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LONDON DRINKER

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

"FOR GODS SAKE ASK
FRED ABOUT HIS
HOME BREWING!"



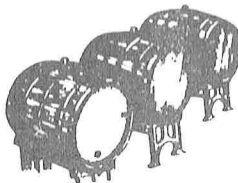
The **Bitter Experience**

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'135' Association A.G.M.

on Tuesday 20th April
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8 p.m. for 8.30 p.m.

All CXXXV tie holders welcome.

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News & Views

● GENERATION GAP

"THREE PINTS of mild, please."
"Three pints of what?"
"Mild, please."
"What's that?"
"You know. Mild."
"Sorry, we don't sell it."
"Yes, you do."
"Do you mean sort of light, like lager?"
"No. It's just been put in. A dark beer."
"Just a minute. I'll ask the boss."

That is the rough transcript of a conversation held a customer and a young barmaid. It took place in a Truman's pub in which the new Truman's Prize Mild, the first cask-conditioned mild to be introduced in our area for aeons, had recently been installed.

One could draw several morals, but perhaps the most frightening aspect is the sense of *sic transit gloria mundi*. Clearly mild, once the best-selling beer, has gone the way of the sixpenny piece and twelve pennies to the shilling and become meaningless to a new generation.

In the meantime, perhaps Truman could ensure that landlords are encouraged to provide their young staff with a crash course in beer history, not to mention directional chalk marks on the floor, so that punters seeking the elusive brew are able to drink it in pubs where it is served.

● WE WANT CASK BEER

OF COURSE we are delighted by what Truman are doing about reintroducing proper draught beer. According to a story in the *Morning Advertiser* they are reintroducing it for the best possible reason, that people want to drink it. Research has shown, say Truman, that four out of five of their male customers believe cask-conditioned beer to be the best (the ladies are more inclined to go for lager).

As one very rarely hears about research into beer attitudes, especially when it is a case of cask against lager/keg, it is pleasing to see that CAMRA's stance has been so overwhelmingly underlined.

● BREWERS AND THEIR PUBS

INVESTMENT PLANS by the brewers should

mean that a record £1.37 billion will be ploughed back into their business over the next three years. Over 70% of this sum is earmarked for developing and improving their pubs, the rest for production, package and distribution.

This is good news for the tied tenant, who has not had much to cheer about lately. A report in *Marketing* said that pubs were complaining that brewers were less concerned about them than about selling cheap low gravity beers in the off trade. Presumably they had in mind the cans of lites and lagers in supermarkets.

The response from Derek Palmar, Chairman both of Bass and of the Brewer's Society, was hardly sympathetic. He said the complaint was "quite unfounded. They are not comparing like with like at all."

Whatever the Brewer's Society might say, the increase in beer prices over the past year - which, at 26%, is more than double the rate of inflation - has fallen mainly in the tied trade. Output continues to fall and Mr Palmar forecasts that beer consumption in 1982 will be a million pints a day fewer than in 1981.

The Budget won't do us any favours, either. We have not heard details of local increases at press time. Some brewers are threatening increases beyond 2p a pint, though we were pleased to read in the *Morning Advertiser* that three Northern breweries were keeping their wholesale increase to 2p, even when the new beer duty raised the cost of a beer by a larger amount. London brewers please copy.

● THE HAPPY HIRSUTE

DID YOU SEE the 6.0'Clock Show on LWT TV on 26 February? If so, you obviously remember the 10 minutes devoted to CAMRA and to that mysterious species referred to in the Show as the "beer buff". The programme was frivolous in the extreme but, since that is what the 6.0'Clock Show is all about CAMRA cannot really grumble.

We were present at the pub where most of the drinking took place and it was salutary to watch the TV men manipulate the outcome by selecting the stars ("we'll use you, you've got a lovely beard") and getting them to mine their ecstasies when sipping.

We have seen a few programmes about real ale and the like, some much more serious than this one. But all of them contain very similar drinking scenes. Until a director or cameraman of genius comes along who can reinterpret us

