

VOL.5 No.7
August 1983

12p

LONDON DRINKER

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



Shire horses and dray attend the launch of Young John's Ale on 5th July at the West Centre Hotel, Fulham. Further details on p.15.

BRANCH DIARY

If your branch is not mentioned below please ring the branch contact. Events for August of which have been notified are as follows. Branches please send details to Andy Pirson.

ALL LONDON: Anyone fancy cycling to the GBBF in Birmingham? As members are now asked to pay for accommodation and bear the cost of transport could be saved. If you are interested contact East London and City Branch. Mon 8 all London branches Darts Match LORD NELSON, 2 Old Street, EC1. Teams please make themselves known to Ted Eller.

BROMLEY: Sun 31 July (12 noon) Sunday Social CROWN leaves Green Road, Leaves Green - Thu 11 (8.00) Beckenham Pub Crawl start BRICKLAYERS, High Street, Beckenham - Sun 21 (12 noon) Branch Meeting FIVE BELLS, Church Road, Chelmsford.

KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD: Thu 11 (8.00) Branch Meeting THE SURVEYOR, Island Farm Road, East Molesey.

NORTH LONDON: Tue 2 (8.00) 2 Pub Social GREEN MAN, 125 Slough Lane and PLOUGH, Kingsbury Road, both NW9 - Tue 9 (8.00) Joint Social with West London TRUSCOTT ARMS, 55 Shirland Road, W9. - Tue 16 (8.00) Dahn at the OLD BULL & BUSH (sorry), North End Way and JACK STRAWS CASTLE, North End Way, plus possible peep at SPANIARDS, if real, all NW3 - Mon 22 (7.30) Arrows with Enfield & Barnet Branch. PETER CAMPBELLS, 21 Bridport Place, N11, - Tue 30 (8.00) Branch Meeting PRINCE GEORGE OF CUMBERLAND, Albany Street, NW1 - Every Sunday in August (12 noon) Social MARQUESS TAVERN, 32 Canonbury Street, N1.

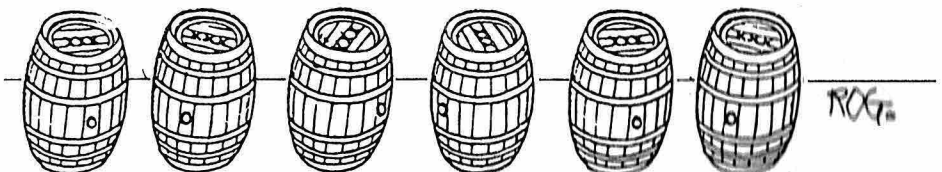
SOUTH EAST LONDON: Mon 8 (8.00) Branch Meeting SUMMERFIELD, Baring Road, SE12 - Sat 27 (8.00) ex-Bear Desert Pub Crawl, start ABBEY ARMS, SE2.

SOUTH WEST LONDON: Wed 3 (5.30) Semi-Social WINDMILL, Clapham Common, SW4 - Wed 17 (3.00) FULLERS Brewery Visit, apply to branch contact - Thu 25 (8.00) Social LEIGHAM ARMS, SW16 - Thu 8 Sept (8.00) Branch Meeting SPREAD EAGLE, Wandsworth. Ken Don, Head Brewer at YOUNGS will speak. All branches welcome.

EAST LONDON: Beer Festival at York Hall, E2 to take place week ending 16th October. It is hoped that a "named" jazz band will provide entertainment. York Hall is in Old Ford Road, 2 minutes from Bethnal Green Underground Station.

BRANCH CONTACTS

BEXLEY	DES WARD	Erith 45716(H)	Erith 33020 x 4 (W)
BROMLEY	ROGER MASON	464 2909 (H)	407 4466 x 294(W)
CROYDON & SUTTON	DAVE HAMER	647 0992 (H) Epsom	41511 x 66 (W)
E.LONDON & CITY	CHRISTIAN MUTEAU		636 2169 (W)
ENFIELD & BARNET	TONY MORGAN	440 2186 (H)	283 1000 x 2944 (W)
KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD	JOHN NORMAN	546 3476 (H)	Weybridge 47282 x 2659 (W)
NORTH LONDON	MEL WARREN	609 0252 (H)	218 4261 (W)
RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW	ANDY PIRSON	977 1633 (H)	
SOUTH-WEST ESSEX	CHRIS CASHMORE	Brentwood 211703(H)	283 1030 x 356 (W)
SOUTH-EAST LONDON	DAVE FOORD	690 5104 (H)	632 5886 (W)
SOUTH-WEST LONDON	JOHN DAVIS	670 0734	
WEST LONDON	RODNEY HOLLOWS	723 2798 (H)	
WEST MIDDLESEX	KEITH WILDEY	423 1243 (H)	





Of all the mysterious arts of pub cellar work, there is one significant function that is never publicised, never written about and never discussed by publicans, that is the delicate subject of returned beer.

We are often told by beer connoisseurs that one of the joys of real beer is that it varies in flavour from barrel to barrel and from pub to pub. However, keg beers including lager and Guinness also vary from pub to pub. Why should this be? One brew of Carlsberg or Holstein is identical to another, the quality control at the brewery is rigorous and meticulous records are kept as to the ingredients, brewing temperature etc. So how can an excellent brew be either good, bad or indifferent?

Once we dismiss the obvious suspicious candidates such as dirty pipes (often a major factor), unhygienic cellars (in the minority) or dirty glasses, we are left with the most undesirable alternative of the lot. Something has been added to the beer in the cellar to alter its taste or colour.

There are still publicans who water down their beer, especially tempting to those who order beer in cellar tanks, barrels (36 gallons) or other large bulk containers, where, for example, one gallon of water would not noticeably alter the taste of the beer (especially if its lager!) - I know this practise still continues because cases are scrupulously reported in the trade journal "Morning Advertiser".

However, this practise is insignificant when compared to "returns". This occurs when a new barrel is connected and the old contents of the pipe are pulled into a bucket together with the first pints of the new. This bucket is then taken to the cellar, where it is poured back into the keg/barrel, usually through a filter, the like of which are openly advertised in trade journals. Many breweries and publicans would defend this practise openly even to the point of providing stainless steel

buckets to assist the perpetrator. Most customers seeing the bucket of slops, immediately assume it is taken away to be disposed of. Nothing of the sort! It is all returned to those customers under the guise of fresh beer at a later date. This, notwithstanding the fact that it has been exposed to harmful bacteria in the bar atmosphere.

Breweries allow a certain amount of beer per container which is free to the publican; that which is left at the end of the barrel, and the new which has to be pulled off before the "clear" beer is reached. These pints are described as "ullage" by breweries, and they are often indescribably mean to their tenants. Anyone who has brewed at home or has drunk at a party from a barrel knows that there is often more than 4 pints of wasted beer at both ends. Yet, this is the limit some breweries allow. Little wonder that the publican feels the need to protect his profit margin by pouring all his "ullage" back into the same or a fresh container for resale.

However, there are many publicans who do not stop there. To create fresh profits for their own pockets (away from the accounts), they resell beer that has already been sold. The contents of noxious drip trays (under the pumps) are either poured into glasses and sold as fresh (often to another bar); or, more often, to avoid complaint, the stale beer is simply poured back into the barrels after closing time.

If you sit at the bar after "close taps" it is often an education to watch barstaff in action. See if the contents of these trays are poured down the sink. If they are carefully nurtured until you have been thrown into the street, be sure they will finish as "returns". Also watch what happens to unfinished pints left by departed customers. In two pubs near me these half-empties are lined up on the bar, graded according to colour and then returned to be sold fresh the following session. Little wonder that beer in some pubs is not as it should be! It is not always the late Indian meal that is to blame for the early morning toilet session.

As with the problem of underfilled glasses, dealt with last month, the answer to dodgy returned beer, is to forsake the pub and find one of the few which have a caring devoted and conscientious licensee who plays fair with the customers as a matter of course. Hopefully some of these pubs can readily be found in the annual "Good Beer Guide" published by CAMRA, though we are by no means infallible!

One last word: don't believe a landlord who

