

THE BREWERY CHEMIST

The Sequel to THE MERCHANT BANKER

BY LLOYD NELSON

ONE

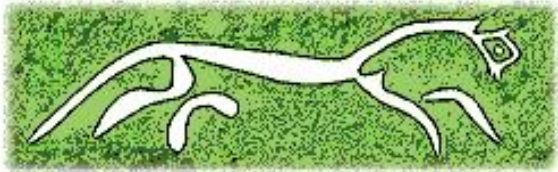
There's a fair bit involved in consistently producing good beer, ales and stouts. Not only must they be a good product to ensure sales, but they have to be of a very steady quality to keep the sales running, drinker's palates are quite discerning.

Roger Coverly's job is to carry out this work and looking to future sales, a good brewery chemist looks at innovations that can be brought in as the market gets younger and looks for new brews.

Roger is good at this. He not only maintains the old lines quality but he experiments in analysing other good selling brews on the market so he can replicate these at any time the market demands it.

Roger
qualified in
Industrial
Chemistry at
Oxford Polytech
and joined Cole
& Shoreditch's
old established

UFFINGTON ALES & STOUTS



Uffington Brewer's straight from college. Norman Crowther was the man heading this part of the operation when he joined. He worked quite compatibly under Norm's management for five years, until Norm tipped his Vauxhall Velox car over on an icy road one winter's night and made a thorough job of killing himself.

A few days later, after the sad formalities are over, Lord Cole himself came into the Brewery Chemistry Department and mizzles over to where Roger is quietly working on pipettes and small glass containers full of frothy brew.

“Care to join me for a pint Roger?” he asks.

“Well, a half pint any day my Lord” he says.

They go over to the model English pub bar that is installed in the next room. It’s everything an English pub bar should be. Hunting prints, riding crops, horse brasses, Campbell tartan carpeting (the red one), ornate pulling handles and so on. A film company hired it a few months back to film an episode of Agatha Christie’s “Miss Marple and the Huntington Arm’s Mystery”. In this most English of series that says it all for our pub.

Roger pulls them both a pint and a half same.

They sit on oak stools and sample the product.

“Well Roger” says Lord Cole. “Are you up to carrying on Norm’s work?”

Roger laughs, “Lord Cole, Norman hasn’t done a tap in here for the past two years, as well you know.”

“Well yes, but Norm never believed in keeping a dog and doing his own barking.”

“It’s really just a case of keeping on doing just what we are presently doing” Roger says.

“And you wouldn’t change anything at this point?” Lord Cole asks.

“Not at all” Roger replies. “Sales are too good, but I think we should maintain our programme of analysing and replicating other well selling brews on the market, in case sales drop off and we have to go into innovation mode.”

“Who are you watching in particular?” Lord Cole asks.

“Most of them” Roger says. “I can knock you out an exact copy of Newcastle Brown ale any day you ask, for example, or a Kerin Replica, if you’re Japanese.”

“Fair enough” Lord Cole says. “Consider yourself the Head Chemist from today and expect your full pay for the job to start also from today. Is there anything you need to acquire for here?” he also asks.

“Not a thing at the moment” Roger replies, “but things can change quick and thank you.”

“Don’t suffer in silence” the Boss says, finishes his pint and takes his leave.

Because old Norm has left him to his own devices for the past year or two Roger hasn’t been inactive. He mentally reviews the weapons in the Breweries’ arsenal that only he and he alone even know about. Among his unnamed brews is a beer of the same high quality, but with more bubbles, than Heineken, a Carlsberg, arguably the best beer in the world, but better again, a Coors beer that will outcoor Coors, a beer to match Tiger beer and one he is close to cracking of a duplicate of China’s outstanding and high selling Ah Ming, discovered in the Western World by drinkers at the C.I.A. Probably the most successful thing this devious organisation has done to date.

It’s all there, fully documented and worked out and ready to produce, that is if you can break the chemical code Roger has wisely written it in.

Before finishing for the day, Roger sits a stubbie of Asahi beer and another of Samuel Adams on his bench top.

“You’re about to be analysed fellows” he says in the direction of the stubbies as he locks up.

TWO

Roger is quite a good Thespian with the Oxford Strolling Players and the University Drama Group. He recently appeared in the West End understudying for Dennis Waterman in 'Geoffrey Bramwell is unwell' when Dennis went down with Bramwell's famous affliction.

He is currently reading Dicken's 'Tale of Two Cities' at the famous Sheldonian Theatre. He's doing it very well in Dicken's garb and pulling the crowds. After his last week's reading he is surprised when the Brewer's son-in-law and daughter come back stage to congratulate him on the show.

He knew they were there, of course, but is still flattered that they have taken the trouble. The Hon. George Heseltine is a very well known international banker with the Mowbray Bank and the Hon. Patricia Heseltine is Lord Cole's only child. She is a qualified architect, twenty years younger than her husband.

Roger knows them a bit, although they are not often at the Brewery. But if Lord Cole is conducting business there he usually brings his meeting members down for a drink at Roger's English pub, next to the Chemist Department. Roger, when this happens, usually changes his lab coat for a steward's jacket and pulls the beers and acts as steward for the occasion. He just does this automatically, is pleasant and totally unobtrusive. They accept him well and he is thus the fly on the wall for many family secrets.

The main subject for discussion lately at meetings, to do with this prospering Brewery, is what to do about the block of shares held by the ageing widow of Tommy Shoreditch, partner with Lord Cole in the Brewery.

Tommy died a while back, the widow has little family and no objections to a satisfactory arrangement by which the shareholding she has goes to Lord Cole or his nominee.

This is why George Heseltine has been into the pub room a bit lately. Lord Cole and he have been sorting out a deal on the shares. George is currently suggesting that the Brewery buy Mrs Shoreditch a decent annuity in exchange for the shares. The holding is a 50% one so they finally do what George suggests and transfer the shares 30% to the Hon. Patricia and 20% to George himself. It's all very amicable and puts an end to pub room meetings for a while. Lord Cole is perfectly capable of running his own bailiwick and the new shareholders don't get involved in this.

In Roger's assessment George Heseltine is a committed banker and has no designs on the family Brewery. He is only there because, rather rarely, Lord Cole wants an outside overview of how best to complete the deal he is engaged in. George is most helpful and quite enjoys a beer. It's all both pleasant and amicable.

The opening part of this tale is, of course, mainly about Roger. Roger, although diffident and unobtrusive, is a very smart egg. He commutes from his Riverside cottage at Iffley Lock to the Brewery at Nuffield morning and night on an old fashioned Raleigh bicycle which England, at one time, was full of and which India still produces to the same design and colour (black) in huge numbers.

However, he has fitted it with a small scooter motor and he is using this quite functional and very, very cheap means of transport to test run his so-called S.O.P.P. pill. It's a capsule containing dried ethanol and other secret ingredients that you put in the fuel tank to 'save on petrol and pollution'. Roger has developed this in his cottage

basement lab and boy does it work. He is arriving at the decision that he has the quantity just right and is now knocking up a supply of car size pills. He doesn't own a car, choice rather than not being able to afford it. He's got good savings, he's a very thrifty but not mean type of chap.

He hasn't decided on how to market this and in fact the only thing stopping him getting on with this is the Hoo Ha that will envelop him when he releases it. He likes the quiet life he is leading, in a very pleasant environment that you can easily get around on a bike. He knows this will go forever when he releases his knock out of a petrol saver and the oil companies apply their ill-gotten gains to discredit his marvellous invention and him personally.

He's read up a bit of history on this and knows what happened to Peter Brock and other innovators in this regard.

While George is going about his daily work and pondering things, he gets an unexpected phone call from the Hon. Patricia. She is peremptory but pleasant.

"Mr Coverlay, Roger" she says, "George and I follow the arts a bit, the performing arts that is and we've watched you in Geoffrey Bramwell, Dickens and as Dick Dead Eye in G & S. He says you have remarkable chameleon qualities. George is in China this week doing banking business and my stand-in escort, which one needs when you have a much travelling husband, is down with the flu. Would you be a great sport and squire me to an investiture at the Palace late afternoon. It's fine with Dad (Lord Cole) if you'll do it."

"What the hell" Roger thinks, thus late afternoon, instead of analysing our beer or someone else's brew, he is in a Moss Bros. morning suit, seeing one of the Hon.

Patricia's cousins get tapped on the shoulder by Queen Elizabeth and thus made a Knight of the Realm.

It's a less formal gathering than he expects after and he gets to talk to Princess Anne and also the Queen. She is gracious.

"Oh, you're Patricia's Chemist stand-in" she says. "How are you finding it?"

"Well" he says "I must say I'm impressed by that sketch painting right there" pointing at a small pastel hanging among the huge oils.

"Oh" she says, "you show great good taste. That's a Francis Colless. The subject is my mother's brother, Lord Fergus Bowes Lyon. A brave chap killed at the Battle of Loos. Colless sent it round, rolled up in a tube. Mum was so chuffed I offered him an O.B.E. for a fine bit of War artist work. He's a Banker in Western Australia these days, he graciously declined, very unusual."

THREE

She (the Hon. Patricia) is going on somewhere else and apologies for this. "I'd like to have taken you somewhere in this great city for a bite" she says, "but duty calls. You've been a real brick."

Roger cogitates and then says, "well if the Banker is still away Sunday, why not lunch at Hendon's (a beautiful pub on the Thames owned by the Brewery)?"

"Why not" she says, "what dress, what time?"

The day is a watercolour one and they lunch amicably on the river terrace and watch the river world go by. She is smart in long white pants, black striped blouse, blue and white nautical jumper over. She's also

very pleasant and he realises all at once she is a very fine patrician looking woman.

Lunch over she says, "let's go and look at a house I'm thinking of buying." So we do. It's near Bladon Village, a very nice part of Oxfordshire. Very Tudor, but authentic type Tudor.

"I though you hadn't long moved" Roger says.

"True" she says, "I like houses and after this one I plan a Georgian."

The Tudor, which many people would give their back teeth for, may not be her residence for long it seems.

Roger has squired the Hon. Patricia to Covent Garden, where a famous Diva is singing 'La Boheme'. They stop for a coffee in the Haymarket after.

"You've never married Roger?" she asks.

"Well, I lived with my dear old Mum until the dreaded Jack the Dancer carried her off. I still live in her old home."

"Come off it" she says, "you're no Mummy's boy. You look a sensual man and every man needs a woman."

Roger laughs. "Yes" he says, "Shakespeare, I think, put it like this 'and therein lies the tragedy'."

She laughs, "oh Roger, if I wasn't married and twenty years younger."

Roger puts his hand over hers on the pub table.

"Hon. Patricia" he says, "age has no bearing. You're a very beautiful woman."

"Why thank you kind Sir" she says. "Now tomorrow let's look at the house I'm planning to buy next."

"Hells bells" Roger says, "you've only just moved into the new Georgian."

"So?" she says.

Poor old Hon. George. He was recently complaining in the pub room at the Brewery that the worst part about their constant wife inspired housing moves was that he can never find the removalist box his favourite reading books are in.

FOUR

Life flows along smoothly for a while and Roger enjoys both his work and his yachting pastime. He crews for Uffa Fox (little Uffa, a rellie, not the famous one that Prince Phillip sailed with at Cowes). They sail and socialise at Cowes and really race in the fastnet and do respectably well. Mainly because young Uffa believes that an ocean racer must have strength as well as max speed. He must know what he's talking about as in one bad fastnet the race is abandoned, but we sail home, close hauled, safely unlike many of our competitors.

Roger goes next down to the Solent where they have a pleasant weekend racing in the 'Spirit of Badajo's' in an ocean racing yacht race in semi enclosed waters. Tied up to a wharf and enjoying a relax and a drink or three, the evening news acquaints them that Lord Cole drops dead late afternoon while golfing at Sunningdale.

It's quite a shock and has a deal of ramifications, which could possibly include the sale, or selling off of Uffington Brewery. However, the Will leaves Lord Cole's shares to the Hon. Patricia solely, provided the shares are held in escrow until the demise of Lady Cole, who will receive the income from the 50% until then.

When the dust settles George Heseltine comes into the Brewery and he and Roger sit on the bar stools for a pint or three.

He tells Roger the share deal and that his wife has tossed it all in his lap and what do I think. He ends up offering Roger the job of General Manager. Roger politely declines, suggests that the Hon. George manages it himself and just does consulting days for Mowbray Bank to keep his hand in.

He (Roger) would be happy to fill in as Assistant General Manager when George is away doing this.

Hon. George now comes in daily and undertakes a due diligence. He tends to confide in Roger and only Roger in the bar room at day end. What the existing Management think of this, Lord knows. Thus Roger shares the knowledge of the huge heap of cash Hon. George discovers in Zurich and Hon. George hears Roger's suspicions that the fellow running their great operation Thames side, Hendons, is milking them blind.

Between them both they get things tightened up. Production, as always, goes very well and some hard pruning is done in the department that produces the figures at the bottom line.

Roger, of course, has been charting much of the operation on an old Wang computer that he keeps in the Chemistry Department, so this makes Hon. George's life easier as it's all more direct than the obfuscating printout Management produces in endless number.

Things now run well and the bottom line is much, much better. Roger has always stuck closely to the operation at Nuffield, while the Hon. George is the original internationalist. His picture is broader.

Hon. George asks, "What's the Jackanory on mini breweries?"

Roger has been closely following the results Budweiser are getting with one of these in Boston and

another seeming goer that Carlsberg have been experimenting with in Heidelberg.

“Why don’t you go and check these out Hon. George?” he says.

“What a good idea” George says. “Patricia has three houses lined up for me to look at and I haven’t found my reading books from the last two moves. I’ll go Monday” and he does and is away a while.

“MMMn” he says when he comes back. “Perhaps a good idea but so far badly executed.”

“What about designing a good compact plant that can be added to in units i.e. if the idea is a goer you just add another brewing unit. Bottling is no problem as any bottling plant can carry a lot more capacity.”

While Roger is keen to assist at the Brewery, he has too much on the go to take up the burden of General Management.

Thus he continues doing what he is doing. Fills in for George when he’s overseas on Banking matters and welcomes the introduction to the Firm of the new General Manager to be, Harold, George’s only son from a previous marriage.

Five

The first thing they do is rack up a Super plan for Roger, they sure don’t want to lose him.

Roger is well along on an initial design when Hon. George comes back from a Bank consulting job in Germany. He pulls a huge roll of bank notes (used) out of his Hermes briefcase and a single sheet of paper.

“This is the pattern” he says, “it’s in Nuremberg. Get over there quick and study it.”

Roger goes but he takes with him an attractive German English Lit student from Merton College with him. They are both in the Strolling Players group and she is pleased to have an all expenses paid visit back to German Land in exchange for a bit of interpreting and perhaps other activities.

Roger words her up on what to bring and they drink along in the boutique brewer, where he finds his Lit student has an amazing capacity to drink beer and hold it well. She puts her heart and soul into their industrial espionage and who knows, perhaps her shapely body. Anyway they come home with a complete set of plans, hopefully the right plans, she says they are anyway.

Roger gets stuck into replicating the plans, stainless steel men cut, weld and come and go.

He takes over another room at the Brewery, a secure room and they set up and get producing the new boutique plant, plus a large capacity bottler borrowed from the main Brewery.

They produce existing Uffington lines for a start, so that's an easy taste comparison.

At the same time he has design people doing a very simple bar design to go with the spot plant. He uses an American girl, a graphic artist from the Polytech and she comes up with and they build a standard sort of bar. It's a bit like an English pub gone hep.

SIX

They sort of internationalise and streamline this so that it would not be out of place in Mexico or Sweden. It's pleasant and bland. The Hon. George is quite excited. It's a package that has the potential to be used in every

country in the world. They put it to the test and Roger replicates all sorts of International beers, except Budweiser, which he thinks is weak.

“What about the great Aussie sellers?” George asks. “Fosters Larger, Vic Bitter, Crown Lager and so on?”

Roger says, “I’ll knock you out a batch next week. We’ve profiles of the recipes. In fact I have them right here” and he has, it’s a recent job and he’s yet to code them into his workbook.

He spritzes them up a bit and the Hon. George is gob smacked with the results.

“Can I have a copy?” he asks and gets it. An unusual request, but he guesses George has his reasons.

Having got the bones of the mini brewing scheme all together, the Hon. George arranges a meeting with the Swiss Alpern Group, immensely cashed up, hard nosed people in Geneva. He thinks this may be the best starting point for this concept, which will take a deal of seed capital to get up and running.

Thus he sets off for Geneva, via the London tube to the Airport, which he is to catch at Bank Station. He goes but never comes back. The Muslim Action Day on the tube occurs and the Hon. George is the first charred body identified. Identified from his fire proof Hermes briefcase, still clutched in his charred hand, when they clear the carriage.

When the dust settles and the obsequies over, a small group gather at the Brewery bar room.

They just carry on, but with the driving force lost, the mini brewery scheme falls by the wayside. The new Manager thinks it’s all too pie in the skyish and has no interest in taking it further.

Roger decides that it's something whose time is yet to come, so it's just all shelved and the Brewery runs along safe and sound in its traditional market.

The Hon. Patricia goes into widowed seclusion for a few months and finally bobs up at the Brewery with a typed list of three in her hand. She hands Roger the first.

"Well, these are events I'd like you to escort me to" she says. "I'm shot socially without a man."

The list is interesting. The second list, details of what he should wear.

The third is a list of houses she wants to look at. It's a steady as she goes time at the Brewery and Roger is a bit keen to try out his S.O.P.P. pills in a car and yachting is out of season, so he enthusiastically joins in her plan and has a very interesting and social time. She sure moves in top circles and being a very fine actor, Roger is a huge success.

She drops him in it at a Lord Mayor's dinner when the guest speaker collapses. It's a finance orientated theme and on Patricia's insistence Roger steps in and gives a newsreel presentation of King George the fifth, making a speech here at this venue 100 years ago.

Roger stands and intones "My dear people".

It brings the house down and he gets some very good theatre offers, including reading a Christmas Carol at King's College Cambridge in early December.

Coming back from Cambridge through the snowy Fenlands, with Patricia's Rover car running along economically and strongly on Roger's S.O.P.P. pills, she is unusually silent.

Finally she says, "why don't we become an item Roger?"

He chuckles "I thought you'd never ask."

"Why should I ask?" she says, "you're a man."

He chuckles again, “and you’re my employer” he says. “Besides the choice is always the lady. Perhaps we can start as a weekend item and take it from there.”

And they do and it goes well.

After the first weekend, in her 23 bedroom Jacobean mansion, he says “let’s try the cottage, it’s got to be warmer.”

“Well I never” she says on Sunday. “Love in a cottage. I never expected this.”

But it’s a nice cottage at Iffley Lock on the Isis or the Thames, the ordnance map men have never decided where one finishes and one starts.

It all goes well.

Harold, the Manager, is a bit unsure of his main employee sleeping with his stepmother, but as she owns 80% of the Brewery shares, he can’t cavil at this. The other 20%, which belonged to George, are completely missing, but turn up to everyone’s stupefaction as now belonging to an Australian Trustee Company.

Things run along smoothly until the following December. The Hon. Patricia changes house three times in this one year. Roger tries to get her off mansions and into real country cottages, but it goes pear shaped when she is looking at a beauty in deepest Oxfordshire.

She’s coming down the very steep stairs and pointing says, “what the hell is that?”

“Oh” says Roger, who is cottage wise, “that’s what’s known as a Coffin Trap.”

“Good God” Patricia says, “that’s it for cottages. If I have to be carried out I expect a broad staircase like the one in ‘Gone with the Wind’, not some blasted garbage chute.”

The last house acquired, in late November, is a really magnificent Tudor, the best so far.

SEVEN

Roger is off to meet little Uffa and tie in with the rest of the crew of the 'Spirit of Badajo's' in Sydney on December 19th. They are in a round the world yacht race and are taking time out, along with many of their competitors, to do the Sydney Hobart race. It's only a short one and can be a millpond yachting outing or a very dangerous head butt into southerly fronts. They need extra crew for this event, hence the invitation to Roger.

Roger has a study up on brewing in Australia where much is happening. The most successful mini brewery chain in the world is about to open its 323rd franchised pub. They call them 'All Aussie Pubs' and paint the number of the pub on the outside. No 1 is at Salamanca Place, just off Constitution Dock, in Hobart Town where the yacht race ends before New Year.

The Hon. Patricia is busy moving house so doesn't want to come.

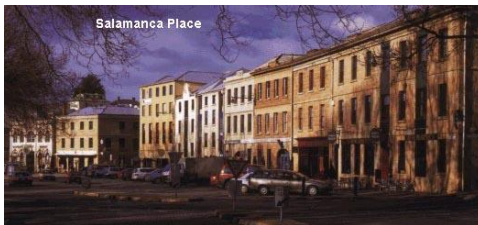
Roger is in the Brewery, analysing the Aussie pubs big sellers, when he gets the shock of his life. The Hon. George, whose lawful wife he has been playing house with for nearly two years now, is alive and kicking. The recipes are those Roger gave him a day or three before the Tube train fire day.

Roger now also sees Hon. George's hand in the mysterious buy out action of the biggest brewer in Australia. It's a funny buy out, the buyers are not at all interested in buying shares on the Exchange. Instead they have been shoring up close deals on acquiring the holdings and/or the voting rights of the institutional investors. Obviously some big and very quiet deals have

been done on a new float. Whatever, all concerned have been keeping their mouths shut.

EIGHT

Roger's run to Hobart ex Sydney on Boxing Day is little more than a river yachting party. It's dead calm and there's little wind. They don't get in until January 2 and run up the Derwent to third placing. Not bad in view of the number of Kevlar constructed maxi's.



Roger walks over mid morning to Salamanca Place.

The Hon. George is sitting on a bollard, smoking a huge Cuban cigar as he steps off the wharf.

"Christ Roger" he says, "you took your time coming."

They shake hands and burst into laughter.

"How's the house buying going?" asks George.

"Aw heck" Roger says and rolls his eyes.

"Quick now" says George, "you and I are out of here to Port Lincoln in 30 minutes, we're opening Aussie Pub 324 at dusk there tonight. The S.A. Premier is doing the honours."

"My God" Roger says, "he can't do that, that is Cooper country."

"Oh" says George, "don't worry, I've stitched that up too."

They enter the best looking plane, a floatplane at that, that Roger has ever seen. It's just so hi-tech and streamlined.

"Saw the first one of these in a Walter Mattau movie" George says, "Hopscotch, the best movie I've ever seen, so I bought myself one to go up to the Lakes trout fishing."

They zero in on the huge wheat silos at Port Lincoln and skim the deep waters of the gulf on their run in. The world envelops them, drinks taken, speeches made.

The Hon. George says, "that's enough, all that we're really here tonight for is to drink heaps of free beer and to listen to the greatest Australian icons ever."

Thus Slim Dusty and his equally famous musician friend Gordon (Ned) Parson step up, wearing Driza Bone coats (the evening is turning chill) and carrying their guitars, swing into 'The Pub with No Beer', which is most appropriate as the Aussie Pub No. 324 runs out of beer. Its priceless publicity, of course.

Flying home next day The Hon George says, "Slim and Ned are really neither great singers or great musicians, Lee Kernagan could buy and sell them, but they're Great Australians, perhaps the greatest ever, they are living proof that nothing succeeds like consistency, their motto is 'another day in another town' rural Australia absolutely loves them and rural Australia is as staunch as."

"Enough of yesterday," George says, "what else have you got for me young Rodger?"

"Oh, tomorrow we're going to hire two identical cars and drive to Launceston and back. What I've got this time will make the pub profits look like small beer."

“Rah, rah” says George (who flew prop planes in Korea for the R.A.F.) “open another Aussie stubbie and we’ll do a victory roll.”