

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

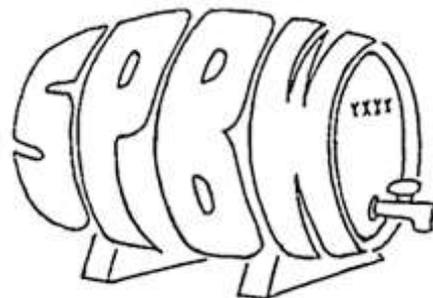
PINT in HAND

Number 121

February 2012



*Malt and pumps at York Brewery (see page 13)
Photo: Bill English*



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 2012 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

This issue marks the 30th anniversary of the debut Pint in Hand. Whatever you may say about this magazine (and please do!) the beer scene has hardly been dull in the meantime. A comment by a fellow member the other day set me off thinking about one of the main changes. Whilst there are literally hundreds of new small and micro-breweries producing countless ales of differing merit, some of the great beers of yore have either disappeared or, more often, been downgraded and devalued. Think of draught Bass, once a classic Burton brew, more recently a little-loved brand (at least by its owners), passed around various breweries like an unwanted poor relation. Now at least it has a home back in Burton, at Marstons, but it is hard to find in many areas and probably seen as 'unfashionable' in comparison to the lighter, hoppier beers that have come into vogue.

Then consider such brands as Fullers London Pride and Adnams bitters, beers I once drank with great relish. These can still be good when properly kept, but have become so widely available that they end up in the hands of less skilled publicans, and are sold too 'green', thus depriving the drinker of their full potential.

Personally I think that some of the best beers around are brewed by the long-established regional breweries: the likes of Harveys, Hook Norton and Bateman guarantee top quality ales to my mind. Of course it's all a matter of taste and we can at least be thankful that we have a decent choice these days.

One thing that's not changed in 30 years is that the SPBW remains a fairly small organisation run, at both branch and national level, by a small bunch of dedicated enthusiasts. The problem is that this bunch is getting older and no larger. If the Society is not to stagnate, or even disappear, it is vital that more volunteers come on board to help out. A few more branches outside London would be nice, and forming and running a branch should not be too much hassle; and more help at running our stalls at beer festivals in the London area would be very gratefully accepted. At the end of next year, the SPBW will celebrate its 50th anniversary and we very much hope we can go into the next half-century with some optimism. We know from events such as the ever-successful National Weekends that there is plenty of enthusiasm for the SPBW, so why not take things a step further, get more directly involved and make us even better?!

That said, I remain highly grateful to anyone who has contributed to these pages over the decades. This is the SPBW's magazine, not mine, so keep it going, I really do appreciate hearing from you good people out there.

Roger

Articles on beer/pub related issues are always welcome! Contributions to the Perfect Pub Page and Last Orders features in particular, as well as responses to my fevered ramblings above. If sending articles by email it would be very helpful if they are in Arial plain 12pt, single spacing with absolutely no formatting! Pictures should be in JPG format. Thanks.

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 4JU. 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 2012 AGM of the SPBW's National Executive Committee will be held on **Monday 12 March**, in the upstairs room at the Royal Oak – address as above. All SPBW members are invited to attend; AGMs are usually fairly brief and light-hearted. Solid refreshments will be provided to wash down the excellent Harvey's beers.

The Royal Oak is just off Borough High Street and Great Dover Street. Borough tube station (Northern line) is about 200 yards away and London Bridge station (Northern and Jubilee line tubes and national rail) is within half a mile. A number of bus routes pass close by the Royal Oak.

As ever we will welcome volunteers for an NEC post; please contact John Rooth if you are interested.

YEAR OF CELEBRATION

No not 2012 – next year, 2013. In 1963 a group of disgruntled beer lovers met in a pub in Epsom and founded SPBW. The NEC will reflect the fiftieth anniversary in the usual annual events that we arrange for you, plus maybe some special ones. Planning is already in hand ,but to quote an old ad 'our roots are our branches' and I hope our branches – and maybe individual members – around the country will do their bit to celebrate this landmark throughout next year. It's never too soon to start planning, so get thinking! We will of course advertise events through PiH, our website and email so as to encourage maximum participation.

Mike Hall, National Chairman

OUT AND ABOUT

We hope to be represented at a few beer festivals again this year, most likely Beckenham (May), Ealing (July) and Wallington (October). Details will be disseminated in the usual media. Needless to say, volunteers will be needed if we are to make a success of these ventures.

LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

As reported in the last issue, the Royal Oak in Borough is the 2012 winner. The presentation to the pub was made on 23 January and an excellent occasion it certainly was. Some 20+ members and guests came along and we were also joined by the estimable Miles Jenner (Harvey's Head Brewery and co-MD) and Leigh Hatts of SE1, a local community on-line newspaper (which gave us some coverage). Miles made the presentation and kindly bought the gathered through a round. A generous free buffet also appeared, not to mention two jugs of Harvey's Christmas Ale. Needless to say, all the beers were on top form, and I can't recommend the Royal Oak highly enough.



Mike Hall (L) holds the trophy which is admired by Frank Taylor (Royal Oak co-tenant, centre) and Miles Jenner (R)

We'll begin the process of selecting next year's winner in the May PiH.

NATIONAL WEEKEND 2011.....

The November event in and around York was another success with the usual 20 or so members in attendance, joined at times by members of West Riding branch. There were visits to York and Roosters breweries and the whole shebang is recounted in detail elsewhere in this issue.

.....and 2012

The 2012 National Weekend may well be based in Chester, on the weekend 16 – 18 November. We are hoping to arrange two brewery tours again as well as visits to the best pubs in the region. This is provisional at present, so keep an eye out for details on our website, other electronic communication and the May PiH.

TONY LITTLER TROPHY

The Tony Littler inter-branch competition will take place on **Wednesday 18 April** in the upstairs room of the **Calthorpe Arms**, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR, 6.30 for a 7pm start. Wantz branch is hosting this event, which will consist of Shut the Box and a quiz. Drinking beer during the competition is to be positively encouraged. Buffet will be provided. All branches are invited to participate and the winning team has to organise next year's event. If you don't belong to a branch, come along anyway and we'll fit you into a team.

The Calthorpe Arms is a Youngs house with usually one or two guest beers. It is a regular GBG entry and London Pub of the Year nominee. Nearest tube stations are Kings Cross (Circle, Hammersmith & City, Northern, Piccadilly and Victoria lines) and Chancery Lane (Central).

It will be helpful to know how many will be there – please let Roger Jacobson (details page 2) know if you intend to come along.

BEER & BUFFET

A belated Burns Night celebration was planned for 30 January at the Wenlock Arms, London N1, with Alasdair Boyd in charge of the haggis. We usually try to plan two more conventional B & B events during the year so keep your eyes open for details.

BEER & CURRY

The latest event, on **Sunday 26 February**, will celebrate Sandie Shaw's 65th birthday. It's unlikely that the barefooted Dagenham songstress will be with us, but even if the girl don't come we hope a good crowd of SPBW members will join our small tour of east end pubs followed by some Brick Lane nosh. Start from noon at the **Eleanor Arms**, 460 Old Ford Road, Bow, E3 5JP, a worthy Shepherd Neame pub expertly run by SPBW member Frankie Colclough and family. The number 8 bus runs past the pub. After that we move, via the 8 bus route, to the Camel (Bethnal Green) and the Mason & Taylor (Shoreditch), then to the Pride of Spitalfields just off Brick Lane. We aim to be eating by early evening. All are very welcome to join the party.

PINT IN HAND BY EMAIL

How would you like to receive PiH by email rather than by post? This would be of particular value to overseas members and would save the SPBW a few bob in terms of postage and envelopes. Beware that PiH is a substantial document (around 5MB) so you may need broadband if it's not to jam your inbox.

If you want to go for this, please email Roger West and Roger Jacobson (details on page 2) and we'll take it from there.

RICHARD KEHOE

I was very sorry to learn that SPBW member Richard Kehoe passed away peacefully on 27th November after a long battle with cancer. Richard Kehoe spent some of his childhood years living in Conway, North Wales before moving down to London and eventually meeting and marrying his wife Diane. Richard lived in London until 2003 when he retired from work, said farewell to London and moved with Di back to Conwy.

Richard Kehoe was a CAMRA life member and served as Social Secretary on the West London CAMRA committee in the 1990s for several years. Richard was very well travelled and enjoyed visiting many different countries around the globe and I was lucky enough to receive many different postcards from his travels. He had many interests including steam railways, canal boats, cinema, theatre/concerts, overseas beer festivals, CAMRA AGMs to name a few. In recent years Richard has been a regular on our National weekend trips until illness made it impossible to attend our most recent trip.

I always found Richard to be very easy going and great company to be with whenever I was socialising with him. There are many other people who, like myself, will miss Richard as a friend and I'm sure would want to offer and express sincere condolences and sympathy to Diana and his mother Kay.

Bill English

BRANCHES IN ACTION

In November **Campden Hill** had its Not the Christmas Meal at an excellent Vietnamese restaurant (Saigon Saigon) in King Street, Hammersmith. Mike and Adrian shared a hot pot dish, which meant that they had to cook the raw food themselves in a bowl of stock boiling on a gas ring. Some of it stayed raw I suspect. Otherwise were less adventurous, but nevertheless had excellent typically Vietnamese dishes. Beforehand the London Pride was in particularly good form in the Salutation.

In January we found some excellent beers in a city crawl: The Crosse Keys in Gracechurch Street is a big Wetherspoon's with a spectacular domed and marble decorated interior, with at least a dozen fairly unusual beers. Then two Nicholsons close to Liverpool Street station: Woodin Shades had limited beers left on, but the Caledonian Double Dark was good. The Magpie had an excellent selection including two Moor beers from Somerset (very Moorish) Amoor and the unfinned Confidence; beers from Truro (Pirates Gold), Acorn (Barnsley) and Inveralmond (Lia Fall) were also very nice.

We have switched to the Duchess of Cambridge in Goldhawk Road for our monthly meetings. This is the sister pub to the Bree Louise at Euston and has

lots of beers and ciders on handpump and stillage as well as the usual pie menu. It is more spacious and comfortable than the Bree.

The **Common & Aldbrickham** branch presentation of 2011 Pub of the Year to the Blgrave Arms took place on Friday 25 November. Unfortunately, the landlord, Sam, decided to terminate his tenancy at the end of the year, apparently after a disagreement with the pubco regarding his beer range and possibly other, personal issues, and has gone on to "pastures new". This is a great shame as Sam worked hard to turn round a failing pub and one does wonder at the mentality of some of these pubcos, does one not?? It also means that the pub is now shut and in the current unhelpful economic climate it remains to be seen whether anyone else will chance their arm with it.

We are commemorating the 5th anniversary of Peter Smith's untimely passing with a crawl of London along the Northern Line on Saturday 3 March. We will meet at the Euston Tap, located in one of the gatehouses outside Euston Station, which are all that is left of the original buildings, by 12 noon. From there we will proceed to the nearby Bree Louise, then by the underground railway to Kentish Town, visiting the Southampton Arms and Junction Tavern, before plunging south towards London Bridge, possibly stopping off at Charing Cross for a pint at the Harp, with visits south of the river to the Market Porter, Royal Oak and possibly et cetera.

In November most of **Kingston** branch congregated on a Saturday afternoon for a mini crawl of The Borough. We met at the deservedly popular Market Porter for a couple of excellent pints then onto the Royal Oak where the plan to continue to other hostelrys, not completely unexpectedly, ground to a bit of a halt whilst we enjoyed the beer and atmosphere there. When we eventually dragged ourselves away we headed for the Lord Clyde followed by meal in Tas Turkish restaurant.

We had our Christmas meal at The Botanist, Kew (www.thebotanistkew.com) - a newish home-brew pub on Kew Green. Pints of "391" brown ale and "OK" bitter were consumed to accompany the very good food, an excellent evening! Two Kingston members (Pete and Dave, who also happen to be Fulham fans) sampled beers at an away game in Denmark including 'slow' Carlsberg from the Vinstue 90 bar in Copenhagen. It takes fifteen minutes to pour. They did not think it was worth the wait. In Odense they sampled beers from the brewery Flakhaven in the town square. Micro-breweries were on the expensive side. Although the beer was not the best, they preferred the atmosphere in the more bohemian pub near the rail station, having made a swift exit from the mandatory Irish pub - Ryan's bar. In December, whilst on another football trip the Pete & Dave also sampled beers in Holland at the excellent in de Wildemann pub in Amsterdam. Given the time of year, bock beer was the order of the day. They also visited the well-known Hoppe and the canalside favourite t'Smalle in the Jordaan district. The branch has plans for further beer related bike rides with the first one of the spring pencilled in from Kingston to Windsor on Sunday 1st April.

With the sad lack of cask ale outlets in the province it is hard for **Northern Ireland** branch to organise a decent sustained crawl. However, a mid-

December Wednesday saw some of us brave the weather and travel by train to visit Coleraine for lunch, with a quick stop-over in Carrickfergus on the way home to enjoy a selection of cask ales in the local Wetherspoon houses. Likewise, the first week in January and another train trip to Ballymena for lunch, with a stop off in Belfast for a top up. Again it was the local Wetherspoon establishments. A lot of people may not like JDW's pubs but they bring to the province an ever changing range of quality cask ales at a very affordable price. February will likely see us returning to Coleraine and stopping off at the Crown Liquor Saloon on the way back. With better weather March could see a five-pub Belfast crawl.

Norfolk Bears celebrated the branch's 1st Bearthday in December. It's hard to make much coherent sense from the meeting minutes but it's not beyond the bounds of reality that in the coming year NB will be visiting Bateman's brewery, Cromer Lifeboat (and local pubs), 6 historic pubs in London, and undertaking a boat trip down the River Yare to Cantley, with a few pub stops along the way.

Life with **RACS** has been quiet over the last couple of months. However with the New Year we are beginning a nomadic existence, following a Sawbridgeworth pub crawl in December to view other establishments in the area. Members felt it would be good to hold our monthly meetings in different pubs around Sawbridgeworth, so January will see us in The Gate as usual and at that meeting the Chair will confirm the calendar for the next few months. We are hoping that we shall pick up new members and spread the Real Ale message across the town. Our Treasurer, Nicholas Macy, died suddenly in November so we are currently looking for someone to fill the gap.

Wantz branch made yet another return visit to the wonderful Singburi Thai restaurant in Leytonstone High Road in late November. Beforehand, we met in the Red Lion up the road – this was one of the first pubs I ever went to as it was a popular venue for live bands in the late 60s/early 70s. I remember seeing the likes of Family and The Nice there when I was still under legal drinking age. 40 years on the Red Lion has been through many changes but now sells a range of about 10 ales from far and wide. Our latest pub walk was in Stratford, starting off in the Tap East in Westfield Mammon Centre. This bar can justifiably claim to be the nearest 'pub' to the Olympic Stadium – it's not very pub-like but it does have its own micro-brewery and also offers beers from the likes of Thornbridge and Dark Star. If you're lost in shopping hell, Tap East is on the lower floor, just round the corner from Waitrose.

Coming up, our next eating experience is at Original Tagines (north African) in Marylebone in early February. At the end of March we have a pub walk in Leyton/Walthamstow, starting at the King William IV, home of Brodie's brewery.



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.

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 **Duchess of Cambridge**, 320 Goldhawk Road, London W6 0XF. Contact John Rooth (see page 2).

CENTRAL LONDON: Meetings usually 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 Ed James, email secretary@spbw.org. Website: www.spbw.org.

CHESHIRE REAL ALE PEOPLE: Are based mainly around the Crewe/Nantwich area. Informal meetings are held each Monday from 7.30 in the Borough Arms, Earle Street, Crewe (some beers £1.50 a pint), then to Hops, Prince Albert Street, Crewe – all real ales £2 a pint for Camra members. 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 280822) or Iain (07707 465750) for details of meetings.

KINGSTON: Meetings held on first Wednesday of each month in the **Willoughby Arms**, 47 Willoughby Road. Contact <http://spbwkingston.co.uk/diary> or email mike.lapworth@talk21.com

NORFOLK BEARS: Meetings held first Thursday of each month at 12.30 in the **Fat Cat**, 49 West End Street, Norwich. The landlord, Colin Keatley, regularly supplies three pins of Fat Cat (and other) beers from the wood. More details at: <http://www.spbw.com/norfolk/about.html>

NORTHERN IRELAND: Normally meet at the Bridge House (JDW), Belfast, on a Friday night after 8pm, at the pillar beside the handpumps. Occasionally the Tuesday Bell (JDW), Lisburn, after 8pm on a Saturday. 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, Cumbria, Cheshire and Shropshire, or wherever we happen to be.

WANTZ: Meetings are held third Monday of the month at the **Old Fountain**, 3 Baldwin Street (off City Road), London EC1V 9NU, 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!

SPBW ONLINE

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.

The SPBW now has its own **Facebook** page (if that's the right technical term). If you're not familiar with this 'social networking' site, go to www.facebook.com – set yourself up with a password and put 'SPBW' in 'Search' and all will be revealed!

FROM THE ARCHIVES

It's February 1982. The Jam are top of the singles chart with A Town Called Malice; Southampton FC, inspired by Kevin Keegan, are top of the First Division; and England's cricketers are playing in the first ever Test match against Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, back on Planet SPBW, the first issue of Pints in Hand is being prepared and printed. Actually, it was called Pints of View, the current title being adopted from issue 4. PiH replaced the old National Members and Branch newsletters and in my maiden Editorial I stated my determination "to make sure that it appears on a regular quarterly basis". Remarkably, this has happened, although I had no ambition at the time to be doing the job for 30 years (and counting!).

Pints of View 'Volume 1, Number 1' was printed on yellow foolscap paper and it was very much a newsletter-style rag rather than the slick magazine you are reading now. The contents were mainly details of branch events plus a lengthy contribution from the legendary Maltworm.

Ten years later, PiH 41 was in much the same format as now; on the front cover was the Prince of Wales in Stow Maries, Essex, an excellent country free house then popular with Wantz branch, who had recently paid a visit. The PoW is still listed in the GBG. Andy Whitley's perambulations had taken him to Northern Ireland and he recounted his visits to numerous hostelrys in the Province. Not a lot of real ale in those days, although Hilden's had begun operations. In fact, most of the few GBG-listed pubs offered nothing more than bottle-conditioned Worthington White Shield.

From further afield was an article by Finnish member Harri Ahola, of the Finnish Society for Traditional Beers. In fact, his article was an account of a trip to London to visit the GBBF and a selection of good pubs. Finally, a former member Derek Selby wrote in praise of the Bell Inn at Aldworth, Berkshire, which he had recently visited. The Bell is described in the 2012 GBG as "one of the great classic rural pubs....in the same family since the 18th century. Sounds like it's still worth a visit (see PiH 117).

On now to February 2002 and PiH is, strangely, printed partly in blue ink. This time round, Andy had been on a day trip to the Lake District to visit some of its finest pubs. Principal among these (at least in the space Andy gave it) was the Old Crown at Hesket Newmarket. For many years both the pub and its eponymous brewery at the back, have been owned by co-operatives from the local community. It is indeed a pub of no little character and the beers are usually pretty good as well. Also covered is Tweedie's Bar at the Dale Lodge Hotel in Grasmere, one of my favourite pubs in the Lakes. It's a fine place to relax after a good walk and is also a nice retreat from tourists on the Wordsworth trail. Nowadays it sells half a dozen beers, mostly from the many Cumbrian small breweries. Andy's party had less choice and were served Coniston Bluebird direct from the cask while the lines were being cleaned. He helpfully explains that the bar's name comes from one Mickie Moscrop (1897 – 1976), a local tweed merchant, singer and entertainer.

TAKING THE LIBERTY OF OLD YORK

After all the e-mails and all the waiting, planning and deliberating, the twenty or so “usual suspects” trained their way from all points of the map, to the ancient Roman city of York, for the 2011 National Weekend. A two hour journey from London’s King’s Cross, a short taxi ride from York station, a quick spruce-up at my digs and it was off to the **Brigantes Bar & Brasserie** (GBG 2012), for a rendezvous with like-minded real ale cohorts from the *SPBW*.

A contemporary-take on an English pub, with plenty of seating for drinking and dining, and eight real ales on handpump. Townhouse *Mount Hood* (3.9) and a couple of Harviestoun beers, *Natural Blonde* (4.0) and *American IPA* (5.0), were duly dispatched as we contemplated on the imminent weekend participation.

The **Ackhorne**, a past GBG entrant, was visited en-route to the itinerary destination, and well-worth the shout too. *Gun Dog Bitter* (3.8) from the new northern brewery Wall’s, and a Great Newsome *Backendish Bitter* (4.1) were consumed amongst the five ales on offer at this smart locals’ retreat tucked down an alleyway. An extra venue not on the itinerary, but glad we visited.

The **Punchbowl** was a busy, bustling city centre two-bar tavern, where most of our *throng* dined while imbibing from the five brews available. Mordue *Newcastle Coffee Porter* (4.7) and Quartz *Extra Blonde* (4.4) complemented my meal nicely. While some of the party were embroiled in their cuisine, a few of us popped up to **The House of the Trembling Madness** (see PiH 120), a quirky first-floor bar above a well-stocked off-licence. Continental beers were at the fore here, but the sole handpumped beer was tried, probably regretted, a hefty (5.9) offering from the legendary Marble brewery, a certain *Dobber*. An alternative concept in ale drinking, the bar funky and upbeat. Well worth an impromptu attendance.

Smack opposite the **Punchbowl** is the **York** brewery-owned **Yorkshire Terrier**. A bright and airy pub where six of their brewery’s brews can be found alongside a guest beer, Tring *Blonde* (4.0), as I remember. *Centennial* (4.0), *Scrum Down* (4.5) and *Conspiracy* (4.5) were all tried and tested. This pub was light relief from the last two bars which were heaving with early evening pub-goers.

Next on the agenda was the **Maltings** (GBG 2012), a pub that I’d longed to visit and which didn’t disappoint. A no-nonsense boozier, smaller than I imagined, but packed with charisma. Of the seven beers on parade, Milestone *Dark Knight* (4.4), Crown *Primrose Pale* (4.2), *A Chimp off the O’ Block* (3.6) from Brass Monkey and *Dark Arts* (6.0) from the impressive Huddersfield brewery Magic Rock, were ‘suffered’ while soaking up the start of the weekend ambience that this pub oozes.

Circa seven o’ clock, so it’s off for the short jaunt to the highlight of the day, a visit to the cities sole brewery, the **York** brewery. Established in 1996, this 25 barrel plant is situated within the Roman walls of the city on a site with a chequered past. A carpet shop, tyre warehouse, motorcycle shop and even a morgue, have all once frequented this venue, now presiding and brewing fine

ales. Josh Dallos delivered an entertaining and frank recital of the operation and functioning of the brewery, before we returned to the cosy upstairs taproom, where some of their spoils, namely *Centurion Ghost* (5.4), a favourite of mine, were put through their paces. Most of the party left to seek further imbibes elsewhere in the city, but I choose slumber over alcohol for a change.

After a hearty breakfast at my B & B, it was off to board a coach, bound for the outskirts of Knaresborough for another brewery visit, this time **Roosters**. Sited on an industrial park, and resembling a huge Anderson air-raid shelter, Roosters have been brewing at this present abode for the last ten years, after two previous homes in Harrogate. A family run business is headed by father Sean Franklin, his dear wife Alison and son Tom. This 25-barrel brewery produces various beers distributed nationally, with some of their latest brews sampled during the weekend in North Yorkshire. Pints, and halves for the pace-yourself drinkers, of *Jak's* (3.9) and trial brew *Black Math* (4.3), were savoured within the bounds of the brewery during our two hour pilgrimage there.

Farewells were served as the *SPBW* stage-coach rolled the short distance into Knaresborough to meander around the various hostelrys which inhabit the town. The **Mitre** (GBG 2012) shadows the local railway station and was bustling with lunchtime diners, some of the trade from ourselves. Roosters *Oakley Cream* (4.7) and *Mary Jane* (3.5) from Ilkley were purchased from the various beers to hand.

I frequented the **So Bar** and the Sam Smith's notable **Marquis of Granby** pubs, before attending my favourite visitation while in Knaresborough. **Blind Jack's** (GBG 2012) is a town centre gem with an eclectic range of ales, nine when totalled. Its defined character and traditional stance enthralled all who crossed the threshold, to deliberate on the choice of their real ale. *Cragdale* (4.2) from Yorkshire Dales, *Blind Jack's Bitter* (3.9), a house beer from Marble and two explosive Thornbridge offerings, *Geminus* (8.5) and *Alchemy XVI* (9.4), were endeavoured. A very fine pub, and one of the best of the weekend. Final watering hole attended in Knaresborough was the **Cross Keys** (GBG 2012), where four of the eight 'skittles' showcased Ossett ales. All *Gates California* (3.8) and *Maypole Ghost Train* (4.7) were enjoyed in another interesting pub and worthy of the Good Beer Guide gong. We departed K'boro early evening for Harrogate as darkness encroached, with a tight agenda to fulfil, but eager to please the itinerary.

The **Winter Gardens** is a fine *Wetherspoons* conversion serving some thirteen to fourteen real ales, a popular venue as tea-time beckoned. Beers from Hilden, Hambleton and Daleside, amongst others, poured expertly by barmaid Jodie, as football final scores from Hull, Huddersfield and Derby were announced on the various TV screens adorning the walls of the bar. A good start to the evenings jovialities, even if my team just got spanked 5-2!

Most of the remaining pubs on our itinerary were based around the large green in the town. The **Blues Bar** (GBG 2012) was the first to be experienced, a small music orchestrated bar with a basic beer range. I managed to put in

cameo appearances at the **Coach and Horses**, **Tap & Spile**, **Old Bell Tavern** and **Hales Bar**, probably one of the best in Harrogate, before a covert party commandeered a taxi to 'snag' the **Swan on the Sway** (the final GBG 2012 entrant), a short hop from its other GBG stable-mates, but one that myself and Mr Rooth wanted to 'tick'.

All the pubs and bars tonight personified their GBG credentials with some fine ale being drank in some great auspicious surroundings. The Daleside brewery was well represented tonight and their *Monkey Wrench* (5.3), a fabulous drop, being sort out and top of the list of beers indulged. As the coach re-entered York on the homeward bound journey, I hopped off to pop into the new brew-pub, the **Junction**, to try their *Der'ailed* (4.5) ale and a chin-wag with the owner/brewer. I poured myself into bed shortly after, brim-full and glad to be under feather.

Sunday, the Lord's Day, was to be spent solely in York, and with our numbers boosted by an influx of West Riding SPBW members, we started at the **Punch Bowl** (*Wetherspoons*) at 11am, where a half pint of Wentworth *Auzzie Blonde* (4.5) served as a "Hair of the Dog" after the excesses of the day prior. Busy with breakfasters and coffee drinkers, our Sunday pilgrims lamented until noon before moving on to Samuel Smith's owned **Trafalgar Bay**, a paradigm Sam Smith's pub, with traditional lounge, saloon and snug bars housing their *Old Brewery Bitter* (4.0) brew. If the **Trafalgar Bay** was archetypal, the next pub, the **Golden Ball** (GBG 2012), was simply utopian, with its multi-room period decor. I was lured into participating into a game of bar billiards by Monsieur Dearing, where I was soundly beaten while I drank my *Black Maxim* (4.0) from Double Maxim.

The **Swan Inn** (GBG 2012) was I think my favourite pub in York! A splendid example of a time-honoured pub format, lounge and snug bars, with the pubs handpumps situated in a spacious corridor with plenty of standing room to converse while socialising on the hoof. A homely feel greeted you on entry with half a dozen ales on offer. I viewed the live football on the TV in the front parlour bar, whilst taking refreshment with Tryst *THT No.2* (3.9), Lees *Hopmeister* (3.8) and *Autumn Red* (4.4) from Caledonian.

I slipped off to the **Slip Inn** (GBG 2012), a small local's community pub with complementary cheese and crackers for the pubs patrons. *The Scream* (4.5) from the new Revolutions brewery was one of the ales that complemented the free 'nibbles' for me. Early evening again saw our "Ale Force" meander their way back inside the Roman ramparts to the **Phoenix** (GBG 2012), a revitalised, enchanting jazz venue. Food was summoned by many in the SPBW during our brief stay, two Wold Top brews imbibed from the five ales available.

The next three pubs were in a pleasing cluster neighbouring one another, as the November climate began to bite, a dark, dismal and dank day from dawn until dusk. The **Rose and Crown** was OK, the **Wagon and Horses** (GBG 2012), Batemans only outlet in York, was considerably better with its brewery offerings and guests totally seven. It hosted an eerie bar area, dark and mystique, like the *Vanilla Porter* (4.5) from Great Heck that I drained. I followed this with a *Galaxy* (4.2) brewed by Empire, before crossing the road

to the **Rook and Gaskill** (GBG 2012). Some twelve handpumps adorn the bar here at this, **Castle Rock's** most northerly outpost. A narrow pub, considerably quiet, on this Sabbath evening, except for a few locals. Until very recently this was the cities flagship pub for most beers on handpump at any one time. This number has now been eclipsed. I selected brewery beer *Midnight Owl* (5.5) and Worcestershire's Blue Bear *White Bear* (4.5), a tough choice from all those showcased.

I departed and headed back into the city, popping into the **Spread Eagle, Old White Lion, Last Drop Inn** (GBG 2012) and **Snickelwaites**, amongst an apparition at the **Blue Bell** (GBG 2012), one of York's smallest pubs, quaint and National Inventory registered. Three Bradford beers were present here, a pub that discourages large groups, so the SPBW had to filter in ones and twos, allegedly. But worth the effort!

I had a late night "ruby murray" prior to retiring to my quarters to reflect on another fine day embracing the legion of diverse real ale establishments that York has in spades. Monday morning! My last day in North Yorkshire! After another cooked breakfast, I wandered into the city centre once more to peruse the wonderful shopping available then strolled to the **Three-Legged Mare** for adieus to the SPBW attendees, (some for another year).

As my return train wasn't until 15.00 hours, I re-visited **Brigantes Bar & Brasserie** for some Kirstall *Blackband Porter*(5.5) and the **Maltings** for some tucker and a couple of halves, one a Humpty Dumpty *Swingbridge Stout* (4.1), the best beer of the whole weekend. These two pubs are central to the city and two of my personal favourites. Further halves were supped in the train stations brand new **York Tap** bar, exhibiting eighteen handpumps, of which fourteen offered real ale today to the fellow SPBW drinkers awaiting their respective home-bound trains back to normality. Another National Weekender over, roll on November 2012!

Alan Sheppard

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.

Also, when events and news are published on the website you can be notified direct to your email by signing up for a FREE notification service on the news page. Go to: <http://spbw.com/news.html> and go to the 'Monitor changes' box in the bottom left corner.

PINTS IN PUBS

We have several 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.

TWO YORKIE BARS

Andy's Roving Report

Here are two Hostelries that I trust all those attending the Society's national weekend last year managed to visit.

The **York Tap** is owned by the same people who have the marvellous Sheffield Tap on platform 1 at that city's railway station; it opened a few days before our National Weekend soiree took place. Previously housing the York Model Railway and looking (to me anyway) like an Edwardian cricket pavilion, the building has been up for just over 100 years, which is nothing hereabouts, and started life as the North Eastern Railway's station tearoom in February 1907. The architect was one W Bell who apparently much favoured the *art nouveau* style of the period. Many of the original features were restored when the present owners Pivovar purchased the place for a cool quarter of a million, aided by £75,000 from the Railway Heritage Trust. The restoration work was entrusted to Andy Thornton (see his website www.andythornton.com for real detail) who carried out work on the stained glass cupola, terrazzo floor, fireplace surrounds, etc and did a most striking job of it I might add. This really is a pub where one gets a sense of what it must have been like originally. Also visit <http://turniprail.blogspot.com/> for more information and photographs of the original tearooms.

Anyhow, you've two ways in; one is via platform 2 and the other is from the city side; left out of the main exit and left again at the end of the main building where the little zebra crossings are. I understand that an antique revolving door has been reinstated (as there was one *in situ* originally) just before Christmas and I imagine it will be gracing this entrance. Take either door and you are faced with a bank of ten hand pumps on the circular bar, so that's 20 all in all and a large number of fonts too. The range of foreign bottled beers is the most intriguing I have seen as I've never heard of any of the breweries, which include a most thorough range of stouts, porters, IPAs, etc, which the barman told us came from some crowd in Japan!

As for the cask ales, there's some from the Thornbridge of Sheffield range and the others come from all over the place - I've drunk a most excellent pint of Jarl, from the Loch Fyne Brewery in Argyll at the **York Tap** and I gather from others who have been here that the quality of the beer they'd had was likewise excellent. The prices of the cask beers are not as bad as you might expect in York and there's pubs in the centre who'll charge more for the same ale. The cost of some of the bottled beers however may cause you great harm and I'd advise pretending to be dead if asked to buy them as part of a round.

Overall, this is a very superior hostelry, a wonder to behold in its restored magnificence (I mean, consider the Wetherspoon's at Leeds railway station and think of what might have been) and anyone who does not like the **York Tap** should be trampled by gerbils.

The **York Tap** opens Monday to Friday at 8.00 and Saturday to Sunday at 11.00. E-mail info@yorktap.com or peruse their page on Facebook for information on beers, etc.

York Tap, York Railway Station, Tea Room Square, Station Road, York YO24 1AB; tel: 01904 635464.

The **Slip Inn** is across the city from the York Tap, and is just over the walls on the eastern side in the quite historic and rather upmarket residential area of Clementhorpe, off Bishopgate Street. I've no idea really of the age of the **Slip Inn** but will play safe and guess that it was built in the Victorian period at some point. History marker - note the incredibly narrow footpath outside and the old row of terraced houses on the other side of the road. The pub may have gone up about the same time as the latter but I'd be interested to find out more. As an aside, I read some years ago that the pub name "The Slip" could be derived from the German "Schilpp" which apparently means an alley or passageway. However, reading a website on the pub, there seemingly used to be a slipway which ran down the street to a long gone boatyard on the river Ouse.

This is not a huge hostelry at all and consists, as far as I could see, of a front bar room and a larger area to the rear, with a beer garden out the back. I really should have taken my scribbling book along to jot down more notes. The **Slip** is a free house and is owned, in full or in part, by the same people who run the excellent Swan at the top of the road. The third part of the estate is the Volunteers Arms on Holgate Road, south west of the railway station. Anyway, the standard beers here at the **Slip** are a quartet of Yorkshire ales as follows; Leeds Pale, Ilkley Best, Rudgate Ruby Mild and Wold Top Gold. There is also a guest beer which changes regularly. I've always found the beer to be in good form on the few times that I've been in. Beer festivals are held regularly here, the most recent having been their Winter fest in December.

The Slip is in the GBG and I'd say worth calling in for a pint or two; in fact I'll probably add it to my list of York hostelrys to be visited whenever I can afford the train fare. As this is a quiet residential area, the pub doesn't open until 5.00 Monday to Friday and noon on Saturday and Sunday.

The Slip Inn, 20 Clemethorpe, York YO23 1AN; tel: 01904 621793; info@theslipinnyork.co.uk

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.

BEER FROM THE WOOD - CHILTERN 300 ALE

The Farmers Bar at The King's Head Inn in Aylesbury was the venue for the launch of a new means of serving the Chiltern Brewery's 300 Ale. The new system for 2011 - drawing beer from wooden casks. The barrels have been produced by the Master Cooper, Alastair Simms, of Wadworth in Devises, who re-cycled old whisky barrels. Apparently it took 5 times as long to work on the mature oak of the former whisky barrels than to work on new oak.

The barrel will be the usual way of serving Chiltern 300's Old Ale in the Farmers Bar, within this National Trust owned building, which is managed on behalf of the Chiltern Brewery by George Jenkinson. George, his brother Tom along with father and mother had invited CAMRA, SPBW and other discerning beer drinkers to come to the launch of the Beer from the Wood. Aylesbury Town Mayor, Cllr Jenny Puddefoot, pulled the first pint and noted the importance of supporting traditional crafts - especially if this was accompanied by an excellent taste. Richard Jenkinson, who established the Brewery 31 years ago, announced that 300's Old Ale (the brewery's winter ale) will be served from the wood in the Farmer's Bar and at the brewery shop.

Pints were then rapidly drawn and consumed. Having enjoyed a pint of 300 from the hand pump a little earlier I was able to compare the taste of both ways of serving the beer. From the wood the taste was much more distinct with a malty and richer flavour. Certainly this is a beer worth experiencing from the wood. Along with the beer Chiltern Brewery had provided a wide range of snacks which demonstrated the high standard of food provided in the Farmers Bar.

In celebration of the 40th anniversary of CAMRA the Aylesbury and Wycombe branch were presented with a case of Bodger's Barley Wine, re-labelled to commemorate CAMRA's 40th, as "Original Gravity". Richard Jenkinson explained that the name commemorates the way of describing the strength (rather than abv) of a 'true ale'.

Wes Harry

Some back issues of ***Pint in Hand*** are available:- numbers 46; 49; 86-120. 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. Most issues from 90 onwards can now be found on the SPBW website, in PDF format.

SPBW PRODUCTS

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- **Please make cheques payable to SPBW** and include a telephone number or email address with your order. Allow up to 28 days for delivery.



*Scenic Knaresborough and the River Nidd; some good pubs there as well (see page 14)
Photo: Bill English*