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LONDON DRINKER

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



"HONEST, LOVE. I THOUGHT IT
WAS A "CAMERA" MEETING!"

GERRY

REAL ALE and REAL JAZZ

AT THE

Prince of Orange

118 LOWER ROAD

ROTHERHITHE

SE16

237 9181

GUEST AND RESIDENT JAZZ BAND EVERY TUESDAY, THURSDAY,
FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY LUNCHTIME AND EVENING

RESIDENT REAL ALES: TRUMANS MILD, BITTER AND BEST BITTER.

3 MINUTES FROM SURREY DOCKS UNDERGROUND

BUSES 1, 17, 47 and 188 PASS THE PUB

IWA/CAMRA

Canalways Festival

29-31 May

**150
Narrow Boats**

20 Real Ales

side shows/stalls/entertainments

situated at

Avon Wharf, Regents Canal
(on canal towpath between
Roman Road E2
and Mile End Road E1).

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News & Views

● PRICES - IT'S CRUNCH TIME

LONDON'S BEERS are at last getting cheaper. An extraordinary statement, with the budget coming on top of massive brewery increases? Perhaps, but the signs are that the facts of life for the majority of the population are at last catching up with the drink industry.

The *Drinker's* Bargain Beers' section thrives and we have been pleasantly surprised by the commitment with which landlords have stuck to their policies once they have introduced the cheaper beers. We like to think that the *Drinker* has played a small part in helping the move towards bargains and, again, make our usual plea for information about reduced prices, happy hours and cheap beers.

What has happened throughout the country and is beginning to happen here was foreseen at least two years ago. While breweries raised their prices they were admitting privately that profits would fall if prices continued to be raised indiscriminately during a prolonged recession. The recession shows no sign of ending, yet brewers have carried on much as before.

Pubs have always been advised to avoid getting involved in price cutting wars. Sensible advice, but too often it has been given in the context of maintaining profit margins at all costs. The impossibility of most pubs doing this today has led to the crunch, with several of them lowering prices in an attempt to retain and to win over custom.

We are happy that many tied houses are offering bargains, especially when they do not get much help from their brewers — one of whom, Charrington, has put up prices yet again. In London, though, the lead has been taken by the free trade, which is ironic since they carried much of the blame for making the capital's beers so hideously expensive in the first place. Their greater flexibility, and the fact that in a buyer's market they can beat down the price per barrel, enables them to set special prices for a period and in some cases even to sell at least one beer cheaply at any time. The *Clarence* in Old Brompton Road, which has knocked 20p off a pint for an 'indefinite' period, is just the most extreme example.

The situation is fluid and fragile. At least people who work in Greater London, from Hadley Highstone in the north to Kenley in the south,

now have a reasonable chance of a cheap pint on their way home. It coincides with the fact that many of the pubs on our list are highly regarded.

The way things are going, *London Drinker's* first 'Bargain beer' pub crawl cannot be long delayed.

● BOTTLED BEAUTIES

A GREAT SUCCESS for London's bottled beers. At the recent Strong Beer Competition held by the British Bottlers Institute, Younger's Strong Export bitter won a gold medal as the best brew of its kind, while their Old Nick and Ram Rod both received diplomas for excellence.

Watney's Stingo won a silver medal in Class D (OG 1075 and over), and their Export Gold received a diploma in Class C. There is even a class in 'Royal Wedding and/or Commemorative brews', in which Watney's Royal Celebration Ale won the silver medal. The beer also picked up a diploma in the 'Best Dressed Bottle Awards (Royal Wedding)' section.

It looks a bit like the Caucus-race from *Alice in Wonderland* where, as the Dodo said *Everybody has won and all must have prizes.* But it sounds a lot of fun and congratulations to Young's and Watney's for keeping London's flag flying.

● BREWERIANA BONANZA

IF YOU ARE interested in buying or selling articles with pub or brewery connotations, the date to remember is **Saturday, 5 June**. CAMRA will be holding the **first National Breweriana Auction in the afternoon at the Clarendon, Hammersmith Broadway, W6** (a Fuller's house). After expenses and deductions to donors, all the proceeds will be divided between CAMRA and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

If any reader has items they wish to sell or to contribute, please get in touch with us and we shall pass the information on to the organisers. They are looking for such items as brewery posters, ashtrays and advertising matter in general; beer mats and beer bottle labels; commemorative bottled beers; old or unusual items of pub or brewing equipment and anything else that sounds suitable.

Catalogues will be available before the event and you will need one to gain admission. Viewing of items will take place on the Saturday morning.

Continued

Join the

SUN SET

April
26-30

SUNFEST

Beer at 55¢ pint

