

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

Beer No.3

February 2011

Long Aged Abbey Ale

6.9% ABV 19 EBC 29 EBU

File Under 'Wood Aged'

Your Notes:

## The Brewmaster's Notes

This Abbey Beer uses a traditional Belgian trappiste yeast that has been lovingly grown up from a laboratory slant. Isolated in a laboratory in San Diego, it was specially flown to London.

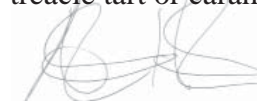
The original idea for the beer was to celebrate the opening of the Old Brewery at the Royal Naval College, and played on the original link of this site to the Abbey of Ghent. The plan was for something Belgian in style with a Meantime quirk. Old style blending of Stock Ales in London would have used a system that introduced young beer to old beer and I was tickled by a couple of 330 litre oak bariques we had that had been used as part of a solera system for refermentation in France. The barrels in question had been used for Syrah, (Shiraz) and, I was sure, would contain large quantities of Tannin. I was unsure of how the oak, wine and possible presence of bacteria would impact on the beer, but knew the tannin would need softening, and that the wood and the beer would play a part in doing that.

The hall-mark of a Belgian style trappiste yeast is confectionary flavours and aromas perfect to soften and balance the palate. We also knew that the brew needed to be strong to survive the time in oak and keep the bugs away.

The grist was typical of a Belgian Triple style trappiste beer, using a small amount of sugar cane for extract and lighter malts to yield a beer with a golden colour. The hops used were English Goldings, notable for light marmalade and citric characteristics.

Two years down the line and we have been rewarded with a deeply complex brew, that despite all of the competing flavour forces has an approachability, and drinkability that is largely down to the time spent in oak.

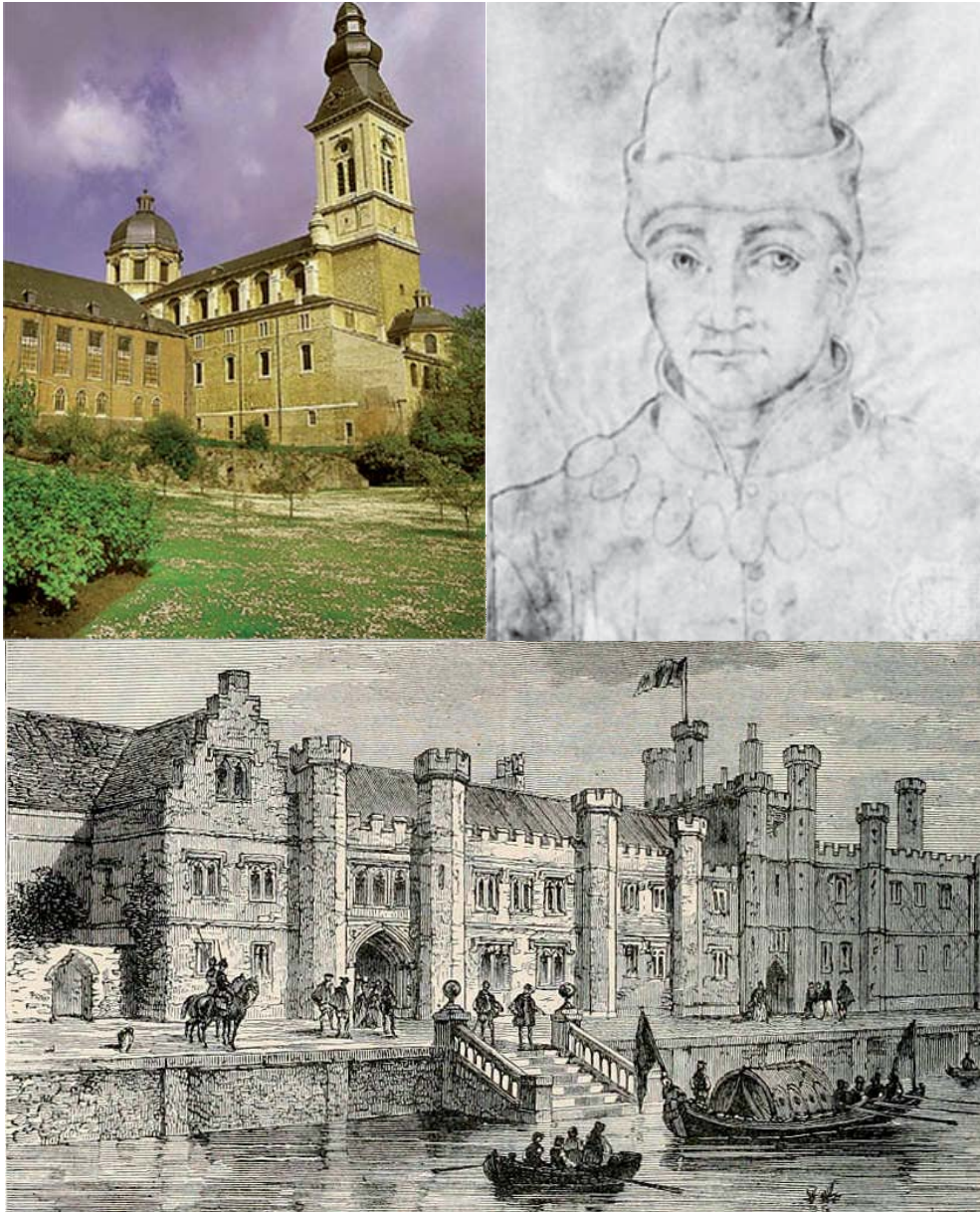
The head of the beer is white and mousse like, the beer is golden in colour. The confectionary flavours and aromas from the yeast soften the tannin to give flavours of fudge and pear, a mellow middle, and a long dry finish. Ideally we would have liked more fullness to the finish but the great thing about brewing beers over long periods of time is they tend to have a mind and character of their own. In this case the high alcohol content more than compensates for a perceived dryness, and I would recommend the beer as a perfect accompaniment to rich sweets such as treacle tart or caramel ice cream.



**Alastair Hook**  
**Brewmaster**

# Long Aged Abbey Ale

## Historical Notes



In 871 AD the Saxon King Alfred the Great inherited the manor of Greenwich. His recently widowed daughter Ælfthryth in turn bequeathed it to the Abbey of St Peter at Ghent (*top right*) in 918. The monks held the land until 1414 when it passed to King Henry V and then, in 1426, to his half-brother the scholarly Duke Humphrey of Gloucester (*left*), who built a riverside residence he called Bellacourt. Which in turn became the Palace of Placentia (*bottom*) (the birthplace of Henry VIII), the Royal Naval Hospital, the Royal Naval College and then the site of Meantime's Old Brewery, which is home to the College Beer Club.

Before Henry V took over the manor, however, the monks' outpost had been in long term decline. We hear that "around Christmas time, in the year 1366, two attendants, a pipe of salt beef, eight bacons and three barrels of beer set off for Flanders. With them went the then Prior. He never came back."<sup>1</sup>

The significance of this statement is the reference to a 'beer' (i.e a beverage containing hops), that was clearly brewed at Greenwich. This appears to be one of the earliest references to English brewed beer, as opposed to unhopped ale.

Duke Humphry's marriage, in 1422 to Jacqueline, Countess of Hainault and Holland allowed him to assume the title Count of Holland, Zeeland and Hainault. This gave Greenwich a continued connection not just with the Low Countries, but with Hainault in particular, home to Phillipa of Hainault (1314-1369), wife of Edward III. She had been instrumental in introducing hopped beer into England by her patronage of Flemish weavers who brought their preference for the thebeer they were familiar with with them.

These associations make it highly likely that Greenwich was an important centre in the introduction, acceptance and establishment of hopped beer into England.

1. in *The Story Of Greenwich* by Clive Aslet, 1999, Fourth Estate, London