

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

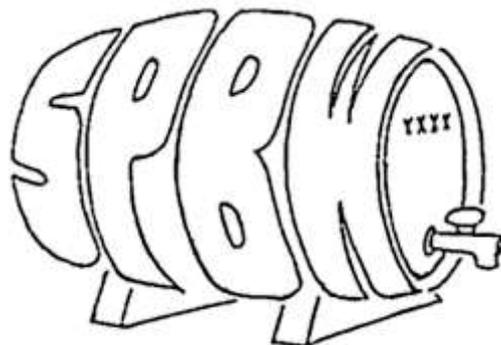
PINT in HAND

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Great Western Hotel – handy for the railway at Exeter (see page 7)



PINT in HAND

- ***Pint in Hand*** is published quarterly, in February, May, August and November. It is issued to all subscribing members and affiliated branches of SPBW.
- All members are invited to contribute articles for publication on beer-related subjects. Contributions for the February 2010 issue should reach the Editor by **25 January**.
- The Editor or the National Executive Committee of SPBW does not necessarily share opinions expressed in *Pint in Hand*.

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

OPENING TIME

An item in the papers that caught my eye recently concerned the lucky pupils at the village primary school in Stoke Bruerne, Northamptonshire, whose lunches are provided by the local Boat Inn. The meals are not delivered to the school: the children must trot along to this canal side GBG-listed pub to eat every day. Obviously the arrangement is beneficial to the school - it is too small for its own kitchen to be viable – but it also represents good business for a pub which is unlikely to be particularly busy at lunchtimes. We assume, of course, that the kids are not washing down their lunches with pints of ale, but at least the experience will accustom them to one small aspect of life and perhaps demystify the idea of visiting pubs. It is a sad failing of many British pub goers that they deplore the idea of children in pubs (they're probably still trying to come to terms with decimal currency and the downfall of the Empire) but, if they are properly supervised (as I imagine the Stoke Bruerne kids are), then why should they be condemned to sitting outside or, worse, the parents not visiting the pub at all?

As it happens, there are those who seem to think that adults shouldn't be visiting pubs either. The anti-alcohol lobby has been making noises in recent months about the supposed need to raise prices and ban advertising of alcoholic drinks. Now we all know the potential dangers of booze and I would not venture to suggest that excess drinking is to be recommended. But we seem to be getting to the stage where enjoying oneself is somehow to be frowned upon. Having turned smokers into pariahs, it is the drinker's turn under the spotlight.

What would be the benefit of raising drinks prices? Well, it would raise more cash for the Exchequer (most of which would probably be wasted on killing people in the Middle East) for a start. And it would drive more people out of pubs, with the inevitable knock on effect for the brewing industry. But it is laughable to suggest that such a measure would deter the determined drinker. A more likely outcome would be an increase in drinks smuggled from the Continent (no duty to be raised there) and the subsequent increase to the criminal fraternity. It's a shame that there seems to be no figure in authority who will speak up for the benefits of pubs, not least in social terms.

And what would a ban on advertising achieve? These days, adverts are almost exclusively promoting specific brands, rather than seeking to increase consumption. (I can imagine it: "Don't be a party pooper – drink shed loads of vodka! Beat up strangers! Puke up in the gutter!") Mind you, weren't CAMRA considering adverts to promote the benefits of real ale over processed beers? That at least would make sense.

As 2009 is drawing to a close, just time to send out the usual seasons greetings to SPBW members everywhere, and to brewers and publicans who take pride in their profession. Have a happy festive period and keep drinking sensibly!

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 2010 AGM of the National Executive Committee will be held on **Monday 8 March**, probably at the Royal Oak. Full details will be in the next issue of PiH and on our website. All SPBW members are welcome and AGMs tend to be short affairs, leaving plenty of time for socialising. As ever we will welcome any volunteers for an NEC post; please contact John Rooth if you're interested.

BURN'S NIGHT CELEBRATION

There will be a Burns Night Buffet at the **Wenlock Arms** on **Monday 25 January** at 8.00 pm. The buffet will be created by the legendary Alasdair Boyd, and will be traditional Burns night fare - haggis, neaps and tatties. Not sure that we can guarantee a piper though. Tickets cost £7 and can be reserved by sending a SAE and cheque, payable to SPBW to John Rooth (details on page 2).

The Wenlock Arms is a renowned venue for beer lovers offering 8 ales and a draught cider. Address is 26 Wenlock Road, London N1 7TA (off City Road; nearest tube station is Old Street).

OUT AND ABOUT

Our usual team were in action at the Wallington Beer Festival in early October and reported a healthy turnover. Thanks to anyone who joined or renewed membership, spent money or just came and said hello. Thanks also to the festival organisers for their hospitality.

Our next public appearance will be at the Pig's Ear Beerfest (1 – 5 December, Ocean Club, 270 Mare Street, Hackney, London E8 1HE, opposite Hackney Town Hall). We'll be there evenings and all day Saturday, so come along for a few beers and a chat.

Just room to mention the August Beer & Buffet event, held at the Royal Oak on the eve of the GBBF. As ever, a good turn out of members, who sampled the excellent Harveys beers and tackled a very generous buffet.

TONY LITTLER TROPHY

Congratulation to RACS, winners of the latest inter-branch contest for this coveted Trophy. The quartet from Sawbridgeworth held off a strong challenge from Woolwich Branch to record a first victory. RACS will now have the honour of organising the next event, hopefully in reach of the London Branches!

This year's event was a Treasure Trail, organised by Special Branch (mostly by John O'Connor in fact). The fun kicked off at the 'new' Wheatsheaf, just around the corner from the original pub, currently closed, and on or near the site of the legendary Becky's Dive Bar. A variety of ales were on offer at typical central London prices. The route took participants around Borough Market then down Borough High Street. The compulsory stop en route was the Old Kings Head, down one of the many alley ways off the High Street. Skinner's Betty Stogs and Hop Back Summer Lightning went down particularly well here. The finish was the Royal Oak, which has oft been mentioned in these pages. Here a sumptuous buffet was consumed by the 20 or so members representing six teams. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and it proved to be another excellent social occasion, which of course is the whole point of these events.

SPREADING THE WORD

We regularly produce a publicity leaflet for SPBW incorporating a membership application form. Some of you may even have joined us having picked one up! We put these leaflets in friendly and obliging pubs but we would like to spread them as wide as we can, especially outside the London area. If you can help us with this, please let Roger Jacobson (details page 2) know and a bundle of leaflets will be sent. Thanks to those of you who have already helped in this way.

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.

<p>Some back issues of <i>Pint in Hand</i> are available:- numbers 46; 49; 86-111. 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>

LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to the **Pembury Tavern** in Hackney, which has been voted as the SPBW's London Pub of the Year. This is the Pembury's second success, having won the award in 2007; it was a clear winner, being chosen by four out of the seven judges (other pubs getting a vote were the Old Fountain, Old Monk Exchange and Willoughby Arms). The presentation of the award will be on **Wednesday 13 January**, 19.30 for 20.00. Do try and come along if you can.



The Pembury is a large imposing pub with a somewhat chequered history. It has been owned by the likes of Truman and Banks & Taylor before it was closed following a fire. It was re-opened early in 2006 as part of the small Individual Pub Co chain owned the by Milton Brewery near Cambridge. The long bar counter boasts 16 handpumps and at least half of these are in operation at all times; as well as a selection of Milton beers (ranging from the 3.3% Minotaur mild to the mighty Marcus Aurelius at 7.5%) plus a few guest ales from small independent brewers. The pub stages three beer festivals each year (the next from 22 – 25 November) which adds several beers on stillage to the pumped offerings. A draught cider is always available plus a 'real' draught lager and a selection of bottled German and Belgian beers. Whisky lovers can choose from a good range of single malts. The food served in the Pembury is of a high standard as well. To while away your drinking time you can play pool or bar billiards or choose from several board games; there is also a knitting club on Monday evenings!

The Pembury Tavern stands on a busy road junction on the corner of Amhurst Road and Dalston Lane. Hackney Downs rail station (trains from Liverpool Street) is just a couple of minutes away and Hackney Central (Stratford to Richmond line) is a few hundred yards distant. The pub is also served by a number of bus routes.

The Pembury Tavern, 90 Amhurst Road, London E8 1JH; 020 8986 8597; www.individualpubs.co.uk/pembury/

TAKING THE ALE TRAIN

There can be few better ways to spend a sunny September weekend than in a picturesque corner of England, in good company, drinking good local ales in a variety of decent pubs. Thus it was that nine of us (five from Cheshire, four from London) gathered in Exeter on a Friday afternoon to tackle the Tarka Line Rail Ale Trail.

The Tarka Line (named after Henry Williamson's fictional otter) is a regular National rail service between Exeter and Barnstaple. Despite linking Devon's county town and a market town in the north west of the county, there is barely a town or village of note along the 39 mile route so we can be thankful the line has survived. The Trail is the brainchild of the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership and is an excellent way of promoting not only the Tarka Line itself, but also the numerous pubs at either end and along the way. Have a look at the website at: <http://www.railaletrail.com/tarkamap.htm>. It involves visiting a maximum of 19 pubs listed on a leaflet, getting a stamp from each pub when you buy a drink and getting rewards (badges, shirts etc) depending on how many pubs you visit.

Our base for the weekend was the **Great Western Hotel**, just across the car park from Exeter St David's station (which just happens to be on the Trail). Apart from providing good value accommodation, the Great Western also has a lively public bar with an excellent range of ales, mostly from the West Country; O'Hanlon's Yellowhammer, Dartmoor Jail Ale, Branscombe Vale Branoc and RCH Pitchfork seemed to be regular offerings. An essential calling point for anyone visiting (or leaving!) by rail.

On the Friday evening we found time to visit a few of the city's other pubs on the trail. A mile or so south of St David's on Bonhay Road is the **Mill on the Exe**, a St Austell pub superbly situated, as you may have deduced, by the river. The pub itself seemed to be deserted as everyone was taking advantage of the late afternoon sunshine sitting on the extensive patio. Tinnars, Tribute and Proper Job were the beers on offer and very nice too. The **Well House Tavern** has an equally impressive location, being directly opposite Exeter Cathedral in its spacious grounds. Our entry into the pub was delayed a few minutes by a fire alarm, but all was well and we were able to enjoy a pint of Bay's Bitter from Paignton; a new one on me but very pleasant indeed (up to six draught ales are usually available). The pub is in the modern café style and is converted from two shops.

While trying to find our way through the city centre we chanced upon the **Fat Pig** in John Street, a new entry in the GBG. This corner pub was formerly known as the Coachmakers but was reopened in its present guise in 2007. Judging by the menu on a large chalkboard this is something of a gastropub, but is still definitely a pub. By way of ale we tried Avocet bitter from the Exeter Brewery, which again was most drinkable.

With Saturday dawning fine and bright we took the train to Barnstaple. The best pubs we visited in this attractive town on the estuary of the River Taw were, first, the Rolle Quay Inn. This pub overlooks the River Yeo (this is a rather popular name for rivers in the south west; there is another one which is a tributary of the Exe, not to mention the one that gives Yeovil its name) and is

another St Austell house. The RQI is a friendly pub with a mainly 'local' trade. Apart from sampling the good quality ales you can also play darts or skittles. A few minutes walk from here is the **Reform Inn** in Reform Street. This two-bar establishment is the home of the Barum Brewery, which has brewed since 1996. There is a cosy lounge bar and a more spacious bar with a pool table. Three or four beers are usually available.



River Tawe at Barnstaple

Now it was time to work our way back to Exeter via various pub stops. First of these was Umberleigh, where it was a short walk across the River Taw to the **Rising Sun Inn**. This ancient inn could hardly ask for a better location and most of the customers were out on the patio to enjoy the sunshine and the views. Inside there was plenty of fishing memorabilia. There were two Exmoor Brewery beers – Fox and Barn Owl alongside St Austell Tribute. Inevitably there was a large food trade.



Rising Sun Inn, Umberleigh

A few miles down the line is a station called Portsmouth Arms. 50 yards along the main road to the right is a pub called the **Portsmouth Arms**. That's all there is here! The landlord claimed that this is one of just three pubs in England with a rail station named after it – I can think of the Berney Arms in Norfolk; any idea what the other is? Anyway the pub is a former coaching inn on the A377 and our choice of the beers was Otter bitter. For some reason very few trains stop here, despite the pub being open, and serving food, all day, so careful planning is needed when you do the Trail. It's worth a stop. We missed out a few stops around the middle of the line since the pubs involved were too far from the stations to be worth visiting in our tight

schedule. No such problems when you get to Morchard Road; again, there's not much here apart from a pub and the **Devonshire Dumpling** is barely five minutes walk away. Not surprisingly much of the pub is given over to dining areas but there is still a spacious and comfortable area for drinkers like us. Two beers from Sharps were on offer: the fairly ubiquitous Doom Bar and 38, which was our choice (a 3.8% bitter would you believe).

A couple of minutes down the line brought us to Coplestone and less than ten minutes walk took us to the **Cross Inn**. In contrast to some of the large road houses we had visited this is a fairly small and friendly village local which I can imagine gets fairly lively. Numerous darts and pool trophies are testimony to the sporting prowess of the locals and there is a juke box to disturb the peace of any passing curmudgeon! We were able to enjoy a choice of Teignworthy Gun Dog and Bay's Breaker, both of which were indeed enjoyable.



Now it was one more stop to the **Mare & Foal** at Yeoford (above); possibly a unique pub name? Built in the 1830s to serve the then new railway, this is a large rambling village pub which would have been closed for the afternoon had our advance party (who missed out the previous stop) not advised the landlord that a thirsty party were arriving on the next train! Bay's Best, Tribute and Doom Bar were the pick of the draught ales and, oddly enough, you can also buy newspapers here; I guess the village is too small to support a shop.

The only town of any size on the line is Crediton although the station is quite a hike from the centre. It was dark by the time we got there and we gave up trying to find the pub. Instead we moved hastily on the last stop before Exeter, Newton St Cyres, where the **Beer Engine** is just over the road from the station. This was our second brew pub of the day, the brewery having been set up here in 1983. The pub itself dates from 1850 and was built at the same time as the railway. It's a lively village pub, well supported by locals and other beer lovers, and doing a fair old trade in food as well (some of our party partook and were impressed.) we tried most of the beer range and these also went down well. Our one reservation was that the bar staff were not especially friendly but we'll put that down to them being hard worked and harassed.

All we had to do now was to get the last train back to Exeter and enjoy a leisurely nightcap at the Great Western. I'll just add that all the trains ran on time – apart from the one which was delayed because 'a passenger has exposed himself'. Not one of us, your Honour! A most enjoyable day out.

RJ

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. There is a possibility of branches being formed in Oxford and Bromley – if you live in these are areas Bill can put you in touch with the relevant contacts.

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 **Monkey Puzzle** at 30 Southwick Street, London W2 (corner with Sussex Gardens). 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@ntlworld.com or the website www.racs.org.

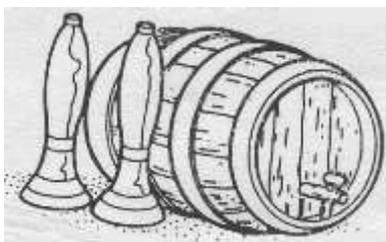
SPECIAL: The branch holds annual, week-long gatherings around the inland waterways network. There are also unofficial visits to pubs of renown in London, Cheshire and Shropshire, or wherever we happen to be.

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 (usually) on last Sunday morning in month in various pubs in and around Leeds. Brewery trips, day trips and crawls and other socials. 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!



BRANCHES IN ACTION

In October **Campden Hill** went on a 3 pub crawl around Charing Cross. The Lord Moon of the Mall is a typically large Wetherspoons in Whitehall. Amongst their guests was Summerskill's Barley Mow, a tasty mild, quite strong as milds are tending to be nowadays. Moving on to the Badger pub the Ship & Shovel, which is unusually split across both sides of the passage under Charing X station, we enjoyed Badger or Lemony Cricket. Lastly to an old Favourite: the Harp; where we joined West London Camra in the upstairs room. Binnie has now purchased this from a pub group, so the beer range was even better than before. I had a traditional strength mild, Moorhouse Black Cat.

On 30 November we have Not The Christmas Meal at Melur, a Malaysian restaurant in Edgware Road. 5 Campden Hillers have birthdays in November, so we shall be celebrating them on Sunday 29 November at the Royal Oak from 12.00. Look out for the pub crawl on January 18th next year, taking in the Old Mitre.

Chesapeake Bay just finished one of the most amazing 10 or so days as we celebrated the Inaugural Baltimore Beer Week. As part of Beer Week, we celebrated our 6th Annual Chesapeake Real Ale Festival which was held at the Pratt Street Ale House (formerly, The Wharf Rat). As a bookend event for Baltimore Beer Week, we experienced our largest and most bountiful Ale Fest ever with over 600 attendees and 40 firkins, plus some Ciders. Although the weather was dreary, at best, the firkins were arranged throughout the venue allowing the hordes of thirsty imbibers to spread out. We also played host to our recent crab feast with almost 170 in attendance and 5 firkins and some 18 bushel crabs consumed. The Chesapeake Bay Branch still maintains around 170 members and hosts monthly "meetings", bus tours, festivals and parties.

Common Branch's Pub of the Year is the Foresters Arms in Reading and John Dearing recently presented the award to Andy Sawdon-Smith at the pub. The members chose the Foresters because it is an excellent small local pub which sells one of their favourite tipples, Harvey's bitter from Lewes in Sussex. John, who co-ordinates the branch's activities has just completed a book on Reading Pubs which was published on 2 November, price £12.99.

RACS are as busy as ever. Having won the Tony Littler Trophy they have staged a number of quizzes at the Gate and celebrated Halloween and Guy Fawkes Night. 12 December will see a Christmas bash, shopping and drinking in Cambridge.

Wantz branch enjoyed two events in August. First was a midweek day trip to Norwich on a particularly hot day. As well as taking in the sights of this historic city we naturally visited a few of its many worthy pubs. Favourite of these was the Kings Head in Magdalen Street, just north of the city centre, a fairly basic but very friendly pub offering around a dozen East Anglian brews.

A week later we were rather more on home territory, enjoying some Vietnamese cuisine at Tre Viet on Mare Street, Hackney. This was a new experience for all of us, but a highly enjoyable one, the food being quite excellent. Tre Viet is more a café than a restaurant (and bring your own liquid refreshment!) but with friendly, if somewhat disorganised, service. Sadly the nearest pub, Baxter's Court, further north up Mare Street, proved to be one of

the less distinguished of the Wetherspoon chain, being let down by the poor quality of its guest beers, not to mention the plethora of tv sets showing Arsenal v Celtic.

Our latest London pub walk was in early October around the Angel area. A good variety of pubs here, some up market and trendy, some more down to earth. For example, we began in the Old Red Lion on St John's Street, which was large and very busy (it has a theatre upstairs) and then moved to the Harlequin over the road in Arlington Street, small and cosy with a very nice pint of Landlord.

On a sad note, we've heard that our former HQ, the Britannia at Barking has closed. It was a good old traditional pub and, for many years, the most easterly in the Young's estate. Back in the 1970s this was the only pub for miles serving beer from an independent brewery and I whiled away many a Saturday evening there.

West Riding branch ventured west to Kendal (beer festival) and Lancaster (pubs) in October but stayed closer to home for a visit to Bridestone brewery in Hebden Bridge followed by a tour of Calderdale pubs.



PERFECT PUB PAGE

The Marisco Tavern on Lundy Island has to be one the most inaccessible pubs in the country but this inaccessibility is one of its attractions. Lundy Island is in the Bristol Channel, about 14 miles off the coast of North Devon. From the end of March until the end of October the principal way to get there is to take the 2 hour trip on the ferry, ms "Oldenburg", which leaves from either Bideford or Ilfracombe depending on the state of the tide. If you don't fancy a sea voyage there is a helicopter which runs all the year round. The ferry runs on three days of the week except in July and August when it runs on four days each week.

At the end of June I made my second visit to the island; staying for a week as I did when I came five years ago. The island is owned by the National Trust. It is managed by the Landmark Trust who own the ms "Oldenburg" and who handle all the accommodation on the island. Lundy is about three miles long and half a mile wide. There is self catering accommodation for about eighty visitors and a camp site. On days when the ferry comes it can bring up to 260 people, most of whom are day trippers.

All the accommodation for both island residents and visitors is at the southern end of the island, much of it in the area known as the High Street. Right in the middle of this is the Marisco Tavern. It is a fully licensed pub and functions as such as well as being the focal point for island activities. Inside it is quite attractive; simply furnished, with granite floors and decorated with artefacts from some of the shipwrecks around the island and mementos left by visitors.

There is no jukebox or fruit machine. It is a place for people to meet, enjoy each others company over a drink or two and discuss their activities during the day. To me this is exactly what a pub should be like and this is why, along with its good beer and in spite of its singular location I call it a Perfect Pub.



The Marisco Tavern is the smaller building in the centre

There was a time when they brewed their own beer on the island but this is no longer the case, largely due to the need to conserve the island's limited water supply. The water that comes out of the tap, although safe to drink, is not palatable and is usually coloured brown by the peat; not ideal for brewing. Beer served in the pub is now brewed for them by St Austell Brewery. There are two brews, both served by hand pump; one is called Old Light and is essentially a rebranded Tribute with an OG of 1.042, the other is called Lundy Experience and is slightly darker and less hopped (OG 1.038). Both beers were always well served and in good condition. The staff in the pub, both behind the bar and in the food area were always very efficient and friendly. In fact this applies to everybody on the island.

The pub can get quite busy at times when the ferry is in, particularly at weekends. The day trippers will be looking for sustenance, those leaving the island will have moved out of their accommodation and will probably spend some of the day in the pub waiting for the time to board the ferry and those who have just arrived will wait in the pub until their accommodation is ready for them. When the ferry has left the island those remaining behind enjoy reclaiming the pub for themselves.

There are just a couple of final comments about this special place. Firstly, the food is excellent and is served in hearty portions. Lundy lamb and Exmoor beef feature on the menu in some form or another every day. Secondly I must make a comment about the gents' toilet. To get to this you have to go outside and across a path to a small outbuilding. The urinal has no roof and the wall is only a little over 5 feet high. Standing there having a pee with the wind whistling over your head you are looking up the Bristol Channel and on a clear day you can see the coast of North Devon near Ilfracombe.

Mike Beavington (who took the photo)

AULD REEKIE

Andy's Roving Report

Although I know a good number of the readership will have been to Edinburgh at one time or another, I still thought it excusable to scribble out a quick article on a few of the pubs visited by a quintet from Leeds at the beginning of August this year.

We saw the **Three Monkeys** advertised in the local CAMRA magazine (describing itself as 'Edinburgh's newest Ale Emporium') and got a taxi from the town centre to the coastal suburb of Portobello, about 3 miles east of the city centre. The area was originally called Figgate Muir, Figgate possibly being Anglo Saxon for Cow's Ditch. The Three Monkeys appears to be quite an old building and was previously known as the Plough. This hostelry has been opened up at some time, but still retains a couple of nooks and thus hasn't got that awful shoe-box effect. Dark wood décor is to the fore here, from the well-polished floor to the large cabinet in the area to your left as you enter. The walls are almost covered by old photos, pictures and adverts - there's a rather good mirror for John Wright's Pale Ale.

There were 4 beers available, two of which were from the local Stewarts Brewery, namely Edinburgh Gold and Cascade. I tried the latter ale, a coppery red and really well hopped beer which was first class – one to look out for. The other two offerings were Newcastle Pioneer Bitter and Hadrian & Border Northumbrian Lager. As the day was very warm, we went outside to the beer garden at the rear of the pub. This is adjacent to some stone tenements which look down into the garden. Whilst soaking up the sun, we saw what must have been the world's biggest bumble bee (roughly the size of a hamster) drift past. It was probably calling in for a pint, as indeed all our readers should. The bar service was of a remarkable standard, the sole barmaid serving the customers with drinks and meals as well as calling up a taxi for us whilst making it all appear effortless. This pub is well worth a visit – go now!

The Three Monkeys, 87 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh EH15 1AW; telephone 0131 669 7155; www.thethreemonkeys.co.uk.

Just a short stroll from Princes Street in the New Town, West Register Street has been the site of two Café Royals over the years. The original one was opened in 1826, across the road from the present building, though Café Royal number 1 was demolished, apparently along with everything else in the street, in 1861.

When the edifice containing Café Royal 2 was built that same year (architect Robert Paterson), it was meant to be for a showroom for such things as sanitary fittings! I have no idea if the business prospered, but on 8 July 1863, the **Café Royal** opened here.

There are so many points of interest it is hard to know where to start. One's attention is immediately drawn to the remarkable Doulton ceramic murals on the back wall, depicting half a dozen of the world's greatest inventors making their discoveries. These were purchased by J McIntyre Henry, licensee and

victualler, in 1886 at the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art, which was being held in the city.

The oval-shaped island bar had 2 banks of handpumps and I noted 4 beers – Kelburn’s Dark Moor and Misty Law; Inveralmond Lia Fail and Deuchars IPA. All beers tasted were in excellent condition (the Dark Moor especially so) and the service was friendly and first rate – I hope the staff get paid what they’re worth! It is almost superfluous to add that the food here is of the highest order, with menus for both the bar and restaurant.

The restaurant is on the right of the West Register Street entrance and I had a quick perusal inside the way to the gents away downstairs in the bowels of the earth. The stained glass windows here (in the restaurant you fools) are surely as good as anything you would find in a cathedral and depict various sports, like cricket, archery etc. the Good Beer Guide states that the glass was made by the same local company who did the windows for the House of Lords.

Even given the brief description of the Café Royal’s splendours that I have noted above, it should come as no surprise that there was a plan 40 years ago to demolish it. In 1965 the Royal was taken over by Grand Metropolitan Hotels, who, 4 years later, attempted to sell it to Woolworth’s in order for them to extend one of their nearby stores into the site! No chance: the City Planning Officer, backed by a petition of nearly 9,000 signatures, refused the application. Since 27 February 1970, the Café Royal has been a listed building and likely to see yet another century out – unlike Woolworth’s.

Café Royal, 19 West Register Street, Edinburgh EH2 2AA; telephone 0131 5561884; www.caferoyal.org.uk

This tremendous hostelry is in the historic Old Town, on a distinctly sloping road. It is a smallish, single roomed bar, popular with locals, tourists and just about anyone who happens to be walking past. Like the above-mentioned Three Monkeys, the walls are positively bedecked with old adverts, mirrors etc, which provide the patrons with something more interesting to look at than, say, the goggle box. The bar counter had no less than 8 fonts serving a great variety of beers as we’d arrived during a 2 week long beer festival that the pub was hosting at the time. The ales came from breweries the length and breadth of England and Scotland, all served the traditional local was through air pressure powered fonts. I recall I tried a mild but cannot remember the name of it! The quality was of the best regardless of what was bought. According to the beer festival leaflet, there were over 60 beers due to be served over the fortnight, with a fair few breweries that I’d never heard of. The whisky selection is far from modest and would keep even a connoisseur happy for a good while. Yes folks, this is another hostelry to head for.

Bow Bells, 80 West Bow, Victoria Street (near the Grassmarket) Edinburgh EH1 2HH; telephone 0131 2667667; www.bowbar.com

PAUL & BERNIE'S TRIP TO JERSEY

Part 2

Friday 15 May

Another fun-packed morning of sight-seeing before a late-ish 2.30 arrival in St Martin's (in the same parish as itself) at the **Royal**. This is a pub that seems more restaurant than pub, although the bar itself is comfortable enough. Bath Gem and Ringwood Best Bitter are available, but needless to say lunch is not – after all it has gone 2.00pm on an island whose second largest source of income is tourism! After a quick Gem for quality control purposes (quality was fine) we head, on a hunch, to Ranson's Garden Centre and are rewarded with a tasty array of sandwiches and baguettes, washed down (in my case) by a bottle of Weston's Premier Organic Cider. Lovely!

The evening (the last evening with the car) is spent on a return visit to the Moulin de Lecq, and we are glad we did return for the food was deeeeeelicious. After the meal we repair to the bar where a cosy fire is burning and where we (or should that be I?) spend the remainder of the evening 'ticking off' all their draft products – most pleasant.

Saturday 16 May

Today is transfer to St Helier day, which means check out of hotel and get car back to airport, which in turn means a last morning's sightseeing around the north coast of the island. Decide to try a non-GBG listed, but marked on the map, pub at nowhere-ville in the parish of St Mary's called **The Priory** (funny name for a pub – I thought it was a drying out clinic) but it has been a lovely sunny morning and the place is heaving, so time by now not being on our side we return to St Mary's Country Inn for a further Liberation Ale and some tasty good value cheese 'n' ham sarnies.

Cutting a long touristy transfer story short, the next port of call is that evening in St Helier, the capital of Jersey (although you would not think it, judging from the trouble we had getting in somewhere to eat – it serves us right for frittering lunchtime away in the pub instead of cracking on with the transfer and leaving ourselves enough time to recce out and book somewhere). Anyway, after a most pleasant meal in a bistro-type establishment, whose name I didn't write down but where I stuck to mineral water, we repair to **The Prince of Wales Tavern**, a very cosy, traditional and, in my opinion, appealing pub which I was pleased to have visited. Beers were: Bath Gem and Barnstormer, Ringwood Best Bitter, Courage Best and Directors. I stuck to the Gem and it was luvverly!

Sunday 17 May

Last full day, and early-ish departure tomorrow, so last chance to achieve my objective of ticking off all the GBG07/09 listed pubs. Therefore, after morning museum visits, we repair to **The Lamplighter** (GBG07, 09). Well what a characterful gem! Beers were: Wychwood Hobgoblin and Rye Smile, Banks's Bitter, Ringwood Old Thumper (all these on gravity dispense), Bath Dark Hare and Gem, Ringwood 49er, Jersey – Liberation Ale, as well as Le Mare – © The Original Jersey Cider.

I have a quick Rye Smile – most grinningly pleasant – while we consider what to do for lunch, all restaurants now appearing to be closed and few pubs in town doing Sunday lunch (at least not that they were advertising from the

rooftops). Decide to catch bus to airport where we'd seen what appeared to be good value 5-course meal advertised, but en-route to bus station (we are now car-less) we happen on a tapas bar serving Sunday lunch. Result! (as they say).

Now on the day before, whilst wandering around, I carried out a surreptitious preview of the last remaining pub on my agenda, **The Original Wine Bar** and decided it did not look salubrious enough to be graced with the privilege of Bernie's lovely presence so, whilst she heads back for the traditional holiday siesta, I sally forth. Well what a waste of time and effort – disaster area – 6 handpumps and none of them working. Even less salubrious than the pub are its Sunday afternoon clientele. I feel decidedly out of place sipping my half of 'wifebeater', and my sip turned to swill in my eagerness to be gone. Clearly things have moved on (or backwards) since GBG 07 was published.

To counter my disappointment, but with Bernie's parting words ("don't be out drinking all afternoon") ringing in my ears, I hot-foot it back to The Lamplighter for a swift pint of consolatory Dark Hare. To my delight I spot a sign we missed earlier, that you can get 3 sampler glasses of 1/3 pint for the same price as a pint. Excellent! There is now no doubt in my mind as to where we will spend the last evening.

And so it is to The Lamplighter once more that we return later. By virtue of the 3 for 1 deal I get to sample all the draughts plus a couple of extra bonus pints thrown in for good measure. With more time to survey the surroundings I note the extensive array of single malts plus a variety of flavoured vodkas/gins (chilli vodka anyone?). Also clock that the pub has won the local CAMRA POTY award on several occasions. All in all a most pleasant ambience, unhesitatingly pub of the trip, and a most satisfactory way to round it off. Cheers!

Could I summarise in a paragraph? Well, despite the occasional grouchy note above, Jersey is a lovely island with plenty things of interest to see and do, without or (God forbid!) with children. If the weather had been better, as no doubt it would have been in summer, we could have spent time on the beach and more time outdoors. I imagine driving some of the little lanes could be a nightmare in high season, but there seemed to be a comprehensive and reliable bus coverage of the island. Beer-wise, as you will probably have gathered, the range available seemed to be fairly limited, but I suppose that is to be expected where most of the stuff has to be shipped in. I can't imagine there is a vast supplier network competing to provide choice, but maybe that is a research project for another day, or more likely another person. Happy drinking!

Paul Rogers

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.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The front cover of the November 1999 issue of *Pint in Hand* was devoted to Hog's Back brewery in deepest Surrey, which had been visited by an SPBW party. This was an entertaining brewery tour and it's pleasing to report that Hog's Back has gone from strength to strength since then, its award-winning beers being widely available across the South East. The brewery trip was part of a rather low-key National Weekend, the other focal points being the Willoughby Arms in Kingston and the Rising Sun, Epsom, where the Society was founded.

Another brewery featured was McMullen of Hertford, which Wantz branch had visited. Despite its beers being virtually unavailable outside its trading area and little free trade presence, this is another example of a thriving family brewery.

Ten years earlier Harvey's brewery was on the front cover. Wantz branch had enjoyed a visit to Lewes and an excellent brewery tour hosted by Miles Jenner. The sampling session provided an opportunity to try Armada Ale, just launched as a draught beer and now a regular brew, probably my favourite Harvey's beer, although they're all excellent. I recall having to cut short my sampling as I had a ticket to watch West Ham play down the road at Brighton. When the Hammers were 3 – 0 down after 20 minutes I began to suspect I was in the wrong place!

Elsewhere, the pubs in Reading and the Isle of Man were featured, along with the Heritage Brewery in Burton (once Everard's) – what happened to that? – and a proposed brewery at Snape Maltings in Suffolk, which never took off.

Skipping back in time to October 1980, the SPBW Branch Newsletter featured two interesting accounts: one was Campden Hill branch's trip to Tolly Cobbold brewery in Ipswich; this included a detour to Southwold where the first pub visited was the only Watney house in town! Fear not, the pub offered Norwich Castle Bitter on handpump, a short lived attempt by Watney's to get back on the real ale track. Talking of Watney's, said brewery had held a 'beer festival' at its old brewery in Whitechapel. London and Stag bitters were available on handpump and a special Festival Ale (og1055) was served direct from wooden casks. I suspect this was another short lived venture!

Last Orders – from Edinburgh

This is an old story which appeared in the SPBW Branch Newsletter of October 1980 but is none the worse for repeating. It is attributed to an SPBW stalwart of yore, Howard Purdie.

Sandy Bell's in Edinburgh is famous for its folksingers and musicians, but in their wisdom the powers that be at Scottish & Newcastle ordered the installation of a juke box, presumably to make it like more other pubs. The response of the customers was immediate: the offending machine was unplugged and led into the street outside, where it remained until arrested by the constabulary for obstructing the pavement.

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Fat Pig, Exeter (see page 7)