



Lord Thomas de Marr', Canton of Basingestoches, Barony of Endewearde

Thomas's Metheglyn

The period process brewers challenge is to create an original beverage using period techniques, tools and ingredients. At least two ingredients must be period accurate.

Rain water, wildflower honey, *Mellisa Officianallis* (lemon balm) and vanilla bean.

Mead in its simplest form is honey and water brought to fermentation. The history of mead predates the Egyptian empire and may be as old as the birth of agriculture. Mead is known in today's culture as the drink of the Vikings. This comes from many references to the feasts and beliefs of the Vikings but in fact mead was widespread throughout many cultures.

To recreate this most basic of beverages I asked many brewers about ratios of water to honey and received a variety of answers. Reading "The Closet of Sir Kenelme Digby" I found the following excerpt from his Metheglyn on pg86. *"Take twenty Gallons of Spring-water; boil it a quarter of an hour, and let it stand, until it be all most cold; then beat in so much honey, as will make it so strong as to bear an Egg, so that on the Top, you may see the breadth of a hazel-nut swimming above;"*. This measurement seemed to repeat itself as a standard throughout his writings so I used this as my base measurement. This ratio comes to 1 gallon of water to 3lbs of honey. I chose to use rainwater as one ingredient following the receipt *"Translation: Take 90 parts or stoops of good river water or rainwater, 10 parts or stoops of white honey, and put them in a kettle. Let them boil, skimming, until only 80 stoops remain. The thickness can be tested with an egg to see if it is strong enough. Let it cool and pour into the vat and let it work. Add beer yeast so that it will change and end up clear. You may add spices, as said above."* Theodorus Clutis, an apothecary and herbalist of Leiden University and published in the 1597AD edition of Van de Byen. Page 167-8. The honey is unprocessed and purchased from a farmer through an intermediary to get it as close to unaltered as possible. Using a steel pot on a gas fire I brought the water and honey to boil for 10 minutes, skimming off the foam with a wooden spoon. This made sure to sterilize the rainwater as well as removing impurities from the honey. Adding a handful of lemon balm (.8oz) and 3 vanilla beans I let the mixture cool for 1 day before straining into an oak barrel and added Lalvin KV yeast. Stopping up the barrel, it worked for 6 weeks before bottling into an earthen ware bottle. After 3 days the mixture was so active it shot the bung to the ceiling, therefore I switched to an S airlock till bottling.

