

The Dragonfly is unfolding its wings

There are very few breweries that can claim to be situated in a c17th coach house but Dragonfly can boast that heritage even though the brewery was only set up in 2014 and the London Tasting Panel were delighted to make a visit.

To find the brewery, walk through the olde worlde, and charming, front seating area of the George & Dragon in the High Street in Acton; note the board with the of landlords dating back several centuries. The current landlord, Jason Woodger, is listed at the bottom right.

Keep walking through to the light and you will find yourself in the cavernous room at the back with an amazing high ceiling, wall painting and an island bar. The bar itself is impressive with large dark wood female statues holding the lamps that stand guard at the corners. Despite this eye catching feature, it is the brewery that dominates with its four sparkling copper fermenters and six silver conditioning tanks, piled on top of each other like two large totem poles.

The brewery is a five and a half barrel plant that makes good use of the limited room but it is

this lack of space that clearly gives the brewer some challenges. The bulk of the ingredients have to be stored in the cellar and the casks and kegs in two out buildings with a third holding the boiler, which takes its time to boil. A second cellar is used for cask washing.

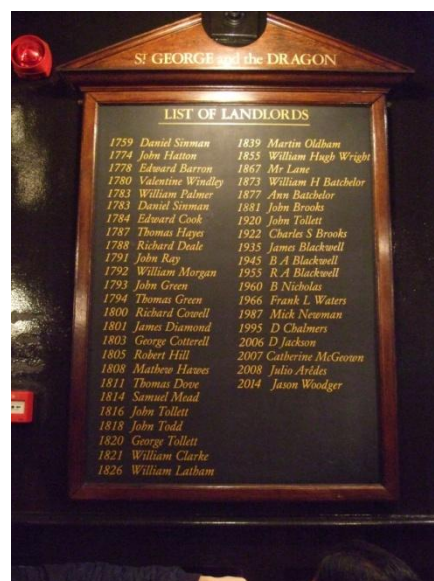


All of the casks and kegs come from Fuller's and are used for the 14 pubs owned by Remarkable Restaurants, of which the George & Dragon is one. Most pubs only get 3-4 casks per week with the Salisbury, Green Lanes N4, and George & Dragon getting the bulk of the brews. The mix is about 60% keg (filtered not pasteurised) and 40% cask but Alex Evans, the brewer, thinks it will eventually be 80/20 as, included in his future beer plans, is a lager. Alex remarked that would involve use of the top two conditioning tanks, which he has problems reaching (he is not tall enough even with a large ladder) and this would solve a problem as to what to do with them. He

currently has four fermenting vessels and six conditioning tanks.

Alex has been with Dragonfly just a short time and is beginning to get his feet under the table. He took over from Conor (ex Botanist Brewery), who has gone back to Ireland. Unfortunately, this meant that, to keep the pub supplied, Conor pre-brewed a number of beers. This led to one of the beers tasted that evening, 2 O'Clock (a best bitter at 4%ABV) being not at its best. But to compensate, the other two regular beers, Early Doors (a slightly stronger best bitter at 4.3%ABV) and Dark Matter (a stout also at 4.3%ABV) were in good form and worthy of at least a second, if not a third, try!

Alex brews four times a week and has a part time assistant. He has already begun to look at both the existing brews for a tweak and new brews for the future even if not all of the existing brews



have gone to plan. A batch of the Dark Matter, ended up more like a Brown Study!

If Alex's enthusiasm and knowledge pays off the way it should, a visit out to the pub to taste the beers will be a worthwhile pilgrimage. If you don't live in the area, and need an extra incentive, Laine's Aeronaut home brew pub is a few minutes' walk away, offering a mini brewery crawl.

Tasting notes

This is how the London Tasting Panel described the beers

2 O'clock Ordinary 4% ABV a pale brown best bitter with some hops and fruit on the nose and flavour and a bitterness that is also present in the finish

Early Doors 4.3% ABV a dark golden best bitter with grapefruit and hops that build and linger in the bitter dry finish, balanced by some malty sweetness. Tipple, Munich, Caramalt and Torried Wheat are used with six hops: Amarillo, Cascade, Centennial, Chinook, Columbus and Galena.

Dark Matter 4.5% ABV East Kent Goldings, Brambling Cross and Target hops combine with Tipple and Black Malts to create a stout with mocha roast notes on the nose; a roast, berry fruits and slightly sweet black treacle flavour finishing with a dry clean roast aftertaste. Easy to drink.

