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LONDON DRINKER

10p

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



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Leeds this year**

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**Bitter
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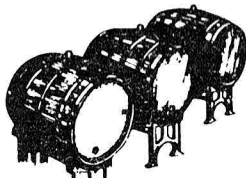
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News & Views

● WARE COMES TO LONDON

ANOTHER SMALL BREWERY is trying to establish itself in the London free trade. The Victoria Brewery in Ware, Herefordshire started in July in part of the old Victoria Maltings. Although the firm is run effectively by two CAMRA members, Allan Swannell and Tony Burns, it is a Private Limited Company, with 40 shareholders whose money helped to finance the project.

At present they brew Victoria Bitter, described as a 'hoppy' beer with an Original Gravity of 1036. A stronger beer may be added in time for the winter. Yeast is supplied by Rayment's brewery's malt comes from next door, the hops are brought in from Sussex and Hereford and no sugars nor additives are used.



Allan Swannell, who does the brewing, picked up the equipment mostly second-hand. He is proud of the fact that his coppers are actually made from the genuine article. Some of his casks are ex-Horselydown and he has recently been

up North to collect wooden casks which were used until recently by Greenall Whitley of Warrington.

About 25 barrels of Victoria Bitter are brewed each week and there is capacity to at least double this.

London pubs taking the beer include the **Village Blacksmith** in Woolwich, the **Fox & Firkin** in Lewisham, the **King's Head** in Harrow, the **Sun** in Holborn and the **Nag's Head** in Hampstead.

● PULLING AGAINST THE TIE

PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD by the EEC for relaxing the system whereby pubs can be tied to a single brewer for their products have stopped short of recommending that draught beer should be 'freed'.

CAMRA, which believes that the tie should be modified to allow landlords to select, say, one extra draught beer of their choice, is not very impressed. The EEC plan looks rather like a sop to the NULV, who are understandably incensed at the way pub tenants are undercut by supermarkets over the purchase of wines and spirits.

● SURPRISE! SURPRISE!

A SURVEY conducted by CAMRA which took in most parts of the country (not London, no doubt because they could not find anyone energetic enough to do the leg work) concluded that Whitbread beers tended to be more expensive than those of other breweries.

Had London been included, we doubt whether the result would have been very different. Does any pub in the Greater London sell a pint of ordinary Wethered's or Fremlin's bitter for under 60p?

Why should this be so? We can think of two reasons. Whitbread may be simply adopting what they regard as the tactics of supply and demand. Everyone wants to drink real ale, so let them pay for it. Alternatively, they may be looking at it from the point of view of their recent miscalculations. Whitbread invested very heavily in new plant, believing that the future lay in lager and processed beers. Now they find that their keg factories are running well under capacity.

