

## Everything In Its Right Place, part II

**Or, here's another fine mess you gotten me into** by Greg Hackenberg

If you remember from last time I had cast aspersions on and uttered heresy against yet another BJCP category, this time 19B English Barleywine. But barleywine is pretty simple, right? Well, it should be, but as I pointed out last time, we have the same beer listed as a commercial example of both Old Ale and Barleywine. Houston we have a problem.

The "Barleywine" that most of us understand it got legs in the 1950's and 60's as a number of new strong pale to amber colored ales. But "barley wine" had been used as a descriptive term for very strong beers since the late 1900's. And the term goes all the way back to Xenophon in 390 b.c.e. referring to the beverage drunk by Armenian villagers as "oinos krithinos", literally "barley wine". But, anyway, back to that 60's stuff.

So, we have a pretty identifiable beer. Not a bad start to a style, but once again the style boys just read old marketing, and never bothered with the history. Lack of history is just ignorance, but as any good student of marketing knows, advertising need not have anything to do with reality. Remember that old Bud Dry campaign from the 80's, where Bud Piss was "brewed with less water" for more absence of flavor or something? Really, they went with that; TV, radio, the works. I think it meant they didn't mop up as often because that beer could not have been farther from water...but I digress, on to further blasphemies.

So, we have old marketing to toss in a number of wenchies into the style. And the biggest problem is they just assumed everything touched by term "barley wine" was the same as the proto-style modern example, or at least had to be shoe-horned into the definition. If you recall from last time Bass Ale No.1, one of the seminal Burton Ales of all time was given the moniker "Barleywine" around 1903. Well, here I go with the blasphemy:

"For many decades of the present century, the **barley wine** best known nationally was Bass No 1, made in England's brewing capital, Burton-upon-Trent." - M. Jackson, Beerhunter

So Burtons are barleywine, when they are not Old Ales, which they are if they're given a different name, in which case...[face palm]. Now, here-with I will defend Michael, as most of the surviving Burton/Old Ales were the darker examples (as with most English beers the color would range widely throughout its history). Bass No. 1 was not as dark as the winter warmers and most of the other "old ales" he had drunk, and it was *called* barley wine. He was unaware of the kinship (button-hole me for an explanation of the historic research fallacy involved). So, this ruby brown beer, with a full residual sweetness and a bit acidic (I'd love to try this stuff, and there have been a few modern runs of it), was added to the pale to amber colored, fully attenuated malty ales. Fortunately the definition boys overlooked Xenophon's "barley wine".

And now, along comes the wrenches tossed in by the lack of a historical perspective. Most people would cite Thomas Hardy Ale as one of the seminal English Barleywine, and a wonderful beer it is. It was first brewed in 1966 so it is one of the new school beers that defined the style. But with the loopy BJCP categories, there is an ongoing debate about whether Thomas Hardy Ale should be considered a Barleywine or Old Ale. I'm not going into the arguments, which are about as pointless as you will find.

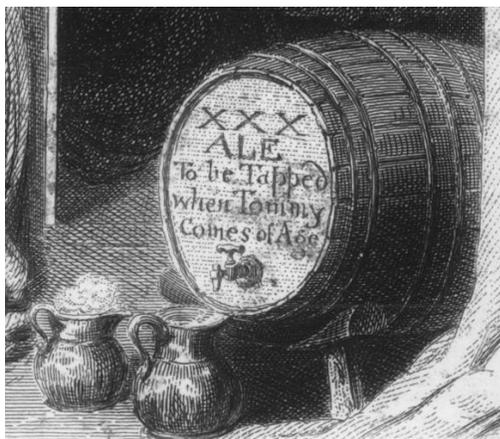
For you see...Dick Cavett had a hilarious bit about how he would do a show and get a flood of what he called "For You See" letters, as in "Dear Mr. Cavett, I object to your use last week of the phrase 'basket case.' **For you see**, I was born without arms or legs...." You get the idea, but I digress.

For you see...To anyone who's looked at the bleeding history, it's a stock ale. See, I'm back to that "stock ale" term I used last time. And it's one that actually gets a passing mention in the guidelines unlike Burton.

Back in the quaint days, Merrie Olde England and all that, most brewing was done in large manor houses. And surprisingly, a number of the buildings survive; some still have the old equipment intact. Here is a view of the 18th century brewhouse at Charlecote House in Warwickshire. Pretty cool.



Typically, the offerings were basic beers of the time, meant for quick consumption. But they liked to brew heavier beers and a few special beers using the more expensive, but available pale malts. What was brewed was often referred to as “October Ale”, for the best



month for brewing, or simply stock ales. These were strong pale colored ales, with 1.080, 1.090, 1.100 and above O.G.'s which would mature for 14 months on the oak (ready for next Christmas) and often even longer. They were also pretty heavily hopped for the preservative quality. Special casks of it were set aside literally for decades. Sound a bit familiar? I think you know where this is going.

Then those oak casks made their own special contribution of *Brettanomyces* and the gentle souring and sherry notes of long aging were prized. And guess where the first strain of Brett that was identified came from? Yep. N. Hjelte Claussen discovered it in samples of English stock ale at the New Carlsberg Brewery in 1904.

Now, I've brewed one with a 1.080 O.G. that will be tapped for Mardi Gras after about a year with Brett C doing its thing. You will have to talk to me nicely and find me during Mardi Gras for a sample. Aged flavors went out of fashion in the early 20th century when modern sanitation made it possible, but not these exceptionally strong beers. So the modern British Barleywine that arose and defined the style we have today is the modern embodiment of these beers.

To sum up:

Burton/Old Ale was a strong beer, characterized by highly caramelized malty flavor, dark fruit and vinuous notes, **low** attenuation, and to balance the sweetness they packed a good hit of bitterness and in the historic examples they were a bit acidic to add a nice tartness. And guess what? This here is one of the few beers where diacetyl is NOT a flaw.

Stock Ale was a strong beer, characterized by malt flavors of the base pale malt, with some caramel and toffee notes and classic yeast esters, **high** attenuation, with a solid background bitterness. Historic examples were also a bit acidic, but the attenuation in modern examples helps.

Okay, back to BJCP. This whole mess could have been avoided, and still could be fixed. How? Dump 19B English Barleywine and 19A Old Ale and replace them with a 19A Burton or Dark Stock Ale category, and a 19B Pale Stock Ale category with a sub-style of English Barleywine for the highest gravity examples - Done. And that's enough for this time. But I did promise recipes.

### **Owd Richard Burton Ale**

OG 1.070 (75% efficiency) IBUs 66 (yes, a lot, and could be more) SRM 27

10 lb Maris Otter 78%

1 lb Crystal 60 8% 8 oz Crystal 120 4%

4 oz chocolate malt 2%

1 lb Invert No.2 (more on that) 8%

Infusion Mash at 155, 90 minute boil (at least).

2 oz. EKG 5%AA and 1 oz. Challenger 7.5% 60m

½ oz. EKG 5%AA dry hop just before or at kegging/bottling (old school addition).

So, here is a nice little Burton for your consideration. Higher mash temp for more residual sugars, and a nice smack of bitterness to balance. Boil the you-know-what out of it, or pull a gallon of first runnings and boil that down to syrup. Invert sugar is a sugar syrup caramelized to different levels (no.1, no. 2, no, 3) similar to Belgian candi syrup. For a substitute for no. 2 use ¾ Lyles Golden syrup (World Market has it) and ¼ treacle (Lyles dark syrup) or molasses.

For yeast, avoid the “dry” “high gravity” and other high attenuators, you want your yeast to crap out. Wyeast 1318 London III is a good choice, as is WLP002 English Ale Yeast/1968 London ESB. For the full effect, give it a long secondary with a tube of WLP645 *Brettanomyces claussenii*. Do not be afraid of this strain, it will smooth this beer out and fill in flavors with mild fruit esters, and that essential tartness.

**1877 Whitbread KKK** (K’s stand for “keeping”, as in aged).OG 1.079 (75% efficiency) IBUs 73 (yes, a lot, and could be more) SRM 10

11 lb Maris Otter 77%

2 lb Mild Malt 14%

1 lb Invert No. 1 9%

Infusion Mash at 152, 90 minute boil (at least).

1.5 oz. EKG 5%AA first wort hopped

2oz. Challenger 7.5% 60m

1 oz. EKG 5%AA 30 minutes

1 oz. EKG 5%AA dry hop just before or at kegging/bottling

Yeast: WLP007 Dry English Ale (a Whitbread yeast)

This is basically, the beer I have aging with WLP645 *Brettanomyces claussenii* for Mardi Gras. Let it “keep” for a good while, hit it with some fresh hops and enjoy.

And now the punch line...That Burton/Old Ale? It’s actually Jamil Zainasheff’s *Brewing Classic Styles* recipe for English Mild amped up and tweaked, with the invert added. You may (or may not) know the English Mild ales come in two shades, a dark and a “few paler examples”. Well, the dark are actually the decedents of Burton Ales, and the pale are the decedents of the pale Stock Ales. At one time these were simply the “un-aged” versions at much higher strengths. Interesting, Barleywine and English Mild, the strongest and the weakest of British beers, sprung from the same source.