



LIVIN' THE BREWS



The Newsletter of the North Texas Home Brewers Association, Inc.

Volume XVI, Issue 8

August, 2001

The
**GINGER
MAN**



August Meeting
TUESDAY, July 14, 7:00 PM

The Ginger Man
2718 Boll Street
Dallas, TX 75204
214 754-8771

The Prez Sez

by Steve Hacker

The Prez Sez

Have you seen the brewing trophies we've acquired? They're at Homebrew Headquarters so go by and see them. One, the Dixie Cup, will be up for grabs again in October. We need plenty of entries to send to Houston if we want to keep it for another year.

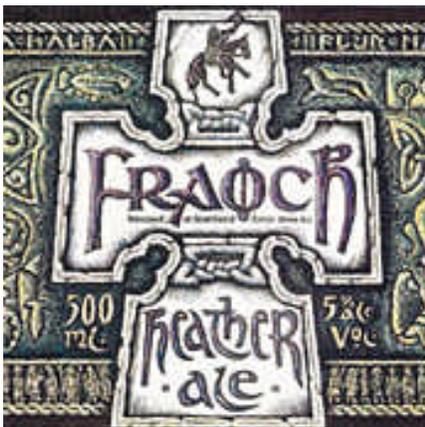
And while you're brewing for Houston, set aside 3 bottles for the Cactus Challenge in Lubbock. The Aleian Society will host their 4th annual competition in September. They recently posted their entry forms and event information on the Internet. Go to <http://www.door.net/homebrew> and click on Cactus Challenge for details. Are you interested in a road trip to the Cactus Challenge? We will depart Friday, September 21st at 12:00 noon and arrive about 6:00 PM. The return trip should have us home about 7:00 PM Sunday. See me at the club meeting if you're interested.

The Bluebonnet Committee has started its monthly meetings in preparation for

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Welcome to All Things Scottish

By Bill Dubas



"Come join us on May 2nd as our special guest, Michael Jackson, leads us on a guided tasting of single malt scotch whiskies." I gazed down at my watch, and then stared in disbelief at the sign posted in the store window. It was April 28th and my wife and I were leaving the city in 2 days. This would most likely be my one and only opportunity to sip Scotch whisky with one of the world's foremost experts on barley based beverages; and I was go-

ing to miss it.

My wife and I were standing outside of Royal Mile Whiskies, one of a dozen or so similar establishments that run the length of High Street, Edinburgh Scotland's most famous street. This street, also known as "The Royal Mile", starts at Holyrood Palace and heads uphill for approximately 1 mile, ending up at the gates of Edinburgh castle. Royal Mile Whiskies has the distinct advantage over its competitors in that it lies within a stone's throw of the exit of the Scotch Whisky Heritage Center, a combination museum and theme park ride, which depicts the history and production of Scotland's most famous beverage.

Dejected, I was about to walk away when one of the store clerks observed me eyeing the Michael Jackson poster. "We

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BREWERY ROYALE 2001		
Style of the Month		
Jan.	Dunkel & Schwarzbier	Cat. 13
Mar.	Stout	Cat. 12C, & 16
May.	Bockanalia	Cat. 14
Jul.	Witbier	Cat. 19B
Sep.	California Common	Cat. 6C
Nov.	Mild Ale	Cat. 10A
STANDINGS		POINTS
Tom Henderson		5
Steve Hacker		5
Paul Doxey		3
Val Bee		3
Randall Woodman		2
Tom Garner		2
Jim Layton		1
Kelly Harris		1
Don Trotter		1

Welcome to All Things Scottish

By Bill Dubas

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still have a few openings left if you're interested", he said. I explained that we were leaving town soon and would unfortunately not be able to attend. I also mentioned that I was a beer lover and would be more interested in a tasting of Scottish beers, rather than Scottish whisky. "Come with me", he said. We followed him to the back of the store where, tucked away in a dark corner amid cases and cases of whisky, was a small beer cooler filled with "historic" Scottish ales.

I wasn't sure what to expect from a beer labeled "historic". Fermented drinks have been made in Scotland since the dark ages. At an archaeological site

on the island of Rhum, Neolithic remains dating from before 2000 BC have been found to contain the residue of a beverage containing barley, oats, and heather. The first ales were produced by spontaneous fermentation of natural fruit, honey, and cereals. Over the centuries, these flavors were refined using local herbs, fruits, and flowers. It really gets the imagination going when you stop and think about the infinite range of flavors available. We selected five different beers from the cooler, thanked the clerk for his help, and began the long walk back to our hotel, wondering if we could be patient enough to wait for them to chill in our hotel room fridge.

Upon closer inspection, we discovered that we had selected five ales produced by the same company, Heather Ale Ltd. of Scotland. Heather Ale Ltd. is

best known in the United States for its Fraoch (pronounced Fruoch) Heather Ale imported by Baltimore-based importer Legends Ltd. In addition to Fraoch, we had selected Kelpie, Alba, Grozet, and Ebulum; all ales brewed using indigenous resources and historic recipes. At least that's what it said on the labels.

The first ale we tried was Fraoch Heather Ale. The word "fraoch" is Gaelic for "heather". According to the bottle label, ales containing heather have been brewed in Scotland for 4 thousand years and it is the oldest style of ale still made in the world. Fraoch is produced to a 16th century Scots-Gaelic recipe. It contains malted barley, sweet gale, and sprigs of heather flowers added as though they were hops, to impart aroma and dryness. The hot wort is also infused with heather flowers before being fermented in copper tuns. For a time, the recipe also included bog myrtle, another traditional ingredient, but this was found to be excessively medicinal. My tasting notes indicated a light amber color and a floral/herbal aroma. It also had a dry finish, which I believe can be attributed to the heather.

The next ale on our agenda was probably the strangest beer that I have ever tasted. As a homebrewer for 8 years, I have sampled some pretty weird stuff that fellow club member have experimented with. However, nothing prepared me for a beer

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Welcome to All Things Scottish

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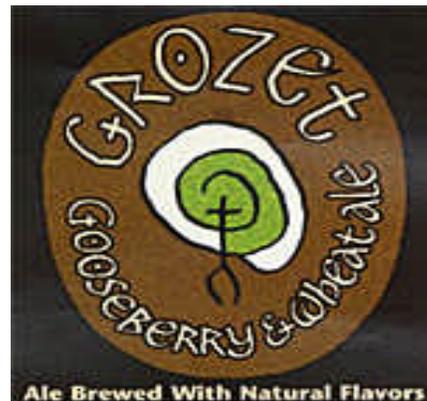
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made with seaweed. Kelpie Ale, as it is named, contained seaweed (Bladder Wrack, to be more specific) harvested on the Argyll coast. It seems that before the 1850s, there were many Scottish coastal alehouses, which brewed their own ale. These ales were made from local malted barley that was grown on fields fertilized with seaweed. This environment gave the barley a very specific flavor, which the brewers of Kelpie have attempted to recreate by the infusion of fresh seaweed in the mash tun. The name Kelpie is a term used for mythical creatures that live in the lochs of Scotland, the best known being the Loch Ness monster. My tasting notes indicated a deep amber, almost brown color

with no head. It almost resembled Coke Cola. I also noted a salty, vegetal flavor that I believe was intentional. Kelpie Ale was definitely not my favorite of the five beers that we sampled that night.



Third on our list was Alba, which incidentally is the Gaelic word for “Scotland”. Alba Ale is brewed to a traditional Highland recipe containing Scots pine and spruce shoots picked during early spring. Introduced by the Vikings, spruce and pine ales were very popular in the Scottish Highlands until the end of the 19th century. Many early explorers, including Captain Cook, used spruce ale during long sea voyages since it prevented scurvy. My tasting notes confirmed the evergreen aroma and flavor, along with a resinous after-taste. It was an amber colored ale with a nice head and carbonation level.



Next up on the agenda was Grozet (from the Gaelic “groseid”, grozet is old Scots for “gooseberry”). The gooseberry has been used to produce alcoholic beverages at least since medieval times. In the 17th century, monks were known to make a strong wine-like ale from unmalted wheat, herbs, and gooseberries. You may also be familiar with Tibbie Shiel’s Green Grozet, which was immortalized by such authors as Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns. Tibbie Shiel was a “luckie”, a Scottish alewife, or tavern brewster, who owned an inn on Saint Mary’s Loch. By most accounts, her grozet was sweet and strong as wine and contained green gooseberries, wheat, and barley. This contemporary version brewed by Heather Ale Ltd. is brewed with lager malt, wheat, bog myrtle, hops, and meadowsweet,

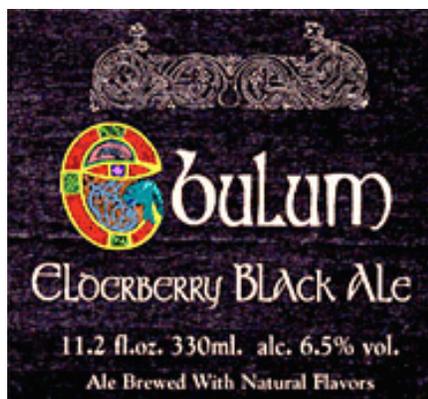
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Welcome to All Things Scottish

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then secondary fermented with ripe Scottish gooseberries. My tasting notes of Grozet indicated a fruity and herbal aroma. The herbal flavor dominated the taste as well. The color was pale gold.



The final beer that we tasted was Ebulum, an elderberry black ale. The elder tree and its berries are steeped in mythology. The Welsh druids considered the elder tree to have mystical properties. They used the fruit of the elder tree for many of their magic remedies and potions. They also drank a dark fermented beverage brewed from cereals, herbs, and elderberries during autumn ceremonies. This drink was then diluted and passed around to the people of the village. This

tradition was in common use in Scotland by the 9th century. Elderberries have also been used as a natural remedy for influenza, epilepsy, and even syphilis. Heather Ale Ltd's version of this ale is made from roasted oats, barley, and wheat, boiled with herbs, then fermented with ripe elderberries. My tasting notes described it as dark brown to black with a slight roast malt aroma. The elderberries were slightly evident as a dark fruit aroma and flavor. I likened it to a German Schwarzbier with fruit. I'd say that this historic ale was my favorite.

All things considered, I was very impressed with these beers. To someone who is used to traditional beers containing only malted barley (or wheat) and hops, it was a welcome and interesting change. I may try to brew one of these beers someday just for a change of pace. Does anyone know where I can get my hands on a half pound of Bladder Wrack seaweed? For more information, the September/October 2000 issue of Zymurgy has articles on gruit (a type of ale made with spices) and heather

ales. The March/April 1999 issue of Zymurgy contains an article on the role of women in Scottish brewing.



The Prez Sez

by Steve Hacker

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the 2002 Bluebonnet Brew-Off next March. If you are interested in helping prepare for this event, see me during our club meeting or give me a call. Your participation will be appreciated and you will broaden your knowledge of our hobby.

With the hot summer days here, watch your fermenter temperatures to keep your brews tasting like you expect.

I'll see you at the club meeting.

Cheers,
Steve Hacker



September Meeting

The Flying Saucer
 Draught Emporium
 14999 Montfort Drive
 Addison TX, 75240
COC: California Common



The Brewing Equipment Trading Post

15 gallon corny keg w/SS carbonating stone, new cond. Could be modified to be an awesome homebrew unitank! Only 1 of 2 that I know about in DFW area. \$150/BO. Double headed brass tap tower, used, \$50/BO. Contact Rick Calley, metro 817-430-2141.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

To list your equipment, include the following information -

- 1 - Description of items)
- 2 - Whether it is "For Sale", "Will Trade For _?_ or "Free, Come & Get It"
- 3 - Your name
- 4 - How and when to contact you about your items).

You can give the information to Don Trotter at our club meeting or email it to djtrotter@yahoo.com.

Your items) will be listed in the next issue of the newsletter. There is **no charge** for this service if you are a club member. Non club members may post here for a modest fee.

North Texas Home Brewers Association, Inc. Board of Directors

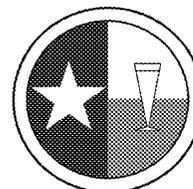
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killet@dhc.net |
| Past President ----- | Jim Layton ----- | (903) 546-6989
j-layton@raytheon.com |

Club Brewmeisters

Club "Brewmeisters" are members who are experienced brewers and have volunteered to help other brewers, both new and old, who are having problems. Give them a call with your questions! Just don't call too late or too early or during Cowboy games!

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
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| Darrell Simon ----- | (972) 475-7571 |
| McKee Smith ----- | (972) 393-3569 |

North Texas Home Brewers Association, Inc.



The North Texas Home Brewers Association is a group with an interest in beer in general and home brewing in

particular. We meet once a month on the second Tuesday at various locations in the area. Visitors are welcome! "Livin' the Brews" is our newsletter and is published about once a month. We do accept advertising, although the NTHBA, its officers, assignees and editors are not liable for losses or damages resulting from mistakes or misprints, or any other consequences of advertising in this or any other publication. Ads are \$30 for a 1/3 page and \$50 for a full page, subject to change without notice. Readers are encouraged to submit articles. Deadlines for ads and articles are the last Monday of each month for publication the following month.

Visit the NTHBA Website at <http://www.nthba.org>

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If you received this with a yellow post office forwarding sticker,
please give Tom Garner a call at (972) 234-4411 and give him your new address.