

The Two Brewers

Richard Hill

I don't remember the weather. I was walking down Clapham High Street, a route that I walked most evenings from my home and workplace, South Western Hospital. It was quite late, around 10pm. My destination was, the Two Brewers, a gay pub that had been open for a year or so.

Once inside, I entered the 'dance bar', as opposed to the 'drag bar'. It was quite quiet, but for the Two Brewers, this was the norm at this time of the night. Evelyn Thomas's "High Energy" was being played at a zillion decibels.

I went to the bar. "What are you having love." shouted the muscular bearded barman, in full drag. "the usual?" I nodded. Drag queens tended to (and sometimes still do) make me cringe. I waited as he poured me a lager from one of the pumps. "60 pence please love.", he shouted as he handed me my pint. I paid and went and stood at the corner of the bar as the room slowly began to fill.

Much later, by now, the room was busy, heaving with men. Some cruised other men while others danced. I wasn't there to cruise, preferring instead just to take in the 'scenery'. By now, I was on my third or fourth pint.

In front of me, leaning with his back against a mirrored pillar, was a young man who flashed the occasional glance in my direction. I smiled, and he smiled back. He was a goodlooking 'straight' looking guy with engaging facial features. He was dressed in a Levi style jacket and jeans which contributed to his heterosexual appearance. I was being cruised. Should I reciprocate?

To cut a 'long story short', forty years on, in July this year, we celebrated our forty years together.

-ENDS-

300 words