

**SOCIETY for the PRESERVATION of
BEERS from the WOOD**

(founded 1963)

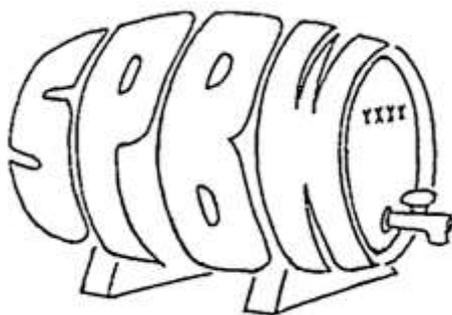
PINT in HAND

Number 100

November 2006



The Victoria, Durham (see page 18)



PINT in HAND

- ***Pint in Hand*** is published quarterly, in February, May, August and November. It is issued to all subscribing members and affiliated branches of SPBW.
- All members are invited to contribute articles for publication on beer-related subjects. Contributions for the February 2007 issue should reach the Editor by **20 January**.
- The Editor or the National Executive Committee of SPBW does not necessarily share opinions expressed in *Pint in Hand*.

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Anyone reading this that is not already a member of SPBW might like to know that annual membership costs only £5 (£6 non-UK). For information about SPBW together with a membership form, please send a stamped addressed envelope to the National Membership Secretary as above.

OPENING TIME

When I took on the task of producing a quarterly magazine for SPBW members I don't honestly anticipated putting together anything like as many as 100 issues. The perils of volunteering!

The very first issue of Pint in Hand included an account of a visit to the Greene King brewery in Bury St Edmunds. GK was even then one of the largest of the regional brewers, still operating its plants at Biggleswade and Furneux Pelham (Rayments), and generally well regarded for the quality of its beers. There was still a fair bit of pressurised ale about (not least in the brewery sample room!) but the company was still well committed to cask beers.

Greene King continues to be a major producer of traditional beers – as does its major regional competitor Wolverhampton & Dudley. But GK has managed to attract seriously negative vibes from beer lovers as it continues its rampage across the beer scene. They have decided “with regret” that it doesn't make economic sense to continue brewing at Kimberley following a review of Hardy & Hansons. Funny how it seemed to make sense for H & H to brew there. It makes no environmental sense whatsoever to send the ersatz brews up the motorway from Bury to the midlands. As well as wrecking British brewing industry they want to destroy the planet as well. And the same old questions: will the relocated beers taste the same as before? (most unlikely) and how long will GK bother with them? (no longer than they feel they can get away with I expect). The Kimberley brewery – one of the last remaining Victorian tower breweries – will be used as a distribution centre, a complete waste.

100 issues on from foolishly volunteering to produce this quarterly magazine there is still plenty in the beer world to rant on about in this column. I would guess that I'm able to consume a far greater choice of ales than in February 1982; the spectre of the dreaded 'Big 6' and its keg abominations no longer hangs over us. But while the likes of GK roam the planet there is still a major threat to one of our great heritages.

I'm happy to report that for this landmark issue I have more material for publication than ever which is why some material is being held over for the future or has been pruned somewhat. Thanks to all contributors over the years, notably Andy Whitley whose erudite works have graced some 70 issues. A big hand also to Oliver Tillett ('Ossie' in SPBW circles) without whose enthusiasm and pro-activeness this might have quickly ground to a halt. Also to everyone else who has helped in the production of PiH, notably Chris Callow in recent years. And special gratitude to all you who have stayed loyal to the SPBW and made it worth while bashing the keyboard every 3 months. I (metaphorically) raise my glass to you all.

.....and I seriously do not anticipate producing another 100 Pint in Hands!

Roger

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The SPBW National Executive Committee holds its regular meetings on the second Monday of each month, starting at 7 pm or thereabouts, in the Royal Oak, Tabard Street, London SE1. If we're lucky we use the upstairs room (it's quieter but further from the bar). These are strictly business meetings, but they are kept as brief as necessary. All members are welcome to attend, particularly representatives from branches.

Sadly, Rowan Brown was unable to take up the post of Products Manager, so – volunteers still welcome.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The National Executive Committee's 2007 AGM will be held on **Monday 12 March**, probably at the Royal Oak. Full details will appear on the SPBW website and the next issue. This is usually a short business meeting, unburdened by pomposity. It tends to be a good excuse to bring SPBW members together for a few beers and a chat.

Anyone who'd like to volunteer for a post on the NEC should contact John Rooth (details page 2).

NATIONAL WEEKEND

The great weekend in the Black Country is just about with us so those of you wise enough to be taking part should know where and when things are happening. About 20 are participating and we'll tell you what happened in the next issue.

TWICKENHAM BREWERY

We have arranged a visit to Twickenham Brewery on the evening of **Monday 26 February**. There will be a charge of £5 each. The brewery has been in operation since 2004 and supplies some 100 outlets in and around west London. Please send your fiver (cheques to SPBW please) to John Rooth (see page 2) if you want to come along.

BEERS AND BUFFETS

Help to celebrate the SPBW's 33rd anniversary by coming along to the **Royal Oak**, Tabard Street, London SE1 on **Wednesday 6 December**. Sample the range of Harveys beers (not sure if the 8.2% Christmas Ale will be on!) and tuck into a first class buffet in the company of fellow SPBW party monsters. The fun will occur in the upstairs room from about 19.30. John Rooth is, as ever, the man to contact (details page 2) – send him an sae with a cheque for £5 made payable to SPBW please. Look forward to seeing you there.

LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

The **Pembury Tavern** in Hackney is the SPBW London Pub of the Year, an almost unanimous decision by the judging panel. This is a rapid rise to fame and glory by a pub that only opened in its present guise at the beginning of this year.

We will present the award to Steve Early at the Pembury Tavern on **Monday 22 January** at around 20.00. Do come along for this happy occasion and judge the pub for yourself – I don't think you'll be disappointed.

The Pembury Tavern was originally built between 1840 and 1870 and has previously been owned by the likes of Truman and Banks & Taylor. The pub was closed after a fire in 1990s then bought by the Individual Pub Company and reopened in January 2006. (The IPC also owns the nearby Oakdale Arms in Harringay and the Coalheavers Arms in Peterborough.)

The pub's long bar counter boasts 16 handpumps, although not all these are always in use. There are usually several beers from the Milton brewery alongside guest ales from other small breweries, plus draught cider and a selection of bottled German and Belgian beers. Bar billiards, pool, card and board games are available and there is no television, electronic machines or intrusive music to disturb conversation. The food is good and the staff are friendly and efficient.

You can find the Pembury Tavern at 90 Amhurst Road E8 1JH, on the corner of Amhurst Road and Dalston Lane. Hackney Downs and Hackney Central rail stations are nearby and numerous bus routes serve the area. The pub held its first beer festival 15 – 19 November, and will be handy for those visiting the Pigs Ear festival in early December. Find out more about the Pembury at <http://www.individualpubs.co.uk/pembury/>. Better still, pay a visit.

Just for the record, as well as the 10 pubs listed in the last issue, there were two further nominated pubs which were judged: the Claret Free House, Addiscombe and Star Tavern, Belgravia (the 1984 winner).

PAST EVENTS

Mike Hall, Bill English and John Rooth ran an SPBW stall at the **Wallington beer festival** in mid-October. This proved useful in selling stock and publicising the Society, our funds boosted by selling games of table skittles.

The annual **Tony Littler Trophy** inter-branch event was held on 16 October at the Wenlock Arms. Four teams tackled Wantz branch's beer and general knowledge quiz and the winner was a combined trio of Mike Taylor (Woolwich), Dave Hamer (Ponds) and John Rooth (Campden Hill). A fine buffet helped to wash down the excellent range of beers on offer.

SPBW WEBSITE

The SPBW Members Forum is still going strong at www.spbw.com/bb. Mark Hutchison, our webmaster, is eager for suggestions on how to improve this and our general site; contact him at: marksalehousecom@hotmail.com.

The Bulletin Board is intended as a way for members to exchange information. It's very easy to get involved with and, as with most things, the more the merrier. We are particularly keen to see representatives of branches acting as moderators to help keep their sections up to date.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you want to receive up to the minute news about SPBW events, you can get this information in the comfort of your own PC monitor. Send your email address to John Rooth and he will add you to his circulation list. We promise that your email details will only be used for the transmission of SPBW material.

GREETINGS CARDS

Hot off the press are the new SPBW greetings cards, depicting four excellent pubs, as shown below. There is no message inside so they can be used at Christmas, on birthdays, or anytime you want to communicate with a picture of a pub on the front. The pubs are: Bhurtpore Inn, Aston, Cheshire; Gate, Sawbridgeworth; Royal Oak, Southwark; and the Wenlock Arms, Hoxton. Between them these pubs have over thirty draught ales on at any time! Cards are approximately 6 x 4 inches in full colour.



We are selling these cards in packs of 20 (5 x each design unless otherwise requested) at £5 including postage; or 4 cards for £2. Send your orders to Chris Callow (see page 2) with cheques made payable to SPBW please.

JOHN YOUNG

I'm sure that you'll have learned about the sad death of John Young in September at the age of 85. Anyone living and drinking good beer in the London area in the 70s owes quite a debt to this fine man and his determination that his company should continue to brew quality traditional ales when keg aspired to be king. I never had the pleasure of meeting John, but I've visited the Ram Brewery on a number of occasions and consumed countless pints of its beers in many a Youngs house and I feel that his spirit somehow was reflected throughout.

There were plenty of obituaries of John in the press which reflected an active life even before he took control in Wandsworth. The decision to close the Ram Brewery and move brewing operations to Bedford must have been painful for him to approve and it seems entirely fitting that he should go just a few days before the last brews were rolled out. I'll imagine him leaning against a cask in the old sampling room at the brewery, pint of Ordinary or Special in hand. Thanks for everything, John.

RJ

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The November 1996 issue of PiH sported a bizarre cover drawing of Timothy Taylor's brewing, lifted from who knows which publication. Worthy establishment though this is, there was no other mention of it in the issue. However, it did report the establishment of the SPBW website, thanks to Graham Canny.

My legendary correspondent, Maltworm. Resurfaced to report on the 1996 Tony Littler Trophy event, held at the Rugby Tavern in Bloomsbury and hosted by another legend, Nick Martin. The event consisted of a short quiz followed by 'hit the bull' darts. It says much for the darts prowess of those present that only one bull was hit, and that by Alasdair Boyd. Nevertheless Central London branch retained the trophy. One more SPBW stalwart of old, the late John Morgan, also broke his silence to pen a collection of anecdotes.

This issue announced the arrival of Acton branch, who flourished briefly in west London. There were also the first stirrings of a Northern Ireland branch and we could also boast fairly new groups in Norwich and Nottingham, both of which have sadly joined Acton in oblivion. Also new on the scene was RACS which had decided to "hold its membership to 40 with a waiting list". Most other branches no doubt read this and wept!

Ten years earlier PiH was duplicated as an A4 newsletter, written on an electric typewriter with much use of Letraset. There wasn't even a picture on the (deep brown) cover. It featured an entertaining article about the long-defunct Sahara branch by ex-member Albert Bourke. The members were expats working on a gas pipeline in Algeria; a key branch rule was that members returning from leave were obliged to bring back ingredients for brewing beer. The branch was in action from 1973 to 1976 when the pipeline project was completed.

THE PERFECT PUB PAGE

Three Superb Pubs in Brum

Here in the West Midlands we not only brew some of the world's finest ales but we also have some really great pubs. The three described here all have excellent ales, but represent totally different kinds of pub.

The Bull, Price Street

A 200 year old backstreet local, situated in the Gun Quarter, this is a friendly, welcoming house with a limited range of ales and good food. (Warning: a sandwich here is a full meal!) Buses 33, 34, 51 and 52 (and probably others) stop at the end of Price Street and the pub is at the other end. I don't know a London equivalent, but think of a smaller version of the Pride of Spitalfields.



The Bartons Arms, High Street, Aston

A vast palace of a pub, the Bartons is about 100 years old and is on CAMRA's list of heritage pubs. Closed for a while some years ago, the pub fell into decline. Then Oakham Ales stepped in and bought it. They spent a large amount of money restoring the interior; although there is still more to do it is well worth a visit just to see the gilded ornamentation above and behind the bar and in the other rooms of the pub. Do try to visit the upper floor (up the Grand Staircase) where there are two more rooms, similarly decorated, which are available for hire. Oakham beers, which are brewed in Peterborough, are complemented with guests, usually including a mild and beer festivals are held from time to time. Excellent Thai food is served both lunchtime and evenings, its quality rivalling that of the Churchill Arms in Kensington Church Street. Access is by the same buses as the Bull; you just stay on for a few more stops and alight opposite the pub.

The Wellington, Bennetts Hill

Bennetts Hill is one of the side streets off New Street in the City Centre. The pub's frontage is rather inconspicuous and tends to look like just another office building. This is an alehouse pure and simple. No food is served, but you are welcome to take your own. At lunchtime this means visiting the excellent sandwich shop next door, in the evening the Thai takeaway on the opposite corner. The pub will provide plates and cutlery on request. Three Black Country Ales beers are complemented by twelve guests, all on handpumps. Please refer to the chalkboard and order by pump number! A ticker's paradise - many people in the ale world have heard of "Mick the Tick"; this is his local! This pub is a short, uphill walk from New Street Station; the consolation is that it's downhill going back!

West Midlands a dreadful place for beer? I don't think so!

Roy Cheeseman

MEET the BRANCHES

Most social activities in the Society take place within branches so it makes sense to get involved with one. You're sure to get a good welcome and most branches prefer to keep things very informal. Details of our branches are listed below; if there isn't one in your area you are welcome to start one! Bill English, (Branch Liaison Officer, address on page 2), will be pleased to tell you what you need to know. We will be happy to put you in touch with other local members.

One of our regular contributors, Somerset Mark, is interested in getting a branch going. Anyone living within about 50 miles of Bath who would like to get involved, please contact Bill and he'll pass your name on.

BMAD: Meetings held first Thursday of each month at the **Burnt Mill Snooker and Social Club** (CIU affiliated) in Harlow, Essex. Contact Tony Syrett (01279 423174)

CAMPDEN HILL: Meetings held first Monday of each month at the **Wargrave Arms**, Brendon Street (off Edgware Road). Contact John Rooth (see page 2).

CENTRAL LONDON: Meetings held on the 18th of each month mostly in the form of pub evaluation walks - usually in central London. Contact Roger West (see page 2).

CHESAPEAKE BAY: Based in the area around Baltimore, Maryland USA - a great area for microbrews and brewpubs. Contact Dominic Cantalupo, email DominicCantalupo@ChampionRealty.com. Website: www.spbw.org.

CHESHIRE REAL ALE PEOPLE: This dubiously-acronymed crew are based mainly around the Crewe/Nantwich area. The emphasis is on the social side with trips planned in the near future. Contact Colin Donald 01270 623376 email colinsdonald@aol.com.

COATE: Meetings held third Friday of each month at the **New Inn**, Coate, near Devizes. Contact Eric Clark (ericclark@aol.com) or email coate@spbw.com.

COMMON & ALDBRICKHAM: Meetings now held in Reading at the **Retreat**, 8 St Johns Street, every Sunday from 2.30. Contact Peter Smith 01189 670647.

IPSWICH: The branch appears to be up and running. Contact Phil (01473 644923) or Iain (01473 251586).

KINGSTON: Meetings held first Wednesday of each month in the **Willoughby Arms**, 47 Willoughby Road. Contact Rick at the Willoughby [020 8546 4236]; or our website: www.spbwkingston.co.uk.

MAYDAY (Hastings): Based at the *First In Last Out* brewpub, 14-15 High Street. Contact Helen or Tony Champion at the pub on 01424 425079 for further details.



NORTHERN IRELAND: Contact Mark Hutchinson for details of meetings and events: marksalehousecom@hotmail.com

PONDS: Time and place of meetings varies but usually in Carshalton area. Contact Dave Hamer (020 8395 8716 or email dehamer@tiscali.co.uk .

RACS: The Real Ale Club of Sawbridgeworth meets last Wednesday of each month at The Gate, London Road. Contact Jan Mead (01279 864398) or email meadspanner@aol.com.

SPECIAL: The branch holds annual, week-long gatherings around the inland waterways network. There are also unofficial visits to pubs of renown in London, Cheshire and Shropshire, or wherever we happen to be. Check our website at: www.geocities.com/canalnav/SPBW1.html

WANTZ: Meetings are held third Monday of the month at the *Britannia*, Church Street, Barking (Youngs), starting at around 7.30 pm. Contact Roger Jacobson (see page 2).

WEST RIDING: Meets on Sunday mornings in various pubs in and around Leeds. Contact Graham Hewitt (0113 2624574; graham-hewitt@tiscali.co.uk) for further details.

WOOLWICH: Meetings held first Thursday of each month in Greenwich or Woolwich or sometimes in central London. Contact Bill Smith (020 8310 5907).

Are the details for your branch correct on these pages? If not please the Editor know before the deadline for the next issue; thanks!

BRANCHES IN ACTION

In August **Campden Hill** branch we went for a branch meal at the Kleftico restaurant in Holland Park. The Mezes portions were huge and we struggled to manage them, except for Mike who managed a dessert course as well. The pre-meal aperitif was at the Brook Green Hotel, the Youngs pub on the Green of the same name.

At the beginning of September a few of us had a day out in Lymington. It was grey, damp and blustery down by the Solent so we didn't hang around to admire the scenery too much. We visited a number of the town's pubs although none of these were terribly exciting, with Ringwood and Wadworth's beers figuring prominently. We stopped off in Winchester for a couple to break the journey home.

In October, Helen organised a pub crawl in Croydon. We started at the Oval in Addiscombe, a quiet back-street local well known for its live blues bands, serving Brains SA and the seasonal dark beer Marstons Wicked Witch. We moved to the gastro-pub the Glamorgan, which had a good drop of Harveys best and the loud music pub, the Ship in High St, which had an abysmal drop of Banks. Then the Skylark (Wetherspoons), which had a beer festival on, so plenty of choice. A last Three Tuns Roberts Nut Mild at the Beer Circus finished the evening.

Forthcoming events include the AGM at the Harp and the annual Not the Christmas meal bash, a re-visit to the Kleftico on 27 November.

Chesapeake Bay branch continues to thrive and push the spirit and essence of cask beer. We are now over 190 members strong and have had a great time this year with bus trips, a crab feast and some incredible monthly gatherings. Our crab feast hosted nearly 80 attendees who consumed over 45 gallons of beer, 5 bushels of steamed crabs, 8 whole beer can chickens, 22 lbs. of pit beef, 50 hamburgers, 50 sausages, 7 dozen of corn and numerous salads and sweets. We also did a growler bottle giveaway with the SPBW logo. We are eagerly anticipating our 3rd Annual Chesapeake Real Ale Festival on October 21st. We will feature approximately 25 firkins from over 18 regional brewers and upwards of 300 in attendance. Some of our members recently attended and volunteered at the GBBF and we continue to raise and follow the real ale flag.

Common branch has been quite active recently with a series of vintage bus trips to country pubs and a couple of brewery visits. Our Local Pub of the Year was the **Hop Leaf** in Southampton Street, Reading. This is a Hopback tied house which sells Summer Lightning, the best beer in town at £2.35 a pint and only £2 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Our first trip took us to the Rising Sun at Stockcross near Newbury, a new West Berkshire Brewery pub with their full range. Second, to the Old Ship, Cadmore End near High Wycombe, a free house selling Youngs, Loddon and Archers. The beer here comes direct from a lowly cellar. We also visited the Stag and Huntsman, Hambleden, which serves Rebellion and Isle of Purbeck beers. The third bus trip into Hampshire took us to the George and Dragon, Wolverton for Brakspears and West Berks beers and the Plough at Little London, a free house with a splendid open fire and beer served direct from the

cask and by handpump including two Ringwood beers and guests. Final port of call was the White Hart, a newly acquired Youngs tied house at Sherfield on Loddon. The fourth tour visited the Magpie and Parrot at Shinfield, a tiny bar seating 12, with Fullers London Pride and a guest at weekends and then the Nag's Head, Sunningdale, a Harvey's house with the full range, with the final visit to the Bell at Waltham St Laurence, an ancient inn with various guests.

Another highlight was a social tour of the Loddon Brewery, just outside Reading, with more drinking than touring as all their beers were available. This was organised by Stephen Brown, head brewer.

We had a separate visit to the New Forest in September, beginning at the Red Shoot, Wadworth's brew pub at Linwood. On to the Royal Oak at Fritham, a thatched free house, and the Cuckoo, just over the Wiltshire border in Hamptworth, another thatched free house where a Beer festival was in full swing. We finally ended up at the Newport Arms, Braishfield, near Romsey, a Gales/ Fullers pub with a singsong around the piano. No request was too obscure for the landlady at the ivories!

Since moving to Reading the preferred title of the branch is the Common and Aldbrickham branch, Aldbrickham being recognisable to readers of Thomas Hardy as his name for Reading and also used by the local clog-dancing group.

Mayday had a visit from Bill, Mike and Roger from the NEC on the last Saturday of September. Unfortunately Helen and family had decided to go out for the day so we never did meet! Instead we enjoyed the sunshine in the conservatory outside while sampling the house beers brewed in a room adjoining the bar. We all agreed that the session ale, Crofters, was the pick of those on offer. The First in Last Out (FILO) in the High Street in the Old Town part of Hastings is a friendly and cosy pub and should be checked out if you're on the East Sussex coast.

RACS ran the usual beer and tombola stand at the Gate beer festival over August bank holiday and did the usual roaring trade. Subsequent events included trips to the Chappell and St Albans beer fests and Mark Mead's 30th birthday jaunt to Hamburg. The RACS Festive Social is at the Gate on Sunday 17 December at 20.00.

Wantz branch has spent much of its energy organising the Tony Littler Trophy event and with members scattering to various corners of the globe, future events are still very much at the concept stage.

In late August **West Riding** branch visited Peterborough beer festival. After a few hours at the festival we set off on a pub crawl and found many excellent pubs worth making the trip to Peterborough for, even without the festival. Then there was an enjoyable day trip to Whitby. Highlight was a first visit to the Shambles, just off the market place. The place is very spacious with 200 year old wooden beams in the roof and lots of large leather sofas to relax in while overlooking the harbour. The beer range was from Copper Dragon, Theakstons and others, eight or nine on when we called and the quality was good. There have been visits to other beers festivals, Elland Brewery and the presentation of the Pub of the Season award to the Junction at Baildon. By the time you read this there will have been a visit to the Salamander Brewery in Bradford. The Christmas Party is on Saturday 30 December at the Grove, Huddersfield.

FIFTY IMBIBING YEARS

I left school in July 1954 aged 17 years and started drinking on a cycling tour a week or so later. Brown Ale was all that I had ever heard of but I suppose I must have looked and, perhaps acted, as if I was of legal drinking age. On return from the holiday I found the nearest pub to my parents home and was persuaded to try Flowers Keg – the new fangled drink which was receiving considerable advertising; I was not keen on the effect and switched to Whiskey Mac, the effect of which was even worse. What a terrible start to what was to turn into virtually a lifetime habit of supping nothing alcoholic other than Real Ale.

As soon as I was 18 I sought out a ‘decent’ pub and discovered Charrington IPA - I know!, but there was not much else available in North London then. Whilst continuing the increasingly difficult search for pubs offering the proper stuff, a move of work location to the City in 1965 proved to be a turning point.

I entered a dry cleaning and laundering shop in Queen Victoria Street one day to deliver a box of soiled and collect one of collars re-dressed by Collars of Wembley. At the end of a short queue stood a gentleman with a seriously beer-stained dress shirt over his arm. I could not help attempting to open a conversation which ran roughly as follows:

“Must have been quite an event”

“Indeed, I don’t remember much about the end of it”.

“I get a distinct aroma of Worthington”.

“By gad, you’re right! Do I detect a member of the SPBW?”.

“Afraid not, but what the hell is the SPBW?”.

“Ah! I just happen to have an application form in my back pocket. Just complete it, stick in an envelope and address to ‘Arthur Millard, c/o The Bank of England’ that will find me”.

He was now at the head of the queue and, upon handing over the said shirt, bade me farewell. In due course the form was returned complete with a rubber stamped paned which was signed and read:

‘SPBW APPLICATION ENDORSED CHAIRMAN SECRETARY

It was accompanied by a helpful information sheet from one O S Tillett - PRO.

I became a lunchtime regular at Ye Olde Watling where I only once fell foul of the Friday tie rule; although being on holiday and having moved to Godalming (where I first ever drank Courage Directors, then brewed by Simmonds of Reading) I was recalled at no notice to the office still wearing ‘country’ apparel. On arrival, why not? at The Watling I was greeted with shouts of ‘Tie! Curses! none of several excuses offered cut any ice. A round had therefore duly to be purchased for the (naturally, all correctly dressed) SPBW Members present.

Camra arrived in 1971 which I joined then moved to Essex in 1973 thereafter becoming a regular attender at South East Essex Camra and Wantz SPBW Branch events (I remember, especially, a SPBW weekend spent at Halesworth in Suffolk, the best part of which (apart from the Adnams) was finding an Aladdin’s Cave of vintage cars with my, by then, good friend Ozzie Tillett, the worst being a fall in the middle of the night on the way to the toilet which resulted in cutting my forehead open - imagine the comments endured

at breakfast - 'WW1 casualty', 'p***ed again', 'can't take some people anywhere' etc.

Following divorce (1986), the death of my Mother (1987) and being made redundant (1989) I became a 'free agent' and moved to Ambleside though not before attending the memorable 25th Anniversary Dinner in 1988 wearing no socks but making up for it with two different (SPBW) ties!

A spell as a volunteer with The National Trust, though interesting did not result in my being able to persuade the NT that I was worth employing for money. What next? asked a nervous bank manager. Ah! The licensed trade, probably what I had secretly long for over the years! After six months behind the bar of a Whitbread (who?) pub I moved to The Golden Rule at Ambleside – still selling Ulverston Hartleys beers then. I did every imaginable (and one or two unimaginable) jobs over the years and became joint Licensee. I still look after the accounts, force down the odd pint or so of (Robinsons) Hartleys, usually manage to venture South to the Great British Beer Festival and SPBW National weekends and, though not so involved now, support the Camra Westmorland Branch of Camra. Oh! I am also Treasurer (and have been Secretary) of Kendal and District Licensed Victuallers Association as well as Treasurer of Ambleside Sports Association – 'Office', i.e. tent, is pitched within an arms length of the beer tent!

A good life so far, and I am not quite 70 yet, made all the better by the many friends that I have made through the SPBW, Camra, Brewers, Licensees, customers and all who have anything to do with this unique, incredible trade. Cheers!

Alan Risdon October 2006



A YORKS QUARTET

Andy's Roving Report

Town Hall Tavern, Leeds

This city centre pub stands at the bottom end of Westgate, about a minute's walk down the road from *Dr Okell's* (formerly the Baroque) on the left hand side. A long time favourite with those of the legal profession (the courts being all too near), the *Town Hall Tavern* was recently bought by Tim Taylor's brewery and is a bit of a showcase for their beers, selling Golden Best, Best Bitter, Landlord and Ram Tam on a regular basis. This is quite a small hostelry and was, sad to say, opened out quite a few years ago. I recall that there used to be a snug to the right as you entered, with the bar being round to the left. The bar is still to that side, but is more central than before.

The pub is done throughout like a lounge, carpeted with upholstered, and the walls are adorned with many framed caricatures of a legal theme; note also the many photos of old Leeds that are quite unusual and not the usual 'job lot' prints that one sees everywhere. A curiosity is the rather narrow entrance to the Gents – any who are broad of beam may need to pull the old waist in while making their entrance and exit.

As for beer quality, I can say that this is invariably excellent and can personally vouch for the Ram Tam, a rare enough sight in Leeds. The THT is certainly worth finding, but not on a Sunday, when it is closed! Telephone 0113 2440765.

As an aside, *Dr Okell's* is usually closed on a Sunday also, but has recently started opening on the first and last Sunday evenings of the month for live music. Phone 0113 2429674 to find out who is on and when!

Hervey's Bar, Holmfirth

My visit here on August bank holiday Sunday was a first for me and anyone following in my footsteps will find this hostelry on Norridge Bottom, next to the much more imposing Bridge Hotel (which, by the way, sold Bateman's mild the last time I was in). Access from the bus stops on Huddersfield Road is down a steep slope or a flight of steps; take your choice.

Although it may sound like a wine bar, I assure you that it rises above any such inclinations, with the small and crowded bar counter having 4 pumps dispensing beers from Copper Dragon of Skipton. Alas, no Dark Gold, so I chose the Golden Pippin: an excellent choice as it was in superb condition, possessing a faintly honeyish flavour. The food side of things is certainly not overlooked and there is a most comprehensive menu. Hervey's was awarded Huddersfield CAMRA's prestigious Pub of the Season award in November 2005, proving that efforts and achievements are not overlooked.

Hervey's is of no great size, comprising a small bar area with a larger section that has a stove at the top end – if it works they will be using it in the winter months, Holmfirth being on the edge of Pennine country. The walls are almost covered with plates, prints, mirrors etc. the loos are upstairs and there was a large quantity of fur on the floor near the bar; opinions were divided between it being a dog or a big ball of fluff.

The general consensus of my party was that Hervey's Bar is worth recommending to any who visit the town and I'll be calling in again.

Whitby

I don't often write about the inns of Whitby, mainly because I rarely visit the town: a shame as it is a most picturesque part of England. In order to redress the situation, may I now bring the **Black Horse** on Church Street in the old town to your notice? This is the bit of Whitby that gets most of the visitors' cash and attention, with its alleyways, old buildings and 199 steps to the Abbey. Walking up Church Street, you will see the small, partially tiled, frontage of the Black Horse on the right, with its stained glass transom windows and Tetley Traditional Inn plaque. Most of what you behold dates from the 1880s, as does the public bar within, which you enter immediately through the door. A coach party of pygmies may fit in here, but only the leaner kind. This room is not much bigger than a 'snug' and has a couple of tables and padded wooden settles around the walls from which hang many old fishing photographs and sketches of what I imagine are some of the pub regulars. The bar counter has those useful brass pegs for shopping bags and coats but no rail strangely. There is no carpeting to spoil the authenticity and the wooden flooring blends perfectly with the rest of the room. I spotted two

handpumps on the counter: these were serving Thwaites' Bomber and Adnams bitter with the Bomber being in very good condition.

Now, if you go through the door at the left of the bar, you enter the Lounge: I didn't study this in great depth as I merely passed through on my way to the loo, but it looked like a slightly longer version of the tap room. There's another pair of pumps here as well, dispensing Taylor's Landlord and Whitby Brewery's Rhatas. I know that at least one of the beers changes regularly but I couldn't tell you which, if any, are permanent.

I checked the pub's website and found it most interesting. Seemingly, it was known as the 'White Horse' up to 1828 when a local magistrate enforced a name change. Allegedly, the pub, along with another 'White Horse' virtually next door, ran a swindle for about a century: gentleman travelling to Whitby would send a bank note in advance payment to the pub for their bed and stabling for their horse/hire of another horse. Anyone unwise to simply address the letter to the 'White Horse' would be told on arrival that their payment did not arrive and they would be obliged to pay again. Of course, it would be discovered later that the money went to the 'other' White Horse, whichever one that was. Anyway, an honest Magistrate (gasp!) got sick of this and, using a recently introduced law, made the pub change its title under penalty of forfeiture and license. The other part of this con trick is still in existence as the White Horse and Griffin just along the road.

Rather more recently (in 1973) the Black Horse was declared to be a building of special architectural and historical interest.

There's en-suite accommodation at the Black Horse and some unusual and inexpensive bar snacks as well, like biltong or bowls of various types of olives in differing herbal infusions. The only downside is the price of the beer – on par with London, Belfast or parts of the Lake District: the Bomber was £2.80 a pint and the Adnams £2.50. Everything considered, the Black Horse is certainly a place to add to one's Whitby itinerary, but expect your wallet to wince.

Halifax

One of the better independent breweries of Yorkshire is the Halifax Steam Brewery, now residing at The Conclave, Southedge Works, Hipperholme. This is just east of Halifax town centre and the number 548 and 549 buses take about 10 minutes to drop you off outside the brewery and its newly opened tap, the **Cock of the North**. The building containing the company is not on par with, say, John Smith's and from the outside resembles an obese portakabin. Inside the COTN, things are quite different however: my first impression was that of a dimly lit club but I decided that this wouldn't do. The room has a highly polished wooden floor that would pass muster in any dance hall and although everything is in one room, it isn't open plan. On the left there's a small, upholstered 'snug' area with a goggle box and another somewhat separate section further along in the corner. The rather lengthy bar counter runs along the right hand side and had no less than 7 Halifax Brewery beers, plus their own lager. Most of us started on the Cock of the North bitter – this was the old Whitaker's Brewery symbol and is an attempt to recreate their bitter. I don't know whether they succeeded but it's an excellent old fashioned

dark bitter beer. My next one after this was their stout called Uncle John, which one of my companions remarked had some connection with a blues singer, although I fail to recall the name of the artist in question. All the beers were £2 a pint and for drivers there's a very unusual selection of organic soft drinks in large bottles. I've never seen these before.

We took our drinks across to one of the square pedestals provided for upright customers – these stand just high enough for perpendicular types to lean an elbow on, there being a brass rail for this purpose, plus an ever helpful foot rail. I was perusing some of the jazz age prints on the wall when Schenker, our Art Deco expert, remarked that these were by Tamara de Lempicka (or Lempitzki), a renowned painter of the period. Two of our group observed that it was a bit like being on board ship: a deliberate intention I am led to understand, though without twee tackiness like stick on portholes etc. Verdict? It will make a very good local for those fortunate enough to live within striking distance and the beer is top class.

SHEFFIELD SHINDIG

Andy Whitley has written about various pubs in Sheffield in previous issues. Just before this issue went to press I had the pleasure of a day in the city with Andy and two others from Leeds plus a trio from Crewe. Taking the tram towards Hillsborough and working our way back towards the city centre we visited six excellent pubs all offering a very fine range of ales and all worthy of a long session in their own right. The pubs are: New Barrack Tavern, Hillsborough Hotel, Gardeners Rest, Kelham Island Tavern, Fat Cat and the Cask & Cutler. All are listed in the latest Good Beer Guide. There were a number of other beer enthusiasts doing much the same pub tour as us, along with a number of beer loving Leicester City fans enjoying pre and post match pints to take their minds off losing to Sheffield Wednesday. No one who enjoys good beer in fine surroundings will be disappointed by a visit to Sheffield.

RJ



THE DURHAM BEAT

Wantz branch enjoyed a weekend in Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne at the end of July. The main focus was on Durham, a city I had long wished to visit and which fully lived up to expectations. Surrounded by rolling countryside and situated on a sharp bend of the river Wear, the Durham skyline is dominated by the 900-year-old cathedral and the neighbouring castle. There are numerous bridges across the river and narrow cobbled streets in a very compact town centre. Our resting place was St Aidan's College south of the town; student accommodation is hired out during vacation times and most of the other guests seemed to have been attending a wedding reception also held at the College.

Apart from all its other attractions, Durham is hardly short of pubs and needless to say we gave a few of these the benefit of our custom. The best of these, without a shadow of doubt, was the **Victoria Inn** in Hallgarth Street. This really is a gem, a genuine listed Victorian pub just outside the city centre. Most of the action is in the main bar, a fairly small narrow room along one side of the pub. Adjoining this is a 'smoke room' complete with upright piano, and a separate snug bar; this doesn't have so much as a bar counter and the bell pushes on the wall are a reminder that there would once have been waiter service. The walls and shelves are covered with fascinating memorabilia, much of which is associated with the eponymous Queen. There is also a considerable collection of bottled spirits behind the bar, the wide selection of Irish whiskies giving a clue to the origin of the management. We were given a friendly reception when we called in at lunchtime and a no less friendly, but more raucous greeting when we returned in late evening. The pub was fairly bustling by now, this being very much a locals' pub – lucky people to have this as a local. I haven't even mentioned the beer yet, but this is not least of the Victoria's attractions. Five handpumps offered a selection of beers, mostly from brewed locally by the likes of Big Lamp, Mordue, Wylam and Durham breweries. A splendid pub, almost worth the journey by itself.

We did manage to visit a few other of Durham's pubs. **Colpitts** in Colpitts Terrace to the west of town is a wedge shaped stone building, also split into 3 or 4 rooms. This is a Sam Smiths house and I was glad it was my round when we called in since the OBB cost a staggering £1.26 – yes, for a pint! Sam's is not one of my favourite brews but the Colpitts offered a pleasant enough pint and the pub and the price made this a worthwhile diversion. Out on the other side of town the **Woodman Inn** on Gilesgate has a comfortable no-smoking lounge area at the front and a games area behind. There were four handpumped beers when I called in, mostly from north east and Yorkshire breweries. Right in the city centre is the **Shakespeare** in Saddler Street. This has a fairly small main bar and two even smaller rooms tucked away along a winding corridor. Boddingtons and Deuchars IPA were on offer, along with a guest beer in the shape of London Pride, not what we'd travelled 300 miles for! Finally there was the **Dun Cow** on Old Elvet, a long narrow building divided into three rooms. Beer of choice here was Castle Eden bitter, of which the Dun Cow sells more than any other pub. There was a music festival in the city on the day of our visit and the back bar of the Dun Cow featured a number

of folk performers who each did a turn in early evening before taking their talents to another pub.

On the Sunday morning we ventured north by train to Newcastle, looking out for the Angel of the North statue. Having admired the variety of bridges over the Tyne and walked around the city centre (rather quieter than it would have been the night before) we embarked on a healthy pub crawl, finding no less than three GBG-listed pubs that don't open Sunday lunchtimes! A couple of us had already enjoyed a sneaky pint in the **Bodega** in Westgate Road, out towards the football ground in the theatre district. Plenty of stained glass and two impressive ceiling domes and an excellent choice of beers, including Durham Magus which I'd relished in the Victoria the evening before. Eventually we all settled in the **Bridge Hotel** which is very close by the surviving keep of the 'new' castle which gives the city its name. It's also right by the railway line which was built to within a couple of feet of the castle. The Bridge is a spacious inn, partitioned into a number of areas and with a small terrace down the stairs at the back. (Incidentally, if you like cities that are nice and flat, the undulations of Durham and Newcastle may not be to your liking!). Six draught ales to tempt us, including a summer beer from Mordue; we pretty much went through the card between us and all were in fine condition. What with a tasty and good value Sunday lunch to wash the beer down, this was a highly satisfying end to an excellent and all too short visit to the north east.

RJ



The Last Word – from Suffolk

Farmer Tony Baskett has saved his dying cow by feeding it six pints of beer a day. Vets gave 3 year old Hereford Lottie only a 50% chance of recovering when she developed a stomach blockage. As it was not possible to cure it with drugs, the vets suggested using brewer's yeast as an alternative. So Tony began feeding Lottie with leftovers from his local pub's casks. Several months on, the cow has made a miraculous recovery. Lottie got better as the yeast micro-organisms in the Adnams bitter kick-started her digestion. Brewery chief Jonathan Adnams said "It's no surprise really, real ale is live – like pro-biotic yoghurt!" Farmer Baskett has paid tribute to Adnams by naming Lottie's calf after the brewery. Thanks to *Ale Talk*, Kirklees Camra mag.

Some back issues of ***Pint in Hand*** are available:- numbers 43; 44; 46-51; 53-54; 60-62; 70- 71; 74; 76; 79; 84-99. These can be obtained from the Editor (address on page 2) in return for fifteen second class stamps to cover postage for the full set. If you don't want the whole lot, send enough stamps you think may cover costs.

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The Barton Arms, Aston (see page 8)