

Merri Mashers Brewing Club

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MAKE.TALK.DRINK.BEER.

LETTER FROM THE PREZ

Welcome to our winter newsletter. It's been a while since our last publication and things have been pretty hectic at the Merri Mashers ... so bear with us while we try and bring you up to speed!

Good Beer Week 2015 is upon us and I'm sure many of you have some fantastic events booked for this week. I'm really excited and proud that our club has its very own event in this year's GBW, with our brew demo at the Catfish on Saturday, May 23. And to make the day even more special we'll be officially launching the club's first ever commercial release on the day, our "Red Man Walking" red IPA. The collaboration with Thunder Road was great fun, and being able to put my own backyard hops into the brew was pretty special for me, as I'm sure it was for everyone else who contributed to the creation of this beer. I just hope the punters enjoy drinking it as much as we enjoyed making it!

The events that eventually led to the creation of Red Man Walking make for a terrific story, bringing together so many things we've achieved as a club in a really short time. Our first ever club-comp winning beer, turned into an ANHC club night award winning brew in front of hundreds of people at Pentridge Prison, then morphed using our member's own hops into a style that will no doubt feature heavily at our inaugural open competition in June.

It's come together brilliantly, and everyone involved should be very proud of making it happen, especially the team at Thunder Road who have been and continue to be so accommodating to the Merri Mashers. So our huge thanks go out to Phil, Marcus, Sam, Simon and the rest of the team down at TRB...you guys rock.

Despite the craziness of Good Beer Week, I hope you're all working away madly on your Specialty IPA's. The comp's only a month away so get those entries in, and make sure you come down to the comp party on June 14. Thanks to every-

one who's pitched in to help with the organisation of this event, it's taken a LOT of hard work to get to this point, hopefully it's all smooth sailing from here. Enjoy your Good Beer Week, and I look forward to hearing your favourite experiences when we next catch up.

Cheers!
- Justin

2015 CLUB EVENTS

This is a little guide to some of the upcoming events in 2015. Not all of the events have firm dates, but you can still roughly plan your brews around them!

May 23: GBW Backyard Brew at Catfish.

June 14: Club Specialty IPA Comp.

June 27: Red Man Walking at Alehouse.

June Meeting: Competition debrief and AGM.

July: System Wars Brew Day.

July: Taint kit tastings.

July 5: Stout Extravaganza Comp by Westgate.

July Meeting: Mystery Mash tasting.

August 2: Pale-Ale Mania Comp by Worthogs.

August 14-15: Beervana.

August Meeting: Garden Ale theme.

September: Geelong Craft Brewers Comp.

September Meeting: Bintani hop brew tastings.

October Meeting: Honey theme.

November: Case Swap.

Check out the Merri Mashers Calendar for a comprehensive list of club events. [Click here!](#)

TAINTY TAINTS

There will definitely be a taint kit tasting session during the winter months, probably in July but this is yet to be confirmed. It will be held at Thunder Road again, using their light-flavoured, clean lagers as controls and tainted beer. I can't wait for that sweet, sweet mercaptan to hit my lips.

MASS MERCHANDISE

The club is in the process of organising an expanded merchandise line. Awesome new zipped and non-zipped hoodies, Merri Masher trucker caps, beanies, bottle openers and more are on the way!

Support your club brewers, wear your Masher gear with pride!

EVERYWHERE YOU GO !!!

GBW BREWS

The club is officially in the Good Beer Week programme with our Backyard Brew event at the Catfish Hotel on May 23. This is a free event for the public and should be a great day: the club will put on a brew out the back of the bar, brewing the same Red Man Walking recipe that we used for our Thunder Road big batch. Bring along some friends and make a day of it!

"The Catfish & Melbourne's newest – yet already award-winning – home brew club, the Merri Mashers, team up with some of Australia and NZ's most highly regarded craft brewers to create a live brew in the Catfish's Beer Garden.

We've assembled a team of professional brewers to oversee the brew and give you an honest answer to all the beery (or life) questions you've always wanted to ask, including the man reinvigorating Tooborac (Moo Brew, Stone & Wood and Byron Bay alumni), Stu Ritchie; the rising star of NSW craft beer, Mike Jorgensen; and the lupulin-loving legend that is Epic's Luke Nicholas."



BJCP EXPERTISE

Six members of the club are currently working their way through the BJCP qualification framework in expectation of becoming fully accredited BJCP judges. Congratulations folks, you're doing the club proud - and your expertise will come in very handy for our specialty IPA comp in a few weeks.

Thanks to Mort for organising and running the program. The more BJCP judges Melbourne - and the Merri Mashers - has, the better our beer will be. Forever.

MYSTERY MASH

An exciting new brew off is planned for the July 2015 meeting involving secrecy, suspense, skull-duggery and genuine uncertainty ...

There will be a call for volunteers to brew today or tomorrow for a July tasting. Who will the brewers be? What will they be brewing with? Why will they be brewing? HOW WILL THEY BE BREWING?

Just what is the *Mystery Mash*? Nobody knows. Yet. Swallow the red pill.

IPA COMP UPDATE

Heaps of progress has been made in the last few months on our inaugural Specialty IPA Comp. We have a large number of sponsors onboard, including Full Pint, the Gertrude, Grain and Grape, the Alehouse, Home Make it, Carwyn Cellars and many more. Prizes are confirmed, trophies are being locked in and the venue is 110% onboard.

Again, the date is *June 14 at the Terminus Hotel*.

The subcommittee organising the comp met a few months ago and has been working extremely hard since to get this competition up and running. We have been lucky to get some very seasoned competition judges, stewards and organisers involved from outside the club as well.

This is shaping up to be the Home Brew Club of the Year. Entries have started being logged into CompMaster.

There will be a righteous party downstairs on the day also even if you aren't involved in the preparations, come along and have a few beers, annoy the judges and have a merry time!

INAUGURAL AGM

The June 2015 meeting will also be our club's inaugural Annual General Meeting. This is an important event and ideally all members will make the effort to attend. During the AGM the club will put to a vote a number of concerns for the club going forward *including committee positions*.

As per our rules of incorporation all committee positions will be declared vacant with current committee members being responsible for nominating themselves, if they so choose, for re-election. Any other member is also free to nominate themselves or others for election to the committee. To refresh the Minds of the Mashers, the current committee structure is as follows:

President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and three general committee positions.

Depending on the outcome of the AGM the current committee suggests adding a fourth general committee position, bringing the total of committee members to eight, to reflect the growth of the club. The minimum expected accountabilities for the committee roles are as follows:

- **President:**
 1. Chairing club and committee meetings.
 2. General oversight and direction of the club.
- **Vice-President:**
 1. Chairing club and committee meetings in the absence of the President.
 2. General oversight and direction of the club.
- **Secretary:**
 1. Maintaining member list and membership cards for members.
 2. Greeting new members.
 3. Meeting agendas and taking of minutes.
 4. Production of the newsletter and club communications.
- **Treasurer:**
 1. Management of all club finances including transactions in club bank account.
 2. Management of membership fees.
 3. Financial activity reports to committee at each meeting and at the end of each year.
 4. Management of club merchandise.
- **General committee:**
 1. Website updates including logging events and write-ups of events.
 2. Organisation of new and existing club events such as case swaps, tastings and parties.
 3. Monitoring of club email.

In addition all committee members are expected to occasionally represent the club at Vicbrew meetings and have a thorough knowledge of the club's rules and constitution. Pursuant to club rules, any committee member forfeits their place on the committee if they miss three consecutive committee meetings, so please consider your potential candidacy seriously.

After all positions are declared vacant at the AGM all nominees who find themselves in contestation for a position will be invited to make a short speech in support of their candidacy. Making a speech is not mandatory. Voting will then be conducted for each committee position *that is being contested*, to be held by secret ballot.

At this meeting we will also toast regularly to the club's success with excellently brewed beer. Cheers!

BINTANI BREW

Our experimental hop brew was such a success in February that we are repeating the event in September with another experimental hop variety supplied by Bintani. The recipe and parameters will be similar but are still to be confirmed. A call out for brewers will be made in July. Eight spots are available with preference going to the Mashers who didn't get a shot last time. Groovy baby!

MEETING OF MEADS

Don't forget that the October meeting is going to be home to all things honey! If you're planning on making a mead the sooner you get started the better so you can age it. We have some interesting experiments confirmed for the day, but we need more honey beers! If you have a house recipe, brew up a batch of it with honey and bring it along.

GBW SHOWCASE REPORT

Merri Masher Roving Reporter David Wilton calls in on this beertastic event!

A team of Merri Mashers headed to the 2015 Gala Showcase in March 13. The event is the first of Good Beer Week which gets going in May and showcased 24 Australian Breweries. It's a ticket only event with 20 tickets to sample from the over 100 beers available.

The two Masterclasses we visited were a highlight; the first was a blind tasting and the second focused on barrel aged and sour beers.

In the blind tasting Mashers showed that their lupulin threshold had indeed been shifted with none of us being impressed with the pale ales on offer by Boatrockers and Two Birds. The IPA's fared better with us: in the blind test Hawk's IPA beat Boatrockers' Hop Bomb and was one of the best IPA's at the event in my opinion.

In the second masterclass Boatrockers' Matt Houghton showed why they have taken people's choice three years in a row with a passionate talk about their sour and barrel aged beer. Matt appears to show little regard for economic principles aging beers for months and even over a year in the case of their Banshee, a 14% barrel aged English Barleywine which was fantastic.

Kaiju appeared to take the prize for most popular brewery with a long line at all times. Also the Beatbox Kitchens Chilli burger was not to be missed!

MEET THE MEMBER

This month the spotlight is on founding member and club Secretary Timothy Train.



A couple of years ago my brother gave me this old brew kit, a fermenter and Coopers can. I did a couple of kit brews then got a book (Laurie Strachan's *Guide to Beers and Brewing*) and really read up on the history and practices behind brewing and got into all grain. Haven't looked back.

I live in Lalor in the far north. Actually it's not that far but it sounds more wild and romantic and bad-arse that way. My many favourite bars are further south: I love Carwyn Cellars and the Terminus but my regular haunt is the Dan O'Connell Hotel, who've moved on from their Carlton United days (makes sign of the cross and backs away slowly with stake in hand) and now have a good selection of local brews on tap.

I was asked about my brewing system at an early MM meeting and I thought about it and said, "Brew in a Rag". It's kind of like brew in a bag, only I just use some old cheesecloth I have lying around the house (it's great for lots of cooking stuff!) and tend to do it in smaller quantities.

Generally I prefer darker brews with stronger malt character - the red ales and the porters and the stouts. I also make a lot of mead because we have bees and they are really prodigious honey producers. The weirdest beer I've ever brewed was Sumerian ale.

My favourite ingredient right now is dandelion. They're everywhere and no-one thinks to use them. You pull 'em up and roast the roots, and by adding a few to your brew you'll get a distinctive chocolate-coffee bitterness.

I've been loving the Northern Brewer's Brewing TV episodes on YouTube. It uses a simple format, but the hosts have a great sense of humour and the episodes are very professionally done. There's lots of stuff on there about anything from sour beers to mead making to more esoteric stuff like making Graff.

CLUB RESOURCES

[AHB](#) [Blog](#) [Calendar](#) [Facebook](#) [Website](#)