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LONDON DRINKER

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



'EVERY MONTH – NEWS OF LONDON'S BARGAIN BEERS'

LORD NELSON

262 OLD STREET EC1

Featuring:

WEBSTERS YORKSHIRE BITTER MANN'S IPA

both 62p pint

and good pub grub lunchtime and evenings

Greenwich Real Ale Festival

Friday 18 June 5.30-11 p.m., Saturday
19 June 11-3, 6.30-11. Continuing this
popular festival for another year. Beers
from Manchester, Nottingham, the South-
East, including many small brewers. Special
festival brew from the 'Two Brewers'
Pitfield Brewery – available nowhere else!

Entertainment (folk on Friday, jazz band on
Saturday), food, pub games.

Commemorative glasses available.

Tickets £1 on door or at meetings –
accommodation strictly limited! Come
early Friday to avoid disappointment.

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News & Views

● FIGHT FOR FLEXIBILITY

LAST MONTH WE spotlighted the campaign for more reasonable prices for drink. The other big issue which we at *London Drinker* are keen to have resolved in the Drinker's favour is that of pub opening hours. We are very pleased to see that the magazine *Time Out* has raised this very issue on behalf of London and has apparently built up a considerable body of support for more sensible licensing hours.

CAMRA has long been in the vanguard of those who have fought for pubs to be open at times when a sizeable number of people are available to drink in them. This does not necessarily mean longer opening hours so much as more sensible opening hours. We note with approval that the *Time Out* initiative has the support of the Brewers' Society and, more to the point, the National Union of Licensed Victuallers.

Our main concern over the campaign is the feeling that much of the impetus might be coming from the restaurateurs, particularly those in Central London, rather than the publicans. We hope we are wrong.

Some of the arguments in support of flexibility are mentioned in Laurie Bishop's piece in the issue. If you wish to back this new initiative, write to 'Keep London Open Campaign', *Time Out*, Tower House, Southampton Street, WC2.

● COURAGE UP

WITH THE PUB world still buzzing with the sound of angry Charrington Landlords complaining about their brewery's swingeing price increase, another major brewery has acted in much the same way. Courage have put up their draught beers by 2p, a more modest increase than Charrington's but not very pleasant for the consumer who has just got used to post-Budget prices.

● WORK AT IT

AT A TIME when the national unemployment rate has reached record levels, we learn that those lucky enough to have a job need to work longer to buy a pint of beer. The

Treasury announced that the average male manual worker earned his pint in 1980 after 15.5 minutes. In 1981, the poor chap had to slave for 16.6 minutes.

● QUALITY OR QUANTITY?

I BELIEVE THAT the quality of real ale served in pubs is now of greater concern than is the number of pubs selling the product, writes John Conen. At the recent Annual General Meeting of CAMRA's North London branch I, as Chairman, reviewed what had been a very successful year for the branch. One aspect of the success was the substantial increase in pubs selling real ale in our area. We now have well over 300 pubs, compared with around 70 in 1975.

Despite this, selection of a small number of pubs to go forward for CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide* remains difficult, as there is a dearth of pubs with really high quality beer. The criterion for the *Guide* is the quality of real ale sold and in North London this has not improved in line with the number of outlets selling it.

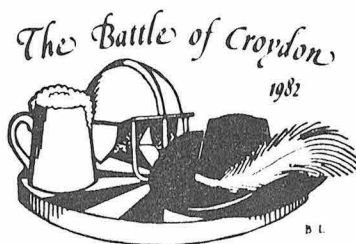
A good pint of real ale has a distinct taste of malt and hops and should have a distinct tang of that particular beer, as if one were sampling it in the brewery. Otherwise, it should be discounted. Also out are beers which are tepid or over-chilled, flat (in taste, not just in appearance) and beer that is out of condition, either through being left on stillage too long or through being served before it is ready.

In many of our pubs, these faults are far more common than is the pint that is 'off', vinegary or muddy, and thus totally undrinkable. Many pints may not be obviously bad enough to send back, but they are hardly enjoyable and are certainly not worth the vast amount of money that one is expected to pay for them.

Equally important is their availability. The thirsty traveller has no use for the pub that is temporarily out of real ale and can offer only keg. Unfortunately, many pubs do little to ensure continuous supplies and either through laziness or inexperience do not have a new barrel ready for service when the old runs out.

Also linked to these problems are pubs that do not sell real ale as their 'standard' beer. It is treated as a speciality and only customers who specify it get it. A request for a pint of

TWO GREAT EVENTS IN ONE



Croydon Beer Festival

CAVALIERS and ROUNDHEADS

fight a spectacular Civil War battle, with pikes, muskets, artillery and cavalry. Battle commences at 3 on Sat/Sun

REAL ALES and CIDERS

in a giant marquee overlooking the battle, plus full bar service in two portable pubs, The Royal Oak and The Cromwell Arms

OTHER ATTRACTIONS
FOOD & REFRESHMENTS

LLOYD PARK, CROYDON JULY 16-18

TICKETS

Battle & Beerfest Sat/Sun 12-6 Adults £1.30 Children 65p

Beerfest only Fri/Sat 6.30-11 £1 (inc. souvenir glass)

Advance tickets only in the evening S.A.E. to 'C&S Special Events'
T. Wilding
34 Parkgate Road
Wallington Surrey

ROUND TABLE

CAMRA

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