good versions may still be found in the Midlands around Birmingham.

**Comments:** Most are low-gravity session beers, although some versions may be made in the stronger (4%+) range for export, festivals, seasonal and/or special occasions. Generally served on cask; session-strength bottled versions don’t often travel well. A wide range of interpretations are possible.

**Ingredients:** Pale English base malts (often fairly dextrinous), crystal and darker malts should comprise the grist. May use sugar adjuncts. English hop varieties would be most suitable, though their character is muted. Characterful English ale yeast.

## Sam Smith’s

### *An English Institution:*

The Old Brewery at Tadcaster was founded in 1758 and bears the name of famous local brewer Samuel Smith. It is both the oldest brewery in Yorkshire and the only surviving independent brewery in Tadcaster.

The smallest of the three modern-day Tadcaster breweries, Sam Smith’s is one of the few remaining British breweries to employ the traditional Yorkshire Square system in the production of its beers.

Brewing water for ales and stouts is still drawn from the original 85 foot well, sunk when the site was established in 1758, and the yeast used in the fermentation process is of a strain that has been used continuously since approximately 1900 - one of the oldest unchanged strains in the country.

In keeping with this rich sense of history and tradition, the brewery keeps a small team of dapple-grey Shire Horses. Far from being simply show horses, these gentle giants are among the last active dray horses in the world. They deliver beer to customers within a seven-mile radius of the brewery, as they and their ancestors have done for more than a hundred years.

The brewery also operates a number of pubs, which are notable for stocking almost exclusively generically branded or Samuel Smith branded drinks, including all beers, ciders, and spirits. These pubs are often referred to as man-in-a-box pubs due to their beers’ distinctive tap handles. They are also noted for their unusually cheap prices; Samuel Smith claims it usually increases prices only by inflation each year.



*Continued from Page 5*

### Vital Statistics:

OG	FG	
<b>1.030 - 1.038</b>	<b>1.008 - 1.013</b>	
IBUs	SRM	ABV
<b>10 - 25</b>	<b>12 - 25</b>	<b>2.8 - 4.5%</b>

**Most have an ABV of 3.1 - 3.8%**

Commercial Examples: Moorhouse Black Cat, Highgate Mild, Brain's Dark, Banks's Mild, Coach House Gunpowder Strong Mild, Gale's Festival Mild, Woodforde's Norfolk

Now that we have some background on our quarry, let the brewing commence! The key to the grain bill is a good quality base malt such as Maris Otter, ample use of British Crystal and Chocolate malts for body, texture, and flavor, and minute amounts of either Roasted Barley or Black Patent Barley for color. You may also want to consider the use of a sugar addition in the kettle to help in differentiating this from a brown ale – but watch your OG! Remember, this is a low alcohol beer style so ½ lb. per 5 gal. is plenty. I would suggest either Turbinado, Molasses, or even simple Brown Sugar as possible candidates with any sugar addition. The mash is quite simple, and historically accurate – single infusion, 152-154oF, and no mash-out is required. Hops should be limited to a single kettle addition (60 minutes), with a typical 90 minute total boil time. Any British hops would be considered appropriate, including Fuggles and East Kent Goldings (my personal favorite). Target and Progress are excellent substitutes. Fortunately there are several good English yeasts to choose from these days, including the Thames Valley and London Ale varieties;

in a pinch, you could also pitch Windsor or Munton's Gold dry yeasts if you did not have a chance to make up a yeast starter. So lets put it all together and brew!



### Prancing Armadillo Mild Ale

Batch Size: 11 gal.

OG=1.034; FG=1.009

IBU: 19; SRM: 21

Alcohol: 3.2% v/v

Grain Bill:

12 lbs. Maris Otter British Pale Malt

12 oz. 55L British Crystal Malt

12 oz. British Chocolate Malt

3 oz. Black Patent Malt

8 oz. Turbinado (sugar)

Hop Bill

2 oz. Fuggles, 5%aa (Boil, 60 min.)

Irish Moss optional (15 min.)

Ferment at 64-68oF 2 weeks, chill, rack to serving keg or bottle; there is no need to secondary this beer. Best served cool at cellar temperatures (53-55oF), with low-moderate level of carbonation.

There you have it, the elusive English Mild. This is a wonderful session beer that matures quickly – brew it just weeks before a contest, and then enter it in the 11A category! Brew it when you are running low on your regular stash of brews, or just brew it when you want something a little different that is easy on the pocketbook. Also, this is an excellent brew to make in developing that healthy yeast cake to then pitch that big Strong Ale or Barleywine. Your humble Mild anxiously awaits you, whatever the reason!

BrewOn!

References:

Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP)

<http://www.bjcp.org/index.html>

~ Sir Vince Turley



**MISSION Statement**

The mission of the Knights of the Brown Bottle and this newsletter is to serve as a forum to promote public awareness and appreciation of the quality and variety of homebrewed beer through the collection and dissemination of information regarding the art and science of homebrewing, and to promote the responsible use of beer as an alcohol - containing beverage. The club newsletter is published monthly and highlights the events and meetings of the club, local beer events and technical information that will help everyone brew better beer. Items for publication are welcomed and encouraged. The deadline is the last Friday of the month, for the following months newsletter. Items should be directed to Chris Owen  
 E-Mail : ludichris@comcast.net

**KNIGHTS OF THE BROWN BOTTLE  
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR 2005**

NAME-----  
 EMAIL-----  
 PHONE-----  
 ADDRESS-----  
 AMOUNT PAID \$ -----  
 DATE-----

Please forward information to Richard Turner, Secretary, KOBB. (don't forget to let us know if it changes)

**Drinking in Shakespeare's England**

*Continued from Page 3:*

building dating from the late 16 th Century. It has been an inn since 1718 and received its current name in 1769 in recognition of the famous Shakespearean actor David Garrick who arranged the first Shakespeare's Birthday celebrations in that year. It is a charming pub with a good selection of cask ales.

**Old Thatch Tavern** is reputedly the second oldest pub in Stratford. A rambling and idiosyncratic thatched/timbered inn, The Old Thatch Tavern serves a good selection of cask ales.

**The Queens Head** Catering for locals and visitors alike, The Queens Head can be found in the centre of Stratford and has an enviable reputation for its cask ales, food and its friendly bed & breakfast.

**The Bell Inn** is a charming 18 th coaching inn just four miles south of Stratford-upon-Avon. With a hard-earned reputation for the consistently high standards of its food and beer, The Bell Inn is a traditional country pub in every sense, with a well-established and enthusiastic management team.

~ Sir Chris Owen

