

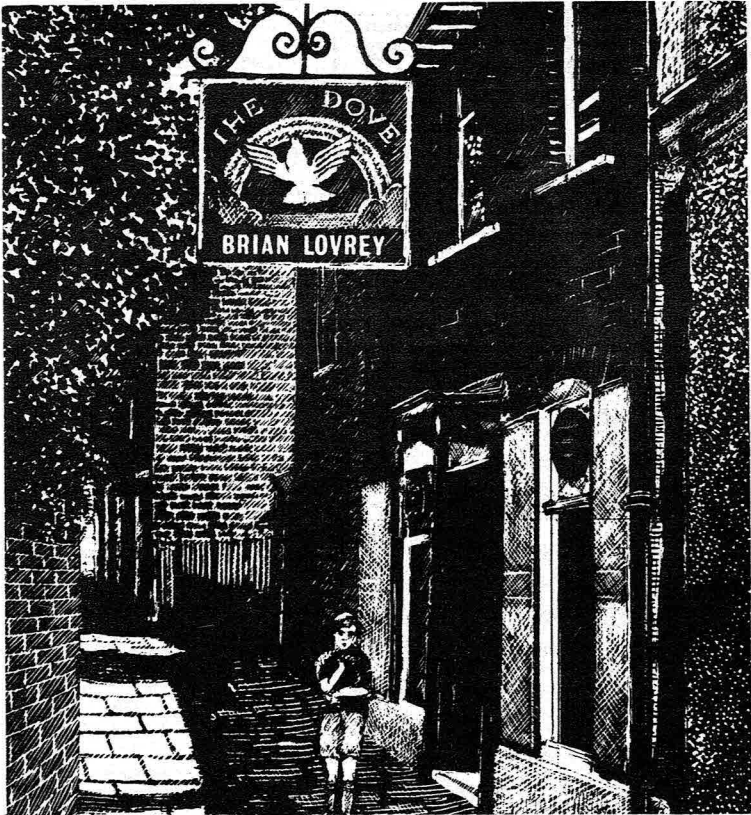
Vol 2 No 7

AUGUST 1980

THE LONDON DRINKER

10^p

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



~SPECIAL PULL OUT SUPPLEMENT
TO REAL BEER IN LONDON

ALAN GREENWOOD'S BEER AGENCY



OFF-LICENCES OPEN DAILY
10.30-1.30 5.30-9.30
SUN 12-2 7.00-9.00

8 Butter Hill
Wallington, Surrey
01-669 5158

1 Hawks Road
Kingston, Surrey
01-549 7811
Closed Mon. Morn.

252 Lewisham High Street
London SE13
01-852 8360
Closed Sun. Morn.

17 North End Road
Olympia
London W14
Tel:01-603 4978

120 The Broadway
Tolworth Surrey
01-390 3446

226, Kennington Park Road
London SE11
01-735 3036

No need for settling if ordered in advance. We refill clean Polypin.

WHERE TO BUY 'LONDON DRINKER'

For space reasons, we have not been able to include our usual list of outlets. The following should be added to last month's list:

- N 1. EUROPA LOUNGE and YORK BAR, King's Cross Station.
- N.10. MARTIN'S FREE HOUSE, 89 Colney Hatch Lane.
- SW19. FOX & HOUNDS, 167 Upper Richmond Road.
- SW19. NELSON ARMS, 15 High Street, Merton.
- SW19. PRINCESS ROYAL, Abbey Road.
- SW19. ROYAL SIX BELLS, 22 High St. Colliers Wood.

LONDON DRINKER

Copy Editor: Ron Atkins
News Editor: Keith Wildey
Contributing Mostyn Lewis
Editors: Louise Joselyn
Distribution: Robin Bence
Advertising: Caroline Bennett
(101a High Street
Ruislip, Middx.
Tel. 943 1122)
Subscriptions: Stan Tompkins

Contributions, correspondence and subscriptions (£1.25 for 6 months) should be sent to:

122 Manor Way, Uxbridge, Middx.
Our next issue will be out at the beginning of September.
Closing date for copy: 11 August.

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

Courage at half cock

IT MUST BE obvious to readers that Courage is not the 'Drinker's' favourite brewery. It is fast taking over the mantle once worn by Watney's, that of the beer enthusiast's Enemy No. 1.

Why should this be so? When you venture into a Courage pub these days, (writes NICK WARD, who is CAMRA's liaison officer with the company), you need to have your beer buds about you. You might, if you're lucky, get a pint of Directors or Best Bitter, still quite good beers, though sometimes hard to tell apart. On the other hand, you might be served 'bright' (i.e. filtered) best bitter from a handpump, prevalent in South-East London, Surrey and Kent. You might be palmed off with a pint of top-pressure Directors.

Both practices are against declared company policy, but the company doesn't seem to have much to say about what goes on in its pubs. To be fair to Courage landlords, the main problem they face with regard to real ale is delivery. Some landlords serving bright best through handpumps do so because they can't get the real thing. Others, particularly in S.W. London (see June 'London Drinker') are being persuaded to take bright beer by the local depot.

Courage's management policies seem to be at the root of the problem. Centralised brewing and distribution through depots favour processed beer, since the double-handling and delays involved are likely to affect the quality of cask-conditioned ale, especially when disputes cause additional hold-ups.

The other big brewers, including Watney's, have realised the commercial importance of real ale, but Courage just haven't caught on.

They show no signs of realising the benefits of decentralisation and the identity of regional brews.

Courage in London have a good strong bitter (Directors), and a bitter which could be improved, although a new barrel of Best Bitter can be very good. But they have no real mild. Within the group they have the ability to produce really good mild, (witness Plymouth Heavy and the excellent, late-lamented Reading Mild). But they have abandoned this end of the drinkers' market in favour of the mad scramble for the lager bubble.

So we have a company which is following the policies of Watney's in the Sixties and their profit performance has gone the same way - down. CAMRA is trying to help them see the light, but the management, at least in London, won't even talk to us. So all we can do is monitor their headlong progress to Grotneyland.

Courage are not as single-minded as Watney's were in pursuing their fate. They are still installing handpumps-1400 are promised in the next year. More promotion is planned for Directors and Best Bitter, and the Courage Western 'Ale House Scheme' whereby leaflets are available giving all outlets for cask-conditioned beer is being actively pursued.

Therefore if we can correct the, largely local, attempts to push pressurised and bright beer and assist any attempts to promote real ale, Courage is not a lost cause.

We can only hope that Courage recognise the full potential of real ale before Imperial Tobacco, who own them, decide to sell them off to Wimpy Bars or to a Pizza chain.

Please send any information on bright beer through handpumps or Directors on top-pressure to me at 15, Darwin Court, Balaam Street, E.1?

