

Norfolk ACB Meeting 6th April 2019

Venue: Coachmakers Arms

Present: Ashley Carr (Chair), Simon Baker, Ray Ashworth, Keith Bailey, Tony Munday, Bob Stoner, John Watson, Roger Yates, Geoff Roser (Guest)

Meeting Notes

Members promptly assembled, all were impressed by the perfectly set up meeting room by the Coachmakers staff and of course Ray. Meals previously ordered were paid for, Beers ordered, smiles all round. :-)

ACB and Home Brew Competitions

Steve Plampton was not present to give his report so relied on his glamorous assistant Simon to do so. We now have 42 entries out of 100 allowed. A little disappointing, so if you haven't already entered remember you don't have to commit to a particular Beer right now, just register and update as you go. If there is no significant increase in numbers the entry will be opened up to allow 2 entries per brewer. A couple of other problems are, finding enough Judges for the event, with the location being cited as an influence on numbers and judging. This is the first one and as such there is a lot to be learned from it. The Chair asked about publicity surrounding the event and whether it had been advertised on the usual Forums?

Update on Lacons Visit

Simon took us through the somewhat Saga length of this Beer challenge and was thanked by all for what has been quite an undertaking. The bottom line is that Patriot is going to be specifically brewed for "us" and the recipe given out, we won't get the yeast. The brewery has suggested we nominate Pubs that we would like the Beer to be in so we have something to compare to, which is a pretty generous offer. Simon is suggesting that we look to have the Patriot clone as the challenge for October/November/December quarter, judging kicking off at the Norfolk Meeting, with a view to having the final judged in January at the brewery. He then made two points. First he would prefer that the Beers going through to the final are the first two of any entry from that region. That is, even if "a. n. other" Beer wins a particular round by a brewer not based in the host County, it is discarded from the reckoning if there are two others from the home County in the local competition. From that you will gather his recommendation is two Beers per County giving the head brewer 8 to choose from. Recipe to follow.

Website Update

Although not an agenda item Simon had some very exciting news on this and a request, so he was invited to give us all an update. He showed what he had created so far on his tablet and we all appreciated what an excellent site it is already and what it could become. It has the capability of becoming a perfect replacement for GS and give us a very flexible platform for the future. There is however a cost to it. So far it has cost Simon £57 to create, using the software he's sourced, but it will of course require hosting. A basic hosting service is \$60 p.a. A more sophisticated one that enables the site to provide us with some rather desirable add ons is \$120 p.a.

Obviously as a Group we can't allow Simon to bear these costs, we need a way to resolve this in the future, Roger suggested finding a sponsor, which should be looked into soon. Until then it was suggested each branch has a whip round at all upcoming meetings to get the ball rolling. Keith proposed we start, so members generously gave £65, so at least Simon's initial cost is covered. But it still leaves coming up with hosting costs. A whip round is not really the solution, as was pointed out, meeting attenders are covering the costs for members who do not attend but still benefit. A long term solution to financing the Clubs needs must be found, sponsorship notwithstanding.

Mild Beer Challenge

Sadly only 3 entries to this, possibly due to Beer style but also lower numbers attending. This was a shame as the reception for the 3 Beers put forward was extremely enthusiastic, drawing very positive comparison to the Mild available on the Bar, Woodforde's Mardler. The Mardler was tasted by a number of members before the challenge and those that did preferred the challenge Beers. For the record the winner was Ray, followed by John, myself third, or as it is otherwise known er, last.

Measuring pH

For this item members had been asked to bring along there usual equipment. There were 3 identical Voltcraft meters and a meter John brought along that can be had very inexpensively from the likes of eBay. Some narrow range pH strips were also provided to see how close they are to a meter. Calbration buffer solutions at pH 7 and 4 were also provided as a benchmark. All the meters, with the exception of Ray's were close to the solutions but still needed calibration, demonstrating the need to calibrate before every brew day. Ray's clearly had a probe problem. These can be very expensive but both Keith and I have sourced a ridiculously cheap option at only £5 from eBay.

Unfortunately the narrow range strips were purchased to cover mash pH and didn't go as high as pH 7 so could only be used on pH 4 calibration solution. The conclusion was that they were pretty good but couldn't be considered accurate.

The main point made about using a meter was consistency. Brewing chemistry is very dynamic, particularly in the mash, so an inconsistent method will give unreliable results. As long as you measure using a calibrated meter, at the same time and same temperature every time, you can rely upon the information you're getting and react accordingly.

Beer Request for Norfolk July JIC Meeting

Our meeting at the JIC means we will not have a bar available. Upside is we get to drink our own Beer and save some money; put it to a Taxi to get you there. Obviously this requires us to provide it so the metering was asked for volunteers to bring Beer along. Could you let me know if you are willing to do so? If I can arrange for Norfolk members to provide all we need I will let you know. Chris Ridout will provide food and will ask for a whip round to pay for it.

AOB's

4 submitted. Ray provided a Beer he had brewed using extract, he is brewing less these days and wanted to experiment with a quicker method. It was by no means the very poor relation I'm sure many of us have endured in days long gone by. However, it obviously can't compete with modern methods and ingredients. Pretty good really.

Next up was a Lager from Keith, to be precise a Pilsner. Miles away from the sort of UK Lager that we all know and hate, a really good example that suffered slightly from being too warm. Even I liked it, high praise indeed.

I provided the last remnants of a Brut IPA brewed in January. Reviews were a little mixed but it at least provoked some discussion on what a Brut IPA is.

We finished with Simon's Xmas Beer. Not one for 2019 but one from 2017. It had changed quite a bit, according to the memory of those who had tasted it before, mellowing, with the spices a little more muted than in its prime.

Norwich Amateur Brewers Beer Festival 2019

The last item was for information only. The Norwich monthly group will be holding this on Saturday 6th June at the Coachmakers Arms. The format is very similar to last time with a slight expansion on Beers offered, up from 16 to 19. 12 x 1/3rd pints for £12 + fees. There will once again be tutored tastings and a two sitting hot Buffet, up from one last time. An additional fun item will be a Taste Test Challenge, where we invite festival goers to "spot the pro". A blind triangle tasting of 2 home brewed vs a professional offering.

As usual all in aid of charity and all ACB members are welcome. Tickets going on sale this week, details to follow.

Meeting closed 4:30pm