



FIGHTING CONTAINER LOSSES

Press Release
22nd July 2009

KEG WATCH 'HANDS OFF OUR BEER KEGS' WARN UK BREWERS

The British Beer & Pub Association has issued a firm "hands off " warning to beer keg thieves after 12 men were committed to the Crown Court by West Bromwich Magistrates yesterday (July 21) in connection with offences associated with a £9 million conspiracy to steal metal beer kegs belonging to five national brewers. The charges relate to the theft and destruction of stainless steel and aluminium kegs by companies and individuals engaged in the scrap metal industry in the West Midlands.

The investigation which led to the arrests and subsequent charges originates from a protracted enquiry undertaken by West Midlands Police under the operational name of Operation Steel

Detective Chief Inspector Danny Long, the West Midlands police officer who led Operation Steel, said: "The allegations relate to the theft of steel and other high value metal products. West Midlands Police was the first force in the UK to introduce an operation focused specifically on this burgeoning criminal activity. Metal beer kegs have been seen as an easy target for too long and we are working closely with UK brewers and pubs to address a problem that is costing the industry millions of pounds every year."

Mark Hastings, Communications Director at the British Beer & Pub Association, said: "Operation Steel is a fine example of the industry's co-ordinated approach to the problem of keg theft and the excellent working partnership that we have forged with police authorities to combat this costly crime. In parallel with the ongoing criminal prosecution S&N UK, Carlsberg, Diageo UK, Molson Coors and Inbev UK have served civil claims and have obtained civil injunctions against the defendants and their associated companies and will seek to recover financial losses from both the companies and the individuals involved in the case.

"The systematic theft of beer kegs uncovered in this police operation is a crime that ultimately has a cost impact for every part of the beer supply chain from breweries, wholesalers and pubs down to price of a pint at the bar. Hopefully, Operation Steel will send out a clear message that the British beer and pub industry is united in its efforts to work with police authorities to successfully prosecute keg thieves and that brewers will not hesitate to pursue civil claims against offenders to recover damages in respect of keg losses."

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For more information about the UK brewing industry's campaign to combat beer keg theft visit

www.kegwatch.co.uk

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Editor's Note

Further information can be found by contacting Keg Watch Limited either by telephoning **0808 100 1945** or by visiting the web site **www.kegwatch.co.uk**.

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