

## **A Few Word(s)** from Greg Hackenberg

Greetings beer aficionados; I am back from my journey into the depths of Horatian and Juvenalian satire and ritual sacrifice to the lords of misrule. I will soon be back to prattling on about beer, history and offering further heresies for you entertainment and enlightenment. This time I'm going to get into where this all comes from.

I've had quite a few inquiries as to the source of all this beer type knowledge that I have been generally annoying you with. Well, the truth is I made it all up. That's right completely fabricated from whole cloth. Okay, not really. The truth is I read a lot, and I read really fast, and I remember stuff I read. My wife thinks I am some kind of freak. All I know is that my brother reads even more and even faster than me, but he turned out to be a lawyer, so maybe being a freak is not so bad.

Now you probably want to know exactly what it is I've been reading. Well, I'm going to have use a much distorted term because quite a number of them are "blogs". The term is a shortening of the term "web log" and that's what they actually are and always have been. A chronological series of entries on whatever topic or lack of topic you want, from ignorant dolts to experts in their fields. Several years ago major media outlets muddied the waters noticed the kids were into this "blogging" thing and looked to cash in by calling the mouth breathers leaving comments in all caps from their spittle stained computers in their Mother's basement on their forum sites "bloggers". This also plays into a conspiracy theory of mine that this was also deliberately done to discredit the whole idea that some outside of professional journalism™ might do a better job of covering a topic or investigating an issue than the underpaid, understaffed shell of their newsrooms. But I digress...

For me, two sources stand out head and shoulders above the rest. Both keep blogs and have published a number of books. Both engage in relentless myth-busting with cold hard facts. First is Martyn Cornell. His blog is "Zythophile, Beer then and now". <http://zythophile.wordpress.com/> This is a fantastic blog on the history of British beer styles and then some. He writes well, does meticulous research and argues and myth busts with hard evidence. Start with the links in the sidebar to some of his best posts. But there are also links to quite a number of other good sources.

I only have one of his books, Amber, Gold and Black; The History of Britain's Great Beers and I would highly recommend it. Chapters outline the history of each style and bring you up to what's happening cir. 2010. You will need to do some hunting for a (reasonably priced) copy, but this one is definitely one to get. He also has an earlier work Beer: The Story of the Pint. I'm sure I will be getting around to buying it eventually.

Next is Ronald Pattinson, who blogs at "Shut Up About Barclay Perkins".

<http://barclayperkins.blogspot.com/>

Ron Pattinson has written multiple titles are available on Lulu.

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/search.ep?contributorId=474752> I have Bitter! Pale Ale, IPA and AK, London! Brown Beer and Scotland! The books and the blog need a bit of explanation. Pattinson is an incredible researcher, having uncovered troves of information on the beery past. However, what he is not, is a good writer. These books can best be described as a collection of his research notes which were disseminated as unconnected blog posts. There is virtually no cohesion or organizations. Topics will often be picked up for a post or two and then resurface later when new information overturned an earlier summation. That said, as you read through them you will begin to pick up the gist of the concepts as he pieces it together based on hard data.

Besides his writing Pattinson has been doing something really incredible for the home and commercial brewers by recreating historic recipes from the brewery logs. While he was the historian behind the Fullers Past Masters series, he has been publishing a "Let's Brew" feature recreating beers on a homebrew scale on his blog over the last several years. Teaming up with Kristen England (Grand Master level judge and former BJCP Education Director) for the technical side, there are a lot of interesting beers

you can try out. For a complete listing the blogger Henken has one up at his “half a cat” blog. <http://www.unholymess.com/blog/lets-brew>. Henken’s blog is now defunct, but he keeps the info up there.

Now, I have made or have used as models quite a number of these. Elvis our erstwhile homebrew shop owner has been banging them out in his current abode of Ashville, NC. And has produced commercial runs at the Green Man Brewery where he now gets paid to make beer. Unfortunately, none was on tap while I was there. The spot had slowed down over the last year or two as Kristen England had gone on to found Pour Decisions Brewery in Roseville, Minnesota. However, he seems to be back at it there is some even better news. Pattinson has been busy on a recently released book where he actually writes down neat summations of the beer style and provided several recipes from various points in the beer’s evolution. The Home Brewer's Guide to Vintage Beer: Rediscovered Recipes for Classic Brews Dating from 1800 to 1950 is now available at Amazon and a number of other sellers for just shy of \$20.

### **A little lagniappe:**

Suppose you run across or cobble together a clone of a particular British beer and you want that particular stain of yeast the original Brewery uses? Fellow Hopline contributor and font of beery knowledge, Mike Retzlaff asked me if I could help him out in that regard. I directed him to this great use of google maps, UK Brewery Yeast Strains.

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&gl=us&ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=204007683282640843034.0004d7bc8c4d60105c10d>

This charts out active, merged and closed British breweries and their yeast strains. If one is available, it will let you know. It’s a work in progress, so it will only get better. Here’s a tidbit for those Dickens fans that gives you an idea: “Site of the demolished Barclay Perkins Anchor Brewery. It was recently discovered that the BP strain is still used today by the new Tonbridge Brewery in Tudeley, Kent.” And sure enough, they do!

<http://www.tonbridgebrewery.co.uk>

Check out the “about us” page. So a trip to Kent might be in order. And quite interesting to find out that there is a yeast bank of historic strains.

And for those not playing along at home, the Dickens reference: "I will not conceal from you, my dear Mr. Copperfield,' said Mrs. Micawber, 'that I have long felt the Brewing business to be particularly adapted to Mr. Micawber. Look at Barclay and Perkins!..." David Copperfield, Chapter 28 by Charles Dickens, 1849

And a Dickens quote is always a good note to go out on. Until next time...