

PASSING OFF BRANDS COULD COST YOU DEAR

Jail warning for 'own brew' pub fraudsters

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by Andrew Don

Publicans caught selling famous beer brands as their own brews could land up in jail, warns a top trading standards official.

Passing-off beer, or any other drinks, as the pub's own brand is illegal. But it's a problem that's thought to be widespread.

Nicholas and Linda Radmore, who run the Three Tuns Inn, at Silverton in Devon, were convicted at Exeter Crown Court for selling Courage Directors as Three Tuns Ale (*PUBLICAN*, March 8). The Radmores got off lightly with a £1,500 fine.

But they claimed that since the court case they've been called by other licensees who have been "innocently" doing it too.



Passing-off well known beers such as Courage Directors as a pub's own is a widespread problem

Nicholas Radmore said: "Other licensees have told us they are doing the same without realising it was wrong. They've

promoted the beer as their own brand."

Radmore also claimed that when he was told he was breaking the law, it had come as a shock. "The pub trade is pretty hard as it is. We were just trying to make a living," he said.

Disclose

CAMRA member Philip Levison from Gwynedd, also told *PUBLICAN* he knew two pubs doing the same thing, although he would not disclose their identity.

And he said one of the licensees refused "point blank"

to disclose the name of the beer, and charges £1.55 a pint.

The practice was not confined to beer. Shropshire trading standards chief inspector David Roberts pointed to the widespread passing-off of cheap lemonade and colas from draught dispensers as big brand names, as well as spirits.

"Courage has as much right to the protection of their name as Johnnie Walker," he said.

Roberts told *PUBLICAN* the breach of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, could lead to an unlimited fine or two years in prison.

Courage said it was "very concerned" because it invested millions of pounds in creating and marketing brands.

But although a spokesman did not go as far as to say it was widespread, he admitted he was sure the Radmores were not alone.

Misleading

He warned: "They are misleading the public... it is very foolish. If you've got a top selling brand, you should shout about it."

A spokesperson for Whitbread said: "It is not our strategy to offer any of our products under own label in pubs. It is unlikely that this would ever happen because of the level of awareness of the Whitbread beer brands in the on-trade."

