

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

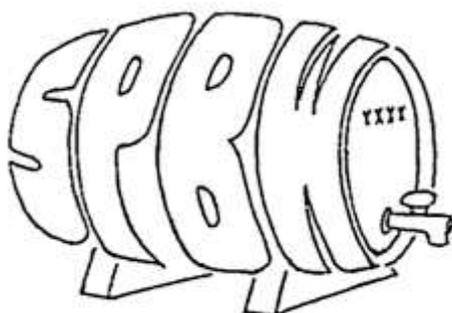
PINT in HAND

Number 106

May 2008



*The Fox & Goose, Hebden Bridge (see page 16)
Photo by Jefferson Hammond for Pennine Images*



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 August 2008 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*.

© Copyright Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood

All photos by Roger Jacobson unless stated otherwise

Editorial address

Roger Jacobson

email editor@spbw.com

Membership Secretary

Roger West, Four Winds, 70 Chalfont Road, Seer Green, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 2QP; email membership@spbw.com

Branch Liaison

Bill English, email beeel@myway.com

Products

Dave Samuel, email spbw.products@btinternet.com

General Secretary

John Rooth

email john.rooth@gfk.com

National Chairman

Chris Callow

email chris@callow.com

Website: <http://www.spbw.com>.

On-line forum: <http://www.spbw.com/bb>

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

Two constantly recurring themes in this column are rising beer prices and brewery takeovers/closures, so allow to me to carry on.

Marstons have followed last year's takeover of Ringwood with the acquisition of Refresh, which brews the Wychwood and Brakspears brands. It is also apparently the UK's largest brewer of organic ales. This appears to be yet another example of a large brewing combine getting its hands on some well known beers brands: in this case, Wychwood's Hobgoblin and Brakspears bitter. What isn't clear is whether those brands will be found in the more than 2,500 pubs in the Marstons empire; will they be jostling for bar space along with Ringwood and Jennings beers? Maybe so, judging by this quote from Marstons' press release: "Following the acquisition Marston's has an unrivalled range of beers to offer to its pub customers, and an increased share of the growing take-home market." Ah yes, the take home market: the bottled version of Hobgoblin can widely be found on supermarket shelves. I wonder what Marstons consider to be the most significant: the pub or take-home trade.

It's a fair bet that more people will be doing their drinking at home following price increases as a result of the latest Budget. 4p a pint tax has translated to at least 10p over the bar and all the threats of rising costs of raw materials will make the beer drinker pay closer attention to her/his budget. Only last night I was charged £9.45 for three pints (admittedly of fairly high gravity beers) in a central London pub; this may be exceptional but only rarely will you get change out of £2.50 for a pint anywhere these days.

The drastic duty increase is a blatant revenue earner disguised as a challenge to the perceived epidemic of binge-drinking. The Chancellor will have had to be very badly briefed if he genuinely believes that this will have the desired effect. All it is in real terms is another nail in the coffin of the pub trade – and thus of traditional beers. While supermarkets in particular, and off-licences can sell heavily discounted drinks there's no need for the determined binger to go into a pub, except perhaps to round off an evening's drunken debauchery.

However much you have to pay for your beer, it's always nice to have a decent choice. A recent trip along the Grand Union Canal showed two sides of this coin. A good few of the pubs visited were depressingly in the grip of a large brewery based in Bury St Edmunds, even if the beers were sometimes disguised under the names of defunct breweries. Alternatives were all too often the likes of Spitfire and London Pride. It was something of a relief to come across some pubs which were sufficiently enterprising and supportive of local breweries to offer beer from the likes of Tring, Frog Island, Slaughterhouse, Weatheroak and Purity; all of which were enjoyable and all the more so for not being mass produced and transported for long distances. Support your local brewers before they get taken over – if you can afford it!

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 AGM of the National Executive Committee was held on 10 March and attracted some 25 members, representing 8 of our branches. As usual the business was got out of the way fairly quickly, leaving plenty of time for socialising, consuming the buffet, holding a raffle and, of course, sampling the usual range of Harveys beers. These included the 4.8% Porter, the latest seasonal offering.

There were no changes to the Committee but, for the record, this admirable bunch are:

Chris Callow: Chairman
Mike Hall: Vice-Chairman
John Rooth: General Secretary
Jim Woodcock: Treasurer
Bill English: Branch Liaison
Roger Jacobson: Editor, Pint in Hand
Dave Samuels: Products
Roger West: National Membership

The Chairman's report and the 2007 accounts appear elsewhere in this issue.

NATIONAL WEEKEND 2008

If you've recovered from last year's event, or are regretting not taking part – now you start planning for the 2008 gathering of the SPBW clans. This year we are heading for **Ipswich** on the weekend **7 – 9 November**. We have arranged visits to 2 of Suffolk's smaller breweries:

Friday at 7.30 pm: **St Jude's** – established in late 2006 and now the only brewery in Ipswich.

Saturday at 11.45: **Old Cannon** in Bury St Edmunds. Not quite on the same scale as another outfit up the road, in an earlier incarnation it was a brewpub from 1845 to 1917; brewing started again in 1999.

The brewery tours cost £12 and £9 respectively and include beer and food.

Members of our Ipswich branch will look after us and, as well as visits to key local pubs such as the Fat Cat and Dove Street Inn, there will probably also be a coach tour of rural pubs. To cover the cost of the two brewery visits, John Rooth will be collecting £21 deposits. Please send him a cheque (made out to SPBW). If we go ahead with coach hire there will of course be more to pay at the weekend.

We hope to have details of local accommodation in the near future.

MEETING THE PUBLIC

In an attempt to meet the drinking public, recruit new members, sell products and have a few pints, we get out and about to run stands at beer festivals when we can. Since we've been priced out of the GBBF we prefer to concentrate on smaller, local fests. Our next public appearance will be the Ealing Beer Festival, held in Walpole Park from 2 – 5 July. Why not come along and say hello to our hard working team?

Later in the year we expect to return to the Wallington and Pig's Ear fests.

AUGUST BEER & BUFFET

We will be holding our usual Eve-of-the-GBBF Beer & Buffet at the Andover Arms, 57 Aldensley Road, Hammersmith, 7.30 for 8.00 start. This is a Fullers pub that has featured in the GBG regularly in recent years. Nearest tube stations are Hammersmith and Ravenscourt Park. Tickets in advance £5.00 from John Rooth (address on page 2) - please send a cheque payable to the SPBW and a stamped addressed envelope.

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 Harp, as current holder, is ineligible this time round but there are plenty of other worthy contenders. Closing date for nominations is ***14 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.

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.

BEER AND CURRY 2008

On a wet and blustery Sunday in March a cricket team's worth of beer and curry buffs attended this annual East End event. Starting at the **Bow Bells**, near Bow Church (my local – geographically at least – RJ) the sensible ones had a good pint of Brakspears rather than my cloudy London Pride. The party availed itself of bar offerings of whelks, prawns, crabsticks & roll-mop.

Ignoring the over-crowded, free (at least that's how the locals see it) bendy bus, we braved the elements to make the short walk to the **Coborn Arms**. The Youngs bitter was pretty good, although I got another cloudy one, and they had Deuchars IPA available, this being introduced in some Youngs houses. More free bar snacks, this time of the carbohydrate variety were voraciously consumed.

We then made the short but scenic route (even if developers & planners have done their best to damage this) via Mile End park and adjacent Regents Canal to the **Palm Tree**. More fishy freebies were washed down by Everards Tiger (my favourite of the day) and Adnams. Jazz background music provided a pleasant ambience and one bar had an interesting collection of sporting caricatures from the 60s and 70s.

Finally on to the **Pride of Spitalfields** in Heneage Street, off Brick Lane. Sadly after I returned a pint of muddy Crouch Vale Brewers Gold this ran out, the first time ever in more than 20 years that I have been unable to obtain a guest beer in this establishment. However the Pride and (for the foolhardy) the ESB were in good fettle.

For our curry we chose the Balti Standard which with 10% discount and free popadoms only cost us £17 a head for all courses including drinks and a tip. The food was excellent and the number of dishes very large including a number of Bangladeshi specialities.

As in previous years the trip was not without incident. After a free and frank exchange of hand signals between the vice-chairman and the driver of a white van (who was unreasonably trying to drive down the road), the said driver confronted 5 burly members of the party (although SPBW burly is a different animal to say England front-row burly). The incident passed off without physical injury.

In the restaurant one of our party's belching attracted comment from an Antipodean Labour voting university type (as the accused party described the accuser). A scene from Lawrence of Arabia in which a Welsh bloke played an Arab was surprisingly invoked in defence of this action, although older film buffs in the group thought that this famous piece of cinema history might have come instead from Ben Hur starring Charlton Heston. Fortunately this incident also passed off without physical injury.

Branch eater status is not awarded on this event, but special mention should be made of the Branch Liaison officer who consumed 3 pickle trays (don't you mean the contents thereof? – RJ), before his starter arrived.

JR



TONY LITTLER TROPHY

The upstairs room at the Calthorpe Arms in Grays Inn Road was full to capacity for the latest inter-branch contest on 21 February. No less than six branches were represented and RACS, Campden Hill and Central London had enough members present to field two teams each; CRAPS, Wantz and Special were augmented by stray national members. John Rooth had the dubious task of trying to manage the assembled rabble and organise the event, as well as collecting money for the buffet and organising a raffle – which he largely carried off with aplomb.

With pints of Youngs ales at the ready (in prime condition as ever at the Calthorpe) we got down to the first stage – ‘round the clock’ at darts. The standard was generally as abysmal as ever (not least yours truly) and in about an hour’s hopeful throwing no team had advanced beyond 8. These scores were to be carried through to the next section of the competition, a quiz on beer and other beverages. The questions were a fairly mixed bag; perhaps the oddest asked how many gallons (to the nearest thousand) of beer were lost in drinkers’ beards, moustaches and other facial hair each year (answer below*).



The Calthorpe Arms

Tension mounted as the final scores were called out and totted up; only at the very end was Special Branch revealed as the winner, narrowly holding off one of the Campden Hill teams. This is the first time for many years that Special have competed but we did donate the trophy and win the first contest back in 1985. So, having won twice with Wantz branch in recent years I find myself on the winning side once again, despite my wayward darts; John O'Connor, Ron Kirkman and special guest Paul Thomas completed the team.

Along the way we tucked into a superb buffet as well as numerous pints, helping towards a most enjoyable evening. Well done to John for organising the whole thing and to Adrian and staff for fine hospitality. Special Branch now has the honour of organising the next event.

*21,000! Glad I'm clean shaven!

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The May 1998 issue of PiH (no 66) had a drawing of Tolly Cobbold brewery on its cover, for no apparent reason. It was at least a working concern at the time although its days were numbered. The brief report of the '98 AGM records that Mike Hall had joined the NEC as Vice-Chairman, a role he has maintained ever since. The Tony Littler Trophy evening had been held in the Rugby Tavern, Clerkenwell and hosted by Nick Martin. Like the latest such event, darts and a quiz were the order of the day; back in '98 Campden Hill prevailed on the night.

Ten years earlier PiH appeared in its now familiar A5 format for the first time. On the cover was a photo of Don Duran, manager of the Spanish Galleon in Greenwich, which had been voted SPBW's London Pub of the Year. The SG stands on a prominent street corner in the town centre and nowadays is owned by a long-established brewery in Faversham. The presentation was covered by Irish television and other media, Mr Duran being a native of the Republic. The international flavour was maintained with reports from Munich, Israel and Australia. Also featured at length was the most recent National Weekend in Dudley and environs. This was an excellent and very well attended event which included visits to four breweries and a maltings, as well as copious imbibing in some of the region's classic pubs.

Now let's delve back to the SPBW News Letter dated May 1977. Headline item was that the Society had submitted to (the then) MAFF its submission on the Food Standards Commission Report on the definition, composition and labelling of beer. Although largely welcoming the Report, our submission did recommend tightening the definition of 'draught' so as to rule out the use of blanket pressure. On a less technical note, Richard Graham recounted an NEC visit to Yorkshire to meet West Riding branch (not the present group but an older and later defunct outfit). Focal point of this weekend trip was the branch's 10th anniversary dinner; it's not clear where this took place, but the preceding afternoon (including 'residents pints!') had been spent at the Blue Pig in Bradford. This event actually took place in February 1976 but such was the 'frequency' of SPBW publications at the time that this was Richard's first opportunity to put his account in print.

On the last page is a list of all Whitbread tied houses in Greater London serving beer 'as we like it' – all 18 of them! On the other hand it's reported that Ind Coope claim to have Burton Ale available in 800 of their pubs. Burton Ale is still brewed – but in Leeds. Whatever happened to Whitbread?

Finally, the report from Coate branch in Wiltshire: a recent guest speaker was a doctor from a local psychiatric unit. His topic was the psychological effect and the problems drink can create for society. It was noted that during his short talk he consumed five pints, chain smoked and coughed continuously.

<p>Some back issues of <i>Pint in Hand</i> are available:- numbers 46-49; 51; 53; 71; 84-105. These can be obtained from the Editor (address on page 2) in return for twenty 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.</p>
--

SPBW National Executive Committee Chairman's report 2008

Welcome to the Royal Oak here in London. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the pub for supplying us with the venue and looking after us for the last year and the support they have given to the officers of the National Executive Committee. All members are entitled to attend our business meetings, they are fairly informal affairs.

The latest winner of the London Pub of the Year is the Harp in Covent Garden. This pub serves various beers and is also close to theatres, Trafalgar Square and Charing Cross. The next event will be starting soon, if you have the stamina to join the dedicated team of samplers who have to visit each nominated pub please let us know.

Our Products Manager, Dave has increased the range of SPBW products within the portfolio to include key rings and useful bottle openers. The sale of products helps keep the society going, and is an ideal way of spreading the word about the society. Our range will continue to grow, and we have the ability to produce small numbers of some items, so if you want something special for that anniversary, please let Dave know.

Pint in Hand has been going now for 105 issues, and is now printed on unbleached, recycled paper and so we can be declared more green than before. A steady stream of articles has been coming in, but Roger will always be pleased to receive anything pub and beer related for future publication. Please also pass on any pictures you have of pubs etc, we may use them in PiH, future Christmas cards or the website.

On the website, if you have not visited it in a while, please pop in and have a look, it changes regularly, and the popular SPBW forum continues with various discussion groups. I also recommend each branch to manage the dedicated area set aside for them on the forum.

The National Weekend visit to the Cheshire had eighteen members visiting various pubs and a couple of breweries. This year's event is fixed for 14 – 16 November; please watch out for PiH 106 for more details. Other events arranged have included various socials around London, the next one being the Beer and Curry event next Sunday. The SPBW have also been spreading the word at various beer festivals over the last year, including a re-visit to the Pigs Ear festival in Hackney.

I extend a warm welcome to our newest branch, the Croydon Real Ale Preservation Society, if there is interest in any new groups, please contact Bill English.

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 an enjoyable forty-fifth year of the SPBW.

Chris Callow, Devizes, 9 March 2008



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

<u>YEAR</u>		<u>YEAR</u>
<u>2006</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>2007</u>
712.58	Sales of Society Products and Donated Items	769.02
	<u>Less: Cost of Sales:</u>	
1068.20	Opening Stock at Cost	778.00
332.30	Purchases for Resale	335.90
<u>(778.00)</u>	Closing Stock at Cost	<u>(674.93)</u>
90.08	<u>Gross Profit from Sales</u>	438.97
336.00	Funding for Events and Miscellaneous	122.60
260.00	Branch Affiliation Fees	220.00
1372.00	National Membership Fees	1096.00
<u>30.96</u>	Interest on Deposit Account	<u>72.64</u>
<u>2089.04</u>		<u>1511.24</u>
		1841.29
	<u>Expenditure</u>	
929.90	Pint in Hand	1090.20
125.50	National Membership Provision	(6.00)
59.00	AGM Expenses	21.00
197.46	Administration and Sundry Expenses	89.05
<u>80.63</u>	Depreciation	<u>68.53</u>
<u>696.55</u>	<u>Balance - Surplus of Income over Expenditure (2006 - Surplus)</u>	<u>1262.78</u>
		<u>578.51</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2007

<u>YEAR</u>		<u>YEAR</u>
<u>2006</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>2007</u>
3131.47	Balance at 31 st December 2006	3828.02
<u>696.55</u>	Surplus of Income over Expenditure (2006 - Surplus)	<u>578.51</u>
<u>3828.02</u>	<u>Balance at 31st December 2007</u>	<u>4406.53</u>
	<u>Represented By:</u>	
	<u>Fixed Assets</u>	
2392.69	Equipment at Cost	2392.69
<u>(1935.80)</u>	Depreciation to Date	<u>(2004.33)</u>
456.89		388.36
	<u>Current Assets</u>	
778.00	Society Products at Cost	674.93
586.61	Sundry Debtors	191.00
225.06	Cash in Hand	161.32
163.28	Balance at Bank Current Account	409.86
<u>2811.68</u>	Deposit Account	<u>3780.56</u>
<u>4564.63</u>		<u>5217.67</u>
	<u>Current Liabilities</u>	
1193.50	National Membership Provision	1187.50
<u>-</u>	Sundry Creditors	<u>12.00</u>
<u>1193.50</u>		<u>1199.50</u>
<u>3371.13</u>	<u>Net Current Assets</u>	<u>4018.17</u>
<u>3828.02</u>	<u>Net Asset Value as at 31st December 2007</u>	<u>4406.53</u>

Accounts prepared by Treasurer:

Accounts audited by Hon Auditor:

I have checked the above Accounts, presented by the Treasurer, and found them to be correct, subject to confirmation of the brought forward figures from earlier years and sight of the Bank Statements for the period ended 31st December 2007.

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.

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: 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@sky.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 usually held in Reading; contact John Dearing 0118 958 0377 or gpwild@btconnect.com to find out where and when.

CROYDON REAL ALE PRESERVATION SOCIETY: Meet on the first Tuesday of each month in The Green Dragon, High Street Croydon CR0 1NA, and also every subsequent Tuesday at a pub somewhere in, or easily reachable by public transport from, Croydon. (These additional venues change weekly, and are intimated by email during the previous couple of days if you have supplied your email address to John Smith.) Contact Pete McGill 07831 561296 (m) or John Smith 02071884844 (w).

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

IPSWICH: Contact Phil (01473 644923) or Iain (01473 253540) for details of meetings.

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 or the website www.racs.org.

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: <http://www.geocities.com/canaladmiral/Special.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 at 8.30 pm at the Prince Albert (Rose's), Hare Street, Woolwich. Usually four handpumped guest beers are available. 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!

NEWS FROM HARVEYS

Miles Jenner, a true gentleman and hero of the brewing industry, has sent his best wishes to the SPBW and adds: "Incidentally, we are currently installing the 5 barrel brewing plant which we purchased from the Golden Galleon at Exeat Bridge, Seaford, some five years ago. I hope to re-create some historical brews on it, dating back over a century, and to this end will be requiring a small population of wooden casks. Hopefully, this is music to your ears."

THE PERFECT PUB PAGE

How about an example of a small pub in a small town that appeals to a wide selection of customers without resorting to gimmicks and that puts an emphasis on quality? Look no further than the ***Harvester Inn***, set in the heart of Long Itchington, Warwickshire. The town lies on the A423 between Coventry and Banbury, and the Grand Union Canal runs past the southern edge of town. The pub is on Church Road, to the west of the main road (turn off at the pond).

The Harvester is a true free house and has been owned by the Mills family since 1984. Its two regular beers come from the excellent Hook Norton brewery: Hooky Bitter and Old Hooky, and a third handpump dispenses an ever-changing guest ale. On my recent visit this was from Wye Valley and was replaced by one from Church End. Budvar Dark is also available on draught.



Despite its overall modest dimensions, the Harvester is divided into three distinct areas: the main bar area is an L-shaped room; there is a side room with pool table and WiFi access; and there is a 28-seat restaurant. You can also eat in the bar and the food is not only top quality but exceedingly good value. Essentially a fairly quiet pub, it has the feel of a true community local, a real family pub with a friendly welcome and service. Look out for the chutneys and jams with risqué names made by customers. Along with the other five pubs in town, the Harvester takes part in the Long Itchington beer festival at the early May bank holiday.

The pub opens 12 – 2.30; 6 – 11 Monday to Saturday and 12 – 3; 7 – 10.30 on Sunday. Have a look at its website www.theharvesterinn.co.uk but a visit in person will be even better! We need more pubs like the Harvester Inn.

RJ

DRINKING BEER FROM THE WOOD

A rare local opportunity to try a range of beers matured in wooden casks was presented at Ipswich's Dove Street Inn winter beer festival held at the end of November. Landlord Ady Smith (an SPBW member) has bought various wooden casks in recent months – some new (imported from France and designed for the storage of wines) and others older (refurbished traditional pins). During the festival he offered six beers served from these wooden casks which I was fortunate enough to try. In the new casks **Mauldon's Black Adder** (5.3%) was delicious with a rich woody-tannin flavour with lots of blackberry flavours. Whilst in the older casks **Earl Soham Sir Roger's Porter** (4.2) was smoky and earthy with a dry fruity flavour. **Old Chimneys Good King Henry** (9%) was rich and liquorishy, with a distinctive winery, dry-woody finish. **Nethergate Old Growler** (5%) was given a distinctive musky flavour but may have improved with longer storage. **Woodfordes Headcracker** (7%) smelt a little like whisky with a sweet malty taste and smooth honey flavours in aftertaste. Finally **Theakstons Old Peculier** (5.7%) supplied in the brewery's own wooden casks had sweet fruity, cherry flavours with woody fruity finish.



Half of these beers were also available in the more common metal casks, so that the difference could be better appreciated. Personally I think the new casks gave a richer taste difference with the tannin from the (oak) wood obviously affecting the beers character. The older casks are still a bit experimental at this stage but would probably be much improved through longer beer conditioning periods and regular usage. The Black Adder and Old Peculier however, are now regularly available in the pub and I heartily recommend them both. I would also encourage any SPBW members to use this rare opportunity to taste such beers. Look out for more experimental beers in wooden casks at the next beer festival being held at the pub (21 - 26 May) and give them a go. Well done to Ady for investing both time and money in this unusual project and bringing some new flavours out of some of our favourite beers.

Nigel Smith

ALAN COULTHWAITE 1927 - 2008

The Watermill Inn at Ings in Cumbria has been regarded as one of the region's most notable pubs in beer loving circles and has had numerous deservedly favourable mentions in these pages. We are therefore sad to report that Alan, founder and former landlord of the Watermill (and SPBW member), died on 7 April. He had been suffering from emphysema and Alzheimer's.

Alan was born in Barrow-in-Furness but moved with his family to Birkenhead where he worked as a wages clerk for Camell Laird before becoming a top fire extinguisher salesman. He was keen on amateur dramatics, particularly comedy, and also played the drums in a quartet.

Alan had always dreamed of running a pub and eventually he took over the Cornwood Inn, near Plymouth, which was Good Beer Guide listed from 1984 – 87. But Alan was also devoted to the Lake District and had always been keen to return to the area. So in 1987 he took over the Mill Holme guest house at Ings (between Kendal and Windermere) with the intention of converting it to a pub. After a long battle to obtain a licence, the Watermill was opened on 8 December 1990 in a blizzard. 5 real ales were on tap and on the first lunchtime precisely 5 customers arrived. Thankfully trade expanded considerably since then, as did the pub – it has been expanded at least four times – and the beer range; up to 16 handpumped beers are usually available including some from the pub's own brewery. Alan had obtained the recipe for the original, Ulverston-brewed Hartleys XB but, regrettably, too late for him to be able to recreate his favourite beer at the pub. The Watermill has been a regular entry in the GBG since 1992 and has been CAMRA Westmorland branch's Pub of the Year no less than 14 times, 12 of them consecutively. Its highest accolade was being voted Runner-up National Pub of the Year in 1999.

Much loved by many, Alan was a devotee of real ale, Manchester United, the Goons, and he loved people's company. His repartee was legendary especially with regular customers who would gather round the bar to enjoy his witty tales and one-liners. On one occasion he invited some ladies to dine at a more distant table only to be told: "Oh no thank you – we are waiting for the cabaret to start!" Alan told the tale of a visit of a rep from a very large brewery, who told him of all the discounts he could have if he took their beers. But then the rep looked at the row of handpulls on the bar and said "Of course to have our 'fine beers' on sale here, you'll have to get rid of all these real ale beers." Alan let the rep sweat for a while and then said, in his finest Lancashire accent "Reet lad, thanks for popping in and your way out would you close the door behind you please."

The Watermill was Alan's dream come true and his daily passion long into retirement. It will stand as his permanent memorial. He remains close by, buried in Ings church. He is survived by Barbara, whom he married in 1952, his son Brian who will continue to run the Watermill, and his daughter Ann. Our condolences to them all.

Acknowledgements to Ken Lowe, Alan Risdon and Brian Coulthwaite

CIDER AND BLACKCURRANT

Andy's Roving Report

Fox & Goose, Hebden Bridge

To my mind, this is by far the best pub in this Pennine town and would be highly regarded anywhere in the country. It stands at the western edge of the town centre on the junction of Heptonstall Road.

The Fox & Goose has three small rooms and one enters the lounge/bar room first of all, with its real fire – a definite bonus in winter when the weather in these parts can get a bit arctic. The somewhat pygmy bar counter is immediately in front: during our visit on Easter Sunday, there were 5 beers and a perry available. I am informed that there's usually a dark beer (be it mild, stout or porter) and this time it was Castle Rock Black Gold mild at £2.20 a pint. The most expensive was Pictish Blue Moon, which weighs in at 6% and cost £2.70. One look at the pump clips adorning the ceiling and walls would convince anybody that no effort is spared in providing the customers with a great variety of ales. The Black Gold mild was excellent, as was the OSB from Oldershaws brewery of Lincolnshire. The pub was packed, needless to say.

To the right of the bar counter is the entrance to the games room, which even has a bar billiards table, a rarity these days. The gents are through here in case you are ever looking for it. On the left of the bar is the third room, which is the venue for the Sunday folk club and the pub hosts regular music sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays as well.

For the last 5 years, the Fox & Goose has been holding a regular Whitsuntide beer festival, which will be held this year over the last weekend in May, which includes the bank holiday Monday. The F & G was awarded the West Riding branch's Pub of the Season plaque about 10 years ago when it was run by the previous landlord, when I wrote about the presentation for PiH. You'll be pleased to know that the present landlord is keeping the standards high, so I definitely recommend this hostelry to the entire readership and even the ungodly who don't read our magnificent publication.

Station Inn, Midland Road, Derby

Blessed with attractive frontage (though obviously extended into the building on its right at some point), the Station Inn is a mere five minutes walk from the railway terminal.

To the left of the entrance, the main bar room is clearly the original part of the pub, with its tiled floor and some original glasswork. The pool room is in the extension and there is a considerable number of sporting trophies on display. Of course, and important reason for visiting here is to sample the Bass, which is conveyed from the barrel in the cellar to the bar in a large stainless steel jug. The beer is of first class quality and I thought it a great shame that we only had time for one pint before we had to move on. The Station Inn is a popular pub and is only a short stroll from the perhaps better known **Brunswick** and **Alexandra** so anyone visiting the hostelryes of Derby has no reason not to call in.

Updates

Here's a few bits of info (hot of the press [as of early April – RJ]) of some pubs previously mentioned by me in PiH.

Firstly in Leeds: on the Headrow, **Mr Foley's Cask Ale House** – formerly known as Dr Okell's and previous to that known as Baroque, now owned by York Brewery and opens on Sundays from 11.00 onwards. You will usually find 10 beers available, with York Brewery supplying Guzzler, Terrier and Centurion's Ghost as well as one of their seasonal beers. The other six ales are chosen from just about anywhere in Britain. The pub has started live music sessions on Sundays and is now named after Patrick James Foley, whose statue adorns the roof. I have read that it is to be hoped that the sculpture in no way resembles the living Foley. The building is Grade II listed I understand. The telephone number is 0113 242 9674.

Over in Wakefield, the **Fernandes Brewery Tap** in Avison's Yard off Kirkgate, is now owned by the Ossett Brewery and the 1st floor Continental Bar has opened. It is rather good, lots of wood and a low ceiling. You'd think it had been there for donkey's years! There's a decent selection of foreign beers on draught and in bottle, with one of my favourites from Belgium (Gordon's) in stock. There's two handpumps as well, one for an Ossett beer and one for a cider or perry. I have actually witnessed some spotty youth ordering a pint of the latter and asking for some blackcurrant cordial to be added! Apart from such heresies, it is definitely worth visiting both here and the upstairs bar, where beer aficionados are catered for.

BRANCHES IN ACTION

Campden Hill held its 500th branch meeting social at the Andover Arms, Hammersmith, on Monday 3 March. John Rooth, who beat former winner Ken Davison in the final, won the Keith Hudson darts competition on 27 March at the Sekforde Arms, Clerkenwell.

On 28 April Clive Poge arranged a Carshalton pub crawl, starting at the Windsor Castle, which had a large selection of beers. From there a short walk to the Greyhound opposite the scenic pond, which had a good drop of Youngs. Then the Racehorse where we were disappointed with the Batemans Valiant and steered clear of the Courage and GK. The final pub, the Railway, had Fullers in good condition. CRAPS members joined us to ensure a good turnout.

On 8 May we went for a Polish meal at the Patio restaurant in Goldhawk road. The following events have been arranged: Monday 23 June meet in the Sultan, Norman Road, South Wimbledon from 7.00 then to Slurps (Japanese/Chinese) restaurant, 138 Merton Rd for 8.30; afterwards to Trafalgar, High Path Merton. On Saturday 26 July we are have a joint outing with Common Branch, probably in the Reading area.

CRAPS hosted a mini pub crawl in central London in March. Starting point was the Princess Louise in Holborn, newly and impressively refurbished by Sam Smith, and ending at the Harp in Covent Garden.

Ipswich branch's AGM was held at The Dove Street Inn on 4 April It was agreed to have a social on the Thursday, 20:00 of the Dove's three annual beer festivals. i.e. 22 May, 28 August, 27 November.

Wantz's latest eating venture was to Chimes restaurant in Pimlico. Apart from some excellent English fare, there are also 3 ciders on draught so we had to try them all, purely for research of course! All round, Chimes has the Wantz seal of approval. Aperitifs were consumed at the nearby Jugged Hare where Fuller's IPA was particularly appreciated.

We have arranged a visit to Brentwood Brewery on Saturday 21 June at 12.00. Cost is £10 including lunch at the nearby White Horse. Please contact Roger Jacobson (see page 2) if you want to join us.

West Riding will be visiting various Yorkshire beer festivals and have an outing to the Grassington (Wharfedale) are on 17 May; the next branch meeting is at the Shepherds Rest, Sowerby Bridge, on 25 May. The branch sponsored one of the beers at the Guiseley Factory Workers Club Beer Festival in April. Congratulations to branch members Barrie Pepper, who turned 75 on 3 May, and Andrea and Paul, who got married on 28 June.

BEER IN CIDER COUNTRY

A couple of days strenuous walking in the delightful Welsh border country also provided a rare opportunity to sample some Herefordshire brews in their native county. My companion was Duncan from Crewe, a useful guide both across country and in town.

We stayed overnight in Kington, a town I last visited in 1983 as part of Wantz branch's celebration of its 100th meeting. Penrhos Court Brewery, which was the focal part of that weekend, is long gone but Kington can at least boast two very small breweries of its own. The ***Wine Vaults*** on the High Street is the home of the Arrow Brewery, whose 5-barrel plant is at the rear of the pub. The Vaults is a fairly small, narrow and cosy no-frills pub and Arrow bitter (4.2%) was the only handpumped ale on our visit; a pleasant brew and nicely priced at £2 a pint.

At the far, eastern, end of town is the much renowned ***Olde Tavern***. This was formerly known as the Railway Tavern, and my OS map shows traces of the old railway line. The Olde Tavern has two small rooms, wood panelled and full of interesting curios, and a tiny bistro is somehow squeezed in at the back. This seems to be a real community pub but, as strangers, Duncan and I were made most welcome. The pub is home of the Dunn Plowman Brewery, which brewed at the Queens Head elsewhere in town before moving to the OT in 2004. Four ales were available on our visit but we just had time to sample two, the Brewhouse and Kingdom bitters. The first of these was a bargain £1.75 a pint and tasty to boot. This pub is highly recommended indeed.

The following afternoon found us relaxing in Hereford, taking in the city's two brewery taps. These are handily situated close together on St Owens Street, not far from the city centre. First stop was ***Barrels***, owned by Wye Valley Brewery. Brewing took place at the back of the site from 1986 to 2003 when expansion took the brewery to the former Symonds Cider plant in Stoke Lacy. The whitewashed front of the building clearly shows that the pub was formerly the Lamb Hotel. Inside there are four separate rooms although I was a trifle weary and not inclined to explore much beyond the front bar where we sat. I

did notice the interesting stained glass windows, not to mention the impressive range of Wye Valley beers at the bar. The brewery has a significant presence in the free trade and its Dorothy Goodbody brands have attained a degree of controversy for the name and packaging. Leaving this issue aside, I've always enjoyed Wye Valley beers and those I drunk in Barrels were of high quality and the pub provides an impressive showcase.

A hundred yards or so further down the road is the **Victory**, home of the Spinning Dog brewery since 2000 - the name comes from the owner's dog's habit of chasing its own tail. The pub stretches back quite a distance and the street end of the bar is built in the shape of a galleon, most unusual. Live bands perform at the far end, where there is also a skittles alley. Reflecting another aspect of the county's drinking heritage, the Victory offers four draught ciders. Of the beers we tried, I was most impressed with the Organic Oatmeal Stout, but there should be several options to choose from.

Staying in the county, a short train ride north is the attractive town of Leominster, where a short walk from the rail station is the **Chequers**. This is a timber-framed building, thought to be the oldest pub in town, dating back to the 15th century. In our all too brief stay this struck me as a comfortable, bustling pub with a welcoming atmosphere. As I wasn't taking notes I can't report on the full beer range but we enjoyed a pint of Hobson's bitter, brewed in the neighbouring county of Shropshire. But Herefordshire is a delightful rural county producing some fine ales and you could do much worse than pay a visit.

The Last Word – from Notts

Tired of seeing gazebos or umbrellas outside pubs for sheltering nicotine addicts? Maybe more publicans should follow the example and initiative of Sean Fields, owner of the Horse & Jockey at Selston (between Mansfield and Nottingham), who has recycled an old church lichgate for this purpose. By constructing some seating and adding a couple of tables, the shelter is so comfortable that it attracts non-smokers as well.

Sean found the lichgate some 15 years ago while passing by the site of the Methodist Church in nearby Ripley, which was being demolished. He was told that he could take it away as long as he could provide transport and a crane. The gate was moved to Sean's back garden where it served as a ferret house, dog kennel and Wendy house for his daughter. The gate dates from 1943 when it was erected to commemorate the life and work of the Rev John Elkes, former pastor of the church.

The purpose of a church lichgate was to shelter the coffin and pallbearers while they were waiting to enter the church (the word is derived from an Old English word for corpse). My (Chambers) dictionary give the definition as 'a roofed churchyard gate (to rest a bier under)' which is a handy pun in this context. Cynics might also suggest that this type of shelter is particularly appropriate for smokers.

With thanks to *Booze News*, free magazine of Mansfield & Ashfield CAMRA.

SPBW PRODUCTS

40th Anniversary Tankards

(white bone china with colour motif) £10.00

T-shirts

(woven motif on white L, XL/yellow L, XL/black L, XL, red L, XL) £9.00

Sweatshirts

(Woven motif on royal blue/burgundy/jade, XL only) £15.00

Polo Shirts

(woven motif on royal blue L, XL/burgundy L, XL/jade L, XL) £13.00

Fleeces

(Navy, royal blue, bottle green or black, L, XL, XXL) £21.00

Ties

(multiple motif on blue) £6.50

(multiple motif on brown or green) £5.00

Hats

(Acrylic knitted, woven logo on royal blue, black or bottle green; one size only) £5.00

Enamel Badges

*(gold motif on black rectangle or brown motif on white oval)** £3.00

**stocks running low, new badges coming soon*

Greeting Cards (no message inside)

(pictures of 4 classic pubs; pack of 20) £5.00

New: **bottle openers** and **key rings** with cask motif. £1.00

We are also producing **coasters** and **fridge magnets**: contact Dave Samuels for details.

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, bottle openers or key rings add only £1.00**
- **Please send your orders to Dave Samuel** (see page 2)
- **Please make cheques payable to SPBW** and include a telephone number or email address with your order. Allow up to 28 days for delivery.



The Barrels, Hereford (see page 18)