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12p

LONDON DRINKER

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

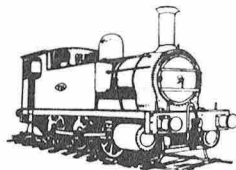


At the pickup of our new-image June issue are pictured (from left to right) John Davis, Wally Brill (printer), John Elliott (photographer), Jim O'Hanlon (printer), Terry Hewitt (London Treasurer) and Martin Smith (Editor). Also present is Taillefer the delivery bike.

(photo: John Elliott - by remote control).



Bruce's latest –
see page 12



Rail Rover –
page 6

BRANCH DIARY

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

EAST LONDON & CITY: Tue 3 (8.00) Branch meeting, HAND & SHEARS, 1 Middle St, EC1 – Sat 7 (8.00) Chingford Membership Social, ROYAL OAK, 219 Kings Head Hill, E4. Free Firkin (maybe) – Thu 12 (5.30) City Micro-crawl. Come early to the QUEENS HEAD, 31 Blackfriars Lane, EC 4 (unless demolished); stay late at the RISING SUN, 61 Carter Lane, EC4 – Tue 17 (8.00) Committee Meeting, ROYAL ALFRED, 267 Kingsland Road, E2 – Wed 18 (8.00) Darts Social, FISH & RING, 141A White Horse Road, E2 – Tue 24 E17 Walthamstow Crawl, COACH & HORSES/LORD PALMERSTON/RINGWOOD CASTLE, 7.30 start for jukebox lovers only – Sun 29 Cricket outing to Snodland, Kent, Supporters welcome; contact branch for details – Tue 7 Aug (8.00) Branch Meeting, LORD PALMERSTON, 254 Forest Road, E17.

KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD: Sun 1 (12.00) Lunchtime Drink, WOODIES, Thetford Avenue, New Malden – Thu 5 (8.00) 100th Branch Meeting, followed by Social, WYCH ELM, Elm Road, Kingston. (All welcome) – Thu 26 (8.00) Pub Crawl of Norbiton. Start at the WELLINGTON, Kingston Road – Sun 5 Aug (12.00) Lunchtime Drink, GAZEBO, Kingston (Behind W.H. Smith, Thames Street).

NORTH LONDON: Tue 3 (8.00) Pre-Independence Day Branch Meeting, VICTORIA, Mornington Terrace, NW1 (Budweiser not available) – Tue 10 (8.00) Two Pub Social, start LADY MILDMAY, Newington Green then PALMS & LISZT (honest), 92 Mildmay Park, both N1 – Tue 17 (8.00) Social in Barnsbury, start CROWN, Cloudsley Square, then LORD WORLSELEY, White Lion Street, both N1 – Tue 24 (8.00) Social, LORD SOUTHAMPTON, Southampton Road, NW5 – Tue 31 (8.00) Two Pub Social, start LEIGHTON ARMS, Brecknock Road, N7 then LORD STANLEY, Camden Park Road, NW1 – Tue 7 Aug (8.00) Branch Meeting, Venue to be announced – Every Sunday in July (12.00) Pub of the Month, HOLLYBUSH, Holly Mount, NW3.

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW: Tue 7 (8.30) Committee Meeting, COACH & HORSES, London Road, Isleworth – Mon 16 (8.30) Branch Meeting, CRICKETERS, Richmond Green, Richmond – Thu 19 (8.30) Social, EARL RUSSELL, Hanworth Road, Hounslow (Farewell to Adrian Keable).

SOUTH EAST LONDON: Mon 2 (8.00) Committee Meeting, ABBEY ARMS, SE2 – Mon 9 (8.00) Branch Meeting, UNION JACK, SE1 – Thu 26 (8.00) Branch Social, DULWICH WOODHOUSE, SE26 – Mon 6 Aug (8.00) Committee Meeting, QUEEN VICTORIA, SE18.

SOUTH WEST LONDON: Thu 12 (8.00) Branch Meeting, DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, 39 Balham High Road SW12 – Sat 14 Day Trip to Manchester, phone Branch Contact for details – Fri 27 Pub Crawl of Clapham Junction, start NORTHCOTE ARMS, Battersea Rise (8.30) then SAVILLES, Battersea Rise (8.45).

WEST LONDON: Tue 10 (8.00) Pub of the Month, GRAFTON ARMS, 72 Grafton Way, W1 – Thu 19 (8.30) Branch Meeting, DEVONSHIRE ARMS 21A Devonshire Street, off Marylebone High Street, W1.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributor and are not necessarily the view of either the London Branches of CAMRA or the Campaign for Real Ale Limited.

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Branch Contacts – see page 27



I have just returned from a cycling holiday during which we travelled between Bath and Nottingham, and have been struck by, not only how much more expensive London is in price, (holiday average price 66p) but also I have noticed how few "public" bars are left in London compared to the rest of the country.

On our trip, we used public bars almost exclusively because of our appearance and smell! Some were rough, some almost comfortable, but all gave us a feeling of security that nobody else in that bar would complain of our "presence". All these public bars were as popular as or as "dead" as the saloon or lounge bars, but they gave the locals a chance to buy a cheaper pint in down to earth surroundings.

In London, however, a large proportion of "refurbished" pubs and many Free Houses have rid themselves of the Public Bar and have concentrated their minds on cleanliness, comfort, hygiene and food, and the public bar seems to have no place in this "new order". Brewery architects seem to all be trying to create a "home from home" atmosphere and who could possibly want to sit on old furniture, wooden settees, wooden stools without even a carpet to cover up those cold, miserable flagstones?

Of course originally the public bar was for the lower orders of society, while the upper echelons used the snug, private and lounge bars. Often these bars were provided with glass snob screens, little hinged windows to keep the patrons out of sight of the plebs even when at the bar. Now, like mild ale, we are being driven up-market by the brewers who rip down partitions and internal walls so we have no choice but button-backed seats, armchairs, piped music, flock wallpaper and food smells. Also of course the publicans and brewers gain in profit eventually as all the prices are "rounded-up" to lounge bar prices, instead of the 2 or 3p saving per pint in the public.

The big brewers are particularly keen to be rid of the public bar (Allied Breweries are a notable exception) but free houses and the Independents are almost as guilty.

Gone are the days, when the traditional layout of the public house was considered important by brewery chairmen, who were heard to boast of lack of fruit machines, juke boxes and space invader tables. Now, down come the wooden partitions in former "show" pubs, and out go the pensioners who don't spend enough money, not forced out by publicans, I hasten to add, but by crowds of younger drinkers who swarm into favourite places and chairs, whereas before they wouldn't have liked to enter because it was a Public Bar.

Many pubs who have managed to retain the public bar, often at the insistence of the landlord/lady (God bless 'em): have been forced to charge a uniform price in both bars, by the brewery only providing one handpump, for example, or by placing the pumps in the lounge.

I do not, of course, advocate that everyone should use public bars, in just the same way that I do try not to decry people who choose to drink lager. It is the fact that we used to have a choice of bars, and that choice has been seriously eroded in London rather than the rest of the country. Are our brewers and publicans more greedy than others, or do they use the one-bar pub as another in the list of excuses for charging the capital's exorbitant prices?

Chris Cobbold

Martin is appealing...

for somewhere to live. By the time you read this he will be the recipient of a Possession Order for the flat he has occupied for 10½ years. Apart from being an amateur journalist he is a 35 year old schoolmaster, unmarried but likes kids, with good tenancy reference, non-smoker and hardly ever home; he is also a senior officer of a national cycling club. Ideally he is seeking a one-bedroomed unfurnished flat, preferably in South London: other considerations (apart from somewhere to keep a bike) are immaterial. If you can help, please contact Martin Smith, 105 St Julians Farm Road, London SE27 ORP.
Thanks

BREWERY NEWS

New Beer From Godsons

We recently received news of a new beer from Godsons, the first new brewery to be established in London this century. The beer is called Wilmot's Hop Cone Bitter (after the company's full name of Godson, Freeman and Wilmot Ltd.) and was introduced in May to around fifteen free houses.

The beer has an original gravity of 1041 and should fit in well with their Black Horse (GBH) which has an O.G. of 1048 and Stock Ale (1084).

Godsons also remind us that they are London agents for Adnams and Everards beers.

Chudley's Local Line has appeared on trial in two Taylor Walker pubs, the Crown & Greyhound, Dulwich and the Devonshire Arms, Marloes Road W.8. By all reports it is a great success. Chudley's is also a guest beer in 16 Clifton Inns. Recently the brewhouse capacity was doubled by the purchase of a new mash tun from Martlet Brewery. New fermenters have also been purchased, but are not yet in use.

* COURAGE IS making a multi-million pound investment in John Smith's brewery in Yorkshire as part of a big four-year development plan, it is being revealed today.

The first part of this major £11.4m investment is the installation of eight fermenting vessels each with a capacity of 1,040 barrels, and a racking plant for John Smith's cask-conditioned beer.

The success of this beer re-introduced earlier this year, has been phenomenal and launch dates in various parts of the John Smith's trading region are being brought forward.

Courage Brewing is responsible for the production operation at John Smith's Tadcaster brewery. A new brewhouse, representing more than a quarter of the total investment, will be opened in August next year.

* *THE EXPANSION of the Californian pink economy continues unabated. A new brewery, Wilde's of Sacramento, has launched its Oscar Wilde lager, brewed, says company spokesman Lee Nichols "specifically for homosexual tastes." The test launch is in San Diego. (Queer beer festival? - Ed.)*

If it works out there, further plans are for the world gay capital San Francisco - just in time for the Democratic Party convention.

Tegestological re-issue

In response to popular demand, Salisbury brewers, Gibbs Mew, are reintroducing their special Collectors Series of the eight beer mats featuring tales from the Historic Gibbs Country.

The mats have proved to be extremely popular among tegestologists (beer mat collectors to the uninitiated!) and Gibbs Mew have received many requests for them; not only from England but also abroad.

The mats will again be available from Gibbs public-houses, free houses and clubs and other establishments who stock Gibbs beers throughout London and Southern England.

* Striking Workers at Whitbread's giant brewery in Oakley Road, Luton, were yesterday faced with a warning that the plant could close.

The future of the Luton brewery could be jeopardised by the long-running dispute. Events surrounding the stop in production have shattered management's confidence in the plant, and continued investment could be affected.

The company points out: "We have invested in the order of £1m per year in the Oakley Road plant over the last four years. But management's confidence has been badly shaken by this sort of action and it brings into question whether investment can be recommended to maintain its viability."

Continued on p.27

Catering at sensible prices for your beer festival or "do". Events, tel. 670 0734

