

HISTORIA DE LA CERVEZA ALE INGLESA

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**INTERMEDIO: PROVERBIOS,
REFRANES Y CITAS,
CON COMENTARIOS**

Beer which left us in sweetness
returned in bitterness.

English proverb

The proverb summarises the account we have given of the replacement of ale by beer in England. Ale was a sweeter drink than beer, and the change-over required a major change in the tastes of English drinkers.

Bring us in no beef, for there is many bones
But bring us in good ale, for that goeth down at
once.

Bring us in no eggs, for there is many shells,
But bring us in good ale, and give us nothing
else.

Bring Us In Good Ale (drinking song, ca. 1410)

This celebrated drinking song testifies to the traditional affection which English people felt towards ale.

ALE—The Beverage of the British People

PEEPS INTO HISTORY

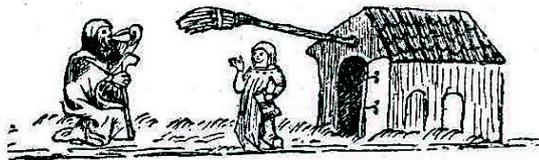
By the Editor of the "Anchor Magazine"

CELTIC England, which preceded the England of Romans, Saxons and Danes, was partial to malt liquors from time immemorial. When the Romans departed, the *tabernæ diversoriæ*, or wayside inns, which they had established at fixed intervals, with posting houses, along the roads they had made, grew in number and influence, and ale became more popular than ever.

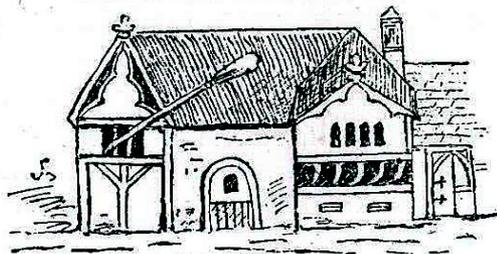
There is an old rhyme which runs:

King Hardicanute 'midst Danes & Saxons stout,
Caroused in nut-brown ale and dined in grout—

grout being a heavy kind of ale prepared from malt that had been slightly burnt in an iron pot.



A ROADSIDE ALE-HOUSE.
(From an Early 14th Century MS.)



AN ENGLISH INN, 14TH CENTURY.
(From the Luttrell Psalter.)

From above the front door of every ale-house in olden times projected a long horizontal pole with a thick bush or brush at the end of it. The weary traveller had but to raise his eyes and look ahead for the one common sign which distinguished them all. In later times these stakes gave place to elegant signboards.

The Normans in their manner of life were more temperate and delicate than the Saxons. They introduced the use of fresh meats, such as beef, mutton, veal and pork. They introduced the more general use of foreign wines. But the people continued to cheer their hearts with home-brewed ale.

If that I mysspeke or seye,
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk,
I you preye.

Chaucer: *The Miller's Prologue* (ca. 1386)

The rumbustious miller seeks to blame any incoherences in his tale on his fondness for Southwark ale. Southwark ale had a high reputation in Chaucer's time. The area of Southwark, south of the River Thames, was exempt from the regulations imposed by the City of London, and so Southwark ale could contain additional ingredients – possibly even hops.

Ale for an Englysshe man is a naturall drinke. Ale must have these propertyes: it must be freshe and cleare; it must not be ropy nor smoky, nor it must have no weft nor tayle. Ale should not be drunke under V days olde. Newe ale is unholosome for all men. And sowre ale, and deade ale the which doth stande a tylt, is good for no man.

Andrew Boorde: *Dietary of health* (1542)

Boorde is often quoted to demonstrate the English pride in their ale.

He was writing at precisely the time when ale was increasingly being replaced by beer.

**She brews good ale – and thereof comes the proverb,
“Blessings of your heart, you brew good ale”.**

William Shakespeare: *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (ca. 1594)

I would give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety.

William Shakespeare: *Henry V* (ca. 1599)

For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.

William Shakespeare: *The Winter's Tale* (ca. 1610)

*There are many such references in Shakespeare
testifying to the English love of ale.*

Good ale is meat
drink and cloth.

English Proverb

I have fed purely upon ale; I have eat
my ale, and I always sleep upon ale.

George Farquhar: *The beaux's stratagem* (1707)

*The idea that ale is a food as well as a
drink is often found, and traces of it can be
found today in the Irish view of Guinness.*

What two ideas are more inseparable than Beer and Britannia?

Sydney Smith, 1771-1845 (*in conversation*)

*The idea of ale as the national drink
sometimes transferred
itself in the nineteenth century to beer.*



Ale, man ale's the stuff to drink
For fellows whom it hurts to think.

A. E. Housman: *A Shropshire lad* (1896)

Although this is a patronising verse by an armchair academic, Housman's poem presented an extremely popular and widely-read picture of a traditional rural England with cheery ale-drinking rustics.



St George he was for England
And before he killed the dragon
He drank a pint of English ale
Out of an English flagon.

G. K. Chesterton: *The Englishman* (1914)

This is a crude nationalist rhyme, but reflects an enduring link between ale and a nostalgic English self-image. (If there was a historical St George, in fact, he would have been Turkish.)



