

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

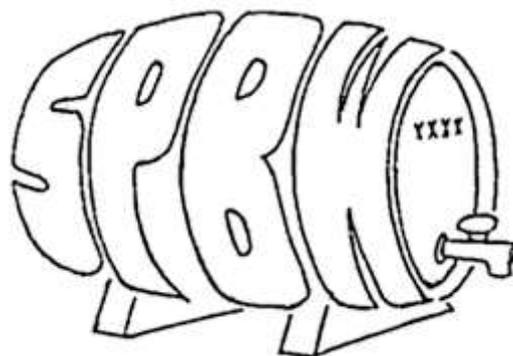
PINT in HAND

Number 116

November 2010



The Bull, Horton Kirby – a rural gem in Kent (page 15)



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 2011 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*.

© *Copyright Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood*

All photos by Roger Jacobson unless stated otherwise

* * * * *

Editorial address

Roger Jacobson

email editor@spbw.com

Membership Secretary

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

Branch Liaison

Bill English, email beeel@myway.com

Products

Dave Samuel; enquiries to Bill English, as above.

General Secretary

John Rooth

email john.rooth@gfk.com

National Chairman

Chris Callow

email chris@callow.com

* * * * *

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

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

* * * * *

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

OPENING TIME

I read recently a column in a national newspaper in which the writer suggested that underage drinking in pubs was not necessarily a bad thing. He bemoaned the concept of a zero tolerance attitude being adopted by publicans. His argument? That it was better for youngsters (and I think he means kids who look old enough rather than pre-teens) to be drinking in the controlled environment of a pub rather than on a park bench or in a bus shelter with cheap cans lager or cider. Well, setting aside the inconvenient details that it's actually illegal to serve alcoholic drinks to under 18s, maybe the writer has a point. After all, I'm sure that just about everyone reading this will have started her or his pub-going career before their 18th birthday. I first went into a pub without parental guidance at 16 and I'm sure it hasn't done me any harm (I'll be grateful if no one writes in to suggest otherwise!)

I think that it's very important that the younger generation get the pub going habit. I'm very keen to see pubs survive as otherwise there'll be no proper beer to be drunk. I don't think it's true to say that traditional draught beer is conceived as an old person's drink; I've seen plenty of evidence of young people drinking real ale in pubs or at beer festivals. Obviously I don't want to see pubs full of 15 year olds getting rat arsed on strong ale and falling on the floor (it's bad enough seeing SPBW members do this!). But the best pubs should have a good social mix and this includes young adults, preferably drinking good beer of course. Incidentally, I'm not sure how many 'young' members we actually have. If you happen to be, say, under 30, why not let me know what you and your contemporaries think about this.

Another significant development in the brewing industry could well be looming in the not too distant future – the review of the tied house system in the UK. The system is outlawed in the EU, but the UK has been given temporary dispensation to continue with it. I've argued before that the tied house system is a good thing where it allows smaller breweries a guaranteed regular outlet for their beers. Against this is a situation where larger breweries can monopolise a local market. Although the Big 6 (under 30s should ask their fathers) is a thing of the past, the spread of the likes of Greene King is of no benefit whatsoever to the consumer.

But would the end of the tie lead to an increase in choice? Let's not forget that the 'Beer Orders' of the late 80s may have led to the demise of the big bad brewers but also resulted in the formation of the large pub groups that now dominate. What would prevent the likes of GK and Marston's forming separate companies to manage their former tied estates, serving the same old beers? Will the long established regional brewers be able to count on the loyalty of their existing customers (and the younger generation of course!)

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 2011 AGM of the SPBW's National Executive Committee will be held on **Monday 14 March**, probably at the Royal Oak. Full details will appear in the next issue of PiH and on our website. All SPBW members are invited to attend; AGMs are usually fairly brief and light-hearted. As ever we will welcome volunteers for an NEC post; please contact John Rooth if you are interested.

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.

PINTS IN PUBS

We have at least a dozen publicans among our membership. If you are such a person and you are organising a beer festival, or any other special event in your pub, why not let us know? We can advertise the event in these pages and hopefully encourage our members to get along.

BEER & CURRY

Our annual frolic in London's vibrant east end will occur on **Sunday 13 February**. This will involve visiting a few pubs, finishing at the Pride of Spitalfields before moving to Brick Lane to eat. Our probable starting point is the Eleanor Arms, 460 Old Ford Road, E3 5JP. Contact John Rooth nearer the time for confirmation of details.

OUT AND ABOUT

Thanks to the hospitality of Sutton & Croydon Camra, we had our usual stand in the foyer of the Wallington community centre for the 3 day festival running from Thursday to Saturday in mid-October. There were over 60 different choices of cask beers as well as extensive cider and Perry and foreign beers. Many of the beers were locally sourced within 30 miles. The beers were generally excellent, with a full representation of all styles. Kissingate ruby mild at 6.5% was an unusual one, about the same strength as Sarah Hughes, which apparently was the tradition for mild in Victorian times.

Wallington always gives us the chance to meet old friends, and our takings were over £250. Pump clips donated by Peter Ramsbottom and Clive Poge proved very popular. This festival is always very friendly and convivial, and from that point of view one of the most enjoyable.

Unfortunately we're unable to run a stand at the Pig's Ear Festival this year, since the new venue hasn't got room for us. Don't let that put you off going however; it runs from Tuesday 30 November – Friday 3 December at the Round Chapel, Powerscroft Road, Hackney, half a mile up the road from the previous venue.

LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

And it's congratulations yet again to Charlie and Eileen at the ***Dog & Bell*** in Deptford, which has been voted best pub in London for the fourth time in 10 years.

The competition was particularly strong this year and it was only after a few 'supplementary' votes that the D & B emerged as the winner, just pipping to the post the Harp in Covent Garden, another former winner. We will make the presentation to Charlie and Eileen on **Monday 24 January** at about 8pm and we'd like to see a good turnout of SPBW members.

I hardly need to repeat this pub's qualities, but suffice to say that it represents the best traditions of the finest pubs. It's a genuine community pub with a warm welcome for all. As far as beer is concerned, it regularly offers Fuller's London Pride and ESB, plus three guests: a few hours ago when I last called in, these were Dark Star Hophead, Hog's Back TEA and Whitstable Bohemian Lager. The food is excellent value, there's a bar billiard table and the Sunday night quiz is always entertaining (even my team's won a couple of times!)

It's worth noting that, out of the 14 nominated pubs, 11 turned up in the top three of the various judges. Of the pubs nominated for the first time we were particularly impressed with the Blythe Hill Tavern (Catford/Forest Hill), Eleanor Arms (Bow), Southampton Arms (Kentish Town) and Cleveland Arms (Paddington).

The Dog & Bell, 116 Prince Street, Deptford, SE8 3JD

SPBW ON LINE

The SPBW has survived for almost half a century and looks set to continue onwards to the centenary. Although now smaller than CAMRA, it is much more a social group, with membership and correspondence around the globe. What helps keep members closer together is embracing all forms of technology.

At its inception, the main form of communication was paper: letters, flyers etc, ultimately leading to Pint in Hand magazine. As an avid book reader and collector I find something very satisfying about words on paper. Easily handled and, most importantly, easily spread around the pubs for others to peruse. It is a fine thing that the magazine motors on and is a mainstay in the publicity of SPBW.

Never let it be said though that we are all Luddites! Technology races on and it behoves us to match pace. Thus we have our own website, our online discussion group/Forum and lately a presence on Facebook. Is this all too much? Why so many?

The IT world is a fascinating place these days, so many levels, so many paths, all intertwining. Facebook (among a host of other "social sites") is a recent concept. At first it was seen as a youth area but Facebook now handles millions of posts per day from all ages. The main problem is that it is open for all to join and post. It is hard to keep control, open to abuse and spamming. On the other hand, it is open to the world (though perhaps not so much in China) and, as such, a great advertising medium.

Our website allows us to advertise ourselves freely, to be succinct and say what we need to say, to be seen. For any business, of any size it a website is now de rigeur! Any group, as opposed to a business, that has a website most certainly benefits from having a discussion forum. Thus we have ours - <http://www.spbw.com/bb> - although it is "members only". The beauty of this Forum is the fact that it is not in the public eye thus a lot more private discussions can be had, and without inane chatter from all and sundry.

So, is it worth joining? Most definitely! Free; Non-public discussions; the ability to post pictures; internal and external mailing systems; Firewalled and anti-viral protection; chat with members and not unknown people. There is even Sudoku to while away an hour or two. All files are stored on a hosting server which is firewalled and AntiViral guarded. We also run an AV routine every so often ourselves.

Is it easy to use? Ah! Here we come to mindsets. New technology is always daunting - at first. The Forum (hosting information for all branches as it does) tends to look large and intimidating. But really, it is just a big pussycat. Once you are on board then it is very like any email program (or Word and similar day to day programs). Help is always at hand: be it the FAQ section, or own tips & hints, or just contact Admin (cough, cough ME!) for help.

Several years ago I happened to mention to "Our Leader" (Chris) about the Forum and I got thrown into the deep end. Knowing nothing about forums it was an adventure. If one takes the attitude that it will be fun then learning comes quicker. The bonus is getting to know other members and making friends many of whom are able to give pertinent information to your questions.

Bottom line: - it is easy to use, when you start using it. So join now!

Receive an email when we update the news page - it is a FREE service: go to <http://www.changedetection.com/> and just enter www.spbw.com/news.html and your email address. You will receive a confirmation email and you just log on to Change Detection and fill in the given reference number - very simple.

*Mark Hutchinson
Chairman, SPBW NI*

NATIONAL WEEKEND 2010

This year's event happens soon after this issue goes to press. More than 20 members are taking part: visits to two breweries plus pubs in Shrewsbury and rural Shropshire are the main attractions. Lookout for a report in PiH 117.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The November 1990 issue of PiH showed a 19th century engraving of Kidd's Brewery in Dartford. Don't ask me why! As usual I was struggling for cover illustrations in the pre-digital camera days. In my editorial I noted that the Tap & Spile pub chain was introducing third of a pint glasses. This was very much a novel concept at the time (and I suggested that it would be suitable for the more mediocre beers of which a pint would be far too much). The third-pint glass has hardly come into common use since, although such measures are usually available at Camra beer festivals.

Long term readers may recall how I often used to slag off Greenall Whitley, both the company and its beers. Despite my antipathy for this outfit, I had mixed feelings when reporting that it had ceased brewing, as this merely contributed to the rationalisation of the brewing industry. Too late of course for the likes of Davenport, Simpkins and Shipstones, already taken over and closed by GW.

Glancing at the branch reports I'm horrified to see that I had been re-elected as Chair of Campden Hill branch. As a humble member of Wantz branch I had enjoyed something like my third visit to Young's brewery; we also had lunch beforehand at the brewery's expense, thanks to their Essex rep who used to visit our meetings occasionally. However, this pales beside the long-gone Suffolk branch who could report a narrow defeat in their annual conker challenge against the Dagworth & District Gentlemen's Cycling Society!

Andy Whitley's report covered Chorlton upon Medlock, just to the south of central Manchester. One of the pubs visited was the Kings Arms, home of the (now defunct) West Coast Brewery Co. Meanwhile, I had gone rather further afield, to southern USA and I recounted the micro-brews I encountered. These were few and far between in those days but the craft beer scene was just taking off.

Ten years later and another irrelevant cover picture: the New Inn at Cropton, North Yorkshire. This remains the home of Cropton brewery and, according to the 2011 GBG 'sets the standard for how a rural pub should be run'. Whitbread was a rather bigger brewery than Cropton and PiH 76 reported that, not only had they closed down all their remaining brewery businesses, but they had also put all their pubs and bars on the market. I questioned what would happen to those pubs, fearing that many might fall into the hands of pub companies or simply be closed down.

One brewery in trouble was Harvey's of Lewes which was flooded when the River Ouse, by which it stands, burst its banks. Despite the inevitable damage, the brewery survived and continues to brew excellent ales. In the meantime Harvey's pubs were obliged to sell their rivals' products.

Many of the articles in this issue covered visits to the west country including Herefordshire, Exmoor and Stonehenge – the brewery that is. Not to be outdone, Andy's report began in south east London and, via Lincolnshire and Liverpool, ended up in Belfast. Just as well he never claimed expenses. In the branch section we see that the Chesapeake Bay chapter has affiliated with 73 members. Wantz has never been able to claim quite as many but had just held its 300th meeting (and passed 400 earlier this year), which is a decent landmark.

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.

MATTERS ARISING

The Editorial last issue stirred up some response. Keep it up!

Dear Roger

I would like to pick up on one subject in your editorial for PiH 115: the standard bitters that brewers produce but which are *never* given the exposure accorded to their 'best' bitters. You, rightly, highlighted Sharp's Doom Bar and compared it, unfavourably, with Cornish Coaster, a much tastier beer. I would like to give three other examples: Charles Wells' Bombardier and Eagle bitter. Needless to say, Bombardier is more readily available than the equally good eagle. My favourite comparison, however, is Fuller's London Pride and Chiswick bitter. The ubiquitous Pride completely overshadows Chiswick in its commercial promotion. Even the sacred name of Harvey's is not exempt from criticism on this point. Harvey's Sussex [Best] bitter is well promoted and well known, but their equally fine Hadlow bitter (Pale Ale) is much less seen.

Many a true thing is said in jest, one reason for the lack of promotion of standard bitters may be that some brewers wish they did not have to produce them at all. Greater profit, one suspects, is to be gained by producing a bland 'best' bitter that will not offend, and can be discounted to receive a larger market share.

John Keller, Crawley

Dear Roger

I have to say that I agree with your conclusions in the latest PiH editorial in that any beer which becomes nationally available tends to be mediocre, even when from an otherwise good brewery. In my view, examples are:

Fuller's London Pride does nothing for me, but Chiswick bitter is excellent, hoppy and fruity and ESB is superb. Taylor's Landlord I find disappointing, but their best bitter and particularly Golden Best are superb. St Austell tribute is scented and uninspired, but their Tinner's bitter is superb. Shepherd Neame Spitfire I have found mediocre, but Masterbrew bitter is fine and Late Red (now available all year) can send you into orbit, a wonderful beer!

Of the big national brewers, Wells & Youngs produce good quality ales, although Young's 'Ordinary' bitter is much sweeter than the lovely dry Wandsworth version. The Marston's portfolio is generally of pretty good quality although personally I don't like the taste of Pedigree. I have had some wonderful Marston's bitter. An exception to the nationally available beers I would say is Caledonian Deuchar's IPA which can often be absolutely superb.

John Savage, Tring

MEET the BRANCHES

We have 17 affiliated branches and details of these are listed below. We always encourage members to join a local branch and get involved with its social activities. Most branches would appreciate new members so you can expect a warm welcome. Branches tend to be fairly informal, meetings being free of boring bureaucracy.

If you don't have a local branch, why not start one? Bill English, (Branch Liaison Officer, address on page 2), will be pleased to tell you what you need to know.

We are hoping that there may soon be an active branch in Norwich again. The former Norvic Nippers look like being resurrected in some shape or form.

BMAD: Meetings held first Thursday of each month at the **Burnt Mill Snooker and Social Club** (CIU affiliated) in Harlow, Essex. Contact Tony Syrett (01279 423174)

CAMPDEN HILL: Meetings held first Monday of each month at the **Wargrave Arms**, 42 Brendon Street, London W1. 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. 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 (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.

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!

GETTING TOGETHER

We have almost 300 National Members scattered across the UK (plus a few overseas). We would like to encourage members who live outside the catchment areas of existing branches to get together. Not just for purely social reasons, but possibly with the view to forming new branches (which is quite social of course). We have two or more members living in each of the following areas:

Bristol; Brighton and Hove ; Dorking; Bromley; Sevenoaks and district; Tunbridge Wells & District; Pinner and district; Braintree; Southend/Wickford district; Bishops Stortford; Hemel Hempstead; Hitchin; St Albans; Luton; Norwich; Potteries; Llandudno; Doncaster; Sheffield; Macclesfield and district; Manchester and district; Wigan.

If you live in one of these areas and would like to get in touch with local fellow members, send your contact details to Bill English (details on page 2) and he will forward them to other interested members in your area (and vice versa). We will not pass contact details to anyone else.

<p>Some back issues of Pint in Hand are available:- numbers 46; 49; 86-115. 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>

BRANCHES IN ACTION

In August **Campden Hill** had a Lebanese Meal at Al Arez on the Edgware Road. Portions, particularly the bread, were large and even the branch eater couldn't finish everything. Good value, friendly and recommended.

In October we had a 4 pub crawl in Westminster. The Speaker is a free house and had an interesting Red Autumn beer from the Conwy Brewery in Anglesey. The next 3 were all tied houses. The Buckingham Arms in Petty France was very quiet and served a fine drop of Youngs. Just along the street, the Sanctuary is a Fullers house. The Pride was better than it often is nowadays. The St Stephens Tavern in the shadow of the Houses of Parliament (nearly) is a Badger pub.

On Monday 22 November we are having our traditional Not the Christmas Meal at the New World restaurant in Gerrard Place. Meet at the Nicholsons pub the Cambridge, 93 Charing Cross Road in Cambridge Circus from 7.00.

Campden Hill events are listed under the Campden Hill Forum on the bulletin board/SPBW forum: <http://www.spbw.com/bb/>

The annual outing of **Central London** branch, in search of pastures new, again used the railways as a form of transport. We decided to follow last year's effort on the Twyford-Henley branch with something similar - the Maidenhead- Marlow branch.



The Bounty



The Old Swan Uppers

So about 14 of us met in Marlow at the end of the branch line. We broke into two parties taking in collectively the Two Brewers with Rebellion IPA and Mutiny, London Pride and Brakspears Best on offer, and the Chequers with a selection of Brakspears available. The Prince of Wales was next with Rebellion Double Dip, Brakspear Best and London Pride, and then the pub only 150 yards from the station the Marlow Donkey offering Green King IPA, Bonkers Conkers Abbot Ale. Meanwhile a splinter group crossed town to find the Duke of Cambridge, which also offered locally-brewed Rebellion beers.

We then moved in a group to Bourne End, with the Firefly only 50 yards from the station with London Pride, Rebellion IPA Deflation on tap. This time the breakaway faction crossed the river to find the Bounty, a pub

only accessible by footpath or boat, another outlet for Rebellion beers. Then onto Cookham (home of Stanley Spencer, the artist) and we wandered 350 yards down the road to a little gem, the Old Swan Uppers, where sandwiches were provided by the owners along with Pedigree, Old Speckled, Doom Bar, London Pride, and Brakspears Best. Returning to the station we moved onto Furze Platt halt, a suburb of Maidenhead, walked 250 yards down the road, pausing at the 'Lobster Pot' fish and chip shop on the way for some welcome solid intake rather than liquid, before walking on to the Farmers Boy with GK beers available.

By now Ray (who organised the trip and wrote most of the above) decided he'd had enough and Dot took him home. The others finished off the day's imbibing at the Greyhound, not far from Maidenhead station. This typical Wetherspoon pub sold Loddon Russet among other guest beers. The weather was fine, the scenery grand, the company superb, and a jolly time I think was had by all who took part in a splendid day out.



Central London members in action at Sambrook's brewery (photo: David Laing)

On 18 October 19 members of the branch celebrated its 30th year by visiting Sambrook's brewery in Wandsworth (writes David Laing). As with many new micros it is housed in a modern industrial unit, this one is located just off York road, north of Clapham Junction station. It is a 20 barrel plant and was purchased from new, many breweries use second hand plant but the owner said it's easier to get ready made kit running quickly. The brewing process is conventional and tries to use ingredients sourced as locally as possible. Traditional hops are used rather than pellets or oils. The brewery opened in late 2008, the first beer was Wandle, a nice session bitter. This was followed in late 2009 by the introduction of Junction, a full malty brew of higher gravity. Due to be launched shortly (as I write this) is London Porter, a 4.9% beer in traditional London style. Thanks go to Alasdair Boyd for arranging the tour and Duncan Sambrook (the owner) for an entertaining evening.

The branch then made the short walk to the local Wetherspoon pub, the Asparagus on Falcon Road for something to eat, and enjoyed some more Sambrook's products that are served there.

Common and Aldbrickham Branch has chosen the Bell at Aldworth as its Pub of the Year for 2010. Although the pub has won many awards from CAMRA including the most recent Regional "POTY" this may be the first (at least in living memory) from SPBW. We also have a provisional date of Saturday 5 March for our Peter Smith memorial Pub Crawl, commemorating the branch's founder. As usual we welcome members of other branches to this. A location has yet to be decided.

RACS staged its annual autumn quiz at the Gate on 7 November. On 13 November they are on the razzle in Brighton.

Wantz branch's latest pub walk, in early September, covered the Dalston, Haggerston and Hoxton areas of north London. Starting point was the Duke of Wellington on Balls Pond Road; this seems to be an up and coming area, judging by the young, affluent trendies who made up most of the clientele; our party certainly raised the average age! Four handpumps dispensed an interesting variety of ales, including one from the fairly local Redemption brewery in Tottenham.



Duke of Wellington



Scolt Head

Next stop was the Scolt Head (named after a Norfolk landmark) which offered Truman's Runner bitter, currently brewed at Nethergate. The Rosemary Branch, close to the Regent's Canal, was a lively place with a theatre upstairs, the Hanbury Arms was fairly undistinguished and our final call was the Wenlock Arms, which should be familiar to our members in London at least. Such a shame that the days of this bastion of good beer from small breweries are numbered. Our latest gastronomic excursion was a return to the Tre Viet in Hackney for a tasty Vietnamese meal. Before and after we supped in Baxter's Court, the local Wetherspoon outlet, which had some decent guest beers on, including Brentwood IPA.

West Riding branch had a trip to Chester and Stockport on 6 November. Coming up later this month is a visit to the new Ridgeside brewery in Leeds (20th) and the following morning sees the branch meeting at Works in Sowerby Bridge.

PERFECT PUB PAGE

When you hear about the number of rural and small community pubs that are closing you get the impression that there is no future at all in such pubs. The reality is somewhat different. There must surely be room for pubs that are well run, offer customers what they want and have a genuine feel for the local community. Such a pub is the ***Bull*** at Horton Kirby, near Dartford in Kent. When Lynne and Garrett took the pub over, a few years ago, it was a boarded-up former Courage pub, on paper perhaps not the ideal place to begin their career in the pub trade. But the Bull is now thriving, a regular Good Beer Guide entry, and Camra's Pub of the Year for Kent in 2009.

The Bull is one of two pubs in this small village; it consists of one room, pleasantly and unpretentiously refurbished, with a large garden offering views of the Darent valley. There has been a pub on this site for some 200 years, although the present building dates from 1903. There are regular darts, cribbage and quiz nights. Good quality, genuine home cooked food is served lunchtimes and evenings. Lynne prepares and cooks the food herself using produce from local suppliers, including fresh vegetables from nearby allotments.

Needless to say, good beer features high on the Bull's agenda. You should find six or seven beers on handpump and possibly some on stillage. On my visit there were two from Dark Star – the increasingly popular Hophead and the excellent American Pale Ale. I also felt compelled to sample Thornbridge Halcyon Imperial IPA, a truly superb 7.7% brew – just a half, mind you, as it was lunchtime!

Although Horton Kirby is a quiet rural village it is fairly well accessible: Farningham Road station (trains from London Victoria) is just a mile north. Dartford is 4 or 5 miles away and the 414 bus runs from there to the village. Alternatively, you can do what I did and walk from Dartford along the Darent Valley path, a very pleasant 90 minute hike – and it was a sunny early autumn afternoon for my visit. However you get there, I'm sure you'll get a friendly welcome from Lynne and Garrett and enjoy some well-kept ales in a very worthy pub. The Bull is open all day from noon every day.

The Bull, 3 Lombard Street, Horton Kirby, Kent DA4 9DF; tel 01322 862274



Singapore Artisan Beer Exhibition

Most visitors to Singapore and south east Asia associate the region with fizzy cold lager. But in the past few years a thriving (if modest) artisan and home brewing movement has arisen. Several bars (they are not really pubs) in Singapore, especially around the Marina area have their own beers on draught. Micro breweries have mainly been based on the Australian model - with beers mainly of the IPA type - perhaps because Indian Pale Ale is considered suitable for the tropical climates. Home brewers also principally rely on Australia for their equipment and ingredients.

It is one of the importers of Australian Home Brewing material (I-Brew-www.ibrew.com.sg) which has been organising the Singapore Beer Exhibition which had its 5th annual event in September 2010. This is not a rival to the Great British Beer Festival but the situation was a little warmer and company just as good. The Exhibition took place in the East Coast Parkway- just by the beach, with warm weather (not unexpectedly as Singapore is only 100 miles north of the equator)) but no rain (which is unusual on an afternoon in this region). Three hundred people arrived to be greeted by the brewers (this being mainly home brews provided for drinking and judging). Yes, the participants had to drink then give their verdicts on 6 entries (3 IPAs, 1 American Pale Ale, 1 Dark Ale and 1 Biere de Garde). As well as the amateur's views of the beers there were three judges from Singapore micro-breweries. Even more important there were 4 beers from micro-brewers and others which were to be drunk without a need to fill in a judging card. As the heat, humidity and tasty beer had an affect the ability to drink without having to judge and write a verdict became a blessing.

Unlike the UK beer festivals this one has free beer - after the entry fee of about £15 had been paid. Plastic pint glasses were issued (holders' names tastefully written on by the ticketing staff) and these could be topped up as often as one liked. An unusual feature of the exhibition was the colour coding of the wristbands used to denote entry fees paid (being in a public park anyone could wander over for a free beer) as those who considered themselves brewers were issued with a blue band (rather than orange for those who just like to drink) which meant that the 'brewers' could be asked for tips on making better beer. In the multi-ethnic city State of Singapore the various non-Muslim communities were represented although Ang Moh (Europeans) and Chinese (orang China) predominated.

All the beers were drinkable and most were excellent- particularly considering that the ambient temperature was 35°C and humidity over 80%. It was not beer from the wood (more beer from plastic / PET or from the glass carboy) but still a great effort.

Wes Harry

SELBY DATE

Andy's Roving Report

The ***Malt & Hops*** in Leith, a waterside inn, was visited on 4 August by a group of 6 *bon viveurs* from Leeds, it being the first hostelry on the day's itinerary. After a short taxi ride from Waverley railway station in glorious sunshine (it was throwing it down in England), we arrived at The Shore, which was the original port of Leith. The Water of Leith is directly over the road from the Malt & Hops which stands in the old docklands area. The building dates from 1749, so it has seen a fair bit of life like when George IV landed at The Shore in August 1822, dressed as a complete berk.

The pub consists of a single wood-panelled room, with hop vines hanging from the roof beams. As befits an old docklands pub, there's a vault full of foreign bank notes pinned up there as well. The Malt & Hops is a renowned free house, so it was no surprise to see a huge number of pump clips displayed, as well as some rare brewery mirrors. Amongst the latter were two old Tetley ones that I've never seen in Leeds or anywhere else.



The Malt & Hops has eight handpumps dispensing beers from all over the place. On our visit, there were two English beers from Springhead and Hadrian & Border and six local offerings from Kelburn, Caledonian, Inveralmond and Highland Brewing. Prices are dearer than Leeds, ranging from £3.05 to £3.40. See the pub's most informative website for beers 'pouring now' and those coming on next. I tried the Inveralmond Thrappledouser which was extremely good and we sat against the far wall to survey our surroundings. Overall, I'd describe the pub as well-worn but comfy and well worth visiting when in the Lothians.

Malt & Hops, 45 Shore, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6QU; tel 0131 5550083; www.barcalisa.com/

The **George & Dragon** in West Haddlesey, a rural hostelry, was visited on the last day of September by a car load from Leeds as part of a rural ride. As the vehicle in question was a Landrover Discovery, no less than 6 of us fitted easily into it: ensconced was Al the driver and my good self, along with Ray, Schenk, Bob and Graham in no particular order.

The G & D stands near the Selby Canal and is difficult to miss, assuming you found West Haddlesey in the first place. For the unknowing, the village is about 5 miles south west of Selby, and it's all in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

The pub has a two-roomed layout, possessing a long (as opposed to wide) bar area with the entrance to another room about halfway down. The beams on the low-roofed ceiling are covered by great numbers of pump clips; a lot of these are from Simpson & Simpson (aka Brown Cow), a local brewery. If I recall correctly, there's three handpumps, and when we arrived we had the choice of the house beer, S & S White Dragon (4%) and Chairman's Stout, a 4.4% beer from the new Thorne Brewery. I almost got to try the latter, but just as I was being served the liquid turned to froth, indicating that it was finished. One of those lucky to get a pint remarked on its excellence. Rather than awaiting the next beer (S & S Bitter) appearing on the pump, I tried the White Dragon, which at £2.45 is not overpriced these days, especially when compared to places like York or Leeds for instance. An added extra was the two free baskets of chips that we were presented with, these being wolfed down by the ratbags who were with me. When we reappeared at the G & D at the end of the night we were given a dish of scallops! All this food was doubtless unhealthy but most welcome nonetheless.

Other bits: the pub won the York Press Pub Award for Community Pub of the Year in 2009/10, which is no minor feat. There are two beer festivals a year held here, one around St George's Day and the other near the end of October. Oh yes, there's even accommodation, there being a guest room available.

Opening times appear to be 17.00 onwards from Monday to Friday, 14.00 on Saturdays and noon on the Sabbath. The George & Dragon is certainly worth stopping off at if you are ever near Selby.

**George & Dragon, Main Street, West Haddlesey, nr Selby,
Yorkshire YO8 8QA; tel 01757 228198; www.info@theGandD.co.uk.**

Leaving the George & Dragon, we climbed back into the Tiger Tank and, crushing all before us, rolled along to nearby Chapel Haddlesey and the **Jug Inn**. I previously wrote about this hostelry for PiH 58 published in May 1996.

Anyway, for those who have joined us since, the Jug is in the centre of the village and is a bit of a rarity nowadays, not having been knocked into a single roomed shoebox. Entering the bar room you'll see the counter just to the right of you. There were three ales available on our

visit; these consisted of Greene King IPA, Wadworth 6X and Jennings Cumberland mild. The latter beer was excellent and the cheapest beer of the night at £2.40. Here we met Les H, a Leeds refugee who had sensibly married an heiress and now lives in luxury, far from the madding crowd.

Over to the left of the room you'll see the way to the snug at the back which has its own bar; the sole handpump there was dispensing Black Sheep bitter. Note the stained glass window in the door of the snug. According to our resident expert Schenk, the work is modern and is the genuine article (as opposed to a 'stick on' job) with strengthening bars added in case someone pushes on the window instead of the door! He went on to mention that the lead pattern on the plain glass background is in 'Cathedral Style': so now you know.

Food is plainly a big draw as the Jug was full of munchers, who chomped away in both rooms. I noted that the desserts all seemed to be of the traditional type (and quite right too), like rhubarb crumble, spotted dick and treacle sponge. It isn't one of those places that are really restaurants with a bar added though and remains most definitely a pub – and a first class one at that. I'd advise anyone planning to visit mid-week to telephone the pub for opening hours though as the details I've seen on various websites are a bit lengthy.

Jug Inn, Burngate Cottage, Hirst Road, Chapel Haddlesey, nr Selby, YO8 8QQ; tel 01757 270718

Last Orders – From Nottingham

A novel idea to further cement the pub's role as integral to the community has been embraced by Karen Williams, manager of the Lincolnshire Poacher in Nottingham. She has set up a parcel delivery service – useyourlocal.com – which avoids the problem of parcels and packages being (not) delivered while you're out. Using this initiative, people can choose to have items delivered to the Poacher and collect them at their leisure. This of course provides a perfect excuse for nipping out for a pint or two, but Karen insists that this is not a prerequisite of the service. But it does help to promote the pub and encourage locals to pay a first visit. It'll be interesting to see if the idea catches on.

Since first writing this I've seen a similar arrangement at the Cleveland Arms, Chilworth Street, near Paddington – a recommended pub if you're in the area, even if you're not expecting any mail.

SPBW PRODUCTS

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 light blue, black red, burgundy;
one size only) £5.00

Enamel Badges

(gold motif on black rectangle)*

*out of stock, new badges coming soon

Bottle openers and key rings with cask motif. £1.00

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 Bill English** (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.



Charlie Gallagher of the Dog & Bell celebrates another London Pub of the Year award (photo by John O'Connor)