

**SOCIETY for the PRESERVATION of
BEERS from the WOOD**
(founded 1963)

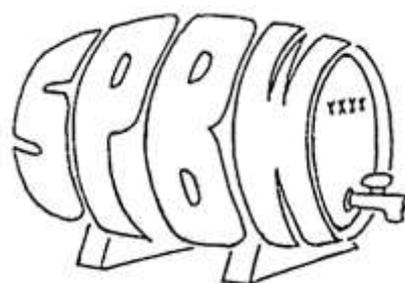
PINT in HAND

Number 102

May 2007



The Gardener's Rest, Sheffield (see page 14)



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 July**.
- 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

Just about all the pubs that have the honour of a mention in these pages are traditional-type houses offering at least a small range of quality beers. For many of us it's all too easy to drink in a kind of GBG comfort zone. So it was a salutary experience for me and some friends recently to visit five pubs in one day that fell well outside these confines (for which we offer the 'unavoidable hospitality' plea of the SPBW founders). The first two of these pubs had been tarted up to the detriment of any traditional character and both offered just one, mass produced, handpumped ale. Our next port of call had a few beers on but seemed to be aimed almost exclusively at diners, had a dress code and was distinctly unwelcoming. Our visit to pub number four was a fleeting one, long enough to note the lack of real beer or other redeeming features. In the end we passed our time in a lively, down to earth pub, drinking Brew XI and trying to talk above the noise of a disco in the adjacent bar.

This experience did beg the question: just what is the norm? I suspect that what we had found was rather more typical of the national pub scene than the cloistered world of the beer aficionado and the fact that the final pub was extremely busy tells that it meets its customers' needs and indicates the diversity of the market. I'm sure we all know examples of pubs that are oriented towards real beer drinkers that can also claim a substantial custom. So long as everybody's happy there should be no problem about such a divide. In an ideal world every pub would sell proper beer but on Planet Earth 2007 this, unfortunately, is unlikely. And there's no pint in a pub having real beer if the publican can't/won't look after it properly or encourage customers to try it. One or two bad pints can put anyone off for life.

Thanks to the internet it's now easier to find out about pubs than ever before. There are a number of websites dedicated to pub lists and descriptions; I've registered with one of these – Beer in the Evening – which is a useful medium for promoting the best pubs I've visited. Why not give it a go yourself if you've not already? Another interesting innovation is on-line petitioning. This has the advantage that it can be easily cascaded to friends and colleagues. I've recently put my name to campaigns for 'full pints' and guest beers in pub chains. Again, I'd recommend all members to sign up to these if at all possible (I'm assuming that these are campaigns we all want to support!).

As I'm sure you all know, pubs in England will be come smoke free zones from 1 July. Another question is thus begged: what will happen to all the suddenly redundant ash trays? Are there hordes of breweriana collectors waiting to ounce at midnight on 30 June? I must admit I find ash trays useful for depositing non-nicotine-related debris in; will pubs be providing waste bins instead (or is it just me who generates rubbish? Don't answer!) but seriously, it will be interesting to see the effect the lung-abuse ban has on the pub trade. My brief experience of smokeless pubs in Scotland earlier this year suggests it will be very little. Time as ever will tell.

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.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2007 AGM of the NEC brought together two dozen or so members, including representatives of nine branches. The meeting was typically brief and good humoured, albeit with a long break while we waited for the Treasurer to arrive with three year's worth of unaudited accounts. In the meantime we tucked into a substantial buffet as well as the fine Harvey's ales, and bought raffle tickets. The raffle raised nearly enough to pay for the food and thanks to Clive Poge for donating most of the prizes. There was no stampede of volunteers to take on an NEC post so we were spared any voting. The Committee as elected unopposed is:

Chairman: Chris Callow
Vice Chairman: Mike Hall
Secretary: John Rooth
Treasurer: Jim Woodcock
Branch Liaison Officer: Bill English
Editor, Pint in Hand: Roger Jacobson
National Membership Secretary: Roger West
Products Manager: Dave Samuel
Webmaster: Mark Hutchison

National Executive Committee Chairman's report 2007

Welcome to the Royal Oak here in London, for those keeping a running total, this is my fourteenth AGM. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Royal Oak for supplying us with the venue and looking us for the last year and the support of all of the officers of the National Executive Committee. As a reminder and a general invitation, all members are entitled to attend our business meetings, they are fairly informal affairs, and a few empty glasses will usually signal the words "beer break".

The latest winner of the London Pub of the Year is the Pembury Tavern in Hackney. This pub serves various beers and always has a selection from the Milton Brewery. This annual event is becoming popular and is spreading the word of the society with coverage in the press and various prestigious publications. There is a dedicated team of samplers who visit each pub nominated. Without their tireless dedication this event that has been running for the last six years could not happen.

We have a new SPBW Products Manager, Dave Samuel. Dave has eagerly stepped in to take this important position, he is keen to hear from you on any products that

we sell and interested in any new ideas. For those that do not know, the previous two Products guys are happily living in Turkey, though in different houses.

Pint in Hand is going from strength to strength, and last year marked our one hundredth issue, Cheers to Roger for his tireless work. We get a high quality of articles from across the country, but as always please pass any write up for future issues to Roger as it will always be received with gratitude. For the technical among you, the increased quality of the pictures has made the current issue fairly large so copy is sent by post on a CD for printing as it is too large to use email.

We have had a demand for SPBW Christmas cards. We have listened and cogitated, and thought a little bit about political correctness as well and have produced some general purpose SPBW cards. These have been well advertised and we have sold a steady stream of them.

With the advent of new technology, the whole world can find out about the SPBW 24/7 by visiting the website. We have details on what we stand for and as always the popular SPBW forum where we have various discussion groups. There is also space for branch contacts to manage, so that they can advertise what they do and make available details of any events that they are arranging to a wider audience. New technology has also enabled us to have a new format membership leaflet, a handy three fold affair produced with state of the art software by Mrs. Chairman.

There have been some social events over the last year with write-ups in Pint in Hand. These have included the National Weekend visit to the Black Country and the surrounding area; the Wenlock beer and supper evening; attendance at various beer festivals; a visit to Twickenham Brewery; and (I assume) yesterday's successful beer and curry walkabout. For the future, we are laying down the groundwork for the 2007 National Weekend. At this time we have hope to visit Titanic in Burslem on the 16th November and Woodlands of Wrenbury on Sunday 18th November and a visit to the Bhurtpore Inn, more details in later copies of Pint in Hand. We are looking at also having a social evening before the GBBF as it was popular last year.

In time honoured fashion as we raise our glass to those who cannot be here tonight, and some that have gone to the great pub in the sky; let's hope for another enjoyable and successful year. To the SPBW.

Chris Callow, Devizes, 11 March 2007



LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

What do you think is the best pub in London? Now's the time to start the process of deciding which pub will win the SPBW's prestigious award. All members in and around the Greater London area are invited to nominate their favourite pub: please contact Bill English (details page 2) for a nomination form. London branches will be sent forms direct. ***Pubs will not be considered for judging unless a form is completed.***

The Pembury Tavern, as current holder, is ineligible this time round but there are plenty of other worthy contenders. Closing date for nominations is **16 July**. Judging will be done between August and October. If you'd like to join the judging panel (warning: this involves going to good pubs and drinking beer), please let Bill know.

PETER SMITH 1949 - 2007

All his many friends in both SPBW and CAMRA were shocked and saddened to hear of the death early in March of Peter J. Smith. Peter was of mixed Yorkshire and Welsh parentage, hence his devotion to Yorkshire cricket, but he was brought up in Kent where he attended Tonbridge School. He lived in the USA for some time and then worked as a sales manager in England for a number of companies, while residing in London, before moving to Reading in 1996, where he found he was able to live comfortably on his investments. Part of the attraction of Reading seemed to be the reopening of a run-down pub called the Hop Leaf as part of Hopback Brewery's burgeoning estate and this became Peter's local (as it literally was) and was almost certainly where he drank his last pint.

By his own account he began drinking beer at an early age and developed a prodigious capacity for it. He was an early campaigner for what would become known as real ale through the SPBW and also joined CAMRA soon after its formation, being a pioneer of the South West London branch. He was Chairman of the SPBW National Executive 1985 - 88, Chairman of Campden Hill branch and, in November 1987, founding Chairman of the Common branch of SPBW (the reference being to Clapham Common). The branch followed him to Reading and was eventually renamed the Common and Aldbrickham, adding Thomas Hardy's name for the town.

In Peter's view probably the best way of campaigning for real ale was drinking it but he also was an energetic worker at beer festivals such as Battersea and Reading, where he seemed to be able to work virtually non-stop. He was also a very good social organiser and many enjoyed the series of vintage bus trips to country pubs that he started up, along with Pete Bowyer.

However, he had many other lively interests including cricket, soccer (Chelsea), the opera, horse-racing and reading. Mind you, the pursuit of these activities was more often than not associated with beer and Peter especially enjoyed visits to Warwick racecourse as there were two excellent real ale pubs nearby which could be visited between races! Similarly, if anyone was fortunate enough to be invited to accompany him on a visit to view a Chelsea match, they were certain to be treated to a whistle stop tour of local pubs afterwards.

Some years ago Peter set himself to read the Top 100 books in world literary history, as determined by one of the nation's newspapers. I was delighted to be able to help him track down some of the more obscure titles via the internet but it does not appear that he quite finished the list, though he came pretty near. Another perhaps more unfathomable passion was "collecting" Wetherspoons pubs, in which he would often sit reading those 100 best Books over a pint or more. .

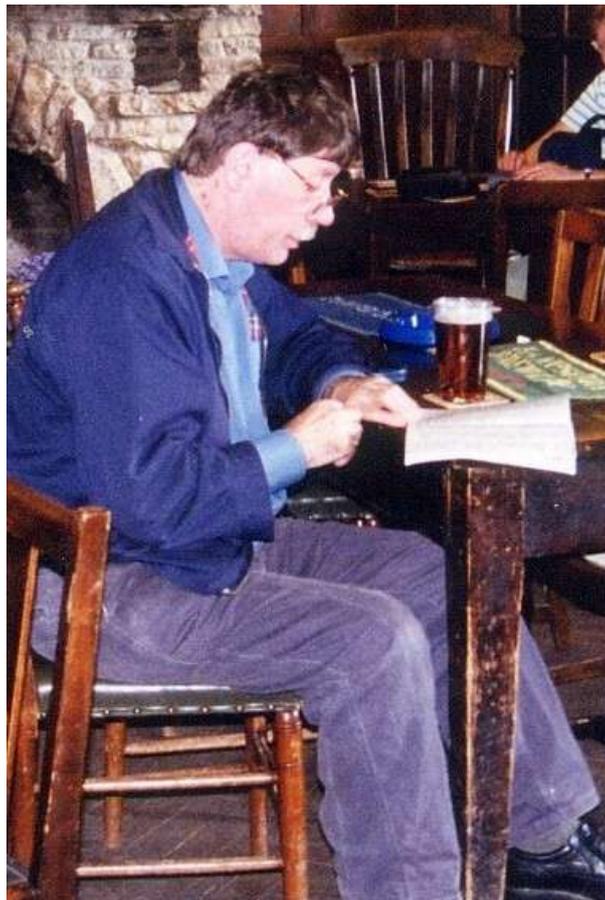
Legend has it that there is someone who did more Harvey Hops than Peter but that is hard to believe. He would return to Reading having achieved seven or eight visits to remote country pubs in one day, employing extraordinary permutations of buses and trains and exercises of shanks's pony. The phenomenal speed with which he walked helped in this and a further legend

has it that he once walked past a jogger on Clapham Common. Somehow for a man who was such a dedicated pilgrim in quest of pubs and beer the choice of John Bunyan's hymn, "To be a pilgrim", at his funeral service seemed fitting, whilst the last verse brought a wry smile to the faces of those who knew his views on the Reading Hobgoblin (not quite his favourite pub!)

About eighty people attended Peter's funeral service at the Georgian church of St Mary's, Castle Street, in Reading and enjoyed quite a few pints of Hopback afterwards at the Hop Leaf, including his beloved Summer Lightning. A number of candles were lit, apparently perpetuating an SPBW practice of not declaring a drinking session complete before the candle had burnt itself out.

Peter leaves a brother, Richard, to whom we extend our sincere condolences.

John Dearing



*Peter enjoying a pint in the Square & Compasses, Worth Matravers
(photo courtesy of John Granvil)*

Richard Graham (Peter's predecessor as NEC Chairman) adds:

Appropriately, the church in which Peter's funeral took place had the inscription "Take the water of life freely", for he surely did. Less appropriate, some felt, was the old-fashioned fire and brimstone sermon to which the mourners were treated. One felt that the minister had spotted plenty of brands to snatch from the burning among a largely unregenerate (I imagine) congregation and wasn't about to miss the opportunity to save some souls. Had Peter been listening, I can't help feeling that after hearing a few sentences he would have quietly slipped out to be found later ensconced on the Hopleaf with a pint, perhaps not his first, when the mourners arrived.

THE PERFECT PUB PAGE

I suppose there are several criteria to qualify for this feature but few pubs I know tick as many of the right boxes as the **Palmerston Arms**, Oundle Road, Peterborough. For a start it's a genuine community pub, drawing its staple trade from local residents, but it offers a friendly welcome to non regulars. Many of these will be attracted by the beer; although the pub is owned by Bateman and offers three of their beers (including the excellent mild) on a regular basis, these are accompanied by up to eight others. On my latest visit, two of these were from the worthy Castle Rock range. All the draught beers are drawn straight from casks in the cellar (check out the chalk board or the pump clips on the bar to see what's on) and in immaculate condition. Draught cider provides an alternative, along with an array of bottled Belgian and British beers. If you fancy a drop of the harder stuff, there's a selection of single malts. Food is confined to basic ballast, such as rolls and pies.



The Palmy (as the locals know it) has two separate rooms, described as 'bar' and 'lounge' although they actually look very similar. The comfy chairs and cushions on the wooden seats give it a very homely feel and there is much breweriana on the walls to admire, along with numerous awards from CAMRA. I'm less sure about the mounted set of arrows! You can find the pub south of the river Nene, first right after the bridge. The nearby Coalheavers Arms is also recommended but make the Palmerston Arms your priority pub in Peterborough. In the meantime look at their website <http://www.palmerston-arms.co.uk>

RJ

Back Page Pub

The south west London pub scene was given a boost by the rejuvenation of the ***Bricklayers Arms*** in Putney. This is the oldest pub in Putney and had been doomed for residential use at one point. Becky Newman reopened it in its present guise in April 2006 and created a classic community pub. It's fairly simple one room establishment with bare floorboards and a log fire for the winter; the walls are decorated with old photos of the area and there is a rare table skittles for amusement. On warmer days you can sit out in the small garden. The Bricklayers is a free house but it specialises in Tim Taylor's beers from Keighley, usually offering the full range including the dark mild and Ram Tam (which is not often available on home turf). Guest ales sometimes appear and there is the occasional beer festival. Over the Easter period just gone there was an Oxford v Cambridge beer fest (featuring beers from both counties) to coincide with the Boat Race, which begins just a short distance away. The staff here are welcoming, friendly and efficient and of course they have the pleasure of dispensing top class ale. The pub is in Waterman Street, a cul de sac just off Lower Richmond Road at the Putney Bridge end. The hordes may flock to the likes of the Duke's Head by the river or the chain bars in the High Street but devotees of good beer in great pubs should make time for an extended visit to the Bricklayers Arms. Find out more on www.bricklayers-arms.co.uk.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

There was something of a Yorkshire theme in the May 1997 PiH. There was a belated report on the previous year's National Weekend in York, while Andy's adventures took him up the River Aire to sample the liquid delights of Shipley and Keighley. Meanwhile the cover picture was of the Farmer's Arms, in Muker, up in Swaledale. I recall having a weary pint or three here halfway through my attempt on the Coast to Coast Walk back in the 1980s. No less than three branches had just started – in Harlow, Kingston on Thames and Baltimore – and it's satisfying to report that they are still in action.

Ten years earlier we reported the shock news that Greene King was about to close a brewery – Rayments of Furneux Pelham. Having got this irritating little concern (producing distinctive ales for a local market) out of the way, GK set about acquiring more breweries so they could be closed down as well. Elsewhere there were reports from the Grampian region of Scotland and South Africa and an entertaining account of the activities of the former Pagoda branch, one of the SPBW's more enigmatic groups. Pagoda's main man was Mike Wilsdon whose main concern was a motor museum in Kew Gardens. The exhibits allegedly included a motorised rickshaw, a barrage balloon inflating gas cylinder trolley and a traditional worm poisoning pump. Where are they now?

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.

Sad to report, Ponds branch decided to pack up early this year, due to dwindling numbers. On a happier note we can add a group of exiles in Turkey to our number.

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 3.00. Contact John Dearing 0118 958 0377 or gpwild@btconnect.com

FÝÇÝ: A social group formed by ex-pat SPBW stalwarts Peter Willett and Dave Brightwell. Contact Peter for more details: peterwillettuk@yahoo.com

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

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 **Pembury Tavern**, 90 Amhurst Road, Hackney, starting at around 7.30 pm. Contact Roger Jacobson (see page 2); also check out our website at www.wantz.co.uk

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!

SPBW WEBSITE

The SPBW Members Forum is still going strong at www.spbw.com/bb. 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.

BRANCHES IN ACTION

Campden Hill had a very good day out visiting numerous pubs in Winchester on a sunny, but windy March Saturday. The St James Tavern up a fairly steep hill was our first and last port of call. This is a Wadworths house, which also sold Manns St George's beer. Then up another hill to the Fulflood Arms which was Greene King. LBW jumping on the cricket bandwagon was better than the usual GK fare. A pub group now owns the Hyde Tavern, which used to be Greene King. It had a range of beers including Young's & Ringwood. The Landlady informed us that she had gleefully blacked out the Greene King name from the pub sign. The Wykeham is a quiet pub near the public school, which had an excellent drop of Pride. We bumped into the Kingston Camra branch in there. The Black Boy sold an excellent drop of Flower Pots, which is the produce of the phoenix from the ashes of Cheriton Pots brewery. The Mash Tun had Goddard's Fuggle Di-Dum but not in great shape & the Market Tavern had a reasonable offering of Deuchars.

In the same week we visited Daquise in South Kensington, a Polish restaurant which has friendly, efficient service and is very good value for money. A very substantial meal was enjoyed for under £20, including a combination of wine, Borsch soup, herrings, ham shank, mixed Polish cuts pastries, ice cream & coffee. Before that the Fox & Hounds near Sloane Sq sold average quality Young's.

On the sports front John Rooth wrestled the Keith Hudson darts trophy back from Ken Davison, in a tense encounter at the Sekforde Arms.

Another campaigning success for the **Ipswich** branch. At the Dove Street Inn's recent winter beer festival there was Old Peculier from the wood. Most of the credit for this very popular addition to the festival's extensive beer list must go to the landlord and fellow SPBW member, Ady Smith, for his tireless efforts in supporting the Society's aims.



Ady had also arranged a wooden cask making demonstration, expertly done by Jonathon Manby who is one of the few remaining coopers in the country. He has been a cooper at Theakston for 11 years. The demonstration consisted of finishing and fitting the head. Jonathon can be seen here fitting the quarter. Later in the evening the festival goers had a chance of assembling a cask that had been prepared earlier. A task harder than it looked but a lot of fun and a bottle Theakson's XB, or Old Peculiar, for the willing percipients. For more information about Theakstons, one of the few remaining breweries to supply ale in wooden casks, go to

<http://www.theakstons.co.uk>.

Fýçý is a social club, based in Fethiye and named after the Tuborg bottled beer. We aim to have a night out, with a meal and beer included, every 3 months. We are meeting every Monday at 3.00pm at our favourite bar, with the provision to move the meeting elsewhere when we want to. The inaugural meeting was on 12 March. On St. Georges day, which happens on our meeting day, we are going to have a darts match at our meeting place, which is Val's Bar, on the harbour. We also have plans for a bar crawl, ten-pin bowling, a day trip to Rhodes, a visit to Çalýs, which is a seaside town across

the bay from Fethiye, with plenty of bars and restaurants to try and a boat trip to visit the 12 islands in the bay of Fethiye, which will be in the summer.

RACS have celebrated various traditional dates: Burns night with 53 fed at the Gate; a Valentine's Day quiz and a St George's day BBQ. Six members found time for a trip to France where many local and Belgian beverages were consumed. Old friends Wendy and Howard at the Half Moon in Hitchin were visited for their beer festival at the end of April. May events include participation in the Sawbridgeworth May Day Fayre and a BBQ at the Queen's Head in Allens Green, not to mention the AGM on 30 May. Finally RACS take on CAMRA in a games day at the aforementioned Queens Head on 4 August. As part of Community Pub Week at the end of February, **Special Branch** organised a charity quiz in the ever popular Royal Oak. Branch members, quizzing chums and partners took part and helped to raise 40 odd quid towards the restoration fund to restore the church of St George the Martyr in Borough High Street. Coming up fast is our annual canal gathering, this year on a circular route in the West Midlands and beyond. A few of us warmed up in late April by taking a friend's boat from Rugby to Macclesfield. After some dreadful pubs on the first day things improved greatly in this respect and it was good to visit some old favourites in the Potteries and Cheshire, as well as discover some recommended new ones (Lloyd's/the Crown in Nuneaton and Malt 'n' Hops in Fenton spring to mind).

Wantz undertook a pub walk round Soho in April. We began at the Argyll next to Oxford Circus tube station which is worth a visit (the pub, that is) if you can hack your way through the tourists. May saw another return to the Singhouri in Leytonstone for excellent Thai tucker.

West Riding have enjoyed day trips to Liverpool and various parts of Lancashire. Past and future events include visits to numerous beer festivals in all corners of Yorkshire.

SUMMER BEER & BUFFET

One of the highlights of the SPBW calendar is the annual summer social, being a good warm up for the Great British Beer Festival. This year's session will occur on **Monday 6 August** in the **Royal Oak**, Southwark. Excellent beer and food is guaranteed. Cost is just a fiver as usual and, also as usual, John Rooth will look forward to receiving cheques (made out to SPBW please).



Some back issues of **Pint in Hand** are available:- numbers 43; 44; 46-51; 53-54; 60-62; 70- 71; 74; 76; 79; 84-101. 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.

THE RETURN OF THE AMAZING CHINCHILLAS

Andy's Roving Report

Sheffield

The **Gardeners Rest** on Neepsend Lane is a hostelry that is on what must be one of the best pub crawl routes in the north of England. Though it is close to what used to be the Stone's brewery, the gardeners was never one of their houses, having previously been owned by John Smiths and then Mansfield. I understand it has been a free house since 1998 and presently showcases the full range of beers from the Sheffield Brewery, which is a newcomer to the scene.

Entering through the doors, one can turn left into a small snug that has two handpumps on the bar, or right into the main bar. When we visited the pub at the start of March this year, there were no less than 8 cask beers available in the main room along: these included one from the Bradfield brewery and two from Wentworth. The other five handpumps were reserved for Sheffield Brewery's present offerings and I tried a half apiece of two of the lower strength ales, Second Brew (3.5%) and Third Brew (3.7%), being £1.70 and £1.78 a pint respectively. The selection becomes even more varied with Konig Ludwig weissebier, St Louis Kriek and Liefman's Kriek on font, with a continental collection of bottled offerings. I haven't finished either as there's a cider **and** a perry for anadin addicts as well.

There was an exhibition of photographs of Sheffield in the 1980s on display in the main room, which is a bit of a gallery for art and photography. The Gardeners even has its own library and is an 'Official Bookcrossing Zone' for all you bibliophiles out there.

The pub has been extended towards the River Don with the building of a conservatory, which can be hired for meetings and gatherings. There's a lot of information on the walls here too, with maps and info on local history, the environment and the regeneration of the area. Note is taken of the wildlife that has started reappearing since the river and Neepsend in general started to get cleaned up.

On top of all this the Gardeners Rest is a live music venue with regular sessions on Friday and Saturday nights. Opening times are Monday to Thursday 3 – 11, Friday and Saturday noon to 11, Sunday noon to 10.30. worth calling in? Most definitely!

Keighley

The **Boltmakers Arms** is less than 5 minutes from the railway station – simply turn left and follow your nose. The pub is on East Parade on the other side of the road. The pub sign is missing, but you'll easily spot the building. Interestingly, the sign once depicted crossbow quarrels – another kind of bolt to what one would expect!

Inside, all is small. This is one of the more minuscule pubs in Yorkshire, yet on our visit at the start of April, there were no less than 6 draught beers available. Five of these were from Tim Taylor's, it being part of their estate, and included the less common dark mild and Ram Tam. The other cask ale was Buttertubs Bitter from the Yorkshire Dales brewery, though as a guest beer it won't be

there all the time. A proper cider completes the handpumped selection (Thatcher's Cheddar Valley) and there's a variety of bottle conditioned offerings from the Little Valley Brewery of Cragg Vale to round things off.

As mentioned previously, the Boltmakers is of no size whatsoever, though manages to boast a split-level layout. Carpeted throughout, there's a real fire in the bottom section that in winter will toast you to a crisp. Décor includes a fair bit of 50s and 60s music memorabilia on display, mainly concentrating on the Beatles and Elvis. There's a rather good framed print from the Albert Hotel in Harrogate promoting a Beatles concert there on 8 March 1963: among the support bands were a Harrogate group called the Chinchillas, though probably not the real thing. Dancing from 8 pm to 1 am and all for 10/6.

Unlikely as it may seem, the pub even manages to fit in live entertainment on Wednesday nights, though there is only sufficient room for solo singers, or perhaps a quartet of chinchillas. The Boltmakers is an excellent hostelry and very popular, so I freely advise all to call in when they may.

From the Boltmakers, simply turn right, cross over the road and very shortly you will see Coney Lane on your left; turn down here and, also on the left, you will behold the ***Cricketers Arms***. This is a well known venue for live bands and sessions are held most nights of the week in the upstairs bar. According to a leaflet I discovered, the pub is over 160 years old and was wrecked internally by Taylor's in the 1970s. Bad show you people. The downstairs room is of about the same size of the average lounge bar and the prints on the wall have a sporting theme – and not just cricket as one might suppose. Beerwise, there was a good selection on our visit: 4 cask ales, one cider, Liefman's Wit and a selection of bottled continentals. The Moorhouse premier bitter was rather good and, although I forget what my companions tried, they all liked what they'd purchased. The Cricketers hosts its own 'Upstairs Downstairs' beer festival when 30+ beers are available. Is it a free house? I'm not sure, though I know it was once owned by Worth Brewery and may still be for all I know. Either way, this is another pub well worth a visit.

BEER & CURRY SUNDAY

The day before the NEC AGM a group of us spent an indulgent few hours drinking and noshing in London's East End. First meeting place was the Coborn Arms in Mile End but, as I rarely drink in my local pubs, I popped into the Bow Bells on Bow Road for an aperitif. The guest beer here was Black Pearl from the Wooden Hand brewery in Truro, a new one on me, but a decent pint. Down the road the Coborn had the usual Youngs ordinary and Special on, both in good nick. From here we headed west to Whitechapel and the Black Bull. I was first to the bar, to be greeted by an apologetic landlord who said that all his lower gravity beers had been consumed by prodigiously thirsty customers and only Old Growler and Suffolk Strong from Nethergate were available. Sadly, said mine host has since retired and sold the pub, which is currently closed.

Final pub call was the Pride of Spitalfields where we were joined by Mike and Elaine Beavington and Crouch Vale Brewers Gold was enjoyed. Then round the corner for some ethnic cuisine before returning to the PoS. An enjoyable day, albeit an unhealthy one!

TWICKENHAM BREWERY

The Twickenham Brewery revived brewing in the town in 2004 after a break of 75 years. It was set up by Steve Brown, a refugee from the IT industry. A small premises was found in the back streets and a 10-barrel brewing plant was bought from Springhead in Nottinghamshire. Having negotiated a large truck through the narrow winding back roads, squeezed the brewing vessels through the front door and set the equipment up, brewing could begin. Since summer 2005 this has been handled by Tom Madeiros, a native of Boston, Massachusetts, who formerly brewed across town at Grand Union. Geoff Neat, drayman and brewer's assistant, completes the small work force here. Having begun life with a range of just two beers, Twickenham now produces up to 14. These can be found in an ever increasing number of pubs in west London and small inroads are being made into the centre of the capital. The brewery itself has just enough room to store raw materials alongside 6 brewing vessels and some office space. A separate premises nearby is used for cold storage. Ideally Steve would have liked to expand into the building next door, had it been available, to include an area for hospitality and merchandise. But despite the cramped conditions Twickenham is producing some very pleasant ales and you are advised to give them a try if you should happen upon them. Have a look at their website at <http://www.twickenham-fine-ales.co.uk/>

20 or so SPBW members visited the brewery near the end of February. Early starters tried out some of the best local pubs first and were pleasantly surprised to find that the Prince Albert, a Fullers house, was running a small beer festival. Our main meeting place was the Prince Blucher on Twickenham Green, also owned by the Chiswick brewery. This is quite a large pub, popular with rigger fans (like many in the area to be fair) with the usual Fullers range. It's also just a few minutes walk from the brewery where two firkins were set up for us to sample (Spring Ale 4.3% and Smiler's Ale 4.8%). Sadly we weren't offered any Naked Ladies (a 4.4% brew, the name inspired by the statues of water nymphs in York House gardens in Twickenham). When we had drained these and before we left we were asked to help Steve and Tom by shifting all the empty casks from outside (where they had been moved to make space for us) back into the brewery. An unusual end to an entertaining evening.

RJ

From the postbag

Sir

In the note (PiH 98) about Chris Hutt's *The Death of the English Pub*, RJ revealingly misquotes the author. 'But if the major brewers are allowed to move with as much freedom and as little accountancy in the next ten years as they have in the last ten, then the death of the English pub, which has already happened in many parts of the country, could well be accomplished elsewhere.' Mr Hutt in fact wrote 'accountability' not 'accountancy' and might well agree with those who think that too much accountancy was part of the problem.

Yours faithfully

Richard Graham, Wembley

HARLOW TO BELGIUM AND BACK

BMAD trip to Brussels October 2006

Friday

All 18 of us on time for 8 am coach pick ups. No hold ups on motorway – slow crawl along the Embankment. Driver decided to shed fuel by taking three circuits around Waterloo roundabout but finally deposited us to face notional security before sampling the pricey refreshments in the departure lounge; no visible signs of alcohol – yet.

First results for Don's organisational skills – seats near front of train and we were sitting together. Pity about the champagne-drinking woman who didn't shut up until she got off at Lille!

Arrived Brussels Nord after negotiating change at Midi and managed to overcome directional problems with a combination of Margaret's compass, Don's map and a little bit of guesswork. Then down Blvd Roi Albert II to Husa President Park hotel. Quite impressive 4-star with large rooms. Soon deposited bags and got stuck into Duvel etc in the bar.

Reconvened after various degrees of 'tarting up' ready to hit the town. Back up Blvd A II in search of the Bourse and basics. First sight of Place de la Bourse disappointingly dominated by a large McDonalds and we eventually had to give up on this area and head towards the Grand Place in search a decent foodie bar. Soon found a corner bar, albeit calling itself Danish but with hopes on the part of some of the women that the food would prove to be as tasty as the waiter.

Margaret and Martin hadn't yet worked up an appetite so headed off to research a decent drinking hole. On their return everybody seemed in good spirits, although Dave R thought they'd served him half a pigeon instead of chicken. Peter had sampled his first Kwak and fallen in love with the beer and the glass – another ex-lager drinker, we hope. As for the glass, we'll name no names, suffice to say it's found a new home over the water! Kim's huge saucepanful of mussels seemed to slow down her camera finger. We all then decamped to *Au Bon Vieux Temps*, a cosy bar tucked down an alley with loads of old tiles, stained glass windows and a great selection of beers. We eventually worked out that the custom involves the waitress taking orders at the tables after she remarked about "the English always being in a hurry."

Then back to the hotel to find that the previously chirpy barman had morphed into a misery, but didn't let it spoil our fun or our enjoyment of the peanuts in those very nice containers!

Saturday

All managed to appear for continental breakfast without too many signs of hangovers. Off to Brussels Nord station where 18 on the concourse suddenly became 16 on the train to Midi. Where were Andi and Dave? Eventually reunited at Midi where Don and Margaret were called into action again for direction-finding to the working Cantillon brewery/museum (producers of Lambic beers) in the Anderlecht neighbourhood. Fascinating tour of a clean, historical building on several floors, culminating in a loft containing an open copper tank where the beer was left, in the cooler months of the year, to absorb special bacteria from the Brussels atmosphere. The tour guide was a real character. A woman speaking excellent English who really knew her stuff,

was enthusiastic about her subject and proceeded to tell us all about the different sugar-free beers, their benefits for all of us (including breastfeeding women – a first for BMAD tours?), organic ingredients, fat American people and the evils of Coca Cola. This was all topped off with samples of the dry, citrusy beers which some declared would take a bit of getting used to – with the exception of Martin Co who was immediately hooked.



La Grande Place, Brussels (photo by Bill Stansfield)

The group then divided into two, one party heading off for a taste of Bruges. The rest of us headed towards the centre for shopping, eating and, of course, sampling Belgian beers. Best find was the *Poechenellekelder* next to the Mannekin Pis, full of character with an amazing range of beers, including some from Cantillon. Groups found their own way back to the hotel, hopefully taking in the magnificent Grand Place for a real ‘wow factor’.

What the Bruges gang got up to is one for them to report! As they didn’t make it back ‘til late they understandably relaxed into the facilities at the hotel. Doreen and Chris also enjoyed a meal at the Husa after a false start in the ‘wrong restaurant’ where they were declared interlopers and had their bowls of soup whipped away from under their noses. The rest of us roamed into the centre where Jackie and Andi had a nasty moment outside the Danish restaurant when they saw the hunky waiter from the night before and thought he was going to demand his Kwak glass back.

We found a pleasant bistro, then downed some beers at *Aux Bon Vieux Temps* before heading back to see what state of inebriation the rest of the gang had achieved.

Sunday

Well! 16 of us made it to breakfast. Then there was time to kill as there wasn’t really time to make it back into the centre and back and there were several sore backs and pairs of feet from Saturday. Martin Co managed to relocate his transvestite bar (it’s a long story!) in the Rogier district near the Nord where several of us celebrated the sun rising over the yard arm with beers at very reasonable prices and one of us actually managed to acquire a Belgian beer glass without nicking it.

Back to the hotel to find some having lunch before heading back for the Eurostar. All aboard! Well done Don!

Margaret Edwards

NATIONAL WEEKEND

The National Weekend is now a well established highlight of the SPBW year which has been well supported in recent years. The 2007 weekend will take place mostly in Cheshire. The ideal base for the weekend is Crewe.

Events definitely arranged are:

Friday evening: visit to **Titanic** brewery in Burslem. With more than 20 years of brewing under its belt, Titanic's superb range of ales are widely found in the free trade. It has one pub, the Bull's Head, also in Burslem and we will call in here for beer and buffet after we leave the brewery.

Sunday morning: visit to **Woodlands** brewery in Wrenbury; founded in 2004 and brewing with spring water, their beers are deservedly making an impact in local pubs. Followed by lunchtime session down the road in the Bhurtpore Inn, one of England's finest pubs, serving up to 11 handpumped beers plus excellent food.

On Saturday we will arrange a bus tour of some of Cheshire's best pubs. There is a total cost of £15 to cover charges for the brewery visits and solid refreshments. If you want to come along, please let John Rooth know (with cheque payable to SPBW); you'll need to arrange your own accommodation. Thanks to Colin and Duncan for making local arrangements.



The Last Word – from Norway

It almost seemed like a miracle to Haldis Gundersen when she turned on her kitchen tap and found the water had turned into beer. Two flights down, employees and customers at the Big Tower Bar were horrified when water poured out of the beer taps. By an improbable feat of clumsy plumbing, someone at the bar in Kristiansund, western Norway, had accidentally hooked the beer hoses to the water pipes to Gundersen's apartment.

"We had settled down for a cosy Saturday evening, had a nice dinner, and I was going to clean up a little" Gundersen said "I turned on the kitchen tap and beer came out."

However, Gundersen said that the beer was flat and not tempting, even in a country where a half litre can cost about 25 kroner (\$3.75) in grocery stores. Per Egil Myrvang of the local beer distributor said he helped bartenders reconnect the pipes by telephone. "The water and beer pipes do touch each other, but you do have to be really creative to connect them together" he told local newspapers.

Gundersen joked about having the pub send up free beer for her next party. "But maybe it would be easier if they just invited me down for a beer" she said. From *Khaleej Times* (Middle East). Thanks to Andy Parr (Surrey) for the cutting.

SPBW PRODUCTS

40th Anniversary Tankards <i>(white bone china with colour motif)</i>	£10.00
T-shirts <i>(woven motif on white XL/yellow L/black XL)</i>	£9.00
Sweatshirts <i>(Woven motif on royal blue/burgundy/jade, XL only)</i>	£15.00
Polo Shirts <i>(woven motif on royal blue XL/burgundy L, XL/jade L, XL)</i>	£13.00
Denim Shirts <i>(Blue, long or short sleeves, L, XL, XXL)</i>	£20.00
Fleeces <i>(Navy, royal blue, bottle green or black, L, XL, XXL)</i>	£21.00
Ties <i>(multiple motif on blue)</i>	£6.50
<i>(multiple motif on brown or green)</i>	£5.00
Hats <i>(Acrylic knitted, woven logo on royal blue, black or bottle green; one size only)</i>	£5.00
Enamel Badges <i>(gold motif on black rectangle or brown motif on white oval)</i>	£3.00
Greeting Cards (no message inside) <i>(pictures of 4 classic pubs; pack of 20)</i>	£5.00

You can admire our product range on the SPBW website!

- **Please add £3.00 per order to cover postage and packing; if only ordering badges add only £1.00**
- **Please send your orders to Dave Samuel** (see page 2)
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The Bricklayers Arms, Putney (see page 9)