



Produced on behalf of the London branches of the Campaign for Real Ale

LONDON DRINKER



THE HALF MOON
Mile End, E1
Photo: Design and Camera

ANNUAL BEER FESTIVAL

FROM:

7pm THURSDAY

25th MAY

TO:

MONDAY

29th MAY

Featuring at least 50 real ales from micro breweries all over the country. To be sampled from our two bars and function room. Then maybe relax in our beer garden or courtyard.

Daily BBQs including the governor's famous fat boy BBQ.

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It is scarcely believable but within a few months there could be only one major UK brewery still in British hands. Bass looks increasingly likely to sell its brewing decision and Heineken, amongst others has expressed an interest in buying. If this happens Heineken will scrap its agreement for Whitbread to brew its lager under licence. Whitbread will then become increasingly vulnerable to a take-over bid itself and Belgium private company Interbrew looks the most candidate to purchase the three Whitbread breweries.

This will leave Scottish & Newcastle as the only UK owned major brewer; Carlsberg-Tetley, Britain's other major, is already owned by Danish giant Carlsberg.

It is unlikely that either Heineken or Carlsberg, or in deed any other international brewer such as Anheuser-Busch or South African Breweries, would continue to produce ale brands to any extent.

Therefore real ale drinkers will have to look to regional and family brewers and the small brewery sector to provide interesting and exciting beer brands. Never have these sectors been so important to the real ale drinker.

In the days of the Red Revolution it was family brewers such as Youngs who held out firm against the flow of tasteless keg brands that was threatening to flood the country. Even fellow brewers Fuller's almost succumbed to the siren industry voices proclaiming the benefits of the "new keg brands".

Today with the smooth flow (aka bland) nitro-keg brands increasingly being foisted on the drinking public it is important that all those who appreciate good tasty beer support those brewers who continue to produce quality cask-conditioned beer. That is the 350 or so micro-brewers and pub breweries and, equally as important, the 44 family and regional brewers.

The regional and family brewers are taking over the mantle from the Nationals as being the largest producers of cask conditioned beer. Greene King IPA and Abbott, Wadworth 6X, Brakspear Bitter, Adnams Bitter, Fuller's London Pride and Youngs

Special are the real ales that can help convince the general beer drinking public that there is more to life than John Smiths Smooth or Boddingtons Gold.

Whilst some may feel that these beers are not as exciting as the latest brew from a tiny producer in deepest Devon or the Outer Hebrides, the simple law of supply and demand will show that total beer produced by all the 350 microbreweries put together will still only supply about 10% of current real ale requirements. Real ale drinkers need the long established family and regional brewers to survive and thrive if real ale is to continue to be the beer that most people can enjoy rather than be a drink for a chosen few.

Beer drinkers need to support family and regionals and convince their management that they need to continue to produce cask conditioned beer in the same way that past generations did. The survival of family and regional brewers in tandem with the new small brewers will ensure that beer drinkers can continue to enjoy quality real ale well into the new century even if the likes of Bass and Whitbread abandon their own brewing heritage.

Ian Lowe

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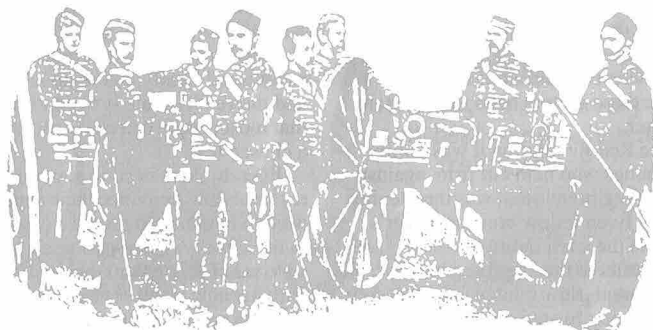
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