

Minutes of Meeting of Midlands Craft Brewers 9th May 2015

The Crown Inn, Nuneaton. Chaired by Ray C.

There were 18 members in attendance, including one new member.

Ritchie Bosworth of the Twisted Barrel Brewery in Coventry gave a talk about going commercial with a small brew length (60 litres). The brewery was set up two years ago as a picobrewery and Ritchie had only been brewing for two years before that. The first part of the talk covered the process of going commercial. Ritchie is willing to share an Excel spreadsheet he has developed for an inventory and to keep track of costs. The second part of the talk covered techniques and ingredients. Ritchie recommended minimising the transfer of beer during fermentation. He also said that he gets good results with Hallertau hops, and recommended trying Hallertau Blanc (like Nelson Sauvin) and Equinox (new USA variety) hops. Ritchie brought three beers for sampling:

Beer 1 was a hoppy IPA at 5.5%, made with Magnum hops and several USA hops. This was very hoppy and had some similarity to Punk IPA.

Beer 2 was a Saison with black pepper added. The group picked up on the black pepper flavour. The beer was very pleasant, but perhaps did not have a strong saison character due to the yeast used.

Beer 3 was a Belgian Tripel at 8.4% called 'Wake up Juice'. This had a very clean flavour and was very fruity

All of the beers were excellent and a testament to the brewing skills at the Twisted Barrel Brewery. Ritchie has just expanded by buying a 6 barrel plant which is sited at Fargo in Far Gosford Street, Coventry. Fargo is a redevelopment of an area of Coventry and is worth a visit.

Members' beers tasted:

Alan Q Bitter 4.5% , a good session bitter. Brewed with Nottingham yeast.

David S 4.2% Golden Ale, commercial beer, clean flavour.

Russell P 4.2% sour beer made with various yeast strains and bacteria. Refreshing lambic style, not to everyone's taste.

Ray C Belgian Witbier 4.2% fermented with *saccharomyces cerevisiae* Boulardii yeast (available from Optibac), yeasty aroma.

Nick W APA 5.3%. Good hop flavour and aroma.

Malc N Black IPA, intriguing coffee flavour from the roasted malts.

Bruce K Pilsner style lager (first attempt at full grain mashing and using a stepped mash). Very clean tasting, true to style. One member identified possible DMS.

Tim L Belgian beer. Authentic Belgian flavour. Warm flavour.

No beers submitted for the beer clinic

Website: Munton's Trouble Shooting Guide has been posted on the website and Allan G has had some copies laminated for use at meetings to help identify faults with beers. Brewing equipment that brewers find useful can be posted on the website. The website has a new sponsor, Idle Valley Brewing. (<http://www.idlevalleybrewing.com/shop/>). It is well worth checking the website as Idle Valley have some very good prices on their products and the shipping costs for orders up to 1.5 kilos are also very reasonable.

Appointment of officers: Allan G gave an introduction. There are three posts, co-ordinator, treasurer and webmaster. The group gave a vote of thanks to the current officers for all of the work that they do. The current officers are prepared to carry on, but if there are any nominations they should be sent in to Alan Q as the adjudicator by the end of the May.

National CBA: Allan G spoke about the current state of the national CBA. Brewers' Contact had not been issued for some time and a recent edition stated that the CBA was not functioning and invited suggestions for what to do with the £10,000 assets. There was some discussion on this topic. It was suggested that there should be a central website maintained with links to the regional groups.

Future events: NCB open competition, Saturday 16th May, Congleton, Cheshire

Home Brew Festival, 12th-14th June.

Slaters brewery visit, Stafford, 15th August, organised by Andy R. Anyone who wants to go please contact Allan G.

Next MCB meeting in July To be arranged.

September MCB meeting, Derby, Malc N to chair, details to follow.

National competition 2nd week of September in Bristol

NCB/MCB competition in Sheffield on 31st October. Symonds ale

Treasurer's report: Allan G on behalf of Peter F. £469.21 in funds current balance.

AOB: Birmingham Beer Bash, David S, 24th and 25th July. Contact David S for tickets, as a small discount might be available for members.

Couriers for sending beers: do not use Hermes, as three members have had bottles broken in transit by Hermes. There were two recommendations for Parcel Force.

Allan G stated that he still had not received a certificate from last year's national competition. Allan has contacted the organiser several times and has sent an e-mail, but has not had a reply.

Andy R has been investigating a possible hop farm visit, to possibly Stocks Farm on the Hereford/Worcester border. Details to follow. (<http://stocksfarm.net/>)

Finally there was discussion about the standard of buffets at recent meetings. Would members be willing to pay more for food or should we bring our own food? We usually get the room free. Allan G will circulate a survey about the buffets shortly.

Ray C, Chair

