

March 79

THE

LONDON DRINKER

10p

Produced by the London branches of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd



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Welcome

Welcome to Issue Number One of LONDON DRINKER. This new magazine is produced by the London Branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Despite this, we hope that the tone adopted by LONDON DRINKER is not totally one of obsession with Real Ale. We make no apologies for the fact that we have certain views about beer and the way it is brewed and served, but we are aware that the pubgoer has other issues that concern him. As LONDON DRINKER develops we hope that these issues will be covered in a way which informs, on occasion entertains, and always provokes the reader's thought.

You as a reader can help in this. Although this first issue has no Letters column - to have had one would have meant making them up and we want to be honest about these things - we certainly want to publish letters in our future issues. So if there is any aspect of pub life, of beer, or of drinking in general (We are aware that many people drink wines and spirits as well as beer and we don't want to leave them out) then drop a line to The Editor, LONDON DRINKER, c/o 6 Ashburton Road, Croydon, Surrey. Please enclose full name and address, although this will not be printed if you wish to remain anonymous.

Advertising

Advertising in LONDON DRINKER is not expensive, and should reach more and more drinkers and pubgoers with each successive issue.

For details of introductory rates (Display or Classified) write to Brian Sheridan, 6 Ashburton Road, Croydon, Surrey, or telephone during the day (Monday - Friday only) on (01) - 211 6698

LONDON DRINKER is published by the combined London Branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. The opinions which are expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of either the London Branches of CAMRA or of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd

Editors

Brian Sheridan
Ron Atkins
Robin Bence
Mike Hammersley

Artwork and Layout

Mike Hammersley

Acknowledgements

Brian Glover
Tony Littler
Jim Scanlon
The London Branches of CAMRA

Will they won't they?

The 'will they won't they' saga over the compulsory use of lined glasses continues. The Government's new Weights and Measures Bill proposes to outlaw brim measure glasses and to do away with the old principle that the head is part of a pint. Now it looks as if pressure from Guinness drinkers has put back plans for legislation on this point.

With its thick head, and a slow rate of separation of liquid from head, Guinness is not the sort of drink that would endear bar staff to filling lined glasses so that the liquid part reached the line. Indeed the Tory MP Michael Sheraby has predicted the emergence of a new industrial disease known as "Barmaid's Squint" - caused by constantly having to peer closely at pints of the dark Irish fluid to ensure that a legal pint has been drawn.

The whole thing may come as a rather confusing storm in a beer glass to drinkers in London. Down here there is less obsession than in the North with getting a thick head on a pint, and so the problem of short measure is less acute. If you get short measure in the South you can usually tell, and complain about it. In the North it's not so easy. That is why metered electric pumps are more common up North, as a pint can be put into a lined glass with a huge head on it with the drinker secure in the knowledge that his glass contains a pint and not 19 fluid ounces.

Have you seen the latest Whitbread Trophy TV commercial? It features a rugged Northern type waxing eloquent about the brew while his pint is being gratefully supped by his mate.

Apart from mumbling on about the "nice tight head which the beer possesses (We can almost sense drinkers of Marlow or Faversham Trophy - both good cask ales - laughing themselves sick at that posturing) the poor actor at one point enjoins us to "look at that lovely body!" Now we had always thought that body in a beer was something that you tasted and not a visual phenomenon. We look forward to the next Trophy advert telling us to "Listen to that wonderful bitterness" or perhaps to "Smell that wonderful condition."

Another pub guide came our way the other day. Published by Bass, and given away free in their pubs, it carried details of those of the company's pubs which provided good food, whether full meals, hot or cold snacks, etc.

Of the few pubs in London which we were able to try, the food was indeed of above the average standard. But we felt that the guide would have been better if it had also told readers about the beers on sale and the type of dispense used. Perhaps Bass will put this information in the second edition.

CAMRA talk with Roy Hattersley



In December, Roy Hattersley, Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection, announced a package of measures designed to increase competition in the Brewing Industry. In essence, the package involved five of the Big Six companies swapping 1000 pubs amongst themselves to reduce the numbers of pubs they owned in certain areas. The plan is to ensure that no company has more than half of the pubs in any local authority area of over 100,000 population.

This follows complaints to the Government by CAMRA about certain areas where one brewer had as many as 75% of the pubs - something which constitutes a monopoly under the Fair Trading Act. But as well as CAMRA's complaints on local monopoly, Hattersley was also under pressure from CAMRA to look at more general reforms following the damning criticism of the Big Six in the Price Commission's report on Beer Prices (1977)

CAMRA felt that the pub swap package was not of much help to areas of local monopoly - and was quite irrelevant to answering the more general problems of the industry which were leading to higher prices for a lot of peoples' beer as well as less choice of products. CAMRA's proposal is that the tied house system should be relaxed so that the

licensee of a tied house can stock one extra draught beer of his own choice. CAMRA felt that this would prove more beneficial to the drinker as it would extend the range of beers available in all areas and also give new firms starting up a bigger potential market to aim for.

On February 8th, a four man delegation from CAMRA met Hattersley. The CAMRA team was led by National Chairman, Joe Goodwin, and the other three were members of CAMRA's Monopolies Working Party - Dave Wickett, Tim Amsden and Norman Spalding. Amsden is also a member of the Campaign's National Executive.

The delegation told Hattersley that they were concerned to see a major improvement in competition in the Brewing and Pub industries so that drinkers would have more say in what they were offered to drink and would get a better deal on prices. The Campaign felt that the measures proposed would do little to help the problem as swapping pubs around the big brewers would not make these companies any more efficient or competitive. Hattersley, however, told CAMRA that he still believed that the proposed swaps would "Yield substantial effects on competition."

The Secretary of State also said that the licensing law reform proposed by the Erroll Committee in 1972 would not happen.

"There may be good economic reasons for implementing Erroll," he said, "But there are good social arguments against. We are not going to implement Erroll; and we are not going to alter existing licensing laws."

As far as the tie relaxation was concerned, Hattersley was sympathetic without being in any way committing the Government to action. He foresaw certain practical difficulties in the proposal, including Trade Union problems.

Hattersley also promised to examine other issues which the CAMRA team raised, including the Greenall Whitley Company's monopoly in North Cheshire and Scottish & Newcastle's position in Scotland. He also said that he would be interested to receive CAMRA's views on any issues relevant to the Beer industry whenever they arose.

After the meeting, Chairman Joe Goodwin told LONDON DRINKER "We welcome the chance to make observations to the Secretary of State, and we shall certainly do so. We shall be watching closely the effects of pub swaps, which we still believe will yield minimal benefits to the consumer. And we shall continue to campaign for the tie to be relaxed to allow an additional draught beer to be stocked by landlords."

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No.3 doing well

Youngers' No.3 Scotch Ale, the beer that is named after the brew that Youngers killed off in London 5 years ago, is doing well since its recent reintroduction.

The beer, which is dark and slightly sweet, has been brought back as part of a test of two cask beers by Scottish & Newcastle. Twelve pubs in London have been taking No.3, with twelve others test marketing another S & N beer, Youngers' IPA. Both beers are of medium strength at a gravity of 1043°, and there is more than a suspicion that No.3 is the same ale as IPA, with a little drop of colouring being the main difference.

The purpose of the dual test market is to compare the performance of the two brews in the pubs. Whichever beer comes out on top is likely to become S & N's beer for pushing in the free trade, not only in London and the SE but in the Midlands as well.

An interesting point noted when we tried No.3 was the price. S & N have been selling another, weaker brew in London - Youngers' XPS, and although this beer had an OG of only 1036.2°, the company had the audacity to price it at 39p in the pub we visited. No.3 is on sale at 38p a pint, and while even this is too high, it is an improvement.

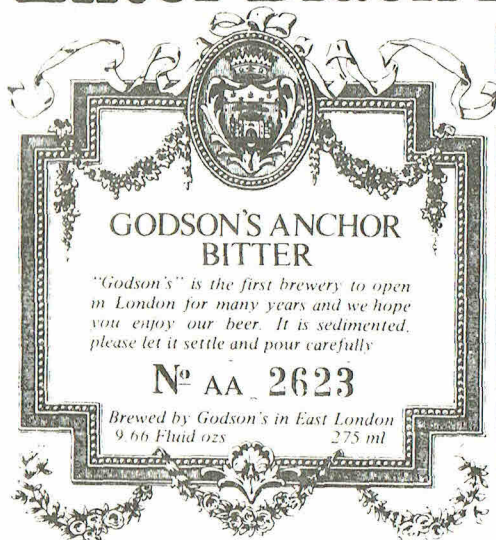
The fact that S & N have been clearing the ground for a push in the Free Trade adds fuel to the rumour that they are looking to buy a

brewery in the South. With their nearest brewery some 270 miles away in Newcastle, and that seemingly incapable of brewing real beer, a more southerly base would seem sound sense to them. As well as cask beer, they could also brew kegs such as Tartan and McEwan's Export. And the lager drunk by the Inverbrow Meat Beaters could also become more common down here. S & N will obviously have to play it carefully in Edinburgh and Newcastle, as jobs there may be in jeopardy, but that apart, the idea of a brewery in the South is attractive. There is one snag, however. The Government is unlikely to be too happy to see a Southern independent such as Morland's of Abingdon taken over by a Big Six company. It may well be the possibility of a reference to the Monopolies Commission that is prompting S & N to make their push now. By demonstrating a growing Free Trade demand, they may hope to convince the Commission that a takeover of this sort is justifiable.

LATEST: It looks as if No.3 has been doing better than IPA in the test markets. Both beers have been doing well, but it looks as if No.3 has captured the imagination more and will become S & N's spearhead ale for the free trade.

Enter Black Horse

by Brian Sheridan



At a time when the giants of the Brewing Industry are placing their faith in large centrally situated fizz factories, it is good to see that there is a growth in activity at the opposite end of the spectrum too. Small new breweries have been opening at an ever-increasing rate and have been meeting with a lot of success.

In London, the first, and so far the only example has been Godsons, whose Black Horse Brewery in London's East End is due to roll out its first barrels very soon. Indeed by the time this first issue of LONDON DRINKER appears, Godsons' beers may be back in the pubs.

Godsons originally started brewing in 1977 in Lower Clapton, and though their beer was a success, they ran into a snag. Hackney Council wanted to demolish the building for development, and so Godsons had to find new premises. After the first alternative site proved unsuitable, the company eventually took the decision to move to the present site - in Chisenhale Rd, E3. The move to new premises meant that brewing had to cease while things were got ready.

When I visited Godsons recently, work was still going on, but was obviously well on the way to completion. Said Patrick Fitzpatrick, the man behind Godsons, "Most of the plant is now in place, but there is some plumbing and electrical work to be done. But we hope to be turning out our first beer in late February or early March."

The brewery will be capable of producing 150 barrels (that's over 40,000 pints) every week, but the size of the building is big enough for further expansion in the future. The equipment is second-hand, obtained mainly from breweries closed under 'rationalisation'

schemes.

"Second hand plant is often best" claims Fitzpatrick. "Some items of equipment which are necessary for a small traditional brewery cannot be bought new, as they are just not made to-day"

To begin with, Godsons will brew two draught ales. They will use nothing but malt and hops, eschewing even the use of sugars. Anchor Bitter, the brew which the company began with, will re-appear but at a slightly lower gravity of 1038, and will be supplemented with Godsons Black Horse (GBH) Bitter at 1048. Patrick Fitzpatrick sees Black Horse as "Our Flag bearer, in a similar way to ESB with Fullers or Abbott Ale with Greene King."

Although Anchor and Black Horse will be the only two brews to start with, there is a strong possibility of more to come. There could be a third bitter at even higher an original gravity than Black Horse - possibly at 1058, and an interesting possibility is a Stock Ale in winter. Stock Ale essentially involves brewing a very strong beer and then maturing it in the brewery for a long period - perhaps as much as 2 years. After the ale is matured, it is blended with a new brew of the same beer to give a beer which combines the smoothness of the mature brew with the freshness of the younger beer.

But Stock Ale would probably have to be very expensive. "Brewers have to pay duty on their beer when it is brewed," points out Fitzpatrick "which means tying up money for a long time. If this country followed the system prevalent in Europe and charged duty when the beer left the brewery, things like a Stock Ale would be given a better chance. Continental brewers often mature beer for years."

For a newcomer to the industry, brewing the beer is just the start. Without tied houses to guarantee outlets, newcomers like Godsons have to persuade the Free Trade to stock their ales - and competition there is fiercer. The idea of relaxing the tie to allow every licensee to stock one draught beer of his own choice is one which Patrick Fitzpatrick endorses.

"It would obviously benefit us" he said. "We would like to sell more of our beer in the East End, but there are only about ten free houses in East London. It would help tenants as well, particularly if their tie brewer was unable to supply beer for any reason. With the big brewers going in for huge breweries which could become 'Little Leylands' this could become more important."

It is difficult not to applaud companies like Godsons. Taking on the big boys on unequal terms must be quite a daunting task and the going is bound to be hard at first. But Godsons do have one or two things going for them. By producing good beer of the type people want to drink rather than trying to pump over-priced over-advertised rubbish down their throats they are able to tap a market that firms like Courage, for example, plainly do not understand. It is my guess that the Black Horse emblem is going to become more and more well known in London in the years to come.

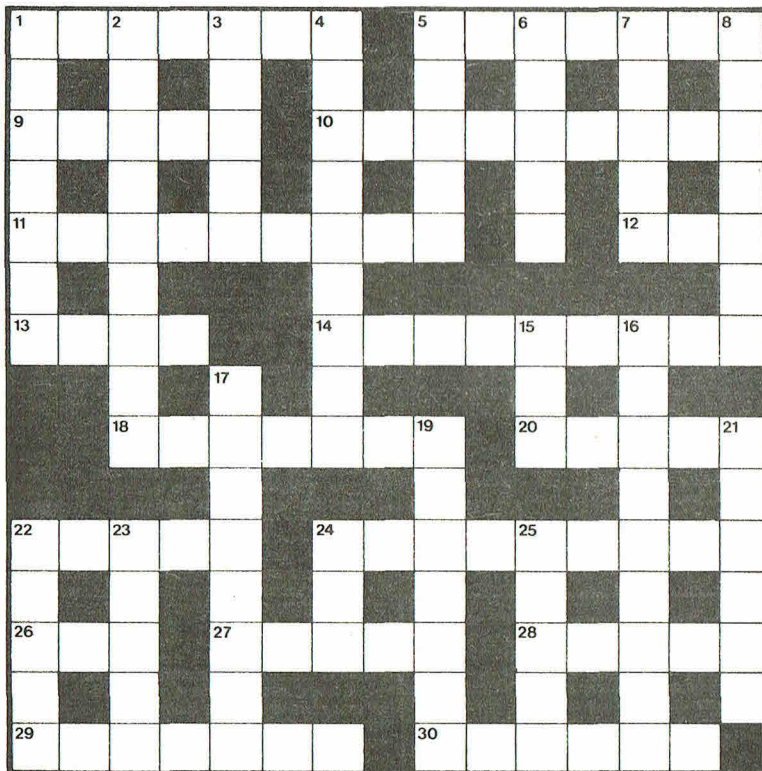
The Drinker Crossword—1

ACROSS

1. Variety of hop (7)
5. No keg or lager left; get lost! (4,3)
9. Broken seats are no liability (7)
10. Limit imposed by Mrs Whitehouse on love? No, this is real love. (9)
11. Useful for varying car's speed. (4,5)
12. One — (David Coleman) (3)
13. Hemeling tastes this way and it won't help you keep this way (4)
14. He should support you if you come over queer. (3,6)
18. Descriptive of architecture of most modern boozers (2,5)
20. "To each according to his ———." (5)
22. Comic with Snooty content (5)
24. Rabelaisian Giant (9)
26. Poetic eye (3)
27. Ladies' alternative to a night on the ale. (5)
28. What Brewers can give you if you don't drink 4
29. After 15 pints, to raise 5 would be this (7)
30. Small company dues mixed up - Portuguese money ? (6)

DOWN

1. Fart! Ugh! It's beset. (7)
2. Liverpool St or Norwich Thorpe before 1923 for pregnant pause. (9)
3. Car with elan ? (5)
4. The way to drink keg or lager (if you must!) so as not to get gassed. (9)
5. Wine equivalent of most Big Six beers (5)
6. If you suffer from 28, getting this will be hard. (5)
7. Goes well with tripe (5)
8. Breast fetishist ? (9)
15. Berni's type of pub ? (3)
16. Timber from an oilfield for Essex town (9)
17. Useful acid for hangover (8)
19. Small, fleshy erogenous zone (3,4)
21. Often served with chips in the posher boozers (6)
22. Sweeps clean when new. (5)
23. Newcastle Brown's little brother (5)
24. Trap which could ruin Mother (3)
25. Like Richard, we hear submarine detector. (5)



Your crossword solutions please

Send completed entries to Brian Sheridan, 6, Ashburton Road, Croydon, Surrey by 22 March. All correct entries will go into the hat and the winner will receive £3. For the runner-up a copy of "Beer Naturally" by Michael Hardman and Theo Bergstrom.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Another 7p!

The Big Brewers have already applied to the Price Commission for increases, and Allied Breweries have been given permission for an extra 3p. If that's not bad enough, the word is that Denis Healey will stick another 2p or so on top when he announces his Budget plans, and there is a possibility that some licensees may add something for themselves.

But there may be a slight ray of hope in the Government's new Prices Bill. This will stop companies putting up their prices if they have not been given permission. Before the Bill, the rules allowed price increases to go through automatically if it was necessary to maintain profit levels. Last year, it was this rule which allowed Allied Breweries (Ind Coope, Ansells, Tetleys etc) to raise their prices even whilst they were under investigation.

The profits rule was something which worked very well for the brewers. The start of its operation coincided with a good year for them and so the effect has been to let them carry on making record profits year after year. It seems likely that the Price Commission, who must know what the brewers have been getting away with, will investigate at least one big firm. Rumour has it that Watneys are favourite, and if this happened, the odds must favour some price restraint. Allied got their increase this year because they got their application in while the old rules applied, but it looks as if the others may have been too late. It could be very interesting if some of the Big Six got their 3p while the rest got less or nothing. If the industry were competitive, then Allied would have to hold their old prices in order not to lose trade. But the brewing industry isn't competitive. It is even possible that this lack of competition could just persuade the Government to let everyone have 3p because they don't want to be 'unfair' to the firms who missed the boat. But perhaps the best hope is that in an election year, Government Ministers will not want to alienate Britain's millions of Beer drinkers. After all, if you're old enough to drink, you're old enough to vote.

New guide

Next year CAMRA will be publishing a new guidebook for London. It will be a pub guide aimed at visitors to the Capital, telling them about pubs which are of special interest or merit - but which also sell good Real Ale.

It is anticipated that the Guide will feature 200 to 250 pubs all over London - pubs of historical interest, architectural merit, pubs with a good restaurant, etc. Pubs near to other tourist centres will, naturally, be important.

A small team of experts, backed up by the resources of CAMRA's London Branches, will be working hard judging the merits of candidates for the guide. But LONDON DRINKER readers can participate in the preparation of the Guide too. If you think there are any pubs which deserve inclusion, drop us a line giving the name and address of the pub and a brief idea of why you think it is a bit special. But remember - the pub must sell a decently kept pint of Real Ale.

The address to write to - Brian Sheridan, 6, Ashburton Road, Croydon.

Readers of the "Sun" were offered a huge extra treat the other week. By cutting out tokens from the tit 'n' bum comic they could get a can of Skol Lager absolutely free.

We understand that "Sun" proprietor Mr. Rupert Murdoch felt that Skol was the most appropriate refreshment for his readers to take after they had spent their daily ten minutes in the lavvy "studying" Page Three.

Showerings, the folks who gave Baby Cham to a thirsty world, have now come up with a new idea. "House Wine" is wine in one glass size bottles designed to be sold in pubs where demand for wine is insufficient to justify full size bottles. The wine is Spanish, and comes as red or white.

Our resident wine expert thought that the red might be O.K. for use in cooking such dishes as Beef Style Soya Chunks à la Bourguignonne, but that the white was not quite right for sprinkling on chips.

Readers may have seen the shock horror report of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, which reckoned that anybody who sipped four pints a day was an alcoholic.

We suggest that the authors of the report have their heads examined.

The Alan Greenwood chain of Beer agencies have recently added beers from Belhaven, Wadworths and the new Ringwood Brewery to their already extensive range. The beers are available in 4½ gallon containers suitable for home drinking. A small number of bottles of Felinfoel Centenary Ale - a specially brewed and long matured strong Pale ale - are also still available.

Opinion

Mild decline

Whatever ideas the public may have as to the qualities which distinguish the typical CAMRA member, one doubts whether a capacity for self-denial comes high on the list, let alone a streak of masochism. Yet the last few years have seen many of the brethren suffering willingly, even enthusiastically, for one particular cause. These unsuspected reserves of character have been called upon in the relentless defence of mild ale.

Now there are parts of the country where drinking 'real' mild comes as naturally as breathing, but in the South East, and in London in particular, this is not the case. In an effort to reverse the trend towards phasing out mild by the brewers who serve the area, CAMRA encourages us to drink as much of the stuff as possible, particularly in May. During this month, chosen for its alliterative attributes, you can find CAMRA folk supping vast quantities in conspicuous fashion in order to prove to other beer swillers that mild is still available, and that people enjoy the flavour and can drink several pints of it without being poisoned.

Whatever success these endeavours may have had elsewhere, they have made little difference to London. By the time May comes round again there is likely to be just one brewery, Young's, whose mild will be on tap in any quantity. Courage have stopped cask-conditioned mild; Fullers are on the verge of following suit and Ind Coope's elusive FK light mild is becoming even harder to find.

Is there a place for mild in London? Few would deny that Young's bitters are far superior to their mild and despite claims made for Hock, the same is surely true of Fullers. Courage Mild was thought by many to have been superior to their bitter, but the Courage Bitter would lose a comparison with almost anything.... So many excellent bitters from outside independents descend on the capital that the enthusiast struggles if he wants to sample them all. But some CAMRA members, who may once have looked on the "Take May a Mild Month" campaign as a form of penance, now claim to relish mild and to seek it out everywhere. One wonders how far some of them are indulging in a kind of trendy one-upmanship similar to that shown by people who boast of all the beers they have unearthed, even of beers that do not actually exist.

On grounds of taste, one can only disagree with anyone who persistently drinks mild in London as a campaigning tactic. It has just not made any impact. Young's Mild, by common consent one of the blander London milds, survives because enough of its traditional market survives and because it is also the one mild which is significantly cheaper than bitter. The newly re-introduced Younger's No. 3 Scotch Ale, though hardly a mild either in price or in strength, deserves to outsell other Scottish and Newcastle products. For the rest, CAMRA should concentrate on areas where there is a reasonable prospect of a good local mild - such as McMullens to the

North of London and Shepherd Neame to the South - and elsewhere abandon the attempt to boost mild by creating an artificial demand.

Labelling

Informed criticism of the drinks industry and of the quality of our booze has largely concentrated on beer and has largely been produced by members of CAMRA. But in "The New Statesman" recently Bruce Page devotes a long article, complete with technical analysis to another Great British Institution - Whisky. It seems that the industry is in trouble because the flourishing export trade is under threat from the Japanese, while on the home front the old familiar brands are facing cut-price competition.

Nothing in his piece will come as a shock to students of the big brewers. He suggests that their Scotch Whisky equivalent, the giant Distillers Company (DCL), offers a classic example of British Capitalism "Which appears to be more interested in groping towards an ultimate monopoly than in the achievement of present profit." Pure whisky is made from malt, and nothing else; popular brands such as Bell's and Teacher's mix malt whisky with grain spirit in about equal quantities; newer and cheaper blends contain far less malt than grain, and Page comments that their inferior quality, as measured by chemical analysis, is confirmed by the drinker's palate. If these newcomers manage to pull the rug out from under DCL the latter cannot complain, because they grew fat by the same means - mass producing blended whisky, with little concern for maintaining a reasonable proportion of malt.

Mr Page laments the lack of a labelling convention, through which the buyer would know exactly what he was paying for. He regrets, as we do that British Governments have been loth "to take any responsibility for preserving honesty and individuality in the liquors that are offered to the people - exhibiting a childlike faith in the natural purity of the market place which would seem inconceivable to French or German administrators."

CAMRA has of course been campaigning for more open labelling of Beer; for lists of the ingredients used in beer to be shown in the same way as the ingredients of processed foods; for the strength to be shown; and for the type of dispense used to be stated. The Food Standards Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture, in their report on the Labelling of Beer, have recommended that certain legal requirements be laid down for labelling of beer. CAMRA supports these in principle. No action has yet been taken by Government to implement these recommendations, and the dust has been gathering on the Report for about two years now.

Beer drinkers may not yet be threatened with lager from the hop fields of Yokohama, but some pretty suspicious things can be put into our pints without our knowing it. Now it looks as though the whisky drinker is facing the same problem. Indeed with whisky at four quid plus the bottle, the cost of

finding out that the selected bottle is one of rot-gut grain is pretty painful. As a first step the Government should bring in legislation on Beer Labelling. But it should also act to ensure that Scotch, which is after all an important export commodity, is made subject to laws which insist that we are told just what it is made of.

The 'Big Six'

The beer market in London is dominated by the six national brewery companies. Nearly 9 out of 10 of the pints drunk in the capital are brewed by one of these companies, and in future issues of LONDON DRINKER we shall be looking at how each of these brewers reached this powerful position.

Four of the companies have grown out of old-established London brewing families - Whitbread, Watney-Truman, Bass-Charrington, and Courage - while Ind Coope, a part of Allied Breweries, have been brewing at Romford for over two centuries. Only Scottish & Newcastle of the big six has no London pedigree.

Beer has always been a perishable product, and the traditional limit of a brewery's growth has been the distance a dray can cover in a day's travel. With the growth of the motorway network in the last twenty years, and the acceptance by large sections of the drinking public of processed keg beer, many companies have concentrated their brewing on large central sites. Small, local breweries have been closed, usually with the loss of many jobs, as well as a reduction in choice of beers. The only memento of these long-lost favourites is the occasional glimpse of an old brewery name on an engraved pub window, or in the name of a beer recalling an older brewery, such as Watney's Stag Bitter (named after the former Stag Brewery at Victoria) or Wethered's Bitter, from Whitbread's subsidiary in Buckinghamshire. But now the ever-rising cost of transporting what is basically water from brewery to pub is reflected in the price of your pint.

London has suffered especially in this respect. In 1974, Charrington closed their Mile End brewery, and now most of their beer is trucked in from the Midlands and the North. Whitbread closed the home of their family brewery (in Chiswell St. EC1) two years ago, and their pubs are now served from Luton or Marlow in Buckinghamshire. All Scottish and Newcastle beer is brewed in either Edinburgh or Newcastle, although there are rumours that Father William is looking for a brewery in the south. (And why not? We already have "Dutch", "Belgian", "German", "Danish", "French", "Irish", "Jamaican", "American", and "Canadian" beer brewed in England.

At the turn of the century, there were 115 breweries in what is now Greater London. By 1950, this had fallen to 31; to-day there are only 8, of which only two are old London family firms - Young's of Wandsworth and Fuller, Smith & Turner of Chiswick. Between them, they own just over two hundred of the 5,500 pubs in London.

From the aspect of choice for drinkers, the picture is improving slightly. Most of the larger breweries are slowly selling off unprofitable houses, although not many of these are in London. But the number of Free Houses - pubs with no brewery tie - is still gradually increasing, and more importantly the number of independent provincial brewers willing to supply the London trade is also increasing. There are now about 30 firms from all over Britain selling their products here. Nearly all are supplying traditional cask-conditioned beer in response to the ever-growing demand for real beer which some of the Big Six have shown reluctance to meet. But there is still a long way to go to improve on the choice compared with the turn of the century. Then, not only were small outside firms supplying London, but over 50 had depots and offices or agents in the capital to stimulate demands for their products.

Charrington Mild mystery

With the future of cask mild in London looking rather bleak, a small drop of comfort appeared recently in the shape of a mystery brew parading under the name of Charrington Mild. The beer was discovered by our informant in the Black Horse, St. Martin's Lane, WC2. Since Charrington have not sold cask mild in London for several years, and only sell pressurised mild in a handful of houses, we were naturally intrigued. Could Charrington be bucking the regrettable trend set by other companies (notably Courage) by bringing back mild instead of killing it?

Enquiries made on our behalf revealed that Charringtons knew little more than we did. They were unable to say how the guv'nor at the Black Horse had got hold of this brew or even which of the company's milds it was. We can only hope that this piece of handy initiative will be allowed to continue.

The economics of Mild are different for Charringtons to those of some of the other companies. All Charrington beers are brought in from the Midlands, where a great deal of mild is brewed for the local trade. Should Charrington feel that the example of the Black Horse is a good one, it would be quite easy for them to divert a few casks of M & B mild to London houses who wanted it. Whether the company will give this any thought may well depend upon the response to the Mild in the Black Horse.



2 BREWERS

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New pub

We are grateful to Brian Seymour, Chairman of CAMRA's Enfield and Barnet Branch for news of a recently opened brand new pub in Colney Hatch Lane, N10.

"Marlers" which is named after the owner, occupies premises which were previously a bookmaker's office, and before that a club. It has been extensively renovated prior to being opened in its new role.

It carries an impressive range of beers. On handpump are Rayments' Bitter, Greene King Abbott Ale, Devenish Ordinary Bitter and Wessex Best Bitter, and Arkells BBB bitter. Kronenbourg Lager and Draught Guinness are also also on the list.

Although the pub is new, the decoration is tasteful and simple, with cream walls and a dark brown ceiling. The use of second-hand but genuine fittings makes a refreshing change from the fake antiques seen in many "traditional" pubs.

■ It seems as if one effect of the lorry-drivers' strike was to deny many pubs the cylinders of carbon dioxide which they use to drive their keg beers and lagers from the cellar to the bar. Serve those pubs right who don't have a good old-fashioned handpump in the place. We gather that one Brewery sent their Public Relations staff round to help blow the noxious fizz to the bar, but their breath tended to turn the beer sour.

Hock?

The demise of Fullers' Hock is likely to be delayed for a few months longer - but it seems unlikely that the reprieve will be a permanent one. The beer is to stay while the company carry out further test marketing on a replacement brew.

Fullers announced their intention to stop production of Hock as sales did not justify its retention. Hock accounted for only 2% or so of total barrellage, and with pub sales often slow, a high proportion of the beer was having to be returned out of condition.

A test marketing of a new brew which was carried out recently apparently met with a mixed response. The second test will be of a brew which will probably be slightly higher in strength than Hock, and not too dissimilar in flavour. Present intentions are to flash pasteurise the beer, which will probably mean that it will only be served under pressure.

CAMRA members have been campaigning for Hock to be retained, but it is likely that economic realities will signal the death knell of this famous and long-standing Mild. Only a sharp increase in demand is likely to make Hock economic to brew, and the signs of a permanent hike in sales are not there.

The loss of Hock will mean that Mild in London will become extremely rare. Courage have been in the process of getting rid of their cask mild, and now only Youngs supply London with cask mild in any quantity.

The 135ers

A group of Young's '135' Association members pictured at a recent Social in 'The Castle' Battersea. Membership of the Association is open to anyone who has visited every one of Young's 135 Tied Houses - and can prove the fact.



CAMRA

CAMRA in the few years of its existence has helped make life a good deal more bearable for many thousands of drinkers in London - but there's a long way to go. The Big Brewers with their over-advertised, over-priced beers still own far too many of this City's pubs for the drinker's good. In order to fight for better beer, better pubs and fairer prices, CAMRA needs your support.

There are Branches of the Campaign to cover all parts of the Greater London Area - so one must be near you. As well as conducting the campaigning side of things, Branches organise Social Functions, Darts Matches, visits to Breweries etc - so getting involved with CAMRA can be fun.

Join now

Membership of CAMRA costs £4 per year for full membership and £1 for Associateship. Full members receive monthly editions of the Campaign's monthly newspaper "What's Brewing" which keeps them in touch with developments in the Brewing and Pub industries as well as with the activities of the Campaign. Why not complete the form below and help the battle for a better deal in the boozier.

Next month

DO IT YOURSELF - Ron Atkins, Jazz Correspondent of "The Guardian" looks at the Jazz Scene (and the ale) in London Pubs.

ENTERTAINMENT - The first of a series of articles on home brewing.

THE BIG SIX - William Samuel discusses WHITBREAD

Plus news, views, features, humour - and lots more beside.

Real Ale is..

CAMRA defines Real Beer as beer made from traditional ingredients, and served by traditional methods of dispense.

The traditional ingredients of beer are Barley malt, hops, yeast and water. However it is perhaps dogmatic to suggest that other ingredients are taboo. But the practice of some brewers of using substitutes for malt in order to save money cannot be condoned since there is a danger that the flavour will not be as good. CAMRA does not, however, disqualify any beer from its guides on the grounds of ingredients alone.

Traditional dispense means several things. To begin with, the ale should still be living, i.e. still conditioning in the cask, and, if properly looked after, developing its flavour. It should be served by methods which do not involve the use of Carbon Dioxide pressure. These are:-

Through a hand pump of the familiar type seen in many pubs.

Through an electric pump which simply replaces the manual effort of handpumps by electrical power.

By gravity, i.e. by holding the glass under the tap of the cask and letting the ale just run into the glass.

Did you know..

Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai has apparently set something of a trend in his home country with his habit of drinking his own urine. At least one Big Six Brewer is believed to have dropped plans for opening a lager brewery in Poona. We also hear that if Mr Desai gets wise to another convenient source of food, then the prospects for the proposed chain of well known American style Hamburgeries on the sub-continent will be in jeopardy.



I wish to become a member of Campaign for Real Ale Limited. I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign, and I enclose £4 (£5 for overseas members) as my annual membership subscription. (Any additional amount will be welcomed as a donation.)

FULL NAME (Block capitals) _____

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Cheques should be made payable to Campaign for Real Ale Limited. Applications should be sent to Membership, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts. AL1 3BW.

