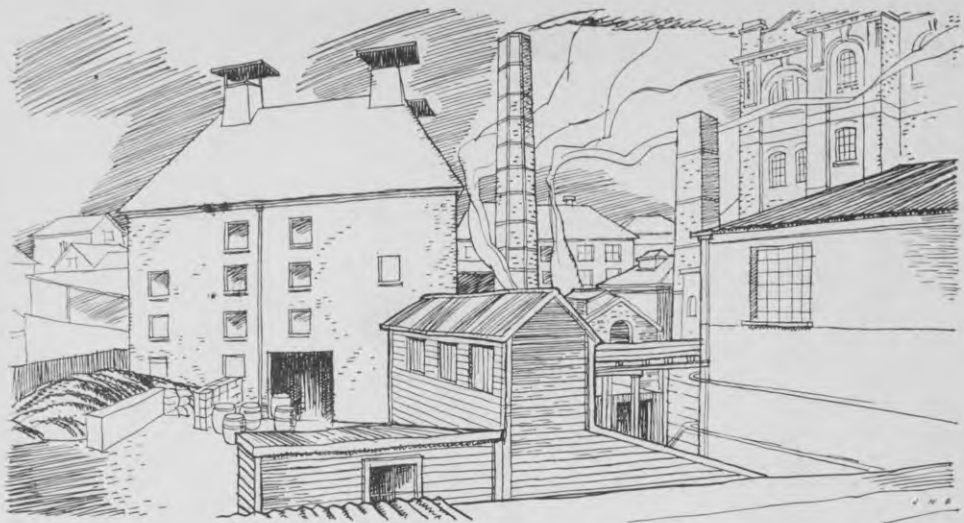




BEER IN THE MAKING

A KORERO Report

IN THE brewery cellar we began to lose our delusions about brewing beer.

"It's much better than the beer you get across the bar counter," we said, sampling the cool, clear contents of the keg. "That's because it's free," said the head brewer cynically. His argument had some foundation, but he did agree that the handling of the hogsheads had a lot to do with the flavour of the beer drawn up from the hotel cellar. That and the cellaring conditions. Here another of our ideas went overboard. We had imagined long lines of casks lying quietly for months while the "old and mild" matured. We had even thought to see a cobweb or two. "It wouldn't keep," said the cellarman. "Besides the demand is too great. A week or so is all it needs and then—" He indicated the endless chain lifting kegs to the delivery platform and the lorries outside.

We liked the cellarman, quite apart from his hospitality. He was at least something like our mental picture of the man who tends the casks with loving care. He was lean and old, with a jutting jaw, but a twinkling eye. He

wore a black beret at a jaunty angle. Also he shuffled.

The head brewer and his assistant had both disappointed us. The manager, from his modern office, had sent us up to the brewing tower to find not a hearty old man sipping with slow appreciation the contents of innumerable brown beakers, but a young chap with horn-rimmed glasses whose khaki shirt and sun tan had only recently been acquired in the Middle East. His chief was older, but, without his white chemist's coat, would have looked more like an accountant. Both admitted that by taste alone they could not always tell last week's brew from last month's. They relied more on their knowledge of the game and the apparatus of their laboratory. And they assured us that drowning in a vat of beer would not be such a glorious death. Too much CO₂ about. So, with our preconceived ideas about beer drowned deep in a hogshead, we began our search for the truth about breweries.

"I'll take you over to the malt-house," said the assistant brewer, and on the way to this white high-gabled building, which