

what's brewing

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Revitalisation of Ale JANUARY 1973

Breweries swap pubs to give wider choice

BODDINGTONS of Manchester and Greenall Whitley of Warrington have agreed to exchange some of their pubs to give the public more freedom of choice. Boddingtons will take over 10 Greenall Whitley tenanted houses in the St Helens area and GW will receive eight houses in the Stockport, Eccles, Hyde, Preston and Wilmslow areas. Greenall Whitley this month became the brewery with the largest number of pubs from the de-nationalised Carlisle State Management Scheme. Another beer-swap: Ridleys, the Essex brewery with only 64 pubs, are understood to have got the go-ahead to sell their ale in some Trumans houses in the East London area.

Chemist warns of stomach trouble

AN ANALYTICAL chemist who does work for major breweries is against keg and pressurised beers.

The chemist, who was answering CAMRA inquiries about possible health hazards caused by carbon dioxide being forced into beer, says he goes out of his way to drink real draught beer.

He told CAMRA that too much carbon dioxide in beer could cause acidity in the stomach. It was, he said, well known that carbonic acid, which is formed when CO₂ is dissolved in water, had an adverse effect on the digestion.

But he added that drinkers today often got the beer they deserved because they accepted anything and didn't complain enough about bad products.

A CHALLENGE - TO KEEP BEER GOING

ABREWERY has practically challenged CAMRA to help keep one of its products on the market.

Courage of Reading say that their Directors Bitter needs to sell at the rate of 20 gallons a week in each of 200 pubs for it to be an economic proposition.

CAMRA General Secretary John Green, who wrote to Courage after rumours that the potent Directors Bitter was to be phased out, says: "I was assured that Directors would not go unless demand dropped

CAMRA MAY GET A PUB OF ITS OWN

CAMRA is looking into the possibility of opening its own pub or club to show the public how real draught beer should be served.

The National Executive has appointed a three-man committee to investigate the idea and to sort out the legal and financial problems involved.

The plan had been suggested by a number of members over the past few months, but positive action was decided upon only last month after Peter Atkinson, a member of CAMRA living in London, had addressed a meeting

of the Executive.

Atkinson, who hails from the North East, said he had made preliminary inquiries about opening a pub to fight the spread of keg and pressurised beers before he joined CAMRA, and he was sure that it could give a great boost to the Campaign.

Even if CAMRA failed to get the necessary licences and planning permission, he said, the Campaign could benefit by drawing the attention of the courts and councils to the serious shortage of real draught beer pubs in many areas.

Terry Pattinson, the Campaign's Press Officer, said much of the difficulty over getting a licence might be removed if the recommendations of the Erroll Committee were made law.

The Executive elected Pattinson and Frank Baillie to serve on the committee with Pattinson. Baillie, who is preparing a report on tank beer for CAMRA, has written a guide for beer drinkers which is to be published later this year.

Drinkers 'are fed up'

INDEPENDENT brewers Shepherd Neame say in their annual report that beer drinkers are fed up with "standardised national beers".

Chairman Robert Neame told shareholders: "There is a growing awareness among the public to try to find products with character and I am certain we are meeting a real need in this respect as far as the brewing industry is concerned in our trading area."

But the Kent brewery has embarked on the road to top pressure - one of the surest ways of standardising the taste of ale - in their 201 pubs.



Branching out around the land

THE RAPID upsurge in membership is resulting in a series of new branches.

A group of active CAMRA men formed a Hertfordshire branch just before Christmas at a meeting in the Farriers Arms, St Albans. And beer drinkers in Walsall, Staffs, have banded together to strengthen the Campaign locally.

Further north, in the Chester area, a branch is to be formed at a meeting in the Dutchers Arms at Rossett on the Chester-Wrexham road at 12 noon. The meeting has been called by area organiser Laurie Hughes "to get members around here campaigning properly".

In Dover, new South Kent area organiser Roger Marples is to form another branch.

The next meeting of the Hertfordshire branch is on January 15 at 8pm in the Farriers Arms. Area organiser and National Executive member John Hanscomb is the first chairman.

The branch at Walsall meets at the New Inns, John Street. The chairman is Peter Linley.

FOCUS ON FACT

Chemical engineering -and why they do it

TOP-PRESSURE beer tastes of the carbon dioxide which blankets it in the cask and which propels it to the point of dispense. It tastes unnatural. When challenged with this point, the brewers have a standard reply: "But carbon dioxide is a natural product of the fermentation process."

While this claim is true as far as it goes, it misses the point. Draught beer drinkers do not object to the carbon dioxide that is naturally present in their beer and given off by it, but to gas that is forced into their pint by unnatural methods, leading to high levels of carbonation.

The amount of carbon dioxide in a naturally brewed and traditionally served pint is known in the industry as the "one-to-one ratio". When such a pint goes flat, it is of course because it has lost all or part of its

The second in a series by the CAMRA research unit on the controversies and arguments in the world of brewing

natural carbon dioxide content. If you ordered a pint of draught beer, stood it on the bar to let it go flat and trapped the carbon dioxide given off, the gas you would collect would just about fill a pint pot. This is what is meant by the "one-to-one ratio".

With top pressure and keg beers, the gas side of the ratio increases. Where the top pressure is relatively gentle, the increase may only be 1.1:1. With a heavily carbonated keg beer, it can be upwards of 1.5:1, and even reaches 3:1 in the case of some lagers.

The actual figures are not important to the beer drinker. What matters is that the delicate balance of his pint is disturbed, even by the gentlest of top pressure systems. The subtle flavour of a good pint of ale depends upon the beer being relatively still. As carbonation is induced, so flavour is lost.

It is also easier to sustain excess levels of carbonation if the beer is cold, and this is one reason why so many top pressure and keg beers are heavily chilled when they reach your glass. This cover of carbonation and chilling has also led to even more sinister kinds of adulteration.

With beers whose taste is governed by coldness and fizz, it becomes less important for the brewers to use good quality malt and hops, because the body and bitterness that these ingredients contribute cannot be detected anyway. The amount of malt substitute used in the industry is on the increase. Typical examples are rice and maize, either flaked or in grits.

Instead of whole hops, the brewers are using an increasing amount of oils, powders and substitutes. In 1961, only 112 cwt of hop preparations and substitutes were used in the brewing industry. By 1969, this had risen steadily to 1609 cwt, and jumped dramatically to 6044 cwt in 1970, the last year for which figures are available.

Every year, the amount of substitutes for real malt and hops used by the brewing industry increases, not only in total but in proportion. It is no wonder that John Sprake, the recently retired head brewer of the traditional firm, Young & Co, of Wandsworth, levelled the serious charge of "chemical engineering" against many of his opposite numbers within the industry.

CAMRA agrees with that charge, and intends to make it stick.

THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

Every member should have a copy of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, which contains the names of 300 pubs in England and Wales where real draught beer of quality can be obtained. It comes in loose-leaf form so that additions can be inserted - the first will be printed in next month's What's Brewing. For your copy of the Good Beer Guide, send 35p, which includes postage and packing, to CAMRA Headquarters at 207 Keats Court, Salford 7.

*If you want real
draught beer while
in town call in at
the ...*

THE MARQUIS OF ANGLESEA

39 Bow Street Covent Garden WC2

IN BRIEF

CAMRA's second annual general meeting is to be held in London, at a venue to be fixed, on Saturday, March 17. All members are urged to attend and a social programme is being arranged for after the meeting.

THE FIRST joint meeting between CAMRA and the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Flood on the production of a Parliamentary report on the brewing industry is

planned for Easter. Full details about buying tickets will be announced soon. Members who can contribute to the list of smaller prizes - bottles of spirits, for instance - should contact the raffle promoter, Graham Lees at 92 Clarence Road, St Albans, Herts, as soon as possible.

THE CAMRA tie, which has the Campaign's motif in gold on a blue background,