Axholme Brewing Company was set up in early 2012 by husband and wife team Mike & Jules Richards. We are commited to craft brewing, creating small batches so we can put as much care as possible into every cask, and create a wide range of interesting beers. Our goal is to introduce a core range of top quality beers in classic styles, along with a wide range of guest ales exploring both modern and historic beer styles. Along with our cask range our beers are also bottled so that they can be enjoyed at home. The Isle of Axholme is a beautiful area of rural North Lincolnshire (and a bit of North Nottinghamshire). Prior to the area being drained by Dutchman Cornelius Vermuyden in the 17th Century, the area was very marshy, and the rivers Don, Idle and Trent formed an inland island (although the Don has since been diverted). The drainage left rich, very flat farmland to the North of the Isle. The three small towns in the Isle are Epworth, Crowle and Haxey. Epworth is famously the birthplace of John and Charles Wesley and the whole area enjoys a rich history.

The brewing process starts when we mix milled malted barley with hot water to create a mash (in the Mash Tun). This is essentially a giant porridge held at a temperature of 65 C for an hour or so. This causes the enzymes naturally present in the malt to convert the malt starches into simple sugars that can be fermented. After this the liquid - now called wort - is strained from the solids and the mash is rinsed through to remove residual sugars. This is called sparging. The wort is collected in the Copper. In the copper the wort is heated to boiling point and the first load of hops - the bittering hops - are added. These hops do not contribute to the flavour of the beer as the aromatic oils are evaporated during the boiling, but the boil isomerises the alpha-acids within the hops creating bitterness. The wort is boiled for an hour, which coagulates the malt proteins,

deactivates the malt enzymes and sterilises the wort. At the end of the boil the heat is turned off and the second load of hops is added - the aroma hops. These are not boiled and so they do not contribute much to bitterness but the essential oils in the hops are released into the wort adding flavour. They stand in the copper for half an hour before the next stage. Then the wort is passed through a heat exchanger, cooling the wort down to 17 C and heating up water for the following days brew. The wort flows into one of our fermenting vessels. When collection is completed the levels of sugar are measured using a saccharometer and if they are too high for the beer being created water is added to the copper (also rinsing wort out of the aroma hops) - this is a hop sparge. When the sugar levels - or gravity - are right the yeast can be added. Over the next four or five days the yeast will metabolise the sugars in the wort into carbon dioxide and alcohol. We can measure the progress of the fermentation by measuring the decreasing gravity on the saccharometers. When the beer - as it now is - is fermented cooling coils in the fermenting vessel jacket activate, cooling the beer down to about 10 C. This halts further yeast activity and causes much of the yeast to sediment out. Now the beer can be transferred into casks, along with a finings agent to clear the beer in the cask, where it undergoes conditioning as it heads to a pub cellar and ultimately, your glass.

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