



50th Anniversary Promotional Pack (6th Edition)

4th November 2015

MARIS OTTER CHAMPIONS



Brian Lock, Chairman of the judges, presenting John Maxted with his 1000 Guineas Prize

The final round of the **Great British Barley Competition** for growers of Maris Otter barley attracted nearly 70 growers to Warminster Maltings on Thursday 8th October 2015. Farmers from Cornwall, the Southern Counties, Herefordshire and Shropshire, Yorkshire and East Anglia made up the gathering, and toured Britain's oldest working maltings while judges examined the finalists barley samples.

Fifteen samples of Maris Otter barley from the five regions created for the competition confronted the panel of six judges, which was made up of farmers, maltsters and one brewer. The chairman of the judges, Mr Brian Lock, a farmer from Sherborne, Dorset, was able to report that the outright winner was unanimously agreed fairly quickly, but 2nd and 3rd places took more time.

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The final result was an equitable one – from Berkshire, **Maxted Farms** superlative sample of barley comfortably scooped the 1000 Guineas first prize, plus 500 bottles of beer brewed from the winning barley. 2nd prize went to **R & J Baldwyn** from Gloucestershire and 3rd prize to **Medler Farms** from Norfolk. A special prize for quality of sample, attention to detail and engagement with the supply chain was awarded to **Westfield House Farming Ltd** from Yorkshire.

By a complete coincidence, the tour party were able to examine the winners barley as ‘green malt’ on the germination floor in the maltings, part of a second delivery currently being processed by Warminster Maltings.

Over lunch, Rupert Ponsonby, principal of PR company R & R Teamwork, a beer sommelier, and founder of the Beer Academy, matched different beers to the menu being served, and re-called some of his success in persuading some of Britains highest profile restaurants to develop beer lists to compliment their wine lists. By default, this was having a positive impact on the continuing demand for Maris Otter barley “**the most revered, the most celebrated, the most famous barley in the world!**”



Staged in the centre of Norwich, over 3 days, 50 new beers from across the UK, plus one each from Spain, Japan, New Zealand and the USA, brought together many of “the good and the great” of the UK malting and brewing industry.

Well known beer writer and commentator, **Pete Brown**, presided over the opening ceremony, remarking that he “used to find hops fascinating, but now he has discovered malt, (he) finds that much more interesting!”

He was joined on the platform by veteran beer writer **Roger Protz** who extolled the virtues of Maris Otter barley, not least its particularly attractive flavour profile.

The 50 beers were then judged by visitors to the festival to find those the drinkers liked best. Was it a coincidence that the favourite was **Woodforde’s Norfolk Ales** contribution – “**Redcracker**”? Second favourite was **Nene Valley Brewery’s “Mid-Week Bender**”, with **Baird Brewing Company** from Japan winning the third slot with “**Maris Otter 50 ESBaird**”. This was a good result for Baird Brewing Company whose beer had been withheld by HM Customs and only arrived on the morning of the first day.

Robin Appel