

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

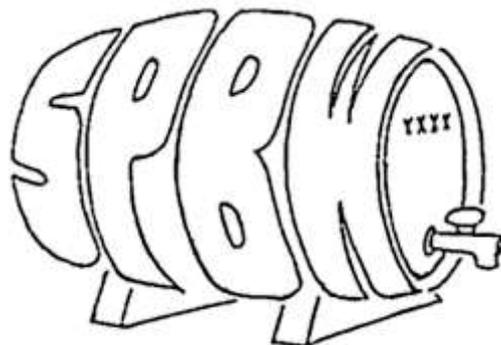
***PINT in HAND***

*Number 113*

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*Plough & Harrow, Kinver*



## ***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 May 2010 issue should reach the Editor by **25 April**.
- The Editor or the National Executive Committee of SPBW does not necessarily share opinions expressed in *Pint in Hand*.

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*All photos by Roger Jacobson unless stated otherwise*

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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***

The cover photo of a Batham's pub recalls the days, seemingly long past now, when free houses were rare and most beer was consumed in tied houses. This was certainly the case when I started to get interested in beers and breweries back in the mid-70s. Tied pubs, complete with the brewery livery, were in many ways a means of identifying what part of the country you were in. For instance, the few Batham's pubs had to be tracked down in the Black Country, where you would also find the likes of Banks, Hanson, Holden's and another rare old (and now defunct) brewery, Simpkins. Going east to the Nottingham area would put you in Home and Shipstone country; north to Manchester for Boddingtons (when it was worth going to Manchester for), Hyde, Holts and Robinson. And of course, all the major brewers' pubs were clearly marked so they could be avoided if required. There are still plenty of tied pubs of course, but so many beers, even from the smallest breweries, seem to be widely available, that the sense of local identity seems to have been eroded. And I think that's a bit of a shame.

Looking rather further afield, I first visited the USA in 1988. Back then the microbrewing revolution was very much in its infancy and, unless you were very lucky, bland mass-produced brews were the only option. Things are rather different today, even if the likes of Bud & co command a massive share of the beer market. But American micro-brewers have proved to be innovative and enterprising in restoring the concept of genuine taste to their customers. What's more, some US beer styles have filtered (so to speak) into the British brewing domain. I've come across a number of beers, mostly from the smaller operators, which are golden and highly hopped: Dark Star has a few such ales in their range, plus there's the likes of Crouch Vale Amarillo from the Essex plains. Even Adnams have had a go: their IPA is the latest in a range of one-off brews inspired by classic overseas beer styles. It's pleasant enough, as you would expect from Southwold, but lacking the aggressive hoppiness of its Stateside counterparts.

Pub closures tend to be quite commonplace these days – can there really be as many as 30 a day closing their doors? I read recently about an old haunt of mine, back in my schooldays. The Squirrels in Gidea Park was never much of a pub in its heyday (it's the first place I ever bought a beer for myself – pint of Watney's Red Barrel at 2/6) but it was recently ordered by magistrates to close down as it was seen as a danger to young people. Serving drinks to under-age customers and alleged drug dealing were the main offences. Ok, I and friends were regularly served before we reached 18, which was illegal back then, but surely the answer is to make sure the pub is run properly.

However, even that may not be enough. One of the finalists in our London Pub of the Year contest – the Duke of Hamilton in Hampstead – is reported as being under threat. The owning company have realised that the property is worth considerably more if sold for development than as a pub. And let's face it, who wants a well run pub with good beer when you can have a nice new luxury apartment block instead?

*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** at the **Royal Oak**, Tabard Street, London SE1 4JU. The meeting will happen in the upstairs 'John Harvey' room, starting around 7pm. All SPBW members are welcome; our AGMs tend to be short business meetings, leaving plenty of time for socialising. A buffet will be provided and liquid refreshment is in the form of Harvey's excellent ales.

The Royal Oak is just off Borough High Street, just a few minutes walk from Borough tube station (Northern Line). London Bridge station (Northern and Jubilee tube and national rail) is within half a mile. Various bus routes run along Borough High Street.

## ***TONY LITTLER TROPHY***

The next inter-branch event will take the form of a beer quiz and will be held on **Monday 26 April** from 7.00 pm. Venue is the **Shooting Star**, 125 Middlesex Street, London E1 7JF; this is a Fullers pub just around the corner from Liverpool Street station. The event will be hosted by RACS, current holders of the Trophy. We hope to see as many branches represented as possible; if you don't actually belong to a branch, come along and you may well get a game.

## ***BURN'S NIGHT CELEBRATION***

A good number of members and friends gathered in the cosy confines of the Wenlock Arms function room on 25 January. Alasdair Boyd was once again in good form in the kitchen and his tasty Scotch broth and haggis were scoffed with alacrity. We had taken enough ticket money to buy a couple of bottles of good Scotches (as if the fine beer selection was not enough) and some of the great poet's works were read. Everyone seemed to have a good time, which is the point of these occasions.

A few of us were at another Alasdair-related event at the Wenlock Arms shortly before Christmas, namely his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. Among the beers on offer was a brew from Downton badged as 'Society for the Prevention of Boyd from the Wenlock'!

## ***NATIONAL WEEKEND 2010***

The 2009 Weekend in Sheffield was another winner and you can read an exhaustive account later in these pages.

We are planning to hold the 2010 Weekend from 12 – 14 November in Shrewsbury. This is an attractive and historic town on the River Severn with a good selection of pubs. As well as visiting the best of these we will be visiting one or two of the small breweries in the area (most likely Salopian and Stonehouse). Put the dates in your diary and look out for more details in the May issue.

## ***LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR***

The presentation of our award to Steve Early of the Pembury Tavern took place on 13 January. The pub was encouragingly busy that evening, including a gathering of SPBW members who had braved the icy weather. As usual there was a good range of Milton beers (including the formidable 8.8% Caligula!) and the guest ales included a few from Green Jack brewery of Lowestoft.



There was a report of the presentation in the Hackney Gazette dated 21 January along with the picture above which shows SPBW NEC Vice-Chairman (left) handing our award to Steve Early, manager of the Pembury Tavern.

As an aside, Individual Inns, who own the Pembury, have opened their fifth pub, the Devonshire Arms, Devonshire Street in Cambridge; the nearest thing yet to a brewery tap!

## ***OUT AND ABOUT***

We took up our usual stall at the Pig's East festival in Hackney in early December. Our team were in rude health in contrast to the previous year and we did pretty good business in terms of sales and recruitment; this meant that drinking all that beer was worthwhile! There was a good selection of ales available right up until the end of the festival. As ever we were grateful to the organisers and staff who were hospitable and helpful.

Our next public appearance will be at the Ealing Beer Festival, which we believe will be held in Walpole Park from 7 – 10 July.

## ***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.

## ***MATTERS ARISING***

Mark Charnley, SPBW member in Manchester tells me:

In issue 112 of Pint in Hand the article 'Taking the ale train' ponders whether the pub name the 'Mare & Foal' is unique. Just to let you know there is a 'Mare & Foal' on Ashton Road West, Failsworth, Manchester. Unfortunately it does not sell any real ale although the 'Millgate' just up the road does sell J. W. Lees bitter.

Elsewhere in PiH 112 I made something of a pig's ear of the last paragraph of Andy's Auld Reekie article on page 16. The 'tremendous hostelry' is in fact the Bow **Bar**, as opposed to the Bow Bells, a very different pub just a few minutes walk from the PiH offices. Andy has already severely chastised me in person and I can only add my apologies to the proprietors of the Bow Bar (and I can add my recommendation).

## ***SPBW WEBSITE***

The SPBW Members Forum is still going strong at [www.spbw.com/bb](http://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.

## ***PERFECT PUB PAGE***

### ***Sunshine in Cumbria***

**The Sun Inn, Bassenthwaite, Cumbria** was until recently my place of employment. Well I did turn up 3 nights a week and look busy behind the bar! Having returned “home” to West Yorkshire I now feel I can write about this wonderful pub without being too biased.

When Ali, the current landlady, took over the pub in 2005 it had suffered at the hands of a small local pub company who had totally misread the market and tried selling food at inflated prices to the many visitors staying at the local caravan sites.

Back to the drawing board and the return of sensible quality food, priced accordingly, with 4 hand pulled beers from the Marstons group.

The pub itself is housed in a building which started life as a farmhouse some 400 years ago. It became the Bush probably 200 years after, changing to its present name sometime later. Whilst changed internally over the years it still retains its exterior charm and is warm and welcoming inside, especially when the real fire is roaring in the bar. Set away from the village green it could be described as “off the beaten track” but yet attracts a whole host of walkers, campers, cyclists as well as tourists from Keswick.

To wash down the excellent food there is always Jennings Bitter and Cumberland from nearby Cockermouth together with 2 beers from the group, which often include Ringwood or Wychwood as well as my favourite, Jennings Cocker Hoop.

With no music or TV and a welcome for our canine friends it is a place to suit most tastes and recent appearances in CAMRA’s Good Beer Guide are well deserved.

Make the effort to visit the Sun. You won’t be disappointed!

*John Bell, West Riding Branch*

## ***BRANCHES IN ACTION***

In November **Campden Hill** branch had the Not the Christmas Meal at Melur, a Malaysian restaurant in Edgware Road. The food was excellent and we were joined by Bruce Davies, a member from the halcyon days. We celebrated 5 Campden Hillers’ birthdays with a traditional roast and some excellent Harvey’s in the Royal Oak. On 18 January we staged a joint event with Central London branch, taking in the Penderel’s Oak (Brentwood Smokey Moon, the most interesting beer), The Cittie of Yorke (Sam’s less than £2 a pint, but service woefully slow and some tedious loudmouthed clientele) The Melton Mowbray (expensive, average Fullers, but quiet and comfortable) and the Old Mitre (an absolute gem): Scotty made a fuss of us, JHB and Deuchars guests in fine fettle, and the Pride much better than in the previous pub.

The February meeting was at the Prince of Wales Cleveland Terrace, Paddington. On Thursday 25 February we are meeting in the Sekforde Arms,

Clerkenwell (Sekforde St) at 7.00, followed by a curry at 8.30 in the nearby Café Saffron, and then a final round in the Jerusalem Tavern.

On Thursday 25 March we are linking up with West London Camra for a Hammersmith crawl: 7.30 Grove, Hammersmith Grove, 8.15 Dartmouth Castle, Glenthorne Street, 9.00 Swan, Hammersmith Broadway. 10.00 Albion, Hammersmith Road (discount with Camra card).

**Common and Aldbrickham Branch** will be holding the Peter Smith Memorial Pub Crawl on Saturday 6 March and this will take the form of an extensive pub crawl of Cambridge. We intend to catch the 11.15 train from Kings Cross and will be delighted if other SPBW members and friends of Pete can join us. Please contact John Dearing on 0118 9580377 email: [gpwild@btconnect.com](mailto:gpwild@btconnect.com) if further details are required.

**RACS** are busy as always - the Quiz at the end of November had a Scottish theme to celebrate St Andrew's Day. The Christmas pub crawl round Cambridge was very successful and well supported. The weather was reasonably kind to us. We held a Christmas Quiz and also a social with a local choir, the De Merc Singers, leading the seasonal hymns and songs.

January saw our annual celebration of Burns Night. Jan and her helpers fed more than 45 and the De Merc choir joined us again for Scottish songs - many of them raucous drinking ones! We held a Spoof Quiz to mark the 50th birthday of our member, John Trimmer - questions were about his club Chelsea, his favourite holiday spot, Swanage and exotic foods and drink because he is a chef. Photos of John asleep over the years after beer feasts made up the Marathon!

**Wantz** branch celebrated its 400<sup>th</sup> meeting in January when we were graced by the presence of former Chairman, Alan Martin, now running a guest house in Westcliff-on-Sea. We made a return visit to St Albans at the end of October, visiting a good selection of the city's pubs. Two of the best of these were in a sort of 'village' area, south of the centre and close to the Abbey: the White Hart Tap and the White Lion, both offering a decent selection of ales. McMullen's Farriers Arms is a friendly and eccentric pub with good quality ale and a brief visit to the Lower Red Lion confirmed its return to form.

Our latest pub walk, at the end of November, begun at the excellent Old Fountain, off City Road, and ended at the historic Olde Mitre in its well concealed passageway off Hatton Garden. The route also took in the Artillery Arms and two well preserved old pubs in the Smithfield Market area, the Fox & Anchor and the Hand & Shears. A good variety of ales were consumed during the evening. Our usual full programme of pub walks, cuisine appreciation and day trips is being planned for 2010 and we also have a 4 day visit to Edinburgh lined up in April.

<p>Some back issues of <b><i>Pint in Hand</i></b> 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>
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## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **READING PUBS by JOHN DEARING**

*The History Press; ISBN 978-0-7524-5287-6; £12.99*

Devoted and thorough *PiH* readers will be familiar with John's name as he is the contact for Common & Albrickham branch, based in his home town of Reading. He also happens to be a local historian and writer, and Chairman of the History of Reading Society. This attractively produced paperback therefore neatly combines two of his main interests.

*Reading Pubs* is a pictorial history of drinking (and brewing) in the town featuring over 200 photographs, postcards and advertisements. In his brief written introduction John traces pubs back to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and notes that in 1577 a census records that 7 inns, 44 alehouses and 3 taverns served a population of 3,000. In 1631, several local publicans were accused of having "sould in their, severally, less than one full ale", which suggests that drinkers have been complaining about short measures for some while.

Inevitably a good many pubs, ancient and modern, are featured but I see that a few pages of photographs are devoted to the Cambridge Arms, a former Morland's house that was John's local from 1980. Sadly the pub was sold in 1998 for development into private residences, the work being carried out without planning permission.

A separate chapter covers the history of Reading's breweries; the most renowned of these was Simonds which first brewed in 1785 but ended up as a victim of Courage's expansion policy.

All in all, a fascinating volume, but one of specialised interest. If you live in, or are very familiar with, the town of reading, and are interested in pubs, this book should be indispensable.

John will be pleased to supply copies direct to SPBW members possibly with a modest discount and suggests anyone interest contacts him via 0118 9589377 [gpwild@btconnect.com](mailto:gpwild@btconnect.com).

RJ

## **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.



## ***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](mailto:DominicCantalupo@ChampionRealty.com). Website: [www.spbw.org](http://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](mailto:colinsdonald@sky.com).

**COATE:** Meetings held third Friday of each month at the **New Inn**, Coate, near Devizes. Contact Eric Clark ([ericclark@aol.com](mailto:ericclark@aol.com)) or email [coate@spbw.com](mailto:coate@spbw.com).

**COMMON & ALDBRICKHAM:** Meetings usually held in Reading; contact John Dearing 0118 958 0377 or [gpwild@btconnect.com](mailto: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](mailto:peterwillettuk@yahoo.com)

**IPSWICH:** Contact Phil (01473 644923) or Iain (07707 465750) 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](http://www.spbwkingston.co.uk).

**NORTHERN IRELAND:** Contact Mark Hutchinson for details of meetings and events: [marksalehousecom@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:meadspanner@ntlworld.com) or the website [www.racs.org](http://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](http://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](mailto: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!*



*The Gate, Sawbridgeworth, home of RACS*

## ***SUBMERGED IN THE VALLEY OF BEER***

The much anticipated **2009 SPBW National Weekend** was staged in the South Yorkshire city of Sheffield. Much has been written and marvelled on the real ale delights of the 'Steel City', and it didn't disappoint and more than lived up to the accolades on the imbibing front.

The circa twenty 'usual suspects' made the trek from various parts of Britain on the mystique Friday 13<sup>th</sup> to enjoy the endless plethora of both local and regional brews. Early and eager beavers were to rendezvous at the **Devonshire Cat** (Wellington St. GBG 2010) from lunchtime onwards. The **Red Deer** (Pitt St. GBG 2010) was the mid-afternoon gig, before the evenings activities unfolded. I arrived early evening so can't comment on the first 'wetting the whistle' session.

Eighteen hundred hours was set for the **Fat Cat** (Alma St. GBG 2010), with the brewery visit to the Kelham Island, (sited just to the rear of the pub), from 7 o'clock onwards. Prior to the brewery visit, the SPBW contingent participated in evening meals and drank hand pumped ales from the dozen on show. *Olicana Original* (4.3) from the Ilkley brewery and *A Very Mild Monkey* (3.6), a rather moreish mild from the recent Brass Monkey micro, were pick of the ales tasted by moi. A tour around the Kelham Island brewery ensued, a larger concern than most of the SPBW had assumed, before retiring to their tap room for generous helpings of their *Best Bitter* (3.8) and *Easy Rider* (4.3).



The renowned **Fat Cat** pub is some fifty yards away from CAMRA National Pub Of the Year, the **Kelham Island Tavern** (Russell St. GBG 2010), so an attendance to one pub went hand in glove with the other pub. Some eight to ten real ales were on offer here, with *St. Petrus* (5.0) from the Sheffield Brew Co (our aborted Saturday brewery trip) and *Sheffield Porter* (4.4) from the Sheffield Brewery Company Ltd, (our replacement brewery trip), being my favoured dark brews. I spoke to the 'boy Moore', Brian Moore (top beer ticker in the UK) at the bar to see if I was catching him up or not? I'm not! Two terrific pubs visited that night, and set the tone for the weekend.

Saturday lunchtime the SPBW met at Shalesmoor tram stop to make the short amble to the Sheffield Brewery Company (Burton Rd) at an old industrial complex. A very interesting tour was conducted by Mr. Tim Stillman (Sheffield Brewery Company head brewer, owner and Sheffield CAMRA member heavily

involved with the recent Sheffield Pub Guide). This three storey plant was deceptive in its size and the whole brewery site reminded me of the TARDIS in TV's Dr Who. Steak and potato pie, mushy peas and gravy was washed down with pints of brewery beers, *Crucible Best* (3.8), *Paradise Pale* (4.1) and new brew *Dark Nights* (5.2).



*Pictures by Alan Sheppard*

We bid our farewells to another enjoyable brewery tour to venture southwards to the **Harlequin** (Nursery St. GBG 2010), where a weekend beer festival was well underway. The pub was rammed with 'tickers' meticulously drinking through the list of rare beers from micros such as Jolly Brewer, Sandstone, Tydd Steam, Graffiti and North Curry, to name but a few. *Special Port Ale* (5.4) from Saltaire and Fat Cat's *Snapdragon* (4.2) were the two ales that 'tickled my fancy' the most, amongst the far too many brews that I shovelled down my 'Gregory Peck' in the limited time spent there.

Next up was city centre **Wetherspoon's Bankers' Draft** (Market Sq.), a chain pub which I'd been using for my breakfast venue during the weekend and wading gradually through their 'International Real Ale Festival' beers. After nailing a couple of festival brews, it was out the back doors and in to the adjacent **Dove and Rainbow** (Hartshead Sq. GBG 2010) for a more diverse concept to real ale imbibing. Well kept beer, great music and some colourful clientele, especially the pleasant guy that I spoke to with the green Mohican about The Dead Kennedys indie band.

The **Wig and Pen** (Camp Lane GBG 2010) was another of those pubs that had a different atmosphere than the usual real ale establishments on our Sheffield itinerary. The general consensus was that it wasn't for most in our party. I left proceedings at this point as the Harlequin drinking bout started to bite back. The last pub attended on the Saturday was the **Three Tuns** (Silver St. GBG 2010) and by all accounts was a breath of fresh air and back into the comfort zone. All's well that ends well!

'Keep Sunday special' they say. So I did. A good nights' sleep after the beery exploits of the previous day put me in fine fettle for the full days drinking and socialising. A day rover ticket on the Sheffield tram network costs just £3 and enables you to flit around the city all day at your hearts content. Some of the SPBW met up early at the **Rawson Spring** (Langsett Rd. GBG 2010) for breakfast before the downhill jaunt to the **New Barrack Tavern** (Penistone Rd. GBG 2010). This street-corner pub showcases ales from both the Bradfield and Castle Rock breweries with their beers *Farmers Belgian Blue* (4.9) and *Harvest Pale* (3.8) respectively, proving the most popular. It was at this point when some eighteen to twenty West Riding SPBW branch members descended on 'the Tavern' to boost our numbers up to circa forty. Well done them! A very welcoming pub, one of my favourites, during our 'tour of duty', whilst in the city.

A short stroll down to the **Hillsborough Hotel** (Langsett Rd. GBG 2010), where fourteen of us indulged in roast lunches, (pork or beef), and dessert. I included the soup starter with my meal as I was never one to hold back. Amid the three Crown brewery beers on hand pump that are brewed in the cellar of the Hotel, were *Empire Albion* (3.9), *Bazens Wandering Star* (4.2) and *Raven* (6.6), from the excellent Thornbridge brewery in Derbyshire. It's the first time that I have visited this brewpub and was impressed with the airy but congenial ambience, wholesome cuisine and eight real ales.



Most of the SPBW made a sharpish exit after their dining to beat the curfew imposed at the next pub on the itinerary. The **Wellington** (Henry St. GBG 2010) alas keeps draconian opening hours and closes Sunday afternoons. Myself, Bill, Richard, Duncan and a few others enjoyed the 'Wellington inset' to fully digest our feast before we frequented the Fat Cat again, isn't life a chore sometimes!

Since Friday night's expedition there, the beer range had changed completely with new monthly Kelham Island specials *North* (4.0) and a very tasty *Rohrback's Scottish Ale* (5.5) on display. Ilkley *Darwin's Tipple* (4.5) and *Nights* from the new Bollington microbrewery were also sampled during our second coming here, which I personally class as one of the finest real ale pubs in England, and with its intimate atmosphere and small cosy rooms, the Fat Cat is 'Top Cat' amongst the real beer brethren.

Another visit to the Kelham Island Tavern, again with a new beer list, a couple of stronger brews were tried, *Wight Old Ale* (6.0) from Yates (IOW) and *Tantalus* (6.5) from the local brewer Brew Co. As 7pm approached it was time for some of us to backtrack to the Wellington, a brew pub not to be missed, with their Little Ale Cart brews produced at the rear of the locally known 'Bottom Wellie'. Last time that I'd been present here was in its Cask and Cutler days, but since then has reverted back to its original title. Three of their well crafted LAC beers were available, *Doncaster* (4.0), *Marmion* (4.3) and *The Green Hounds* (5.0), alongside guest ales *Riwaka Beata* (3.8) from Foxfield and Salamander's *Tattooed Lady* (4.8), in another 'special Sheffield ale house'.

National Inventory entrant the **Bath Hotel** (Victoria St. GBG 2010) hosted live music on our Sunday evening appearance there, with guest ales hailing from Anglo Dutch amid others. Pleasant enough two bar pub, although the music was not to my personal indie rock taste. The **Devonshire Cat** (sibling to the **Fat Cat**) was last on the agenda tonight, a large, modern, bright, airy drinking den with some dozen ales on display including Spire's *Dark Side of the Moon* (4.3), *Rugby No.8* (5.0) and *Victory Ale* (4.2) from Empire. As the SPBW cohorts dispersed after their days eating and drinking jovialities, Hugh, John and myself treated ourselves to a midnight feast in the shape of a very late *ruby murray* at Nirmal's Authentic Indian Cuisine restaurant on the Glossop Road. I 'hit the sack' at 01.35am 'cream-crackered', but fulfilled, yes very full and very filled!

Monday morning brought departures from 'the real ale Mecca', that is Sheffield. The people, the pubs and the city in general were great and I will be returning here soon to enjoy the delights that this city offers in abundance. I was subpoenaed for a farewell lunchtime pint at the **University Arms** (Brook St. GBG 2010) with their array of Thornbridge beers showcasing. *White Swan* (3.5), *Jaywick* (5.0), *Lord Marples* (4.0) and the superb *Jaipur IPA* (5.9) were available amongst guest beers. I liked the laid back characteristic at this pub before I was catapulted by train back to Bucks with fond memories of the Steel City and its real ale culture. Where will the SPBW be blessed with for the National Weekend 2010?

*Alan Sheppard*

Let me add thanks to John Rooth for organising yet another successful event. To complicate matters this time, the Brew Co, our intended brewery destination for Saturday morning, let us down just a couple of weeks before the Weekend so John had to find a substitute fairly sharpish. Thanks also to those members, including a couple of first timers, who came from many parts of the country to join the social mix. It was especially good to meet some old friends from West Riding branch during my flying visit on the Sunday. Thanks of course to Alan, whose detailed account makes me wish I could have made the entire Weekend.

*RJ*

## ***LATVIAN BREWERIES***

Whilst in Latvia recently, I visited the Lodina brewery in Bauska, a small farming town 66 km south of Riga with a population of just under 12,000. The town has the oldest Lutheran church in Latvia. The brewery is situated in the centre of town on the river Mernele. Theodore Lodina founded the brewery in 1873. It remained independent until it was nationalised by the Soviet Union in 1939. The original brewery closed in 1960, but was reconstructed in 1997 after the fall of the Warsaw Pact and is now a modern stainless steel plant, employing 5 women and 2 men.

They brew 5 different beers, usually carrying out 2 brews per week. All the beers have hops added in the form of pellets and are pasteurised. The water comes from a well 400 metres deep. After the brewing process the beer is lagered (stored) for 7 days in a basement 8 metres below the river level. Ice is used to keep the temperature at 5 degrees.

None of the beer is exported and consumption is mainly local. Much of the beer is bottled, using a sizeable plant, and it apparently takes 45 minutes to wash each bottle (although something may have been lost in translation here). As well as the beers they produce Latvia's most popular soft drink Kwas, a dark brown concoction which tastes like cold Bovril.

The beers include: Sencu, a pale lager 4.5%, Gaisais a light lager type beer of 5.2%, Ipasais a special amber also at 5.2%. There is also a white (wheat beer), and a dark beer.

Heading back into the capital Riga, we went to the Riga Entertainment centre, which is the second largest wooden building in the world (behind one in Canada), and has a windmill, playgrounds, skating rinks, restaurants, bars, shops and entertainment. Inside this is also the Lido microbrewery. Lido also own bars and traditionally serve hot and cold buffet food alongside their beers. They brew 3 beers all of which are unfiltered and all 4.5%. These are Gaisais, a pale lager; Specialais, an amber lager and Medalus, a honey beer. The brewery pumps beer directly into its bar in the entertainment centre. The Lido, which was founded in 2000, brews 900 litres per day. The whole brewing cycle takes 21-28 days depending on the type of beer. All of the equipment was traditional coppers.

My favourite Latvian beer was Uzavas, which brews 2 light Gaisais Lagers and 2 Tumsais (darks), one of each of which is pasteurised, but not filtered and then perversely vice-versa.

Sadly drunken British and Irish stag parties are catalysing a change from the traditional Latvian bars, selling cheap Latvian beer to the Irish, theme, sports and clip joint type bars selling more expensive and blander products.

*John Rooth*



## **OPENING A BOX OF FROGS**

### ***Andy's Roving Report***

Now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year, the West Riding branch of SPBW had its inaugural meeting on Sunday 12 March 1989 at the (now demolished) Baron Inn at Stourton on the edge of Leeds. Eight persons were present, including yours truly, the others being Chalky, Sandra, Hick, Sue, Mike, Roy and Glenn. Apologies were read out from 3 others (including Schenker) who could not attend due to work commitments. Some of the items discussed were the forthcoming SPBW weekend in Bradford (anyone remember that?) and a planned pub crawl of Todmorden and Rochdale.

The idea of forming a branch came about when Chalky and I met Oz Tillett & co at the Society's stand at the Great British Beer Festival in the (now demolished) Queen's Hall in Leeds in 1988. Oz had indulged well but not wisely the night before and, feeling a bit under the weather, had purchased a pint of orange juice. When asked by a customer what it was he was drinking, Oz replied, dead pan, that it was beer made from straw, and directed said customer to a stall across the hall. Such was one of our early introductions to the membership.

The branch met in various licensed establishments in the early days, including the Bus Drivers Club on Swinegate in Leeds – due to the chairman being employed in that role. The third meeting was originally due to be held at the Garden Gate in Hunslet, but the venue was changed to the (now demolished) Brassmoulders Arms just up the road. Unfortunately, our arrival coincided with that of a large stag party, so we decamped for the comparative peace of the Gardeners Arms on Beza Street.

Being a campaigning branch, we corresponded with various organisations like the Victorian Society, whom we contacted when we heard that the Clee Park Hotel on Grimsby Road in Cleethorpes, was doomed to be demolished in its centenary year of 1990 by Bass. The VS sent a representative across to Lincolnshire to survey the building and reported that "I regret that I don't think that it meets the criterion of a listed building: 'a building of architectural and historical significance.' If the interior had been intact, complete with tiles, Victorian fittings etc, then it might have met the criterion." In fact, even the local council had discussed trying to get the building listed, but decided not to after it was pointed out that, should the attempt fail, they would have to pay compensation to Bass. And so, in spite of everybody's efforts, the Clee Park Hotel, a most imposing edifice, was demolished in September 1990. At least I managed to call in before its demise.

We were also in contact with bodies as diverse as the Licensing Magistrates and the Motorcycle Action Group as well as our nearest sister branch, Dearne Valley (now deceased). As would be expected, we also communicated with pubs, breweries and the only cooperage on the go back then, Buckleys of Dukinfield, which we visited in April 1991.

We definitely visited some excellent inns: the first pub of the season winner was the Healy Hotel in Rochdale. The second PotS was the Eagle Tavern in Leeds, Les Moon accepting the award in January 1990.

A branch motto was decided on too back in the early days – “*Ut Sana Ut Cista Ranis*” which translates loosely as “As sound as a box of frogs”. And so it was.



## ***FROM THE ARCHIVES***

One of the more obscure cover illustrations adorned the front of the February 2000 PiH, this being a drawing of a pub named the Dog & Bacon in Horsham. It looks like a pleasant enough pub that once sold King & Barnes beers but I know nothing about the place and it's certainly never been mention in the content of any issue. Clearly I was running short of pictures in my pre-camera days.

This issue (no 73) was the first to be produced on a 'brand new PC' and ushered me further into the electronic age by giving me the benefit of email contact at home. It also featured the first article by an American contributor, one Gary Steinel from White Plains NY. It actually covers an historic English brew, Courage Imperial Russian Stout, of which Gary owned 8 bottles of different vintage. He and two friends sampled the lot and he managed to write down his tasting notes and decide on the 1981 version as his favourite.

Closer to home, some of the pubs of Lakeland and Shrewsbury were reviewed and the Perfect Pub was the Birch Hall Inn at Beck Hole, deepest North Yorkshire: a quite remarkable little place which I hope has not been spoilt in the meantime.

Ten years earlier, the cover of PiH 33 depicted the Cheapside Brewery in Liverpool, home of Higsons from 1796 – 1914. Higsons were in the evil clutches of Whitbread who were to close the current brewery later in 1990. The site is now occupied by Cain's who have managed to carry on flying the flag of brewing in Liverpool despite their own difficulties.

Branch reports included one from long-defunct St George's, recounting their Summer Outing to Southwold, which had taken place the previous November. I guess there's not a lot to do there in late autumn other than to visit all the Adnams pubs in town, which is what they seemed to have done. Meanwhile, Andy Whitley and his merry men had been touring the finest alehouses of Oldham and Manchester. Beers from the Oldham brewery were sampled in the early part of the tour – this was then owned by Boddingtons, I believe, and it was destined for a similar fate to Higsons.

Now back to September 1980 and what was described as the Branch Newsletter and National Bulletin. I was never sure why branch and non-branch (national) members needed separate publications and it was only the launch of PiH in 1982 which ended this arcane policy.

We learn that Richard Graham had stepped down as NEC Treasurer to be replaced by Dan Appleton of Wantz branch. Richard would later return to the NEC to put in time as Chairman as well as Treasurer. Dan spent a few years in post before dropping out of the SPBW prior to a major lifestyle change.

Snippets of brewery news reveal that the Horsleydown Brewery by Tower Bridge will be closed in March 1981; Courage beers have since done a grand tour of England (Reading, Bristol and Tadcaster at least) before reaching their present home in Bedford. Boddingtons had finished modernising work and the then current 'public bar' price of a pint of bitter was 37p. This was only 20 years ago?! Meanwhile Fullers had launched the low gravity Chiswick bitter at an astronomic 46p a pint!

## **ARTHUR BATHAM**

We were sad to hear of the death of Arthur Batham at the age of 82. He was diagnosed with cancer just before Christmas and had only commenced treatment last week. He had only taken a back seat from running the Brierley Hill brewery in recent years.

The company, which operates 11 pubs, is currently run by his two sons, Tim and Matt, the fifth generation of the family to operate the brewery, which was founded in 1877 by Daniel Batham, Arthur's great grandfather.

It was Arthur who did much to put Batham's on the map, devising the recipe of Batham's Bitter in the early 50s to satisfy the demands of customers at a local pub.

It is now nearly 35 years since I first sampled Batham's excellent ale, at the Plough & Harrow at Kinver (in the days when this small town on the Staffs & Worcester Canal offered a remarkable range of beers in its many pubs). Since then I have had the pleasure of several visits to the Vine (Bull & Bladder) next to the brewery at Brierley Hill plus one or two others of the small tied estate. Let's be grateful that such a small and modest company has survived so long and let's hope they carry on doing so.

Blessing of the heart, he brewed good ale.

*With thanks to Bill Stansfield and the Morning Advertiser*

## ***Last Orders – from Ipswich***

Interesting developments in Suffolk: a local millionaire businessman, Richard Cattermole has bought three struggling pubs in Ipswich as part of a major initiative to save the town's pub trade. The pubs have been leased to two of his business partners and the arrangement means that they can buy their stock from the cheapest source rather than being tied to a brewery. Thus they can keep prices down for customers: for instance bitter can be sold at £2 a pint. Richard and co are planning to take on three further pubs in Ipswich.

Well, I don't know if we have any men or ladies of means in our number but this does seem to be a splendid bit of philanthropy which may well also make very good business sense. Let's hope it does and that others follow suit elsewhere.

*Thanks to Last Orders, magazine of Suffolk & North Essex Camra*

## **SPBW PRODUCTS**

### **40<sup>th</sup> 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.



*New Barrack Tavern, Sheffield (see page14)*