

## Minutes of Midlands Craft Brewers Meeting Rugby 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Chair: Bruce K

Minutes: Ray C

Present: Allan G, James F, Malc N, Andy R, Jon D, Jon A, Sean O, Allen B, John C, Mark L, Steve H, Colin F, Jim S, Nick W.

Apologies: Ian R-B, Peter F, Steve R, Richard B, Martin R

Venue: The Alexandra Arms, James Street, Rugby

1. Introduction: the Chair welcomed everyone to Rugby and explained the rationale behind the Tribute comparison brew. He explained that the quality of bottled Tribute seemed to vary, as he had had a bottled version in the past with good hop aroma and flavour. Two different batches sampled in the week had quite different colours, no hop aroma and mediocre flavour. With this in mind bottled Tribute was the first beer for tasting in the brew comparison, for reference purposes.

2. Tasting of Tribute clones:

For the tasting the members were split into two teams of eight, which was chosen to give a consensus view on each beer from a reasonable number of tasters. There were 16 Tribute clone beers (English Pale Ale style) for tasting. For the first round of tasting the MCB Beer Assessment Form was used and aroma, appearance, flavour, mouthfeel, and overall impression were marked out of 10 and comments provided for feedback. Each tasting team completed one form on each beer. All beers were coded and tasted blind, apart from bottled Tribute. It was ensured that each brewer did not taste their own beer, but that it went to the opposite tasting team. Teams were instructed to identify the two best beers to go forward to the taste off final. The beers were quite variable in character and quality. English Pale Ale is a quite difficult style to brew well as it tends to expose any faults. One interesting beer had a distinct Belgian character and it was a very good beer, but not true to style. After the tasting the brewer said that he had used the yeast from Proper Job, but had left the beer on the yeast for much longer than usual. Another beer had ropiness, which is caused by a bacterial infection and can be difficult to eradicate from the brewery. After the first round of tasting two best beers were identified by each tasting group, based on the scores for the beers. For the taste off final the BJCP scoresheet was used and both tasting teams tasted all four beers and scored them independently. The combined scores from the two teams was used to place the final four beers in rank order.

The results were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place Matt S with a score of 78 out of 100
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place Sean O with a score of 68 out of 100
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Mark L with a score of 65 out of 100
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place Alan Q with a score of 55 out of 100

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> placed brewers received a certificate designed by Steve H. Congratulations to the finalists and thanks to everyone for taking part. Feedback on the beers entered will be sent out to brewers.

Each of the finalists who were present at the meeting gave a brief description of how they had made the beer. One of the finalists had used SO4 yeast and another had used the yeast

cultured from bottled Proper Job. There was some discussion around the age of beers and how beers change over time. Young beers seem to do better in competitions. It was reported that at a recent comparison brew of Greene King's Mild by the Cambridge group only those beers that had been fermented with Greene King yeast had the correct character. Greene King yeast does add a lot of the character to the beers.

3. Visit to Atomic Brewery, which is housed in a garage at the back of the pub. The Head Brewer, Keith, showed us around the 6 barrel plant. Only Amarillo hops are used in the beers and dried US05 yeast is used for all brews. The brewery supplies two pubs in Rugby owned by the brewers and barrels are swapped via the trade to supply guest beers for the pubs.
4. Tasting of two Black IPAs and discussion of recipes: after lunch two Black IPAs brewed by Allan G and Malc N were tasted. One had used English hops and the other Australian hops (Ella, Summer and Enigma). It was felt that the beer with English hops did not have enough hoppiness for a Black IPA, even though it did have a BU/GU ratio of 0.9. The beer was also fermented with a new batch of WLP 002 but only attenuated to about 68% which would have left some sweetness. The brief for the beer competition with the Northern Brewers in October is a Black IPA with an OG of 1050-1055 made with English hops only. Malc N recommended the Port66 website for tips on brewing black IPAs and recipes.
5. Ingredient suppliers: Ray C mentioned a new brewing business in Leamington Spa called 'BeerTorrent', where beers can be made on the premises in stainless steel kit and fermented there. They can also supply brewing ingredients at a reasonable cost. Bruce K has been using a homebrew supplier called 'Copper Kettle' near Kettering. They can supply a Grainfather for £550. 'Brewers Select' in Peterborough sells 25 kg sacks of grain at very good prices. They only sell hops in 5 kg packs, but do have 10 x 11g packs of Mangrove Jack dried yeasts at good prices.
6. Report from the recent Homebrew Festival in Leicestershire: members of the MCB were very successful in the awards. James F got 1<sup>st</sup> prize for a Saison and 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for an ESB. Andy R got a 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for an APA and he also donated a Corny Keg of the same beer for attendees to sample and several members said that it was the best beer on the bar. Nick W got a 1<sup>st</sup> prize for a cider, a 2<sup>nd</sup> for an IPA, a 3<sup>rd</sup> for a dark mild. The beer that got a 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the IPA category was apparently packed with American hops and was entered in the APA category, where it was not placed. Allan G won a 1<sup>st</sup> for his Wheat Beer and a 3<sup>rd</sup> for an Ordinary Bitter. Congratulations to the four successful MCB members.
7. Future events: the next meeting will be on 10<sup>th</sup> September at the Flowerpot in Derby, chaired by Malc N. The Charnwood Brewery visit is on 1<sup>st</sup> October in Loughborough. The brewing competition with the Northern Brewers (Black IPA) is on 29<sup>th</sup> October in Sheffield. The Co-ordinator suggested a Christmas social and asked for ideas, suggestions of venues and volunteers to organise it. The January meeting will be in Loughborough, chaired by Peter F and the March meeting will be in Birmingham, chaired by Sean O. Members were reminded about the Birmingham Beer Bash on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and several members said they would be attending on the Friday evening, with some going to the Saturday afternoon session. The National Homebrew competition will be in September in Bristol.

Members were reminded about the annual Waitrose beer competition and the Brewdog beer competition.

8. Treasurer's report: Allan G reported on behalf of Peter F that the current balance on the account is £750, after taking into account all existing commitments.
9. Election of officers: there have been no applications received for the posts of Co-ordinator, Treasurer or Webmaster. The current Co-ordinator, Allan G, said that the job of co-ordinator is hard work as we now have 150 people in the mailing list. The main problem is the lack of response to e-mails and late replies for attendance at meetings, which necessitates a lot of chasing up by the Co-ordinator. A new website will be developed by the webmaster, Malc N, which will have a form to complete online to register attendance and whether food is required. The new website hosting could be shared with the Northern Brewers to keep down costs. Allan G is going to put forward guidelines and procedures for the role of Co-ordinator, Chairmen and Members. Another issue is that there needs to be good communication between the Chair of the meeting and the Co-ordinator. A suggestion was made of having a forum, on which members could sign up to attend a meeting and order lunch, which could relieve some of the work of the Co-ordinator.
10. AOB: There was discussion of grain mills and the possible advantages of milling your own grain.