

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

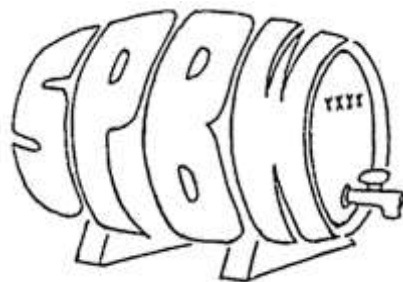
PINT in HAND

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The Leopold, Portsmouth (see page 7)



PINT in HAND

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- 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

Life used to be fairly simple for both the drinker and barperson where beer was concerned – pint or a half? There's just the possibility this hitherto simple choice may be extended. That well known body, the National Weights and Measures Laboratory have come up with the idea of a two-thirds of a pint measure (a twoth?). This brainwave has been picked up by the British Beer and Pubs Association who are very much in support. The BBPA think that the twoth is the ideal measure for high strength beers.

Well, really. Just how strong must a beer be before the consumer wilts at the prospect of downing an entire pint? If the ale is so powerful why not just make do with a half and go back for another if still standing? The twoth has all the bearings of a good old compromise which is of no real use for anyone. Regulars at beer festivals will be aware that one-third measures are quite common, giving the drinker the opportunity to sample a wider range of beers than halves, let alone pints, might allow. Fair enough, although such a measure may be of less value in a pub, particularly one with a limited choice (unless the beers are of mind blowing alcohol content of course!)

Perhaps the way forward is for the drinker to say “when” while the beer is being poured and be charged the appropriate proportion of the cost of a pint (the necessary equipment should be a useful additional burden to publicans who have such an easy life). Or how about half-litre measures for those who wish to align themselves with our continental brethren? Maybe we should just stick to halves and pints after all.

A far more worthy initiative has come from long-established midlands brewery Everards. When we visited Titanic brewery a year ago we first heard of what is now known as Project William. Under this scheme, Everards is buying closed or dilapidated pubs and letting them to local, small brewers. There currently are seven pubs let under the scheme: Titanic is tenanting three, Steaming Billy Brewing Company (Leicester) has two, while Ashover Brewery (Chesterfield) and White Horse Brewery (Oxfordshire) have one each. A number of other breweries of similar stature are also hoping to benefit from the scheme.

Microbrewer tenants are free-of-tie on cask ales, but agree to sell one Everards beer; they are tied on all other products. The scheme's success relies on Everards buying and refurbishing pubs at low prices and a retail offer centred around the local microbrewer's products and signage. Microbrewer tenants benefit by earning much greater margin than most tenants are able through selling their own cask-ale products, which enjoy Progressive Beer Duty benefits.

Now, I think this is a splendid scheme and full marks to Everards for the initiative. Wouldn't it be a nice idea if other similar regional brewers could jump on this bandwagon (how about the likes of Robinson, Thwaites, Brain, Wadworth?) There is surely no lack of small breweries that would jump at the chance of getting involved. I can't really see any losers: the 'sponsor' breweries get the rent and sales of their beer and other drinks; the small and microbrewery sector gets a boost and of course the consumer gets more choice. We can but dream.

The traditional seasonal best wishes to all SPBW members plus brewers and publicans who take pride in their profession.

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 possible 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 2009 AGM of the National Executive Committee will take place on **Monday 9 March**, probably at the Royal Oak. Full details will appear in the next issue of PiH or through the usual electronic channels. Our AGMs are by tradition short and informal business meetings and provide excellent opportunities for our members to get together.

As ever we will welcome volunteers for a post on the NEC; anyone interested should contact John Rooth.

OUT AND ABOUT

Two social events and two appearances at beer festivals to report:

Social number one was in August on the eve of the Great British Beer Festival (apologies for omitting the actual date in the last issue). We chose a new venue for this – the Andover Arms, a Fullers house in Aldensley Road, a back street in Hammersmith. This is a friendly pub with well kept beer and, on the night, an ample supply of excellent buffet. A few new faces were in attendance, which is always good to see.

The second event takes place very soon after this issue is due to be published: **Monday 17 November**. This is the legendary Beer & Curry night at the **Wenlock Arms** with Alasdair Boyd cooking up his fiery potions. If you read this in time and want to come along, please contact John Rooth pronto so we can let Alasdair how many victims – sorry, guests – he has to cater for.

On the festival front, our team were back at Wallington beer festival in October and did good business. Our next public appearance is at Pig's Ear from 2 – 6 December. Venue is again the Ocean in Mare Street, Hackney (at the north end almost opposite Hackney Empire). Over 100 beers and ciders are promised and it's invariably an enjoyable event. We hope to see some of you there.

As part of a general publicity drive we had 1,000 SPBW beer mats printed in the summer. These have been distributed to pubs of distinction throughout the country. They certainly look good and have been well received by lucky landlords (well, they are free!); time will tell what degree of interest has been generated.

LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to the ***Dog & Bell*** in Deptford, which has been adjudged the SPBW London Pub of the Year.

The voting this year was particularly close since each of the six judges chose a different pub as first choice. The other five were: Bree Louise (Euston), Bricklayers Arms (Putney), Pembury Tavern (Hackney), Royal Oak (Borough) and Sultan (Wimbledon). However, when second choices were counted, the Dog & Bell emerged as a clear winner. Well done to Charlie and Eileen who already have two of our awards on their wall, having won this competition in 2002 and 2005.



We will present the award at the pub on Thursday 29 January, 19.30 for 20.00. As ever we'd love to see a good many SPBW members there; the pub's address is 116 Prince Street (corner with Watergate Street, off Evelyn Street), SE8 3JD. Buses 47 and 188 run along Evelyn Street; Deptford rail station (London Bridge line) is about 10 minutes walk away. Cutty Sark and Greenwich DLR stations are less than a mile away.

Described in the 2009 Good Beer Guide as 'a London Gem', the Dog & Bell is a smallish, cosy pub with an ancient bar billiards table in one of the drinking areas. Tucked away in a narrow side street it attracts a diverse clientele which represents the 'up-marketing' of the area alongside the traditional Deptford locals. As well as numerous SPBW and CAMRA awards, the pub walls feature art from local colleges.

Regular beers are Fullers London Pride and ESB; there are three ever-changing guests, often from such breweries as Dark Star, Nelson and Whitstable, and at prices usually well below £3! Lovers of Belgian bottled ales should find their needs catered for as well, and if you need more solid fare, the catering side has been stepped up since the D & B last won our award and the food is recommended.

The Dog & Bell has a website: www.thedogandbell.com.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The November 1998 issue of PiH announced “35 years of good ale” as we were about to commemorate that anniversary. The birthday celebration took us back to our very roots, the Rising Sun in Epsom where this worthy body was founded all those years ago. The pub was holding a beer festival at the time and one of the attractions was an 8% Anniversary beer brewed by Harveys (presumably their Christmas Ale in disguise).

The delights of Otley (Yorkshire), Boston (Massachusetts) and Bamberg (Germany) are recounted by my various roving correspondents – and they all sound worth visiting – while on a sadder note John Liffen provided an obituary of Simon Evans who first introduced him to Campden Hill branch.

10 years earlier and PiH 28 inevitably celebrated the 25th Anniversary, using the start of the minutes of the inaugural meeting as its cover illustration. This celebration was on a grander scale, a dinner in the Bonnington Hotel, Bloomsbury. This proved to be a jolly evening; all attendees received a special Silver Jubilee SPBW tankard. I’ve still got mine; any others out there?

The centre spread was a photo of Wantz branch’s stand at that year’s Dagenham Town Show. I look alarmingly youthful and am also wearing a tie; I’m not likely to be accused of either these days. I (like my colleagues in the photo) am clutching a pint of beer donated by the Phantom & Firkin in Plaistow in those days when many Firkin pubs did actually brew.

Ossie Tillet is also in that picture and he contributed two articles: one on the SPBW stand he helped to run at the Ipswich beer festival; the other on an organisation known as the Pub Users’ Preservation Society (PUPS). The front page of the first issue of their Journal was reproduced – dated May 1946. Subjects of concern included price, décor, rude publicans and short measures (not a lot changes, does it!). Membership cost one shilling and included a ‘beerometer’, a patented device to show how much money the customer had been cheated out of by the head on their beer. I don’t think we ever found out any more about this group; anyone got any information?

And so back to January 1980 and issue 27 of the Branch Newsletter. This was edited by John Liffen, posing as ‘Eddie the Happy Editor’, although most of the content was provided by John Morgan (no wonder ‘Eddie’ was ‘Happy’ if he didn’t have to write much of it!). We learn that Central London branch has just been started (the brain child of Nick Martin), and it’s still going strong (as is Nick). Another new branch was based at the Boot Inn, Berwick St James in Wiltshire, although by contrast I don’t think this venture ever took off. The NEC was considering finding a new meeting place since its HQ, Ye Olde Watling was now closing at 8pm (meetings were scheduled to start at 6). The Branch Diary section showed plenty of activity, by the London branches at least, with visits to breweries such as Tolly Cobbold, McMullen, King & Barnes and Gibbs Mew in the offing. Finally there was an account of a weekend visit to Devizes the previous August which seemed to take in trips not only to Wadworth brewery, but to quite a few of their pubs in town and in the vicinity. The brewery tour began at 9.30 on the Sunday morning and it’s perhaps no surprise to read that “very few made it” on time!

BRANCHES IN ACTION

In August Clive arranged a pub-crawl for **Campden Hill** branch in Portsmouth. We went in some excellent pubs, and despite a dispute about map reading, we managed to find our way round from Portsmouth station, to Portsmouth harbour station. A notable feature of the pubs was that quite a few had very well preserved facades with the names of long-gone local breweries, such as Brickwoods and Portsmouth United Breweries. The latter was proclaimed on the Leopold Tavern on Albert Road. This is a true community pub selling local brews from the likes of Bowman, Oakleaf and Irving – the last of these having begun brewing at the end of 2007. Look out here for the imposing notice board and darts scoreboard, not to mention many old photos. Two more of the best pubs visited were around the corner from each other: first the Barley Mow in Castle Road. This traditional Victorian corner local had beers from Flowerpots, Ringwood and Irving 42. The Hole in the Wall in Great Southsea Street is a cosy split level pub again with a good choice – Bowman Eldorado, Ballard Wassail, Irving Invincible, Oakleaf Half Hearted, and a strange ginger beer. The numerous Fuller's houses in the city are a reminder that Gale's brewery was just a few miles up the road.



Hole in the Wall, Southsea



Barley Mow, Southsea

In October: A few pints of Young's Ordinary in excellent shape in the Wargrave Arms. We then adjourned to Kandoo, a Persian restaurant in the Edgware road. This isn't licensed, so we collected 3 bottles of stout new world Red Wines (at £4.99 a bottle) from the grocer across the road. Food was typical middle eastern, quite similar to Greek or Turkish. Starters were various dips, with mashed aubergine being prominent, and soups. The mains consisted of chunky lamb or fish dishes, or kebabs on skewers with rice. A highlight was the bread baked in front of us in the clay oven, by a baker getting obvious pride and enjoyment from doing it, including the freebies he gave us. The whole lot came to £15 for starter, main & coffee.

Mike arranged a pub-crawl in Islington. The crowded Island Queen had end of barrel Tim Taylor Landlord, the even more crowded Charles lamb had excellent dark Star Hophead. The star of the night was the late replacement, the Red Lion Theatre bar. We were able to get a seat because the Theatre was in progress, so stayed for a couple of the 5 beers on again including TT Landlord, as well as Harvey, Adnams & Fullers. A large mouse under the piano provided entertainment.

Chesapeake Bay branch has been doing great with a recent crab feast attended by about 160 people. We combined our club and some home brew clubs for a fantastic mix of 6 firkins and many homebrew offerings ranging from incredible German Pilsners to Belgian style sour ale, brewed with a yeast kept alive and cultured by homebrewer, Ben Schwalb and it was originally utilized and developed by our late past president, Ronald Kodlick in his home brew efforts. The firkins were greedily consumed as were 17 bushels of Maryland's finest steamed crabs.

Our Chesapeake Real Ale Festival is taking place on October 18th and will feature 30 firkins this year, including Dogfish Head Brewery's Palo Santo Marron which is a rare Brown ale aged in Palo Santo wood. We have a wide range of Milds, Bitters, Oatmeal Stouts, Pale and IPA's, Imperial Stouts, Porters, 2 Ciders and several wood aged and experimental ales. Nearly 400 people are expected and it's our 5th festival at The Wharf Rat in Baltimore replacing our old festival which used to be held at Racers in Baltimore.

Common and Aldbrickham Branch will be holding a pub crawl on Saturday 28 February to mark the 2nd anniversary of the death of Peter Smith. The 28th is in fact the nearest Saturday to the date of the last major pub crawl undertaken by Peter before his untimely death. An itinerary has yet to be worked out but will in all probability take the form of a Harvey Hop, this being one of Peter's favourite forms of exercise! Any SPBW members who would like to join us will be very welcome. Please contact John Dearing nearer the time for details (Tel 0118 9580377, email: gpwild@btconnect.com)

Ipswich Branch is having a Social on 26 November at 20:00. This is the first day of The Dove Winter Beer Festival (26 - 30 Nov) to ensure that there is plenty of beer from the wood available.

RACS celebrated its 150th meeting on 29 October with a beer festival at the Gate. This was due to run until 9 November, the finish to be marked with a quiz in the pub.

Wantz Branch had its second overseas trip in October, in the shape of a weekend visit to Lille in northern France. This is an attractive town near the border with Belgium and our hotel was conveniently close to the town centre and the Eurostar station. Needless to say there were plenty of bars and cafes where we could find refreshment, mostly in the form of *bier de garde*, the top fermented ales which are a speciality of this region. Inevitably, plenty of fine Belgian beers were also much in evidence; all the places we went for a drink, including the more foody places, offered a good range. Almost opposite where we were staying, in Place de la Gare, is Les 3 Brasseurs, which is as good as anywhere to start. Opened in 1986, this was the first brewpub in France. If you sit at the bar, the brewing equipment is right in front of you and there is a choice of 4 or 5 beers. For a quick sample of the beers, you can order a *palette*, a wooden tray with four 15 cl glasses containing the products on offer. If you want to take some beer home (we certainly did!), a visit to L'Abbaye des Saveurs is recommended. This is a specialist beer shop in Rue des Vieux Murs in the Old Town with a wide range of northern French and Belgian beers, often with the appropriate badged glass on sale as well. Although ours was a fairly fleeting visit it was also a fruitful one.



Nightingale, Wanstead



Les 3 Brasseurs, Lille

Our other recent events have been rather more in our own backyard: a pub walk in Wanstead in late August; and in September a return visit to Singhauri, an excellent Thai café in Leytonstone High Street. In Wanstead we particularly enjoyed the Nightingale in Nightingale Lane and the Duke of Edinburgh, just around the corner.

West Riding have the usual programme of visits to beer festivals, plus an evening trip to Thwaites brewery on 25 November. A recent trip to Stamford and Newark was quite well supported. Stamford is a beautiful place with lots of old property, a bit like a mini York or Chester. It was for the beer that we went and we were not to be disappointed. First up was the Otters Pocket, a bare boards ale house with 6 beers on and all were good. A walk across town to the Tobie Norris where a beer festival was in full flow too. The pub building dates back to 1280 and it shows. It has three levels and the arched ceiling on the top floor is superb. Plenty of beer to go at but the beer festival was on Yorkshire beers so most we had tried before. Must mention the excellent pizzas here too. I also managed the Kings Head and finished up in The Green Man. All had top beer on and with another 10 pubs selling real ale this town is worth a visit anytime.



Green Man, Stamford



Otter's Pocket, next to Melbourne Brewery, Stamford

In Newark is the Fox and Crown, a winner of a West Riding SPBW award 10 years ago and it is pleasing to see it still proudly on display there. Just as good as it was then with about 8 beers on. I had a walk round town and found Wetherspoons with only a couple of beers on and two pubs selling Wychwood beers and enjoyed some Bombardier in The Old Post Office. A great day out.

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.

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!

<p>Some back issues of Pint in Hand are available:- numbers 46; 49; 86-108. These can be obtained from the Editor (address on page 2) in return for 12 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>

BIRTHDAY BREWS

Andy's Roving Report

The GBG-listed **Lord Harrowby** stands in suburban surroundings on the western side of Grantham town centre, on the other side of the river Witham. Sue and I were in the area in early August as part of my birthday obsequies, which normally continue over a week or two: not unceasingly though, I hasten to point out, just the odd day here and there.

As we approached the Lord Harrowby along Dudley Road, we admired some of the houses, which seem to be of the late Victorian or early Edwardian period. The hostelry itself stands on the corner of Dudley Road and Granville Street. From what I can gather, the pub is named after Dudley Ryder, who later became the 1st Earl of Harrowby and was the Foreign Secretary from May to December 1804. He had to resign due to ill health after he fell downstairs and landed on his head – I always thought this was a requisite for the job but there you are. At a guess, I'd say the Lord Harrowby dates from the same era as the surrounding houses but I may be way out.

As one would hope, this is a traditional public house and not some abortion of a 'gastropub' or trendy bar. Sue and I entered the lounge (the tap room is on the right) and found ourselves directly in front of the handpumps at the top end of the bar counter, which has an authentic looking 60s/70s frontage. Three guest beers were being dispensed: I remember one was from Tom Woods' and one from the Black Hole brewery, though what the other was escapes me quite. I tried the Black Hole beer, which hails from Burton on Trent, and thought it pretty decent.

As for décor, there is a positive plethora of RAF memorabilia, even more than at the RAFA club in Guiseley that I wrote about in the last issue of PiH. There are framed pictures, plates, squadron badges etc covering the walls. One presumes some link twixt the pub and the Brylcreem Boys. Also on display was an advert from the local branch of CAMRA that proclaimed that the Lord Harrowby to be the venue for their forthcoming beer festival a few weeks later. This was a great success I have since read.

At one end of the lounge there is a small raised dais just big enough to take a table and a few chairs. We sat here and Sue sipped her drink before going through my pockets and enquiring where all her presents were. I observed that, as it was my birthday we were marking, etiquette demanded that any gifts and gee gaws available should be offered to me. Sue mused over this plainly novel idea for a while before rummaging in her shoulder bag and presenting me with a human head. It wasn't mine (I checked) and presumably belonged to someone else who annoyed her.

The Lord Harrowby is an excellent inn. Visit it the moment you have read this article!

(The Lord Harrowby, 65 Dudley Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 9AB; 01576 563515)

My birthday itinerary continued the week after the visit to Grantham, when 6 of us travelled northwards on the Settle – Carlisle line to Dent station. Alighting here, we walked down the very steep and lengthy hill (admiring the scenery en

route) to the hamlet of Cowgill at the bottom. Here one either turns right and continues to Dent, about 4 miles away, or left and walk alongside the river for about 10 minutes or so to the **Sportsman's Inn**. This hostelry is beautifully situated with views southwards to Ribbleshead Viaduct. The building is of some antiquity and was at one time known as Cow Dub Farm, according to the oldest building records, which date from 1621. The first mention of it being licensed premises is in 1745 and the present landlord informed me that it is the last of 4 hostelries that once graced Cowgill!

As you enter through the front door, the copper topped bar counter is directly in front of you. The beers available on our visit were Thwaites' Wainwright and Copper Dragon's Golden Pippin. There is a quite sizeable room to the left for dining – this is the oldest part of the pub. To the right there is a pool table and a small raised section that contains the piano which is flanked by photographs of the late Ulster motorcycle champion Joey Dunlop.

I tried the Golden Pippin which was in damn' fine form and as this is a proper free house, the licensees (who have been there 21 years) can change the beers or keep on favourites as they choose.

Although well off the beaten track, the Sportsman's Inn is certainly worth calling in at if you are ever hereabouts. Please note: the pub is about 25 minutes walk from Dent station, which is the highest mainline station in England. In other words, it will take you a lot longer to walk back – the hill is a killer! For anyone coming by car, be warned: sat nav is absolutely useless and the road where the inn stands has no name. The advice from behind the bar was "phone us for directions"!

Sportsman's Inn, Cowgill, near Dent, LA10 5RG; 01539 625282.

Although worth the effort, the walk from the Sportsman's Inn to our next stop in Dent was likely to prove a bit far for those of the throng who have been enfeebled by age. Therefore I'd organised a minibus to collect us and drive us in style to our next stop, even though I'd been looking forward to plying the lash on the weedier travellers. I may as well take this opportunity to introduce the rest of the cast, they being Jo, Ray, Al, Bob and Graham.

The transport arrived bang on time and we were in the most picturesque village of Dent about 15 minutes later. There are two hostelries here, but only one is owned by Dent Brewery, the **George & Dragon** on Main Street. This is a substantial sized Grade Two listed building with some excellent wood panelling and surviving leaded lights. There are 4 rooms, two of which are for dining with a good standard of décor throughout: even the pool room is carpeted, with padded settles as well as some striking framed etchings of various local viaducts on its walls.

Of the 5 cask beers on offer, 4 were from Dent and the other was from Jarrow Brewery. Unusually for this part of the world, there was Weston's Perry available and Dent's bottled products can also be purchased here. The quality of the beer was very good: I especially liked the Dent Bitter. The George & Dragon has 10 en-suite rooms, so anyone wanting to spend a few days hereabouts will be well catered for.

George & Dragon, Main Street, Dent, LA10 5QL; 01539 625256

BELGIAN BARS

(The last in this series)

Ghent

Ghent, the capital of East Flanders is the third biggest city in Belgium. With its canals, harbours, spectacular castle, cathedral and town Hall Ghent is an exciting city. There are many good bars in Ghent.

Waterhuis aan de Bierkant is on the banks of the river Leie. The beer list is about 130, and the bar is an atmospheric candle lit place, with wooden furniture. The house beer Gandavum is a hoppy dry hopped beer. A short walk along the river leads to **Galgenhuisje**, the smallest bar in Ghent with about 20 seats, but with a larger restaurant attached. The name means the "little gallows house" and refers to the last drink offered to condemned men on their journey to the nearby gallows. On the largest square in the Old Town is **Dulle Griet** (Mad Meg); this is an old pub with a large beer list of about 120. A truly amazing bar is **Velootjie**. This small bar is cramped with antiques, artefacts and sheer junk. Its name means the Bike and there are many bicycles hanging from the ceiling, amid the candelabras, cobwebs and various old and strange objects. The eccentric proprietor plays classical music. A roaring log fire adds to the atmosphere. The beer was Pater Lieven Blonde, a golden 6.5% beer from Van Den Bossche.

The **Café Den Turk** dates back to 1340 and is Ghent's oldest pub. This is now a jazz and blues café with many posters adorning the walls. The beer list is around 30. The **Gouden Mandeké** is a cosy bar with wooden beams and a farmhouse feeling, with about 40 beers. The **Belga Queen Café** is a post modernist type bar and designer restaurant serving unfiltered Boon Kriek and unfiltered Palm on draught. It has stone walls with a monastic feel incorporating futuristic water feature designs.

There are two very good bars around St Jacobs's church. **Prelude** with its pseudo marble green decorated columns with matching tables and chairs has a list of about 80 beers. **Trollekelder** is a two storey brown pub, with paintings of red nosed customers on the walls. It is a quiet dimly lit traditional pub, with 140 beers. The *Aba-Jour* is a chicken/pasta & steak restaurant with a list of 70 beers. It overlooks the river at the back.

Leuven

Leuven is the largest town in Flemish Brabant, situated 20KM east of Brussels. Its old buildings and large number of students on bicycles are reminiscent of Oxford. Most of the best bars branch off from the central area. **Domus** near St Peter's church is a spacious brown bar with tiled floors. Con Domus, a bland pils is brewed on the premises. **Universum** is a large café with a basic draught list, but with some good trappists on its bottle list of about 65. This is on the corner of a big square.

Wentelsteen has a high-beamed ceiling and plaster walls, with sculptures and paintings around the walls. It is situated in a quiet courtyard. The 10 draught beers were again fairly commonplace, but the bottle list of about 55 was

reasonable. **Blauwe Schuit** is just across the square (Vismaarkt), it is a large café with a large bamboo garden and a salad based menu.

Wierings is off Grote Markt adjacent to the fast flowing river. It is a 3 level dark wood panelled bar & restaurant. It had a lot of wall decoration, including squeeze boxes and film posters. It has taken since 2003 to re-create some of these after the ravages of a serious fire. There were about 60 beers on the list and the food looked good.

Halle

The market town of Halle in Flemish Brabant has a splendid 14th century basilica in Grote Markt (St Martins). Just off the pedestrianised shopping area is **Cambrinus**, a one-roomed tavern, with carpet on the tables. This is a Dutch style brown café serving Boon Kriek amongst a bottle list of about 60.

The **Triangle** has Silly beers and Boon bottles, and is a good eating café. **Sleutel** on Grote Markt is a traditional cafe decorated with Delft tiles, serving De Koninck on draught. The best eatery was **Mouterij** -The Old Maltings. This had Bel Pils and Steendonk wheat beer on draught from Palm/Moortgat, and a very good fixed price menu.

Hasselt

The main feature of Hasselt the provincial capital of Limburg is the **Hemelrijk** Italian restaurant, near the Grote Markt and St Quintus cathedral. It was noted for an extensive beer list, and when this was changed to an Italian restaurant, contrary to local fears the beer list was actually expanded to somewhere in the region of 400. Spoilt for choice, we chose the very far Cantillon apricot, an extremely mature and bitter brew. Kerkomshe tripel a dry golden beer served very chilled was also very good. The **Augustina** brasserie, near the station had a bottle list of about 40. On draught was the Augustina blonde, made by Van Steenberge (8%), which is only sold in Hasselt.

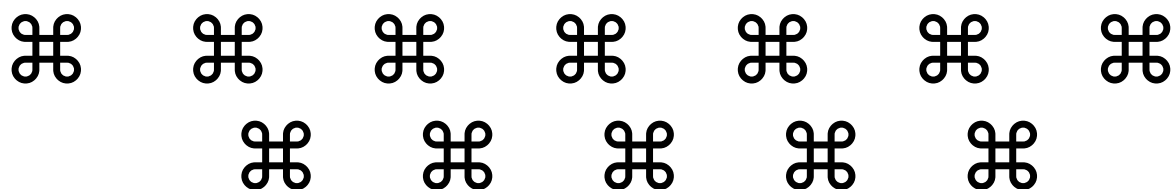
Mons

Mons is famous in the tragic annals of world war I, but was also subject to heavy bombing in WW II. The proud residents have rebuilt the town in its old style twice. The provincial capital of Hainault province with a population of 90,000, this impressive town has a spectacular Grand Place, with fine buildings and a splendid town hall. There are many good bars in Grand place.

Cervoise is a long, thin café with a large beer list. The **Excelsior** a fine brasserie has standard draughts, but a good Flemish bottle list and an excellent (especially the fish) menu, in a wood panelled dining hall setting.

Copenhagen is a bar/café serving Danish food. Timmermans sweet commercial peche was on draught.

John Rooth



'IDEOUS 'ISTORIES

The Blue Pits, Castleton, near Rochdale

Unusually titled, the pub continues the name of the former hamlet of Blue Pits (or Pitts) that was swallowed up by the town of Castleton about 150 years ago. The Good Beer Guide, in which this hostelry regularly used to appear, remarks on its history of being used as a morgue (cellars) and for the holding of coroner's inquests (upstairs). This article will concentrate on one of those inquests.

During the last week of February 1887 a coroner's court was held in the Blue Pits to inquire into the death of Mary Ann Finley the previous February. Dr Thomas Harris, of Manchester Royal Infirmary informed the inquest jury that, having examined Mrs Finley's body at Moston Cemetery, Manchester, he had failed to find any natural disease that would explain her death. The stomach and other bits were sent to Dr Paul of Liverpool University College, who lectured in Medical Jurisprudence. He had found traces of a poisonous substance called atropia, an alkaline in Deadly Nightshade which could destroy the nervous system, thus causing death.

Surgeon W H Sharples of Castleton, who had signed the death certificate of Mrs Finley, said that he'd had no suspicion at the time and had stated the cause of death to be cerebral haemorrhage. Having listened to Dr Paul's evidence, however, it was his opinion that death was caused by atropin poisoning. The deceased's symptoms of irregular muscle movements, flushed face and quick pulse all indicated this.

A Rochdale chemist, John Taylor, then told the court that, on 9 February 1886, a woman aged around 30 came into the shop and signed the poison register to purchase sulphate of atropia for use as eyedrops. She signed the book as Ellen Saunders, workhouse nurse. The same female returned three days later for more, claiming to have knocked the bottle over. She then asked for a double dose to be made up to save her having to come back.

But who was the mysterious 'Ellen Saunders'? The Master of Oldham Workhouse, William Lawton, stated that the signature was very similar to that of the daughter of Mrs Finley, one Elizabeth Berry, Head Nurse there. The sister of the deceased, Sarah Pemberton, told the court that Mrs Finley's health had gone west after her daughter had arrived to nurse her. She further stated that, along with the neighbours, she'd heard the old lady complain that some medicine given to her by Elizabeth Berry had "tasted worse than poison".

On 28 February, the jury returned a unanimous verdict of wilful murder against Elizabeth Berry. EB was not at the coroner's inquest however. Having been on trial throughout it at Liverpool Assizes on the charming capital charge of having murdered her daughter, Edith, by poisoning her with sulphuric acid at the start of January 1887. She was found guilty and sentenced to death. Motive for the murders was simple – insurance money. Elizabeth had a great love of moolah and the fine clothes that one could purchase with it. Elizabeth took the 8 o'clock walk on the morning of 14 March at Walton Prison,

Liverpool; she was the first to be executed there as all previous toppings were carried out in Kirkdale gaol. Ironically, she died flat broke, even having to will all her earthly possessions to her lawyers to pay off the legal fees.

Andy Whitley

*Sources: Good Beer Guide 2002;
Classic Murders of the North West by Sara Lee*

POOLE'S GOLD

I always thought Poole was little more than a minor adjunct to Bournemouth. After a very pleasant day there in July I know that in fact it's quite a substantial town in its own right. No longer the major port it once was, Poole relies heavily on the tourist trade – hardly surprising given its terrific location. The main areas of interest (on land at least) are the quay and the well preserved old town that lies behind it. Rather more spectacular is Poole Harbour - the largest natural harbour in Europe and the claimant of the title of second largest natural harbour in the world after Sydney Harbour. It is an area of international importance for nature conservation and is noted for its ecology, being an internationally important habitat for several species of migrating birds. It contains several small islands, the largest being Brownsea Island, a nature reserve owned by the National Trust and the birthplace of the Scouting movement.

There's plenty for the beer drinker to scout around for as well. You can do a simple pub crawl along the quay where there is a good number of licensed premises close together, including a Wetherspoon. The only one here I visited was the **Portsmouth Hoy**. Named after an old sailing vessel this has a ship-like wood interior with wooden and glass partitions. Badger beers are on offer in the front bar.



Bermuda Triangle, Parkstone

From the quay you can take a scenic walk east along the coast to the district of Parkstone. Here (in Parr Street, 50 yards off the A35 main road) you will find the **Bermuda Triangle**. On my visit this offered 2 Dark Star beers and one from Thwaites. Note the unusual, custom-made beer engines with swan necks alongside the handpump. The one bar is L-shaped with several nooks and crannies and there is a variety of pirate-themed décor plus an aircraft wing on ceiling. The pub offers regular live music but I had to make do with the Beatles' White Album and the Blues Bros on CD.

Back in the old town have a look for the **Angel** in Market Street, a quiet side road close to the High Street. This is Ringwood's only tied pub in Poole and had about four of their beers as well as Jennings Honey Bole (note the Marstons connection). The pub consists of a U-shape room around long bar and features a part wood-panelled ceiling. Standing next to the historic Guildhall, now Poole Registry Office, the Angel is a genuine community pub supporting various charities and with regular quiz and live music nights.



Angel, Poole

My favourite of the pubs I visited was the **Brew House** in the pedestrianised High Street – look out for the distinctive blue frontage. Formerly owned by the now defunct Poole Brewery, this is now under the auspices of Milk Street brewery of Frome. The Brew House offered four Milk Street beers including one named Beer, said to be the cheapest in town (£2.30 pre-budget). The pub is a nice quiet retreat for shoppers, consisting of a long narrow split level room with 2 pool tables and darts board to the rear. There are numerous old prints and CAMRA awards on wall and a wheel bedecked with hops on ceiling. From here it's less than 10 minutes stroll back to the rail station. London is less than 2 hours away and it's a journey well rewarded.

RJ

NATIONAL WEEKEND 2008

By the time you read this the Weekend will have come and gone. 20 or so members were due to head for Ipswich for what should be another splendid event. Look out for the full exposee in the next issue!

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.

The Last Word – from Gloucester

There's nothing new about binge drinking. The Gloucester Journal of 14 March 1903 reported that one Herbert Matthews had been charged with being drunk and disorderly on the street the previous week, being described as being 'mad drunk in Stroud Road'. Matthews was so pissed that 'a truck had to be procured to convey him to the police station'. The Gloucester Police Court was told that this was the third time in a year that Matthews had been convicted of drunkenness. The Court decreed that he should be treated as a habitual drunkard and he was placed on a 'black list' banning him from drinking intoxicating liquor in Gloucester City pubs for a period of 3 years. He was also sentenced to 21 days in prison with hard labour. When the prosecution asked how many pubs he had visited on that fateful day, Matthews replied "about 20!" Asked if he had anything to say about the judgement, the sober Mr Matthews replied: "That's what I wanted to get. I want to be a teetotaller!"

Anyone wishing to give up the booze is recommended to try an alternative method.

With thanks to *The Tippler*, magazine of CAMRA Gloucestershire Branch

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)**

**out of stock, 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 Brewhouse, Poole (see page 18)