



The Ferm 69

EDITOR'S EDIFICATORIALISATION

I was one of the people who realised a while ago that taking three days off between Easter Monday and ANZAC Day would make a nice break of ten continuous days, so I haven't been on the e-mail lists much this month. Looking back through the archives, there seemed to be a lot of talk about the Russian Imperial Stout challenge, which seems to be actually challenging! There was also a lot of talk about fish. *shrug*

This month we have an article from The Frugal Brewer (I even asked him if I could use it, instead of just giving in to my Viking genes and pillaging it!), a tale from the history books that shows you really can have too much beer and the other usual stuff.

- Matt Tolley (Bro Google)

PRESIDENT'S SPARGE

Fellow brewers,

I'm driving to work on a chilly and misty morning and reminded that winter is on the way and the season of lagers, pilsners and bocks is almost upon us. (*We won't ask what you're using to press the keys while both hands are on the steering wheel – Google.*)

In the meantime, I trust ales, porters and stouts are happily blurping away in your brew house, and I trust that one of those beers is or soon will be a Russian Imperial Stout.

This is a wonderful challenge issued by Mike Day (Bro Hoppe) to brew big black

beer with a starting gravity over 1095, and it looks like the Club is rising to the challenge. Some of us were discussing it last night at the judging of the British Ales and the consensus was that the most enjoyable part of this exercise is the sharing of knowledge.

I for one have never brewed a Russian Imperial Stout before, and I am sure most other brewers are in the same boat. A lot of the fun of this challenge has been brewers sharing their experiences on the chat line in planning for and constructing the grain bill that they would use and monitoring progress. This sharing of knowledge and the enjoyment of our hobby is a wonderful aspect of our club fellowship.

The other question we asked ourselves is, how are we going to judge these beers when the time comes? We will probably have to do it over several weeks! A few beers in the morning followed by sleep, followed by a few beers in the afternoon etc and as these beers should last several years (that is if we don't drink them first!) then this interesting experiment will continue for some time yet. Many thanks Mike for creating such an interesting challenge.

And a special hello to Bro Domestos. Charles Wood is one of our more senior (most senior?) members. His likes include pitching crickets, brewing beer and the Canberra Raiders leading the competition. His dislikes include the fish markets and smart-arsed Southerners! I think it is high time we reinstated those brewer profiles, Bro Humus (*yeah, Bro Humus, get to it - Google*), and Charles Wood would be an excellent choice.

That's it for me, I'm almost at work. Tonight I'll rack my Russian Imperial Stout and also my follow-up Porter.

Looking forward to seeing you all on Thursday night where Richard Pass (Bro Pass-the-Bottle) will be doing a mash demo. For all you new brewers this should be a very interesting exercise, no doubt as usual accompanied by much beer tasting and good humour.

Cheers! – Dominic Staun (Bro Fatboy)

SOCIAL SECRETARY'S SOLILOQUY

To lager or not to lager seems to be the theme of the moment with the weather turning cooler of a night time but still plenty of warmth during the day to keep an ale or three ticking over. The Russian Imperial Challenge has been met by a terrific response and keeps the techline humming with lots of useful info and amusing anecdotes. The chatline similarly has been kept busy also with everything from Japanese poetry to joining the dots on a coral trout's back to an interesting take on shoe care...

...nevermind that now though, onto the upcoming social business.

The poll on another bus trip to Sydney suggested that there will be enough participants to run a trip in the next couple of months as well as one later in the year for the beer festival (which incidentally may be coming to Canberra as well – we'll let you know).

We'll see if we can pick a date for the trip over the next couple of months and gauge opinions on whether it should be a three day (head down on Friday arvo) or two day (leave Saturday morning) affair at the Mayday meeting.

The eclectic Dr Kurtz has put the Canberra Brewers on the international map and

registered at the AHA Big Brew Day where he, Christian Toime and Shaun Gambrell will run 3 concurrent brews at his home brewery and has organised a live hook up to Jeff Renner in the US, all of which should make for a great day out.

The date for this not-to-be missed event is Saturday, 3rd May and the address is 43 Goldstein Crescent, Chisholm with a proposed start time of 8 am (for 8:30 am dough in and sparge commencing at about 10). The finish should be about in time to watch the Brumbies play so come for as long or as little as you can and bring along some beer or other refreshments and tucker (BBQ facilities available) if you wish.

Cheers! – Christoph Zierholz (Bro Humus)

COMPETITION NEWS

The competition calendar for the next few months looks like this:

Month	Tasting session	Entries due
May	None – mash demo/gadgets	
June	Pale Euro lagers	Porters/stouts
July	Free-for-all – mead, cider, wine	

Congratulations to the winners of the British Ale comp. All the place-getters were English Best Bitters. Mark Bailey (Bro Parliament) took out first with 111.5, Christian Toime took second place with 107.5, just pipping Mike Day's (Bro Hoppe) third place entry which scored 107.

Christian's recipe is featured in this issue of the Ferm.

BREWS IN THE NEWS

Curry beats liver damage

A vital ingredient of curry prevents alcohol-related liver disease, a study of rats has found.

Curcumin, the substance that gives the spice turmeric its distinctive yellow colour, stopped the changes caused by excessive alcohol consumption that lead to liver damage.

The research adds to the repertoire of benefits already shown by curcumin, which include anti-oxidant properties and anti-cancer activity. However, the research does not mean that people eating curries can safely drink more alcohol, warns Kalle Jokelainen, one of the team of Finnish and American researchers.

"Curcumin is not harmful, and it may protect your liver from liver disease if you have very high amounts - but this has only been seen in rats," he says.

Furthermore, the doses used in the experiments were much greater than would ever be used in cooking with turmeric, he says. Alcoholic liver disease is a serious problem, he says, but the answer is to drink less. (*Bugger. Never fear, brothers and sisters – I'm still looking for a scientific article that promises that the more you drink, the closer you are to immortality. – Google*)

BEER IN HISTORY

The London Beer Flood of 1814

The Meux and Company Brewery, located on Tottenham Court Road in central London, had one of the largest beer vats in the city. The 20 foot high container could hold 3,555 barrels (511,920 litres) of beer and was held together by 29 strong metal hoops. Several other large vats were also housed in the same building. The ale had been fermenting there for almost ten months, but the containers were very old and starting to show signs of fatigue.

On October 16, 1814 the metal hoops that held the big vat together snapped and beer

exploded in every direction, causing all the other vats in the building to rupture. A total of 8,500 barrels (1,224,000 litres) of beer smashed through the brick wall of the building and out into the crowded slum area of St. Giles. The sea of beer ran through the streets, flooded basements, and demolished two homes. The wave collapsed a wall in the nearby Tavistock Arms pub and buried a barmaid for three hours. In one home, the beer busted in and drowned a mother and her three-year-old son. A total of eight people were killed, seven due to drowning and one due to alcohol poisoning.

People quickly waded into the flooded areas and tried to save all the free beer they could. Some scooped it up in pots while others lapped it up in their hands. Chaos ensued at the local hospital when the smell of the beer-soaked survivors quickly filled the building. Other patients, convinced there was a party and that beer was being served, rose from their beds and demanded pints of their own.

Most of the victims were poor people who lost their lives or lost everything they owned. Relatives of some of the people who drowned had their corpses displayed in their homes and exhibited to crowds for a fee. In one house, too many people crowded into a room and the floor gave out. Everyone was plunged into a cellar still half-filled with beer.

For weeks afterwards the neighbourhood stank of beer and the primitive pumps of the day could not get rid of all of it. The brewery was brought to court but the judge and jury blamed no one. They found that the flood was an 'Act of God' and the brewing company was not liable.

Of course, Walt will tell you that all this pales in comparison to the Great Molasses Flood of 1919 that killed 21 Bostonians and injured 150. Seriously.

THE FRUGAL BREWER

Here's one of the many excellent articles from a website I stumbled across recently, <http://frugalbrewer.com>. From the site's 'About' page:

"www.frugalbrewer.com was started as effort to share my brew gear projects. These projects are intended to show other brewers/winemakers how to do a project fairly easily (I'm no Bob Vila, Norm Abram or Charlie Papazian) while also saving money.

Why don't I just go out and buy gear instead of making/modifying existing items? Quite honestly, I can't afford to. I was a successful upper manager on a successful e-commerce site. As the economy slowed and stalled, my value didn't equal my salary apparently and I'm now unemployed still looking for a new position months later.

I thought the best thing to do would be to take my love of homebrewing / winemaking, my interest in using power tools, and my internet skills to create this site."

Trust a brewer to make the best of a bad situation – when the Big Masher in the Sky gives you sour beer, you call it lambic and charge twice as much ;) I'd encourage you all to check out the site, and maybe even send in some of your own frugal gadgets to share with the rest of the web!

How to make your own tap handles! *by The Frugal Brewer*

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I built my own kegorater which has plastic tap handles. Not bad, but just not the right look. Also this doesn't indicate to others what I've got on tap. I looked into buying some tap handles and that's just out of the

question. My wife gave me one made from a pool cue and ball a couple of years ago, but I can't count on gifts to supply tap handles. When all else fails.... make your own!

The first step is gathering the parts. For this I use a staircase spindle, a 3/8" zinc nut, a 4" diameter wooden circle, 2 screws and a bit of epoxy. Here's a picture of the spindle and nut.



I held the spindle up to my tap stand and figured out the height that I was looking for. This is entirely your personal preference. Once I had that I marked and cut the spindle (keeping the end with the square post). I then drilled a 3/8" hole in the bottom of the spindle and enlarged an area around the drilled hole with my dremel tool to hold the nut.

You could just drill one 3/8" hole (to allow the handle shank to fit into the tap handle) and then drill a larger hole, but by using the Dremel tool I was able to create a roughly hexagonal hole that better fit the nut. I then screwed the nut down as far as it would go onto the tap faucet shank and marked it with a sharpie (as to what side is "front") and pencil marked the spindle. Here is a picture of the nut on the faucet shank.



After you've done this you'll need to mix up some epoxy and put your nut into the bottom of the spindle. This is one of those things where I've got to say "be careful" not only are the fumes a bit toxic but the last thing you want to do is have a tap handle permanently attached to your hand.

You can see from this picture that I've epoxied the nut in place (I used JBWeld).



I then cut a notch in the top of the "square" part of the spindle. This allows me to inset my wooden circle a bit. This is entirely up to you. I could have just screwed it in place and left it at that, but I think this gives a nicer look.

I then drilled some pilot holes and after applying glue on the spindle, attached the round plate with 1 1/4" zinc screws.

After all that, here is a picture of my tap handle. All it needs at this point is a couple of layers of polyurethane and a label. You could paint it if you want, or stain first. I opted for a polyurethane/stain combination (as it's what I had on hand). This goes on first. Once that's dried I will then print out a label on the computer and decoupage it onto the tap handle.



I can hear you now. "The Frugal Brewer is permanently attaching the labels?" Don't worry, I haven't lost my mind. The reason I permanently attach them is that my cost to make a tap handle is low enough that I can justify making unique handles. Over time I'll have my own little collection of handles and when I make "standards" (the beer you always want to have on hand) I'll just pull down the existing handle and use it.



Here is a picture of my tap handle, stained in Honey Pine looking nice mounted on the keg. All it needs is a label (I'm waiting on my artist for this).

I'll post additional pictures once it's labelled and some of my other designs as I build them. One of them will have a "globe" of heather on the top (for my Scottish Heather Ale).

Skills needed:

Basic woodworking

Tools used:

Drill

Screwdriver Measuring Tape

Saw

Supplies used:

Staircase Spindle

3/8" zinc nut

2 1 1/4" zinc screws

1 4" wooden disc

JB Weld Epoxy

Polyurethane/stain

Cost:

Spindle - US\$4.73

Zinc Nut - US\$0.04

Wood Disc - US\$1.00

Epoxy - already had

Zinc Screws - already had

Polyurethane/stain - already had

Total - US\$5.77

As an additional note, by buying a different spindle (one with square ends on both ends) you can even further reduce your cost. I bought such a spindle for my next handles, for only US\$3.98 putting my per unit cost at roughly US\$3.00!

PRIZEWINNING RECIPES

Here's the recipe for Christian Toime's ale, which took out second place in the British Ale comp with a score of 107.5 (an average score of a little over 35/50). I've had a few bottles of this over the last month or so, and really enjoyed them all.

This was my attempt at a clone of Brains Buckley's Best Bitter, which is a Welsh

brewery. The stuff coming out of the fermenter I think tasted better than the bottle conditioned stuff!

300g Maris Otter

200g sugar

400g Bairds crystal

200g torrefied wheat

200g flaked maize

25g Centenial plugs @ 60 mins

35g Styrian Goldings pellets @ 45 mins

10g Kent Goldings (home grown - my entire crop!) @ 15 mins

Mash at 68oC with 13 litres of water. Sparging was pretty ordinary - in fact my technique was would have sent shivers down most people's spines!

Had to top up with water to make 23 litres. Boiled in two saucepans most of the hops in one of the pots.

Yeast was Wyeast 1318 London Ale III. FG = 1010. Can't remember the OG. Lovely krausen. First time I've used liquid yeast and only second mash ever so very pleased with the results.

The next meeting of the Canberra
Brewers club will be on

Thursday 5 June 2003

If you plan ahead, you can take the
Friday off and enjoy a four-day
weekend for the Queen's Birthday
holiday.

Cheers!
Bro Google