

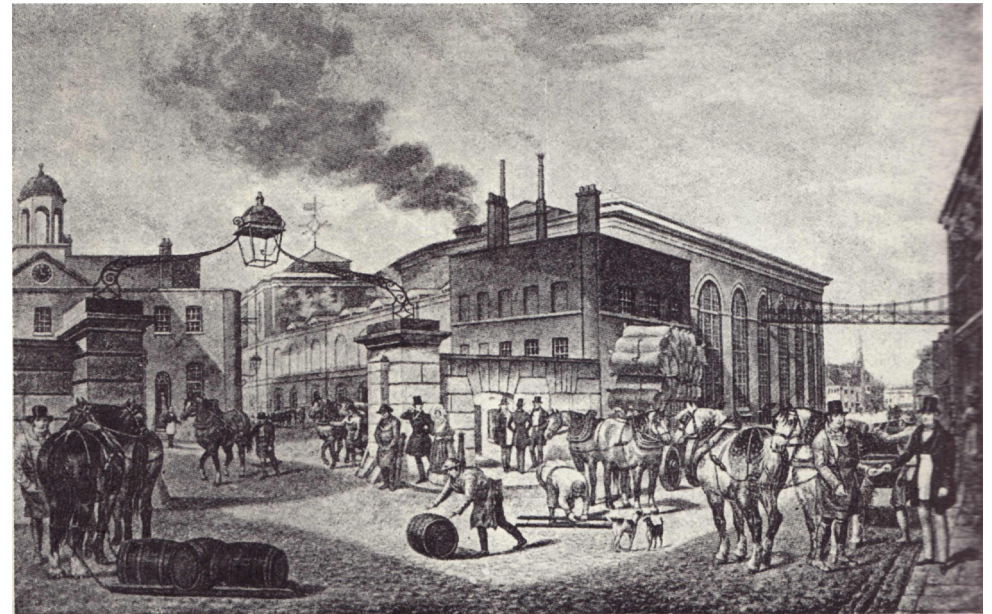
*The*  
**MEANTIME**  
*College Beer  
Club*

Beer No.1  
December 2010  
Imperial Russian Stout

13.4% ABV 180 EBC 28 EBU

**If you are looking at this taste note without its accompanying beer it could be that you are not a member of the College Beer Club.**

**Happily his woeful state of affairs is easily *rectified*.**



### The Brewmaster's Notes

*Barclay Perkins Brewery  
Bankside. C.1840*

**A Note About Beer Specifications**  
EBC stands for the European Brewing Convention units of beer colour and has taken over from the original Lovibond system first developed (serendipitously) in Greenwich by J.W. Lovibond in 1183 using coloured slides. The modern EBC system uses a spectrophotometer to produce a more accurate result. The higher the number the darker the beer. 180 is pretty dark.

**EBU** or European Bitterness Units measure the perceived bitterness of beer. A pale 'lite' lager may have only 5 EBU's whereas an American IPA might strive to reach an EBU of 100.

As we no longer have access to the original raw materials, putting this beer together relies on educated guesswork. Malting techniques in particular have changed since Imperial Russian Stout first saw the light of day and Porter and Stout recipes changed considerably between the 18thC and 19thC as the scientific understanding of malt improved. We like to brew with reasonable quantities of the brown malts favoured by the early brewers. However, it is the wood, and the rum that it contained, that have had the major influence on this beer, giving it a liquid Christmas character. The wood also accounts for the relatively low carbonation. The good news is that there is yet more, still aging, for you to try next year, maybe.

# Imperial Russian Stout

## Origins & History

Russian Stout seemed such an obvious beer with which to kick off the College Beer Club because it is both a beer style in its own right but one that is almost entirely associated with one brewery - Courage - or more correctly its antecedent Barclay Perkins, the greatest of the south of the Thames brewers, and therefore of no little inspiration to us at Meantime today.

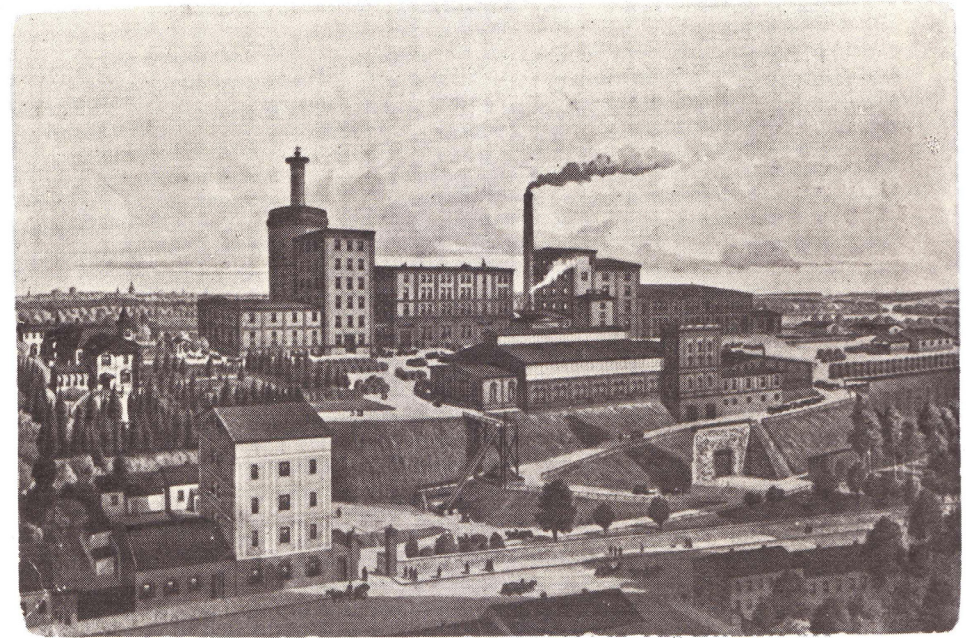
Legend has it that Russian Empress Catherine the Great (1762-1796) was partial to a drop or two of strong London Porter and her patronage secured the popularity of the style for an incredible length of time; the beer being shipped, seemingly uninterrupted, from sometime in the 1780s until the First World War.



Imperial Russian Stout is also the reason that a black beer tradition, generally associated with the British Isles, persists in the Baltic states. Again, just as one brewer is responsible for the IRS style, so one man is responsible for its enduring popularity in the region (with the help of one very powerful woman, naturally).

*Catherine the Great  
Empress and Autocrat of All the Russias.  
b.1729 d.1796*

*The Le Coq Brewery  
Tartu, Estonia*



Albert Le Coq was the Barclay Perkins agent in the region, bottling and shipping the beers under his own name. The same rising tariffs that prompted the brewers of Burton-on-Trent to abandon their traditional export of sweetish, brown, Burton Ale to Russia and focus on sending Pale Ales to India also drove him to open his own brewery in Estonia in 1826. Le Coq Premium is still the most popular beer in the Estonian market.

Imperial Russian Stout in its later Courage days had an OG of 1101.8 (c25.5°Plato), a shade higher than the 25°P to which the Meantime beer has been produced. It had two months in cask and then a year in bottle before being released. The Meantime beer has had 10 months in an old rum cask (yes, this is a single cask beer) so has a somewhat higher final alcoholic strength. We use Fuggles hops as opposed to the Target used in the last days of the beer's life at Courage.