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10p

LONDON DRINKER

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



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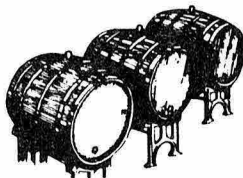
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LONDON DRINKER

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News & Views

● COURAGE UP

THE HONEYMOON with Courage may be drawing to an end. When the dust cleared after the Budget fiasco it looked as if Courage-draught beers were among the cheapest in London, despite being carted all the way from Bristol as a result of the closure of Horsleydown Brewery.

There appear to have been two increases, both of 2p, in recent weeks. We hope this is not the beginning of the slide which the 'Drinker' forecast a few months ago. To be fair, the conversion to handpumps still seems to be in force, while one of your editors nearly choked on a hop-leaf that oozed unsuspected-like from his pint of Directors the other day. Never happened when they brewed it at Horsleydown.

● ANOTHER BREWERY CHOPPED?

A BREWERY near London is set to close early next year. This is the Phoenix Brewery at Watlingbury in Kent, which once sold Lene's beers but has long been part of the Whitbread empire.

CAMRA outcry has been muted so far, as the brewery does not produce any draught beer. The effect of London will be minimal. However, unlike Horsleydown which had been run down in preparation for the axe, the Watlingbury brewery has been well maintained and is, we understand, a shining example of a traditional brewery which has been modernised successfully.

If this is true it would be a tragedy if it is forced to close. At present, the brewery produces Whitbread English Ale, Gold Label and other bottled beers.

● LAGER WARS

NEW LAGERS still sprout from all directions aimed at all ends of the market. At the teenybopper end Tennent's of Glasgow, the Scottish arm of Bass, have put out Charger, a weak lager which will be sold in Scotland in cans.

This is possible Tennent's response to Kestrel, produced by Scottish & Newcastle. S&N are not normally regarded as being among the

deep thinkers or the strategical wizards of the Big Six brewers, but they seem to have stolen a march on the others by brewing a lager which, low in gravity and unremarkable in taste though it may be, they sell at what in lager terms are rock-bottom prices.

You may remember a piece on lager by ALAN GREENWOOD in our December issue in which he referred to the Wrexham lager brewery, now part of Allied Breweries. He mentioned that it was set up as a proper German plant by four Bavarian exiles and that it used to brew lagers of dark colour as well as the now-obligatory yellow.

Obligatory no longer, it would appear. To celebrate the Royal Wedding, the brewery is producing a strong lager which in some forms will have a reddish colour.

On top of this, Bass are now going in for dark lagers. Their Mitchell & Butler pubs in the Midlands are receiving a lager which is supposed to appeal to people who normally drink beer. It is called Crusader and its label says "Dark Lager Beer. Brewed to the taste of our Island race."

Finally, a few words on San Miguel. Last month we said that this Spanish lager would be a Premium lager and would probably be expensive. Expensive it is, but we would like to qualify the term 'Premium'. The lager for the British market is considerably weaker than the San Miguel beers that the Spaniards know and presumably love. Technically, we are told, the word 'Premium' spans a very wide gravity ban. San Miguel, British-style, is anchored firmly at the bottom end.

● A FIX OF STOUT

We are still boggling at a story in a recent issue of 'Off Licence News'. The author, Sandy Guthrie, has discovered a new type of Guinness. Readers know that Guinness comes in both draught and bottled form and that each has a different taste from the other. The more CAMRA-aware of you will know also that bottled Guinness is a real ale, ie it conditions in the bottle and has the sediment to prove it, while 'draught' Guinness in this country is a pasteurised beer to which gas is

News & Views continued

added before dispense.

Well, Guinness thought it might be a wonderful idea if people who normally drink draught Guinness were able to do so at home. So they launched a test market in the Galway area with six-pack bottles of Guinness - but bottles with a difference. As we understand the story, these bottles contain flat, pasteurised, 'draught' Guinness. The question is, how can anybody drink it while it lies so dead and ungassed?

The answer is, you inject the gas in with a syringe. Or with what Guinness refer to as a 'creamer'. At this point, we would prefer to quote the excellent Mr. Guthrie for a crystal-clear exposition of the operation. "You pour half your bottle of Guinness into a glass. You take your creamer in your right hand - left, if you're left handed, either if you're ambidextrous - and place the tip into the glass. By raising the plunger in the syringe, and by the wonder of science the syringe will fill up with Guinness. Then take a deep breath and 'whoosh' the Guinness back into the glass again with all the force your thumb can muster Then tip in the rest of your bottle and, hey presto, you have a bottled beer that looks and tastes like draught."

● PROBLEMS FOR TAYLOR WALKER

WE COMMENTED last month on the poor quality of some of the Taylor Walker beer, certainly in the area covered by CAMRA's North London Branch. The situation has not improved and word from the Branch is that several pubs seem to have dropped the beer altogether.

In the 'Local' section, we shall continue to provide details of Allied pubs which 'odd' beers, such as Central London pubs which take Friary Meux or Benskin's. From what one hears, the proportion of these is likely to increase.

● THE LUCKY PAIR

READERS WILL be aware that, in conjunction with a topical event of some importance, rumours of certain tapes made of certain telephone conversations have been

circulating in those quarters where rumours of this nature tend to circulate. The calls in question were alleged to have been made by a Very August Personage to his fiancée while he was on a visit to the Antipodes.

We at 'London Drinker' have been privileged to hear these tapes. While most of the conversation is of a personal nature and of not the slightest interest to anyone other than the participants, we think it right to draw the attention of our readers to the following excerpt:

He: And another thing, I can't get a decent pint anywhere. Nothing but this frozen lager stuff which everyone gulps down and then throws up all over the place. I can tell you that I am staying here not a moment longer than necessary.

She: Never mind, darling, I've got some good news for you. They have finally put in the handpumps at the CORGI & FIRKIN. also, the PRINCE OF WALES now sells sixteen different real ales. I'm working there two nights a week to earn a bit of money. You are so right about what pulling those pumps does to ones figure!

He: What about wedding presents? Have you told Great-Auntie Babs that I want an 'Eeezi-Bru' kit?

She: Yes, and she says she does not like the smell of boiling hops. But your Mama is giving us a brand new maxistyrene fermenting vessel and Daddy has promised to convert the old gamekeeper's room underneath the hunting lodge into a temperature-controlled cellar.

He: That's better. Make sure we get at least one bottle of each of those so-called Wedding Ales, if possible with labels signed by the brewers. If they are no good we can at least make some money by flogging the empties.

She: I'll try, but we shall have to hide them from your Nan. I think she has discovered where you stashed the Hardy Ales! Anyway, you don't have to worry any more about our honeymoon, as I've fixed up all the brewery visits.

News & Views continued

HARRY SECOMBE may be the one professional comedian to become a Sir in the latest Honours List, but several others who received the accolade have contributed their share of buffoonery.

The brewing industry has been honoured by the knighthood bestowed upon Keith Showering, Chief Executive and Chairman of Allied Breweries. He has enriched the world of drinking above all by his propagation of Babycham, the sparkling beverage with which his mane will for ever be linked.

He has also enriched the Conservative Party. The 'Investor's Chronicle' report last October awarded Allied Breweries the Number One spot for 1979-80, up three places from the previous year. True they gave a paltry £500 to

the Tories as such – probably to pay for the Central Office Xmas Party – but a further £61,500 was channelled through British United Industrialists and through what the magazine describes as 'fronts'. "It is assumed, and not denied," says the 'Investor's Chronicle' "that most if not all the monies they collect are passed to the Conservatives."

Tim Amsden, now CAMRA's Chairman and someone with wide experience of Allied affairs, has described him as 'boorish'. CAMRA ranks very low on Mr. Showering's list of favourites and he once even accused it of being a Marxist plot. This was an undoubted example of boorish behavior, since anyone could have told him that there exist several Conservative activists in the upper echelons of the Campaign, which is a genuinely all-Party affair.

Fortunately, Mr. Showering's attitude is not shared by many of his colleagues, and relations between Allied and the drinkers of traditional draught beer have improved enormously in recent years.

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Valley of the Hops

A trip round one of the new breed of small traditional breweries by RON ATKINS

PART OF THE fun in visiting brewers of good ale comes from the look and feel of the brewery building, often a lowering Victorian edifice which has somewhat reluctantly adapted itself to the modern era. On that score, the Bourne Valley Brewery is not one that is likely to sell many picture postcards. Situated in an industrial estate just outside Andover in Hampshire, it has a Nissen Hut frontage and a hanger-like interior which lack any trace of romance.

The beer, though, is thoroughly traditional. Only malted barley, hops, yeast and water are used to brew it. No brewing sugars, nor any additives. Pubs that take the beer, of which there are about 75, are not allowed to sell it under any form of gas pressure.

Of the small breweries to start in recent years, Bourne Valley is unique in that one of the founders, James Lynch, is a former Chairman of CAMRA. Some members of the Champaign get upset at the number of top figures who have gone into the trade as landlords, company officials, pub owners, brewers and so on. But surely it is better for people to put their ideas into practice rather than hang around for ever on CAMRA's National Executive?

The day I picked to see Lynch at the brewery happened to be the day after the Budget, so that the place was not exactly falling about with laughter. Even so, I was offered a couple of glasses of their superb Andover Ale plus another brew, whose name escapes me, which they produce for just one pub - while I learned what it was like to start a brewery and what needs to be done to keep it going.

One obvious question was - why London? Why is it that brewers agree to send their beers here so that it can be served at inflated prices in (sometimes) poor conditions, either because the licensee does not care or because the wholesaler has left the barrels lying in his yard for weeks at a time? That is how the scene can look to a disillusioned London consumer in a cynical moment, so I wanted the opinion of someone in the trade who might, with his CAMRA background, be

expected to take a more exalted view than that of the average brewperson.

"When we started the brewery" Lynch explained, "we wanted a small local operation selling local beer to local pubs. None of us like getting up at five in the morning to drive a lorry to pubs in London and Surrey. But we have to do this to survive."

In the early days, Bourne Valley was a local brewery. Despite the positive support given by the surrounding CAMRA branches, however, the beer tended to suffer from the phenomenon of xenophilia, whose corollary is that the stuff brewed down the road is regarded as rubbish even by people who have never tried it.

More seriously, Bourne Valley faced the restrictions that affect those who try to break into the free trade. According to Lynch, free houses in his area are notorious for being 'tied' by brewery loans. "It is not really a loan, more of a discount on barrels over a specified period. There were some pubs where our beer became more and more popular until the landlord had to stop taking it because it was cutting into the barrelage that he had promised another brewer!"

January, for obvious reasons, is not a peak production month for brewers. Lynch recalls that in January 1979, the month after Bourne Valley's first Christmas, they only brewed once and that was because the TV cameras were present. After that, he started casting around and began deliveries to London in April, mainly of polypins for off-licences.

This trade has grown, and he has no regrets. "London pubs are a lot freer than those around here. Many are part of a chain and are run by sensible people. They do have barrelage deals, but they have retained the flexibility to take in other beers. Round here, there is one so-called 'free House' that has to buy its crisps from a particular brewery!"

Bourne Valley deliver 10 barrels, mostly kils, every week to London. When I pointed out how annoying it was to chase after a

Continued

Valley of the Hops continued

particular beer which is continuously unavailable even in pubs which are supposed to stock it, Lynch explained that all his London outlets place regular orders but that these were perhaps not intended to ensure that his beer was on tap seven days a week. At the time of the interview, the beer was being sold in the MERRIE-GO-DOWNE in Kensington, the VILLAGE BLACKSMITH in Woolwich, the David Bruce 'Firkin' pubs, the various Clarke-Baker pubs (BRICKLAYERS, WINDMILL etc) where a specially-brewed Clarke-Baker bitter is available and in two off-licences Bitter Experience and 2 Brewers.

"London pubs are good business to deal with and they are good payers. You can make a rule that the more beer a landlord takes from you the better he looks after it and the faster he pays for it. With those people I refer to as the 'firkin-a fortnight brigade' you often have to tap and spile the barrel for them, they sometimes sell the beer in poor cellar conditions and they are slow to pay.

"Another golden rule is that 90% of the returns of ullage comes from 10% of the pubs. The same pubs all the time. You can't help but be suspicious. They may be putting the slops in from beers of similar gravity. The only thing you can do is to run a quick test and find out the original gravity. If they have been clever, it is very difficult to prove."

The brewery turns out roughly 150 barrels a

month and has capacity with the present plant to double that. There are four workers who share all the duties "We operate a closed shop in that all of us have to join CAMRA!" Tiny by some commercial standards, but Lynch points out that the beers he produces for certain pubs really are different. "Not like those from Romford! Our recipes are different, different malts and hops are used. Even the yeast varies, because we use Young's yeast for Clarke-Baker bitter while for the others we use yeast from Belhaven."

He says that Bourne Valley have survived the period of local suspicion and that trade in the area should improve. I was pleased that he spoke warmly of backing from CAMRA because the products of the small new breweries have not always been received with open arms by the faithful. Indeed, before Bourne Valley had been in existence a year a motion suggesting that such breweries were less than wholly admirable was actually passed at a CAMRA AGM.

This fortunately has had no deleterious effect on the number of small brewers, which grows every month. The belief that a small firm might be deficient in some way still, however, persists. "When a beer from a new small brewer appears," says Lynch with feeling, "the glass is held up to the light. It is sniffed. If it is not perfect it is sent back. It seems unfair to subject us to this kind of scrutiny, which is not applied to beers from anyone else".

CLOSING FOR REPAIRS

YE OLDE CHERRY TREE, in The Green, N9, will be closing down in mid-July for several weeks. The pub is, as the name might suggest, of historical interest and apparently some parts of the pub have become too historical for their own good and for the patron's safety.

We hope that the renovations are carried out expeditiously and with taste. The Banqueting Suite, meanwhile, remains open.

MILD MATTERS

YOUNG'S MILD at 45p must be one of the cheapest pints in North London. This is what you pay at the MARQUESS TAVERN in Canonbury where the beer is selling well, we are told.

The beer also sold, for 47p at the LAMB in

Bloomsbury. Opposite in the SUN, Brain's Dark and Felinfoel's mild have been appearing of late.

Which reminds us that we have received an overwhelming number of enquiries, most of them from around the Holborn area, asking us to identify the pub which appeared on our April cover. It was of course the SUN in Lamb's Conduit Street, the House Of A Million Beers.

BRUCE BOTHER

WE were sorry to learn of the trouble which broke out at the 1st Birthday Party held in the FOX & FIRKIN in Lewisham. David Bruce, popular owner of the 'Firkin' pubs, was attacked by what was described to us as a number of drunken National Front yobboes. They were subsequently chased down the High Street by police with tracker dogs.

What's on the Menu at CLARKE BAKER INNS?



1. King & Barnes, Tisbury's, Shepherd Neame & Youngs Beers
at

The Windmill, 27 Tabernacle St., E.C. 2.

**



2. Devenish, Sam Smiths, Fullers & Bass Beers
at

The Bricklayers Arms, 63 Charlotte Rd., E.C.2.

**



3. Eldridge Pope, Arkells, Charles Wells, Greene King Beers
at

The Truscott Arms, 55 Shirland Rd., W.9.

**

4. Whitbreads, Wethereds & Tusker Beers at the
Crown, 35 Albert Embankment, S.E.1.

&

Courages Best & Directors Beers at the
Blue Boy Hotel, Station Hill, Farnham, Surrey.

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LOCAL

● MORE SHEPS

FAVERSHAM BREWERS Shepherd Neame have extended further into North London by acquiring two more pubs from Charrington. The RAILWAY TAVERN in Jude Street, N16 is already selling real Sheps and the RYDON ARMS at 225 New North Road, N1 should follow by the end of the summer.

● PATH TO GOOD ALE

AFTER SPENDING £160,000 on the Addington Hotel, New Addington, Friary Meux have re-opened it as the CUNNINGHAM. At the opening session the first pint was drawn by Group Captain John Cunningham, the famous nightfighter pilot and Pathfinder leader, who later became the chief Test Pilot at De Havillands and the man who flew the Comet prototype.

He now joins the select few who have had a pub named after them in their lifetime. The CUNNINGHAM sells Friary bitter and Ind Coope Burton Ale, but we cannot give you the price as all the beer at the opening was paid for by the brewery! DAN ALLEN, who sent us the news, would like to thank Friary Meux for inviting CAMRA's Croydon & Sutton Branch.

● BARGAIN BEERS

WE HAVE a couple of additions to the list. The new MARLER free house in Pentonville Road, N1 is selling a cheaper beer between 5.30 – 7.30 from Monday to Friday. On each of these nights, one of the beers will cost 'only' 50p.

For those in the Barnet area, the OLD WIND-MILL at Hadley Highstone runs a Happy Hour (actually 90 minutes) between 5.30 –

7.00 from Monday to Thursday. At these times, the Ind Coope Burton bitter and Burton Ale are reduced by 10p.

Previous entries were the WELLINGTON near Waterloo, the SHIP & SHOVEL in Charing Cross and the WENLOCK ARMS in Shoreditch, all of whom we believe still qualify. If anyone knows otherwise, or can give details of other pubs selling beer at reduced prices on a systematic basis, please get in touch.

● BEASTLY BREW

A NEW HOME-BREW pub has opened near the centre of London. The Duke Of Bridge-water, in Graham Street, N1 – formerly a 1930s Ind Coope house and Islington's answer, stylistically, to Salford – has been metamorphosed into the KING OF BEASTS a free house. Brewpubs have installed the equipment and two beers are being brewed: Islington bitter (Original Gravity 1045) and Angel bitter (O.G. 1055).

The process seems similar to that found in the IRONBRIDGE, which also uses Brewpubs techniques. In other words, the beers are served by handpumps and no carbon dioxide is added, but they are brewed with malt extract.

● IN THE COURTS

THE MANAGER OF THE JOHN BAIRD in Muswell Hill was given a conditional discharge at the Wood Green Crown Court after being found guilty by the jury of selling Courage Best Bitter from a handpump which described the beer as "a stronger and more expensive beer", i.e. Courage Director's. The judge accepted that the offence was not deliberate.

Earlier this year, the landlord of the QUEEN'S

LOCAL CONTINUED

HEAD in Crouch End was sacked by Courage after being convicted of selling diluted Director's bitter.

Both convictions followed action by Haringey's Consumer Protection Unit.

HOPING FOR HELP

THE HOPE is a small and friendly Young's

pub in West Norwood, writes JOHN DAVIS. It has just acquired a new guvnor, has started selling 'London Drinker' and has formed a football team.

They have a full side of keen players but would like some help in getting fixtures and, ideally, sponsorship. Their immediate need is for any spare or disused kit.

If any reader can help, please get in touch with Tony the landlord, or with Clive Pereira at the pub.

Alan Greenwood's Beer Diary

LAST MONTH, R.J. Peel of London N6 questioned my statement that "Beer was a good wholesome beverage, rich in vitamins and minerals, a modest stimulant for relaxation and conducive to good company." I have to accept that perhaps "rich" might be a slightly misleading word in that it could imply beer was a vital source of vitamins. It is not, of course, although compared to other beverages such as tea and coffee, which are untaxed, beer *is* rich.

About this goodness in beer. There are many misconceptions and fallacies held by the public. The industry and institutions have done a great deal of research into the subject, but unfortunately there are so many aspects of this research that, apart from needing a book rather than an article to quote all the findings doing so would add to the misconceptions rather than resolve them.

For example, the fact that alcoholics need vitamins when admitted to hospitals does not mean that beer does not contain vitamins only that in excess alcohol defeats the body's ability to retain the Thiamin, etc. It is also likely that an alcoholic's lifestyle ignores the need for solid meals and a balanced diet.

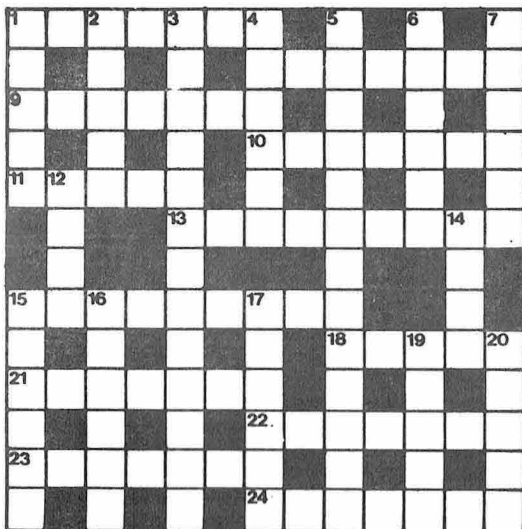
Another example of how confusing the situation can be: most people have heard that Guinness is so good, it is often prescribed by doctors. This could be another fallacy as most people who drink Guinness leave the most nutritional part, the sediment, in the bottom of the bottle. However the psychological benefit to the elderly who have faith in the daily Guinness cannot be denied. Whilst the true benefit comes from the fact

that Guinness is a very good appetiser and as such encourages them to eat more than they would if they did not have the beer.

I must make clear that I am not advocating beer or any alcohol in excess. In moderation, though, it does benefit the drinker because of the wholesome ingredients from which it is made. It does not have the syrupy constitution of coke and such products, and is therefore less likely to rot teeth. The cholesterol content of milk in excess can be more harmful than alcohol, as is the caffeine content of tea and coffee.

Beer is more harmful than these beverages, so why would it be penalised with such unfair and excessive taxation? If one takes into account the friendly atmosphere in most well-run community pubs and bars, beer has a positive place. A lower price will not encourage people to drink more beer than they want, although a highly-taxed price just denies the poor this friendly convivial amenity.

DRINKER XWORD 25



Last Month's Solution

Across

1. Little Charlie risks holding North Church. (7)
8. Book in, snap up as it comes! (3, 4)
9. Dismal with me in comatose state. (7)
10. Trendy ways lead to raids. (7)
11. Sonny, turn and back it to wave! (5)
13. Push the trim points out to help with 15. (3, 6)
15. For cracking, I led by example in bog. (6, 3)
18. Tapes rewound for heads. (5)
21. Cheer up as he tells the story between the rivers. (7)
22. As raucous as a gaggle of Moonies? (7)
23. Plunge in different directions with energy. (7)
24. Greed cleans up after doctor. (7)

Down

1. A novice, bounder and French. (5)
2. Assent to change before note. (5)
3. Memo: ply carnet as it makes whole. (13)
4. Jump with 5 on zero? (5)
5. A flutter when the gate opens. (8, 5)
6. Murmur an Eastern song of benevolence? (6)
7. Ask to use the orders. (6)
12. A dipsomaniac in by himself. (4)
14. Sounds as if he scribbled by numbers? (4)
15. Abuse Rugby Union squeezed by old cleric. (2, 4)
16. One novel suggests romance. (2, 4)
17. He deserved a navy surrounded by kegs. (6)
19. Lash the union of two vowels minus high dip. (5)
20. Pick a careful path among the trees. (5)

Closing date 18th July

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drawn out of the hat
will receive £4 worth of Real Ale

Winner of our June competition.
Mr. R. Evans, 46, Hilldale Road,
Sutton, Surrey SM1 2JD

Up the Zambesi (with a bottle)

by HOWARD GLADWIN

THE IDEA for this article came from your indefatigable Copy Editor — a doughty drinking companion. We were quietly supping our Brakspear's in the ROYAL GEORGE just a few days before I was due to fly on business to Zambia (you remember that in the days before there was a need for CAMRA it was called Northern Rhodesia).

"Why don't you" he said, taking a brief rest from his supping, "while you are there visit a Zambian brewery, bring back a sample and write the whole thing up for 'London Drinker'?" Before I had time to reply, carried away by his own mounting enthusiasm and his knowledge of my predilection for Worthington White Shield, he added "You could take a bottle of White Shield with you and present it to the brewery as an example of real English beer!"

Well, what could I do but agree? By now there was a dangerous gleam in my companion's eyes as he mentally assembled a world-wide team of beer reporters, briefing them tersely on their next assignments. "Right, George, next week you do Greenland and the North Pole. Fred, do you think you could take in Tibet and Outer Mongolia on your way back from China?" And so on. Anyway it seemed a simple enough request but, more important, it was his turn to buy the next round.

So about a week later, I walked across the tarmac at Lusaka International Airport with a bottle of White Shield (third week, first quarter) in my hand luggage. The weather was warm and sunny and I looked forward confidently to my small assignment.

After a couple of days I mentioned to my Zambian hosts that I would like to visit the brewery in Lusaka. They readily agreed. Nothing could be more simple.

However a week went by and nothing happened. I raised the subject again and there was some embarrassment. My hosts explained that as the brewery management did not work at weekends and as my programme did not allow a weekday visit, it

would not be possible to arrange a visit after all.

Ah well, not to worry. I could drink my White Shield, which was safely stored in my hotel bedroom, and I did so that night. It tasted delicious and had travelled extremely well via Frankfurt and Rome before reaching Lusaka.

Just a brief word about beer in Zambia. Most is brewed by the Zambia National Brewery Company (ZNBC). They seem to brew one type only, which is called Mosi (pronounced 'mossy'). It is a sweet-tasting, lager-type beer of, I would guess, a very low O.G. as vast quantities had little noticeable effect on me compared with, say, a similar amount of Charrington IPA or Ridley's bitter. It is filtered and pasteurised, always sold cold and always sold in half-litre bottles with blue-crown caps. The bottles bear no labels or markings of any kind, presumably a Zambian economy. (If only one kind of beer is available in a country, there is little need to put a label on it — why haven't our big brewers thought of this?)

Actually, it is not quite true to say only one kind of beer is available. I saw adverts for Lion Beer but was unable to obtain it. When I enquired about it, my Zambian friends informed me that it was not very popular! Also brewed is some kind of real ale, i.e. non-filtered and non-pasteurised. But this is available only in the townships where, sadly, white men do not go and are not taken. The beer is apparently of very variable quality.

Back to Mosi. I found it quite palatable provided it was served cold. Warm, it is undrinkable. It is probably just as well that it is not too strong. Vast amounts are drunk and a heavier beer would most likely have the whole population legless all the time.

Mosi suffers from distribution problems. One weekend I visited Livingstone and the Victoria Falls (a truly magnificent sight) to find on arrival that there was no beer at all in the area and that this had been the case for about a week. All that could be bought in the hotels and bars were spirits (very expensive) and soft drinks (unspeakable).

continued

UP THE ZAMBESI continued

However, my hosts proved to be extremely enterprising. They drove across the border into Rho- (sorry) Zimbabwe and purchased what seemed to be an inexhaustible supply of their national brew, Castle Lager. We carried this around with us on our sight-seeing in a large ice-box, much to my embarrassment and to the envy of beer-less sightseers. Well will I remember a trip on the Zambesi where bottle after bottle was drunk and the number of hippopotami "seen" by my companions went up in increasing proportion to the amount of beer consumed!

Castle Lager itself is very similar to Mosi although not quite as sweet. Unlike Mosi, each half-litre bottle bears a label sporting a design of what looks like the Windsor Castle.

The bottles are crown-corked, which one of my companions removed with his teeth as his enterprise had not run to providing a bottle opener!

That was near the end of my trip, and a few days later I was sitting in the departure lounge at the airport thinking that, although I had not managed to visit a brewery, I at least had a bottle of Mosi in my hand luggage for the Copy Editor. However it was not to be. On checking that all was secure in my bag whilst waiting for the homeward flight to be called, I found that the bottle was leaking. So I decapped it and drank the remaining contents there and then.

Africa had struck again!

TARAG

THE ANAGALACTIC REAL ALE GUIDE

Episode 10: GALACTIC PICK-UP

The journey to Hybdroje was tedious, even at hyperdrive. Lazarus had little to do except play electronic games with the ship's computer and he was bored. This was accentuated by the fact he had lost every game.

He longed for a game of darts or some other traditional game, secretly detesting the sophisticated games which had replaced them. He had thought of placating Graafian, but decided against it.

Lazarus slowed the ship and, using the retro brake, steered it neatly into the orbiting parking lot of Asteroid Service Station X119. Taking the shuttle he drove in.

He brought a galactic newspaper, which he read whilst eating bland space food and sipping tepid coffee. He pondered over the fact that unemployment in the Sirius sector had reached 9.73×10^{28} , then turned to page 3 and pondered the 3D picture of a scantily-clad clergyman's clone from Aphod Minor.

He was thinking she had a very nice pair of heads when a voice interrupted him. "Mind if I join you?" A young woman with dark hair which curled across her shoulders sat down opposite. She smiled sweetly, her eyes sparkled in the light and she was very attractive. "I'm on my way to Hybdroje."

"So am I" said Lazarus. "Would you like a lift? My name is Lazarus Earnshaw. Is your visit business or pleasure?"

"Yes, I would like a lift. As for my visit," she paused "you could say it is both business and pleasure. By the way, my name is Laclair Brocard."

As they went back to the ship Lazarus asked "What do you do?" Laclair smiled and said "I'm a hostess." "Working for Laker Galactic?" Laclair smiled again. "Actually I'm, well you could say self-employed."

They arrived back at the ship and stowed Laclair's luggage, which consisted of several dresses and a large box containing several thousand black plastic discs. Graafian viewed the stranger quietly, politely introduced herself and asked her what she did.

Lazarus briskly interrupted "Laclair is in Social Services." The trio settled down as the ship went into hyperdrive. Laclair produced a strange cigarette, lit it, inhaled deeply, then gently exhaled a stream of soft blue smoke between her pouted lips. "This Mercurian stuff is really good" she said as she passed it to Graafian.

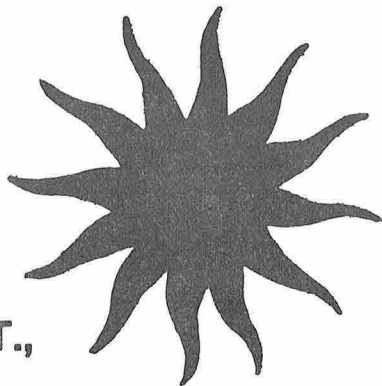
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CAPITAL BEER

by LAURIE BISHOP

THE TITLE was to have been CAPITAL ALE but Roger Protz, the bibulous (or bilious as someone once described him) editor of the 'Good Beer Guide' has taken that title for his book on London real ale pubs worth visiting. But this month I am going to indulge in a very popular pastime at the moment, namely choosing my favourite beers. Everyone else has done it. Protz himself, Michael Jackson, Frank Baillie and Richard Boston. CAMRA's popular Great British Beer Festival has in recent years featured a "Beer of the Year" competition and many others have done the same.

I find it difficult to choose my top ten beers because there are in this country so many good ones. So I am sticking to beers that are brewed in London or are sold in the tied trade in London.

Why are so many good beers sold in poor condition in the free trade? Beer agencies are often to blame. Not because they handle the beer badly (although some do) but because they tie the beer up in their yards or warehouse for an extra period thus adding to the age of the beer by the time we, the drinkers, come to get our taste buds round it. As far as I am concerned you should drink these beers locally to where they are brewed. Your local CAMRA branch will tell you how to get there and might even sell you a copy of the local beer guide.

My top ten beers are in no particular order and please don't think that the first is better than the last in my opinion. And don't write abusive letters to me if you disagree. Join CAMRA and start doing something about improving them instead.

Youngs Ordinary Bitter

John Young is always complaining about people calling his ordinary bitter ordinary. It's unfortunate I know but I don't see anyone changing it now. On its day Youngs ordinary is one of the best all night beers in the country and John Young is to be congratulated on continuing to complain

about high prices and poor quality for this and other beers in his tied trade and the free trade as well. Perhaps I am getting old but my one grouse is that it doesn't taste as bitter as it did a few years ago. It's still a fine drink for all that. Try it in the PRINCE OF WALES in Hackney, the SPREAD EAGLE in Camden Town, The COACH AND HORSES in Isleworth, the ORANGE TREE in Richmond, the ALEXANDRA in Wimbledon, the SPREAD EAGLE in Wandsworth and the CATFORD RAM in Catford.

Fuller London Pride

Nothing to do with the flower or bread but a really excellent fruity beer. People who drink nothing but ESB (qv) in Fullers pubs miss out on a lot. London Pride is a tremendously satisfying beer to drink because it's so full of flavour. Fuller's unfortunate tendency to pressurise their beer is slowly but surely being reversed and with that will come an increasing number of pubs to savour drinking it in. Try the STAR in Belgravia, the CHURCHILL in Notting Hill Gate, the BEEHIVE in Brentford and the JOLLY GARDENERS in Putney.

Godson Black Horse

Once described to me as well worth the wait. When I used to drink in the Hole in the Wall at Waterloo we went in there hoping to sample this beer when it was still a novelty. It always seemed to be off. Its more ubiquitous now but still needs a bit of ferreting out. Just like the brewery which always seemed to be moving around north and east London. The beer is very good although parts of the free trade seem to have the utmost difficulty in serving it in reasonable condition. Try it in the HOLE IN THE WALL, which I think still sells it or go to one of the Murphy chain of free houses in the East End who keep it very well.

Fuller Extra Special Bitter

I cannot add anything to what has already been said about ESB. It's strong, it's fruity, it's not to be tampered with and it's definitely to be rationed at CAMRA beer festivals where I've seen too many people make themselves ill over it for comfort. Not a beer for drinking

Continued overleaf

Capital Beer

continued

in any quantity and I doubt many can afford it these days anyway. Still a good drink, despite its popularity. Try it in the Fuller pubs I've listed for Pride.

Ind Coope KK Mild

Not a mistake but a very presentable beer. I understand its being renamed Benskin's mild or something similar which is only fair as its based on an old Benskin's recipe used by that fine brewery before Ind Coope got their hands on them. A really excellent beer that is best drunk in and around Watford and Harrow. Lightly hopped but with a very pleasant flavour that makes it easy to drink you can have several of this before you feel any effect at all. I don't go north of the river much nowadays but the VINE at Stanmore serves it well and there's a good little local in Pinner that does it too. Don't, repeat don't drink it in any Ind Coope pubs in New Malden.

Young Special Bitter

I suppose the ratio of pints of Young's Special to Young's Ordinary that I've drunk must be about 1 to 50. Nonetheless I always enjoy a pint of Special. It's so much better than so many other stronger beers because you don't feel that the strength overwhelms the taste. I understand it once was described as the strongest draught beer in England. Now its never been that but don't let that put you off. The Young's pubs I've listed for ordinary are the best places to try it.

Shepherd Neame Master Brew Bitter

Now that Sheps have quite a few pubs in Greater London their popular bitter can take its place with the best. Full of hoppy flavour and quite reasonably priced I recommend it to anyone although there are unfortunately some who find the hop rating too high. It seems to survive the journey up to London reasonably well although I think there's no substitute for drinking it in deepest Kent. Try it in the CROWN at Chislehurst, the ROYAL GEORGE in Greenwich, the TWO BREWERS in Croydon and the BISHOPS FINGER in Smithfield.

Draught Bass

I mention Bass because the Burton Union system is under threat of extinction. This is the brewing system unique to Burton that brews Bass and White Shield amongst others. Draught Bass seems to be declining in status and taste and this is a shame. It used to be a superb drink. Now it's still enjoyable but not what it was. I could not begin to list the pubs to try it in as there are so many of them. If you feel, like I do, that this great beer is being done over by Bass Charrington then write and complain to the brewery or CAMRA or both.

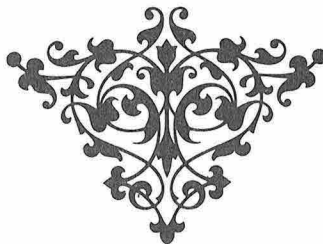
Bourne Valley Andover Ale

James Lynch is an ex-chairman of CAMRA and his brewery's most famous beer is an excellent one. Of course its only available in the free trade but I was struck by its full flavour the very first time I tried it. I have never changed my opinion since.

Well done James!

That's my selection then. Not many from the Big brewers but then that's not surprising. Incidentally in reply to Mr Andrew Clarke of Truman who asked for specific instances of poor Tap bitter in 'London Drinker' for May (following my comments in the February edition) the answer is that people say to me that Tap is an inferior beer. I can't say why for sure but it suggests that the larger brewers are losing the art of brewing really excellent beer. Hence the poor showing of the big 6 in the top ten above.

Good drinking and cheers for now!



Book Review

CAPITAL ALE by Roger Protz.
Arrow Books. £1.95

PUB GUIDES traditionally come in one of two forms, and there has been a sizeable gap between the pure CAMRA products and those which go on at some length about the history of the pub, the sort of food available, and close each entry with something like "Beer available: Double Diamond and Tartan on draught."

Roger Protz has bridged this gap for London. In 'Capital Ale' he has selected 200 pubs which may have some reason to attract the visitor other than the quality of their beers. At the same time, the book is CAMRA – oriented quite apart from each of the chosen pubs serving at least one draught beer by approved means.

The introduction contains much good advice on the lines of "if you come from a country that produces good bottom-fermented beers,

keep clear of British lager", as well as the basic facts about our licensing laws which a tourist may otherwise find confusing. There are chapters devoted to 'historic' pubs, those with live entertainment, and other specialist chapters before the guide splits into simple geographical divisions.

It should be clear by now that the book is aimed unashamedly at the visitor to London, not least at those who come from abroad. Cherishable back-street locals are few, while many of CAMRA's favourite whipping-boys are included. I don't think one can complain. Tourists have different priorities and they tend to go for places like the CLARENCE and the PRINCESS LOUISE. Even some of our members from out of town have been in them, possibly so that they can go back and have a good grumble.

Each entry consists of a descriptive note on the pub by Protz and all draught beers on are mentioned. No photographs, but there are several excellent illustrations of pubs drawn by Martin Tomlinson.

R.A.

Membership Prizes

MR.T. SMITH, the winner of the first prize in our recent membership campaign, has chosen a polypin of Well's Bombadier from the list.

Second prize is 12 bottles of naturally-conditioned Belgian beers, donated by The Real Thing agency of Nottingham. This has been won by Mr. L. Forde.

The third prize, won by Mr. S. Duffy, is a polypin of Tisbury bitter, donated by Majestic Vintners of Colina Mews, N15 and, more recently, of Hester Road, SW 11, just a hop, step and a dive away from the Thames.

The fourth prize goes to Mr. R. Cowan who receives 12 bottles of Paine's Xmas Ale, donated by Alan Greenwood.



Branch Diary

THE FOLLOWING events will be held by CAMRA branches during July. For details of other meetings, please ring Branch Contact.

CROYDON & SUTTON: Wed. 8.

Visit Salisbury and Gibbs Mew. Ring Branch Contact. — Tue. 14 (8.00) Social. RED LION, Betchworth. — Tue. 21 (8.30). Branch. SUN, North St., Carshalton. — Sat. 25 (12.00). Social with Kingston. BISHOP OUT OF RESIDENCE, Kingston.

NORTH LONDON: Thu. 16 (8.00). Two-pub social. QUEEN'S HEAD, 178 Hoxton St., N1 and UNICORN, 202 Hoxton St., N1. — Tue. 21 (8.00). Social. KING'S HEAD, Varndell St., NW1. — Sun. 26 (12.00). Social. SHIRES, St. Pancras Stn., NW1. — Tue. 28 (8.00). Social. RAILWAY TAVERN, 2 St. Jude's St., N16.

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW: Thu. 9 (8.00). Open Cttee meeting. GREYHOUND, Hampton Court — Tue. 14 (8.00). Social. ANGLERS, Broom Rd., Teddington. — Mon. 20 (8.00). Branch. BEEHIVE, High St., Brentford.

SOUTH-EAST LONDON: Mon 13 (8.00). Branch. QUEEN VICTORIA, SE18.

WEST LONDON: Sat. 11 (12.00-8.00). Pimlico Summer Festival. St. George's Sq., SW1. — Thu. 16 (8.00). Branch. BROOK GREEN HOTEL, Shepherd's Bush Road, W6. — Sun. 26 (12.00). Social. DRAYTON ARMS, 153 Old Brompton Rd., SW5. — Thu. 6 Aug. (5.30). Social. OLD SHADES, Whitehall, SW1.

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SOUTH-WEST LONDON	JIM SMITH	671-3482 (H)	
WEST LONDON	DI KEHOE	603-3103 (H) early evening please.	
WEST MIDDLESEX	KEITH WILDEY	423-1243 (H)	828-7733 x.61 (W)

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 EC3 RED LION, Lombard Court
 EC4 POPINJAY, Fleet Street.
 EC4 QUEEN'S HEAD, 31 Blackfriars Lane.
 E1 LORD NELSON, 230 Commercial Road.
 E2 APPROACH TAVERN, 47 Approach Road.
 E2 MARKSMAN, Hackney Road.
 E8 ROSE & CROWN, Mare Street.
 E11 NORTHCOTE, 110 Grove Green Road.
 E17 FLOWERPOT, 128 Wood Street.
 N1 CROWN, Clouesley Road.
 N1 EUROPA LOUNGE, King's Cross Station.
 N1 LORD WOLSEY, White Lion Street.
 N1 MALT & HOPS, 33 Caledonian Road.
 N1 PRINCE ARTHUR, 49 Brunswick Place.
 N2 WINDSOR CASTLE, The Walk, Church Lane.
 N6 ANGEL, 37 Highgate High Street.
 N6 DUKES HEAD, 16 Highgate High Street.
 N6 VICTORIA, 28 North Hill.
 N9 CROSS KEYS, Edmonton Green.
 N10 MARTIN'S FREE HOUSE, 89 Colney Hatch Lane.
 N12 MOSS HALL TAVERN, 283 Ballard's Lane.
 N14 YE OLDE CHERRY TREE, 22 The Green.
 N20 BULL & BUTCHER, 1277 High Road, Whetstone.
 N20 RISING SUN, Oakleigh Road.
 N22 STARTING GATE, Buckingham Road.
 NW1 SHIRES BAR, St. Pancras Station.
 NW1 VICTORIA & ALBERT BARS, Marylebone Station.

NW3 NAG'S HEAD, 79 Heath Steet,
 SW1 FOX & HOUNDS, 29 Passmore Street.
 SW6 WHEATSHEAF, 562 King's Road.
 SW7 ANGLESEA ARMS, 15 Selwood Terrace.
 WC1 MOON, 18 New North Street.
 WC1 PAKENHAM ARMS, Calthorpe Street.
 WC1 SUN, 63 Lamb's Conduit Street
 W1 CARPENTER'S ARMS, Seymour Place.
 W1 DEVONSHIRE ARMS, 21a Devonshire Street.
 W6 CROSS KEYS, 157 Black Lion Lane.
 W11 FROG & FIRKIN, Tavistock Crescent.
 W4 BRITANNIA TAP, 150 Warwick Road.
 E.BARNET WINE HOST, 243 East Barnet Road.
 ENFIELD CRICKETERS, Chase Side Place.
 ENFIELD FALCON, 115 South Street.
 ENFIELD OLD PARK HEIGHTS HOTEL,
 Old Park Road.
 HAMPTON WINDMILL, Windmill Road.
 HOUNSLOW CHARIOT, High Street.
 HILLINGDON HILL RED LION, Uxbridge Road.
 HILLINGDON HILL STAR, Uxbridge Road.
 NORTH EALING GREYSTOKE, Queens Drive.
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NW3 North-West Vintners, West Heath Road.
W14 Alan Greenwood's, 17 North End Road.
W14 Outside Inn, 156 North End Road.

NEW OUTLETS

Pubs

- EC1 SEKFORDE ARMS, Sekforde Street.
N2 FIVE BELLS, East End Road.
N9 RISING SUN, Winchester Road.
BARNET ALEXANDRA, Wood Street.

Off Licences

- SW11 Majestic Vintners, Albion Wharf,
Hester Road.

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