



PARISH PUMP

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2p.

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, fights for the preservation and promotion of beer brewed in the traditional way from malt, hops and yeast, and served the way it always has been - without being filtered, pasteurised or fizzed-up by unnecessary carbon-dioxide gas.

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Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA.

----- First the good news - only days ago, WARDS MILD Wards Mild was put on sale again, for RETURNS TO the first time in Sheffield for many SHEFFIELD! years, at the Hallamshire House, Commonsideside, ----- Walkley. Now the bad news - it replaces the declining Ordinary bitter. The Sheffield Best Bitter has been sold in bright form for some months now. Still, this is a good sign overall that dark mild is still on the increase in the city, especially so since the success of Wards mild at our Bear Festival.

Tim Parkin.

----- More than thirty different real SHEFFIELD'S SECOND beers were on sale, over 800 REAL ALE FESTIVAL gallons altogether, and the first ----- barrel ran out after just over an hour. So the second Sheffield CAMRA beer festival was a great success, with only a few gallons of a handful of beers left over at the end (easily polished off by the hawks with their plastic containers on the Sunday morning!) Thanks to the mammoth efforts of those helping, more than a thousand people had a good time in what was an excellent atmosphere.

Nobody can have failed to notice Garth running about in bowler hat and apron, but few people can realise the tremendous amount of hard work he and many others put in during the few weeks before the festival - and look out for Garth on the next set of Webster's advertisements!

Nearly all the beers, including some rather rare Black Country brews, were in excellent condition, thanks to Martin K., but the exception was the Old Peculier, which failed to clear - and yet it still sold out first! There were not many more hitches apart from a last-minute attempt to find change for those who wanted their deposits back at the end, which involved chasing round the pubs of Sheffield with a large bag! Once again the Al Rogers band provided excellent entertainment, and it seems that a good time was had by all.

----- Over the months which have elapsed since December 1975, when price lists
OPINION were made compulsory in pubs, customers have grown accustomed to having
----- a means of ensuring that they are not being overcharged. Overcharging,
though, is more frequently accidental than criminal; bewildered barmaids trying to
cope with hordes of noisy, impatient and sometimes abusive customers cannot be
blamed for making the occasional mistake. But one other trade malpractice which we
have all seen, and which seems to be quite common, could easily and quickly be stopped
by pub landlords merely by instructing and supervising their staff in the proper
use of the dispense equipment.

A recent report by a trading standards department has indicated that
seven out of ten pints of keg beer sold were short measures, mainly due to carbon-
dioxide froth. Short measures, therefore, have been the subject of legal actions
in the past, mainly concerning lager - a subjective matter though (as the courts have
found) since some lager drinkers would undoubtedly rather have part of the volume of
their glasses occupied by froth than drink 'flat' lager. And, with free-flow taps,
anyone who thinks he has an unreasonable amount of froth can ask for his glass to be
topped up.

Real ale, however, is usually served in the Sheffield area from electric
pumps into oversize glasses, through adjustable sparklers which aerate the beer to
produce a fluffy, unreal-looking head. The large, insubstantial bubbles which form
this head are the result of two inherent disadvantages of the electric pump when
compared with the handpump. Firstly, the force behind the beer flow is not variable -
the Mills engine is designed to pump beer at a constant flow-rate, whereas a handpump
can be pulled as fast or as slow as the operator desires. For any given sparkler
setting, the faster the flow the more aerated the beer, and therefore the creamier
the head. Secondly, the electric pump is metered so that it can dispense only an
exact measure of beer, regardless of the capacity of the glass to cope with this
fast flow; the handpump user, however, can pull a pint glass three-quarters full
with aerated beer from fast, hard pulls and then finish gently, adding what would be
almost 'flat' beer to produce a full glass with a shallow, thick head - and any
shortage is easily topped up.

One consequence of this is that landlords who try to imitate the smooth
head produced by a handpump tighten the electric meter's sparkler far too much. The
volume of highly-aerated beer is so much greater than the original measured quantity
that even the standard 20% oversized glass is unable to contain it all. The resultant
short-measure is not obvious to the casual customer, who is accustomed to seeing a
deep head on beer served into oversized glasses.

If you suspect that too much of your beer is being allowed to spill into
the drip-trays, lean across the bar and look. Drip-trays, theoretically, should
contain only a few drops of beer. Try another test: order two pints and, when the first
is almost full, ask if you can have the second pulled completely flat. It will not
be a waste, though you may get strange looks; personally I prefer the taste of cur

three local mainstays 'flat' rather than from the average electric pump, and in past tests I have found the over-frothed pint, after both have been left for five minutes to settle, to be anything around five per cent short. This may not seem a great deal, but at 25p. per pint the resale price of the spillage would be £3.60 per 36-gallon barrel if it were to find its way, at the end of the evening, back into a barrel of beer. This practice, of course, is highly illegal, and in the vast majority of pubs any spillage is poured down the drain - but be on your guard. It is also highly profitable; if the pub's turnover is ten barrels a week, a not unreasonable average, someone could be making £36.00 weekly tax-free pocket money out of you.

Tony Scholes.

ALL HANDS TO THE PUMPS! When a pint is pulled from a handpump, the regular drinker can almost read the character of the operator simply by observing the method of action used. It is difficult to categorise them, but here are a few recently seen by me:-

1. The new, young and inexperienced barperson nervously gripping the pump handle, with white knuckles showing.
2. The naive young lady pulling pints with alternate hands because she has been told that if she does not do this one side of her bust will develop more than the other.
3. The older type of barmaid who, perhaps because of arthritis, does not use the elbow but grabs hold of the handle and leans backwards using the body in its entirety.
4. The person not having drunk beer before, and therefore not having any idea what a pint looks like. This type pulls the beer in spoonfuls, resulting in a pint of froth.
5. The type who uses the handle as though each stroke is the winning pull on a one-armed bandit.
6. Finally, the experienced landlord who, with two masterly strokes and a little 'topper-up' pulls a beautiful-looking pint. This skilled hand can pull a pint whilst talking to the customer, or even do it blindfolded.

These are just some of the ways of approaching a handpump; next time you have a pint pulled watch out for these characters and the many others to be observed.

John Beardshaw.

IMAGINE a piece of furniture. A large object, virtually immovable, requiring great care and delicate treatment, difficult to clean under, obstructive when painting the ceiling or changing a light-bulb, taking up a whole room of your pub with itself and its ancillary equipment, often a cause of disgruntlement among your customers, very expensive to buy and maintain, and - worst of all - not even making you a decent profit. What landlord would ever dream of having one in his pub?

And yet despite all this a number of Sheffield pubs still possess snooker tables; the Hallanshire House even has two, taking up at least half the space of the

pub. The 1975 report of the licensing authorities states that ten licences were renewed in the previous year, although there must be more than ten Sheffield pubs in total possessing snooker tables; perhaps these licences are only applicable to full-size tables and not to the smaller tables often seen. But why do so many landlords keep their tables and put up with all the problems they cause?

The brewers seem to have a considerable say in this matter, as indeed they do in everything else. I can think of fourteen pubs in the city still having snooker tables, of which Tetleys have five, Wards five, and Whitbread and Stones two each. There will no doubt be more than this, but I have no reason to believe that the ones I know are statistically unrepresentative; if so, this is to say the least an uneven distribution among the local brewers. One would not expect Wards, with only 44 tied houses in the city, to have as many snooker tables as Tetleys - and moreover it is interesting to note that the only pub I know which has two tables is a Wards pub, bringing their total number to six - 43 per cent of the total of all the breweries. Wards seem most beneficent in this respect, and deserve to be thanked for keeping snooker alive in well over ten per cent of their Sheffield houses.

Customers' influences must be strong, too. Snooker is a game every bit as frustrating and skilful as golf, as anyone who has played both will agree. Like any subtle game, it has its addicts. As a semi-traditional pub game, it is a part of the upbringing of anyone at all interested in pubs, and there can be no doubt that it draws customers; the removal of his snooker-table would cost a landlord several of his regulars. But if a publican's main wish is to increase his turnover, the substitution of a juke-box and pinball machine for his snooker table would not only improve his cashflow by attracting younger drinkers and giving them more room to drink in, but would also provide a secondary source of profit from the money collected by the machines. Not a desirable thing perhaps, but an unfortunate economic reality.

The pub customer has traditionally never been asked to pay a direct fee for using the snooker table; imposing one now would seem as unthinkable as charging people for using the dartboard or dominoes. But I, and I hope many others, would rather pay a fixed sum per game or per hour, or accept a raising of the lighting slot-meter charges, than see any of those fifteen (?) snooker tables disappear from Sheffield's pubs.

Tony Scholes.

The Sheffield & District branch of the Campaign for Real Ale meets regularly on the third Wednesday of every month at the Red Deer, Pitt Street - non-members are welcome to come along and see what's going on in the pubs of this area. If you wish to join, you could do so at the next branch meeting or by writing to our Secretary for full details. The address is: David Grey, 41 Endcliffe Hall Avenue, Sheffield 10.
