

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

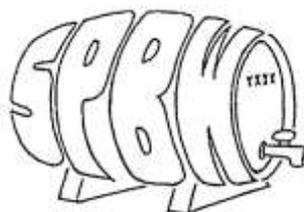
PINT in HAND

Number 109

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Memories of old breweries – from the Fat Cat, Ipswich



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

Instead of my usual rant I thought I'd reflect this time on the SPBW, its past, present and future. This is, admittedly, because I can't think of anything else to write about and my deadline is approaching!

The very structure of the Society is unusual since the Founder Members had little time or inclination for bureaucracy. Back in the 1960s, members were encouraged to form branches so that activities could take place under the SPBW banner; as far as I'm aware, no events were organised centrally. When the Founders handed over the running of the SPBW to a national Executive Committee in the early 1970s this arrangement continued: affiliated branches were completely autonomous. It was as a concession to members who didn't live near to a branch or were unable to form one of their own that the concept of 'National Membership' was introduced. Hence the continuing anomaly that members may either belong to the SPBW centrally or to a branch; there are indeed more than a few members who do both.

Nowadays there are a dozen or so affiliated branches, most of which are active to some extent. Some of these, notably Chesapeake Bay, West Riding and RACS, are quite substantial bodies in their own right. At the other end of the scale, my own branch – Wantz – has just five members yet still manages to be fairly active with various types of events. Needless to say, we are always keen to see new branches formed, especially in areas where we are not well represented in this way. Anyone who lives within reach of a branch is recommended to make contact if not a member: like most organisations, the more you put into us the more you get out.

It's a fact that most if not all of the SPBW events advertised in the early pages of *Pint in Hand* take place in and around London. This is simply because the NEC is based in the Capital (presumably because there was a greater concentration of members from whom such a committee could be formed) and we know we can usually rely on a good turn out of fellow members living in and around London. It's always heartening to see members from outside the usual 'hard core' turn out for events; they always seem to enjoy themselves. This is after all a friendly and sociable Society and there's nothing better than good beer (and food) in a good pub to encourage conviviality.

Having said this, I should add that it's not really practicable for the NEC to arrange events outside the London area since we lack local knowledge and contacts. The exception to this is the annual National Weekend (always a very popular event) but even then, we usually rely heavily on locally based members to help with arrangements. We'd be delighted to see non-branch events being organised in other parts of the country – it just needs individuals or branches to take the initiative.

The SPBW may not necessarily be thriving, but membership at both branch and national level is steady. With even more people getting involved and supporting events the Society can get even stronger. I'm looking forward to seeing you out and about this year. I hope 2009 will be a good one for you.

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 National Executive Committee's 2009 AGM will be held on **Monday 9 March** at the **Royal Oak**, Tabard Street, London SE1. The meeting will be held in the upstairs room and is scheduled to start at 7pm. All SPBW members are invited to attend what in many ways is a social event with a (hopefully) short business meeting throw in. A buffet will be provided to help wash down the range of Harveys beers.

The Royal Oak is off Borough High Street, between Long Lane and Great Dover Street. Borough tube station (Northern Line) is just a couple of minutes walk away and London Bridge station (Northern and Jubilee tube and national rail) is within half a mile. A number of bus routes run along Borough High Street.

If you are interested in volunteering for a post on the NEC please contact John Rooth (details page 2).

OUT AND ABOUT

We ran a stand at Pig's Ear in Hackney in early December. Although a bug had struck our team (we sounded and looked like the waiting room at the GP's) we did rather good business. Plenty of our stock was sold and we managed to recruit several new members (to whom "Hello and welcome!"). Needless to say we indulged ourselves with plenty of the 'medicine' on offer. Our next public appearance will probably be at the Ealing beer festival in July.

NATIONAL WEEKEND

The 2008 event in Ipswich and environs was a great success and is recounted at length later in this issue. Looking ahead it looks likely that the 2009 gathering will be in Sheffield – a city blessed with numerous excellent pubs and a few micro-breweries. Most probably this will be in November, but look out for more details in the next issue.

BEER AND CURRY

This is annual event, taking place in London's bustling East End. It involves visiting a few pubs, scoffing a Brick Lane curry and, quite possibly, engaging in a frank and honest exchange of views with random strangers. The date for your diary is **Sunday 22 February**. We kick off at the Bow Bells, 116 Bow Road (turn right out of Bow Road tube or Bow Church DLR) at noon; then we visit the Little Driver (also Bow Road) and the Coborn Arms before moving on to the Half Moon (Wethersfield) on Mile End Road and the Pride of Spitalfields in Heneage Street, off Brick Lane.

All welcome; it'll be helpful if you could let John Rooth know if you plan to join us.

BEER AND BUFFET

Another regular occurrence in the SPBW diary, the next B & B is on **Monday 27 April** at the Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR. As ever, this will be a moveable feast as far as starting time is concerned, but get there by 7.30 and you won't go wrong.

The Calthorpe is an excellent Youngs house where the beer and food are always first rate. It's a fairly small pub but we'll be in the fairly spacious upstairs bar.

As ever, cost is a mere £5 and tickets are available from John Rooth (enclose SAE and make cheques payable to SPBW please).

LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR



Chris Callow (r) presents the SPBW's award to Charlie and Eileen Gallagher of the Dog & Bell. Around 15 SPBW members made the trip to south east London for the presentation on 29 January and were rewarded with some fine ales and free buffet. Do try and visit the D & B if you've not done so yet: you're guaranteed a good welcome to go with the beer.

PERFECT PUB PAGE

Let me recommend the **Star** at Acton, on the A51 just outside Nantwich in Cheshire. I first visited it on the last evening of our 1972 trip on the Shropshire Union Canal. I'm afraid after the boozy hell of that week's heavy drinking, I haven't got much recall of it or its beers. All I can remember is fellow Special Branch members Ossie Tillett (the Mad Hatter), Tim Kettley (the Dormouse), myself (Rabbit) and Joe Ross (HomePride man - don't ask) having a Mad Hatter's Tea Party in the pub, complete with hats and props. Needless to say the tea in the tea pot came out of one of the hand pumps and writing this, I now recall the landlord and some of the locals topping it up on a number of occasions! Our "entertainment" must have been ok, as we and the other eight in our party later got involved in "a lock in".

Jump forward to the present day. The pub had suffered a long decline in business and had been closed for two long periods over the last few years but in April 2008 Jim Mason decided to take it over.



I first met Jim at the 2008 GBBF, although I had heard about him from my friend Colin Donald (a CRAP member). We all spent a pleasant afternoon at Earl's Court and I promised to visit the Star again when I was up in Cheshire with my wife and friends later in the month. We weren't disappointed, having a lovely time with plenty of excellent beers from a variety of breweries and good food. I was very impressed in what he had achieved in such the short time since he re-opened the pub.

In October when staying again with Colin, we walked along the canal for another very enjoyable evening (access from the canal is via bridge 93). I had an excellent Beef Hotpot (huge) and got change from £7! The menu is not extensive but there is more than enough choice of the home cooked food

including vegetarian offerings, served most of the day, and the prices being very reasonable. The beers on offer that evening were Copper Dragon Golden Pippin, Hanby Drawwell Bitter, Woods Shropshire Lad, Marston's Bass, Beartown Kodiak Gold Black Bear. All were spot on and kept beautifully and the prices seemed a lot less than around that area. Although tied to a large PubCo, Jim is signed up to SIBA's Direct Delivery Scheme and tries to serve fairly locally brewed beers as much as possible. Bass is the biggest seller with the locals however.

Jim keeps a good pub; he has worked hard to build up his trade, with darts and quiz teams in various pub leagues. All round there is very much a 'community' feel to the pub, with children and dogs welcome. Jim is also a keen supporter of the SPBW and CAMRA and if he and his good lady Liz have achieved what they have in less than a year, they and the Star deserve all the support we can give them. It is certainly my pub of 2008.

In May, when the 14 members of the Special Branch gather for their week long annual Branch Meeting, we intend to have a least one convivial evening with "mine host" Jim. There are even tentative plans for a "games evening" with Jim's regulars. As we are unlikely to win any of the more traditional pub games, maybe we should be thinking of making up some sort of game based around a Mad Hatters Tea Party, after all the pub has a 37-year old history of the "sport"!

*Star Inn, Chester Road, Acton, near Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 8LD; 01270
627296*

John O'Connor

KEN BREWSTER

We were saddened to hear of the death of Ken Brewster, one of our long-standing members, in January.

Ken was born in Yorkshire and went to Sheffield University. His life time loves were traditional jazz and proper beer. In his spare time he worked on airport security systems. After Ken moved to Twickenham he became involved in SPBW (he was an instigator of the erstwhile Pagoda Branch) and Camra. Often to be found in the Express, Kew Bridge, he became a member of the Ring whilst there. Latterly he was Chairman of CAMAL, Campaign for Authentic Lager, helping to organise trips abroad to seek out the decent biers. Ken was a regular supporter of many SPBW events, despite having to travel from the Basingstoke area. Ken was a close friend of ours for over 20 years, a person who no one ever had an unkind word to say about. We shall miss his calm, gentle personality and his dry, mischievous sense of humour.

Ken was a good organizer, very affable and an all-round good egg, as was demonstrated by the large attendance at his funeral on 27 January at Chineham. Incidentally, as he was a jazz enthusiast his coffin both entered and left the church to the sound of jazz.

John Rooth and Sue Hart; thanks also to RG

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The February 1999 issue of PiH featured a drawing of Banks brewery on the front cover with a caption hoping that it stays open. The story was that, after Wolverhampton & Dudley put in a bid for Marstons, the Burton brewery replied with a counter bid; had this gone through it may have spelled the end of brewing in Wolverhampton. Of course, this didn't happen – Marstons was taken over (and now provides the company name), and both breweries remain open.

My scribes had reported on pubs in Bristol (mostly concerning the now defunct Smiles brewery), Nottingham (venue of the 1998 National Weekend) and the Lake District, where Andy and pals enjoyed what must have been a fairly hectic day trip from Leeds.

10 years earlier PiH 29 announced that the annual National Membership rate was being raised to £2, the first increase for nearly 7 years. Even worse news was the demise of Davenports brewery in Birmingham, courtesy of my former bete-noires Greenall Whitley; brewing would be transferred to Shipstones in Nottingham (whose days were also numbered). The Davenport name is kept alive these days by Highgate brewery. Another long established brewery to be closed was Truman in Shoreditch. Although Truman went fully down the keg road for many years, in their latter days the Brick Lane plant did produce some quite acceptable beers. These days the old brewery buildings house, and I quote: “the creative hub of London's East End in an area that is being called the Portobello of the new millennium. To-day more than 200 small, creative businesses are housed in the Brewery. Fashion designers, artists and D.J's work alongside graphic designers, architects and recording and photographic studios.” Who needs beer anyway?

Ossie Tillett continued his series of articles about obscure beer-related groups with a piece on the ‘What Pub Next? Club’. This body was still apparently active in 1989 although it had “no constitution, no objects, possible no morals, and no rules other than that members on turning up put a stated amount into a kitty.” No one seemed sure when the WPN?C was formed, one theory holding that exiled Australians got it going about 50 years earlier. What it boiled down to was an informal drinking club; nothing wrong with that of course.

The centre pages were taken up by a Technology Appeal – the NEC needed to purchase a PC to hold membership records which then were being kept on a very basic computer. Sue Hart set out the case in favour (correctly forecasting that the PC would in the near future be a common office accessory). The Appeal was successful in raising the required £100.

Elsewhere you could read about the world's (allegedly) strongest beer (og1150) then brewed at the Steamboat Inn at Sawley, near Nottingham; and about the beer scene in Canada, such as it was then. Of rather more significance was the first ever article by Andy Whitley, relating a trip to Ulverston, Lancaster and points in between.

BRANCHES IN ACTION

Campden Hill commenced the new year with a meal at the Junction Tavern in Kentish Town, with a good 7 strong turnout. This is a nouveau cuisine gastro pub, but it is in the GBG and the restaurant area is separate from the bar area. Beers on were Hopback GFB, Exmoor Gold and Tring Colleys Dog. The menu included venison or clam starter, duck, sea bass, potato cake, or steak main. Quite good red Argentinean wine was £14 a bottle, and this accompanied the cheese and biscuits well. Future events include a pub-crawl on Thursday 26 February, and the Keith Hudson darts on hopefully Thursday 26 March.

Several members from **Chesapeake Bay** were in the UK in December and visited the Pig's Ear Festival as well as some of London's best pubs.

Common branch has organised the Peter Smith Memorial Pub Crawl in Brighton on Saturday 28 February. Contact John Dearing (see page 10) for details.

RACS enjoyed the usual Yuletide celebrations, not to mention a visit to Nethergate brewery without a look at the brewing site; drinking and eating was the order of the day instead! Coming up: a St Patrick's day celebration on Sunday 15 March with a quiz and Irish themed food; it's St George's turn on Sunday 26 April. The following Sunday RACS will run the usual charity tombola stall at the Sawbridgeworth May Fayre.

Wantz branch kicked off 2009 with a pub tour of London EC3 which has a large number of pubs in a small area. We only took in four of these; a new one for me was the Jamaica Wine House in an alley way off Cornhill, a fascinating old pub but with a boring beer selection. This is handy for the back entrance to the Crosse Keys, probably my favourite Wetherspoon pub!

West Riding branch crossed the Pennines to visit Thwaites brewery in Blackburn on 25 November. About a month later was the Christmas party at the Grove in Holbeck (south of the river from Leeds city centre). In recent months the branch has visited beer festivals from Ilkley to Hackney.



The Grove, Holbeck

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>

SUFFOLK SO GOOD

THE 2008 NATIONAL WEEKEND

Recent trips have taken us to Cheshire, Yorkshire, Sussex, East and West Midlands, and Oxfordshire. This year's November weekend soiree was based around the Suffolk town of Ipswich, with town micro St. Judes and the Old Cannon brewery sited in Bury St. Edmunds, being the two selected candidates for this year's Society visit. Circa two dozen SPBW members from various corners of England (plus our old friend Dave Brightwell from Turkey, who misses British beer, but not British weather) had made the pilgrimage to Suffolk for the weekend jovialities.

Ipswich is a town founded on agricultural industry but, according to Katherine Callow, has many interesting churches, and buildings, as well as the scenic Marina area, a good museum and art gallery.

Early arrivals on the Friday took in both of Ipswich's premier free houses; the **Dove Street Inn**, run by branch member Ady Smith, is on St Helens Street just outside the town centre. This offers a vast range of ales either by handpump or straight from the cask. One or two of these casks are wooden and I recall that Mauldon Black Adder and Theakston Old Peculier were served from the wood that day. Ady is planning to start his own microbrewery in the near future. The **Fat Cat** on Spring Road, further out of town, had about a dozen beers on, all served directly from the cask. Like its sister pub in Norwich the décor consists of memorabilia from long defunct breweries.

The pre-brewery meeting place was the **Greyhound** in Henley Road, a bustling, cosy, classic two bar tavern with both diners and real ale enthusiasts who enjoy a homely ambience alongside the Adnams beer range on offer. The SPBW gave the Adnams Old Ale (4.1%) a good hammering while frequenting the public bar during our short time at the pub. I explored the Adnams Explorer (4.3), amongst others, a brew that I haven't come across for a while.

At 7.15pm we departed for **St Judes brewery** in Cardigan Street, around the corner from the Greyhound. This micro-brewery was established in 2006 by entrepreneur Mr Frank Walsh (who also works for the Museum services) and Colleen Wright in an old music recording studio located in a small 18th C coaching house. This seven barrel brewery supplies several outlets, but most of their beers are bottled by the in-house bottling unit. Frank laid on a welcome buffet, to soak up the reward for his endeavours on offer, which consisted of Ipswich Bright IPA (4.4) and St. Gabriel's (7.0). The IPA was a crisp, light, easy drinking ale, that left a pleasant aftertaste. The St. Gabriel's was one of strong, dark brown, breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper, Christmas beers. A dangerously drinkable ale that needs to be shown the ultimate respect! Several members of the party who failed to do so were in a sorry state, which would slow them down for the rest of the weekend.



Chris Callow (l) presents Frank with an SPBW plaque

Everyone was pleased with the laid back atmosphere and attitude at the brewery and from the brewer, an unusual and unique experience. Having been on countless brewery tours and visits, this was a first, and hopefully will be repeated, soon. A great night was had by all. Cheers Frank!

On Saturday we went to the historic market town of Bury St Edmonds by the shambolic replacement bus system, which infects British transport like a virus every weekend. We were able to get in the **Nutshell**, which is the UK's smallest pub. This was possible because some of those worse for wear from St Judes opted to stay outside and take in deep gulps of cold autumnal air. The GK IPA was acceptable. The Greene King Brewery is a huge concern, the second biggest employer in the town, however we opted to visit somewhere with a reputation for quality instead.



Another SPBW plaque - for the Old Cannon brewers

The Old Cannon Brewery, founded in 1999 by Mike Shallow, is a 7-barrel plant like St Judes, but much more spacious. The brewery supplies its own pub, the **Old Cannon** which is a smart, contemporary, airy pub/bar showcasing four of their real ales. Joe the brewer, a graduate of Herriott Watt Brewing Faculty took us round. Afterwards we consumed some of the brewery

range from the bar, whilst enjoying another excellent buffet. The beers available were Old Cannon Best Bitter ABV 3.8%, Gunner's Daughter 5.5%, Blonde Bombshell 4.2 % and Black Pig, a dark delight in the Old Ale class with great depth and character also 4.2%. Guest beers were Dark Horse Hetton Pale Ale (4.2) and Phoebe (4.7) from the Milton brewery.

Afterwards we visited two more GK pubs. The **Rose and Crown**, was an absolute timeless gem. It boasts not only public and lounge bars, but a 'jug and bottle' (off-sales), rarely seen nowadays. Five GK ales were available, and XX Mild (3.0) and the Ridley's Witchfinder Porter (4.3) were enjoyed at this former Suffolk Pub of the Year, where the landlord has resided for some thirty years. A superb public house, one of the best that I've been to for a while, which is now protected under the English Heritage umbrella. If ever in the town of Bury St. Edmunds, the Rose and Crown is a compulsory attendance. By contrast, the long walk to the **Spread Eagle** wasn't justified by the beer quality.

Our next port of call was Stowmarket. Arriving here the second group were informed by the advance party that the **Royal William** was too crowded and we couldn't be served inside 15 minutes. I shrewdly ascertained that although the pub was packed to the gunnels, the actual bar area was relatively free, and through sheer strength of personality, and by barging several people out of the way, who subsequently turned out to be members of the local rugby club, I was able to get a pint of Deuchars in 15 seconds.

After yet another bus trip, back to Ipswich we visited the **Lord Nelson**, which serves Adnams out of sadly fake wooden barrels, and then back to the Dove Street Inn, where we were able to meet members of the local SPBW branch.



On Sunday, we visited the **Cricketers** (Wetherspoon) to take advantage of early opening, before catching the train for the short trip to Woodbridge, a scenic town also on the Orwell. We managed to visit 5 pubs. The **Sekforde Tap** is a large cavernous place, but as we are all obviously agoraphobic, we all crammed into the bar (about a dozen of us were still standing). The Sekforde had half a dozen beers, possibly too many I fear. A sub-party then took in the **Kings Head**, a traditional wood panelled, oak tabled place serving excellent traditional Sunday lunches, and with a good drop of Adnams, and the **Old Bell & Steelyard** a GK pub, but which had a good drop of Riddleys Witchfinder Porter. Across from there was the **Old Mariner**, which had a log fire and average Woodforde Wherry.

The final port of call, nearest to the station, was the **Cherry Tree**, which was a good choice for eating, although I think that would have been true of any of the 5, and had Wherry in better shape than at the Old Mariners.

Most of the throng left for home on the Sunday afternoon, while the more hardy (or foolish) stayed on for another evening in Ipswich. Indeed, the Cheshire contingent were still to be found drinking in central London on the Monday evening!

Words mostly by John Rooth and Alan Sheppard. Alan's words were lifted from his article in the December/January issue of Swan Supping, magazine of CAMRA Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe branch, to which our thanks.

MERLIN'S FIREWORKS

Andy's Roving Report

The **Market Inn** in Huntingdon is a pub that looks every bit of its 400 years – in fact it is one of the better preserved buildings in a town centre that seems to have had most of its architecture destroyed from the 1960s onwards. Set up a small alleyway off the pedestrian precinct that runs through the shopping area, this is a really good example of a dying breed – yer actual market pub which attracts shoppers and regulars.

Inside there's beamed roofs and walls, leaded lights and an odd carmine effect caused by the prevalence of the colour red in the upholstery and wallpaper. I recall seeing 3 distinct rooms/areas dotted about, which comprise the games room (at the rear), bar and the small lounge which one passes through on entering.

Three cask ales were available: Young's bitter, Potbelly Beijing Black and one from Earl Soham Brewery, which I think was the Victoria bitter. I chose the Beijing Black and it was first class – I can't recall the exact price but it struck me as being a damn' sight less than I expected to pay. Maybe the beer is cheaper on Tuesday afternoons?

Only one gripe – the music tapes being played. These are surely unnecessary in a hostelry where most of the clientele seemed to be perusing newspapers or nattering. Notwithstanding this, the Market Inn is a pub to head for when in Huntingdonshire.

Market Inn, Market Hill, Huntingdon PE29 3NJ; 01480 453332

Although the **Globe** in Glossop is not the easiest of pubs to reach from Leeds, a quintet made the effort in the middle of October, travelling by train to Stalybridge and thence to Glossop by bus. After being met by local Roly Olroyd (of renown), we were shown around several of the inns of the town, finishing at the Globe. Being a brew pub, the house beers are produced on the premises, the plant being that once used by the Merlin Brewery in Leigh. The prices are 'customer friendly' by today's standards – out of 5 of their ales available, I noted that the Porter was £1.80 and the wheat beer was £2.00; the Porter was extremely good, as was another beer I tried called Comet, which

was pale and hoppy with a citrus flavour. Other breweries' products were on sale as well, including a fair old selection of bottled products. Note also the mass of hops above the bar counter.

A pub made for conversation, the Globe is a marvellously old fashioned sort of place, very cosy and comfortable with a tiled floor. I think that there are three rooms downstairs, with a beer garden out back, which is partially sheltered from the elements by a sail! For those in a perusing mood, there are books and magazines aplenty to read plus, for the peckish, a vegetarian/vegan menu. While some of our group tried the curry, others chose the chips – both potato and parsnip kinds. All the grub was inexpensive and definitely well worth the money.

I understand that the Globe hosts live music/ discos and comedy acts on a regular basis. Am I right in thinking that there is an upstairs room or somesuch?

If you find yourself in Glossop, the pub is less than 10 minutes walk from the train station with buses from Manchester and Stalybridge stopping almost opposite. This is another hostelry that is well worth going out of your way to find – so go there at once.

The Globe, 144 High Street West (A57), Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8HJ; 01457 852417

Of all the pubs I have ever scribbled about, the **Guy Fawkes Inn** in York must have the best known historical connection, as Mr Bonfire Night himself was apparently born here! I am not sure in which part of this Grade II listed building exactly (although one website claims it was in what is now the restaurant) but I suppose the question is academic over 4 centuries later.

I understand that the inn consists of two separate dwellings – the front is an early 18th century house with a 16th century cottage to the rear, where the inn's own website states Guido was born. The bar room is in the downstairs front bit anyway – straight through the door and you're there! This is pretty much my idea of what pubs should be like, but so rarely are – brass foot rail, dark wood floorboards, bench seating and even what surely must be a double seated church pew with carved canopy, all illuminated by gas lamps and candlelight. There are two larger rooms to the right hand side of the entrance and what seems to be a beer garden at the top, but I have never been able to investigate thoroughly owing to the number of patrons here. The local CAMRA magazine reports that there was a beer festival in early November, selling beers from casks on the courtyard – I wish I'd known about it!

On the three occasions that I've been there, the Guy Fawkes Inn has had rather a good selection of beers on. I don't know if I hit lucky, but each time there has been a dark beer available, which you won't find in most pubs even in the winter months. When I called in on the first Saturday of this year with Sue, there were 5 beers – one each from Leeds and Daleside breweries, Guy Fawkes Strong Ale (aka York Brewery's Centurion Ghost I am told), Taylor's Landlord and Acorn's Old Moor Porter. We ordered a pint and a half of the latter – my consternation can be imagined when informed the cost was £4.20 – that's £2.80 a pint! "Whah" I thought, and immediately pretended to be dead. This left Sue to pay the bill, which she did after trampling my inert form. The

beer quality cannot be faulted however and whoever is responsible for the cellar knows what they are about.

There's some pretty classy looking accommodation available here, a Belfry suite, four poster beds, the lot. Munching is done on a big scale as well, with a restaurant and bar meals and sandwiches – the food prices certainly aren't excessive for a town like York.

The company which owns the GFI is called de Bretton and they own some interesting bits of York, including the Lamb and Lion further down High Petergate on the other side of the road and next to the walls at Bootham Bar. I haven't been inside this hostelry yet, but hope to be able to report on it for our next issue.

In my opinion, the Guy Fawkes Inn (winner of York CAMRA's pub of the season award for winter 2008/09) is most certainly one to visit if you are ever anywhere near York, but make sure it is someone else's turn to get them in!

The Guy Fawkes Inn, 25 High Petergate, York YO1 7HP; 0845 4602020

Finally we have a great example of what can be done to a pub when a decent company gets involved. At one point closed and with an apparently uncertain future, the **Waggon & Horses** in York was then bought up by Bateman's Brewery. The pub underwent a good clean up and extensive refurbishment in autumn last year. I (with various ratbags) called in on Remembrance Sunday evening to see what had been done.

Bateman's deserve a round of applause for leaving the multi-roomed layout alone and not turning the pub into a shoe box. There're four rooms still, with the bar just to your right as you enter. I lent against the bar counter (brass elbow and foot rails here folks) and perused the beers on offer. We had the choice of no less than six, three from Bateman and three guests, one of which was Dixon's of Wainfleet, rivals from Bateman's own home town. My choice was the Bateman's Dark Mild, a bit of a bargain for the city at £2.10 a pint. The quality was absolutely first class and I pondered how some landlords have the ability to keep the beer this good, whilst others appear to take little interest in their wares. The tattybogles that accompanied me were likewise pleased with their choices.

For the peckish, there is a very extensive menu, plus 'special' nights, like Fridays for fish and chips and Saturdays for steaks. Accommodation is available as well (check their website), so if you realise that your last train has gone rattling down the track, you've no need to leave the pub.

The Waggon & Horses is on the eastern side of the city centre, just outside the walls at Walmgate Bar and stands across the road from another good hostelry, the Rook & Gaskill which I have written about in a previous article. Verdict? Definitely worth calling in for a pint or three.

Waggon & Horses, Lawrence Street, York YO10 3BP; 01904 637478;

website: www.waggonandhorsesyork.co.uk

BEERS AND NUPTIALS IN NEW MEXICO

Jackie Tulip and I got married in Albuquerque, New Mexico USA on 24 November last year, whilst staying at my sister's home there. We were wearing our best wedding apparel that had cost us 'fortunes' ie I wore a Coniston Brewery Old Man Ale t-shirt and Jackie a Watermill Brewery W'Ruff Night t-shirt. Whether Jackie had a 'W'Ruff Night' later is a closely guarded secret!



(L-r Jackie, Ken, Ken's sister)

We went round two breweries whilst in the USA. First, Marble Brewery in Albuquerque in which Ted Rice, one of the two brewers there, took us round. Small breweries in the USA are not small compared to the UK: Marble is about three times the size of Hawkshead, for example. Cutting out all of the technical bits it was an excellent first ever tour of an American brewery. After various samples of Amber Ale, IPA and Hefeweiser we were offered a sample (½ pint) of a beer that Ted had nurtured in wooden Bourbon whisky barrels for six months. You could certainly smell the Bourbon and it had a golden amber colour. The taste was out of this world and the beer slid down all too easily, but beware, the abv is 8.5%.

Marble has a bar attached to the brewery which, apart from selling the brewery's beers, sells t-shirts, sweatshirts, 6 packs of bottled beers etc and also does some good food. We had the Marble Nachos at \$7.50 a plate. If you ever visit here, buy one plate to share unless you're really hungry.

The other brewery was Trummer Pils in Berkeley, near San Francisco; once again not small. The parent of this set up is based in Salzburg, Austria. They decided in 2004 to set up a satellite brewery here to get a foothold in the USA beer market. Darren Moser, Production Manager, was our guide for a 1½ hour visit. We were shown everything and anything we asked to see. One of the main points I can remember is that they have to produce the beer 100% as it

would be produced in Salzburg and they have a quality control laboratory that would shame most UK hospitals. At the time of our visit 70% of production is bottled and the rest kegged. We had samples in the hospitality suite and bade Darren a fond farewell. Seemingly, Trummer Pils won a World Beer Cup award in 2008.

We visited other micro-breweries but only to eat and drink. At the Magnolia Brew Pub on the Heights in San Francisco six of their beers were served through authentic English hand pumps.

Anyway, that's enough from us, but Jackie and I will definitely be going back to the USA.

Ken (and Jackie) Lowe

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 North London

These are hard times for publicans, as we know. Customers in their droves are staying at home, smoking and drinking cheap lager from the supermarket. If, that is, they're not getting smashed out of their gourds on alcopops in trendy bars prior to decorating the pavement outside. The *Independent on Sunday* on 16 August reported how some enterprising landlords are looking to innovative ideas to bring in the drinkers. The Dartmouth Arms in Tufnell Park (a regular GBG entry) is a community-oriented pub that has recently diversified by bringing a hairdresser on Thursday afternoon as a means of bringing in trade at a notoriously quiet time of the day. Thus you can pop in for a pint or two and have your hair done for £9 – supposedly a bargain for London. Now I'm sure you don't expect me to make cheap cracks about having your hair cut while getting half cut. I'd rather do some quaffing with the coiffeur!

Thanks to *Pints of View* (where have I seen that title before?), published by CAMRA Hertfordshire branches

SPBW PRODUCTS

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(white bone china with colour motif)

£10.00

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£9.00

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

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

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(multiple motif on brown or green)

£5.00

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*(gold motif on black rectangle)**

**out of stock, new badges coming soon*

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(pictures of 4 classic pubs; pack of 20)

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£1.00

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

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The Old Mariner, Woodbridge