

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

***PINT in HAND***

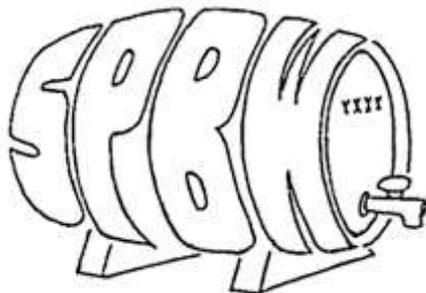
Number 123

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August 2012



Old Green Tree, Bath (see page 14)



## ***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 August 2012 issue should reach the Editor by **25 October**.
- 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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On-line forum: <http://www.spbw.com/bb>

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

## **OPENING TIME**

The SPBW can generally be said to stand for tradition – obviously in the beer we prefer to drink but also in the pubs we drink the beer in. I don't see our stance on beer changing in a hurry; I gave my thoughts on the ever-more-present 'craft keg' beers a few issues ago.

But what about pubs, or to be more general, drinking outlets? Now I'll state quite clearly from the off that I'm a great devotee of the traditional 'local', the unpretentious hostelry where there's a friendly greeting and you're made to feel welcome, even/especially on a first visit. In recent months I've drunk good draught beer in a number of places which are probably best described as 'bars' rather than 'pubs'. Many of these I would have simply walked straight without suspecting that a good pint was waiting inside. And here's the point: in just about every case there was good, traditional hospitality to go with tasty traditional beer.

If you want some good examples of this new breed of bar, try visiting – as I did – Chorlton-cum-Hardy in the southern suburbs of Manchester. There are 16 'real ale' outlets within a very small area with about an equal split between 'pubs' and 'bars'. In most cases I've come across it's fair to say that 'bars' attract a younger clientele, but what's wrong with that? These outlets aren't going to put on handpumped ales if they don't think they'll sell them and, for us imbibers of more mature years, it should be highly encouraging to know that the younger generation has the taste for the type of beers we grew to love long ago.

I heard somewhere recently that 84 new breweries have started trading in the UK *this year so far*. That's an extraordinary number – and I know that at least three microbreweries have opened in Hackney, east London, alone in the last few weeks. Clearly the more outlets for this new flood of beers the better, whether a traditional boozier or a trendy bar. After all, just as we should welcome a choice of beer, why not a choice of where to drink it.

As I'm struggling to reach the bottom of the page, I'll leave you to get on with the rest of this issue!

*Roger*

*Articles on beer/pub related issues are always welcome! Contributions to the Perfect Pub Page and Last Orders features (both of which have been absent of late) 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.*

Some back issues of ***Pint in Hand*** are available:- numbers 46; 49; 86-122. 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.

## ***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.

## ***NATIONAL WEEKEND 2012***

The 2012 National Weekend, 16 – 18 November, will be based in Chester. We have arranged trips to Frodsham and Northern breweries and there will be tours of local pubs as well. More than 20 members will be going so places may now be very limited if you are interested in joining us – contact John Rooth who will need a deposit of £35 towards brewery and transport costs.

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

Many thanks to those members who nominated pubs. The following are to be judged for the 2013 award:

**Blythe Hill Tavern**, Catford; **Calthorpe Arms**, Clerkenwell; **Camel**, Bethnal Green; **Cleveland Arms**, Paddington; **Dog & Bell**, Deptford; **Eleanor Arms**, Bow; **Old Fountain**, City Road; **Olde Mitre**, Holborn; **Olde Rose & Crown**, Walthamstow; **Sebright Arms**, Hackney; **Southampton Arms**, Kentish Town; **Star Tavern**, Belgravia; **Sultan**, South Wimbledon; **Sussex Arms**, Twickenham; **Uxbridge Arms**, Notting Hill; **Willoughby Arms**, Kingston.

Five first time nominations there and a well-scattered selection of pubs. Judging will take place between August and October and the winner will be announced in the November PiH and the usual electronic media. If you want to join the judging panel please contact Bill English (see page 2).

## ***MIRROR IMAGE***

The *Daily Mirror* of 15 June featured a column by one Paul Routledge. His main theme was the delight of proper beer (although he seemed excessively keen on Tetley bitter). He claimed to have been a founding member of SPBW “in the early 1970s before it morphed into CAMRA”. Well, I can only find two mistakes in that short phrase. Does anyone know anything about Mr Routledge? Thanks to the anonymous member who sent me the cutting.

## ***BEER & BUFFET***

The latest B & B event was on 6 August at Ye Olde Mitre. I'm writing this two weeks before the event so I hope I can safely say that the beer, food and company were all of the finest quality. We may organise another similar event in London in the autumn so keep your eyes open in the usual media.

## ***OUT AND ABOUT***

We again ran stalls at the Beckenham and Ealing beer festivals with reasonable success – thanks to anyone who helped out or bought stuff. Our next public appearance will be at the Wallington beer festival, 11 – 13 October. Again, volunteers welcome; contact John Rooth if you can help out.

## ***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 – especially now that postage rates are being hiked in a big way. 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.

## ***SPREADING THE WORD***

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

## ***SPBW ONLINE***

The SPBW **Members Forum** is still going strong at [www.spbw.com/bb](http://www.spbw.com/bb). The Bulletin Board is intended as a way for members to exchange information. It's very easy to get involved with and, as with most things, the more the merrier. We are particularly keen to see representatives of branches acting as moderators to help keep their sections up to date.

You can join SPBW on **Facebook** at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) – set yourself up with a password and put 'SPBW' in 'Search' and all will be revealed!

## ***2013 – 50 years of SPBW***

6 December next year will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of SPBW. This is a fine landmark and we want to make 2013 a year of appropriate celebration, involving as many of our members as possible. As well as participating, we hope that our branches and individual members can help to organise events. I (Roger Jacobson) have offered to co-ordinate events. Contact me (details on page 2) if you can make any kind of contribution to 2013 activities. I'll outline below some of the ways we hope to commemorate our golden jubilee.

- Celebration dinner – to take place in central London as near to the anniversary date as possible. Suggestions for a venue please (including details of costs, hire charges etc).
- Branches to organise at least one celebration event during the year, preferably so that other members can take part; these to be spread throughout the year.
- Publicans who are SPBW members – how about arranging a celebration event?
- Publicity – we'll try our best to get coverage in the national media (let me know if you have any contacts). On a local level, members can try and get articles published in local CAMRA publications – I can provide some historical background on SPBW.
- Commemorative beers – if you know a friendly brewer (or are one!), can he/she be asked to brew a special beer for us? Our one main stipulation here is that SPBW should not have any financial responsibility or be involved with distribution. We can provide a logo to go on pump clips. Which leads me on to...
- We will produce a special 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo which can be used on new products and anywhere else we think appropriate.
- Nostalgia – I would like to pull together:
  - Any old SPBW artefacts/memorabilia – if you don't want to actually part with them, a photo or scan 9in JPEG format) should be okay;
  - Your memories – how you came to join SPBW, any outstanding events you've been involved with.

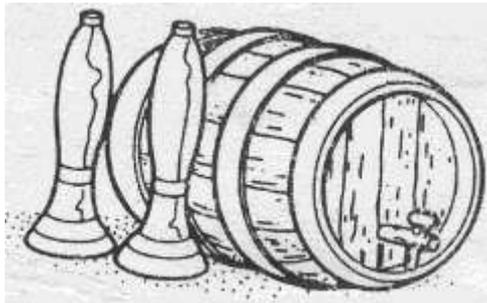
- How about your favourite beers you've drunk or pubs you've drunk in, particularly in an SPBW context?

In particular I'd appreciate hearing from our more venerable members. I've been an SPBW member since 1977 and I know a good few others pre-date me.

So get thinking and get active – we had a very good programme of events in 2003 so let's try and top that next year. As in our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we intend to produce a commemorative magazine at the start of the year, so the sooner events are organised the better.

For a small organisation like SPBW to achieve 50 years is quite an achievement – so let's make the most of it!

*Roger*



### **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.

## ***FROM THE ARCHIVES***

The August 1982 issue was actually called Pint½ of View which may have been a good idea at the time. The contents included Nick Martin's account of the first National Weekend which he organised, based in Devizes. There was the inevitable trip to Wadworth's brewery plus visits to the New Inn at Coate and other worthy pubs in the area. More than 30 members came along and I can recall what an excellent time it was.

The London Pub of the Year had been won by the Royal Oak in Romford and the Mayor of Havering had the honour of making the presentation. The Royal Oak was a fine community pub, then used by Wantz branch for meetings. The pub is now distant memory as it was demolished just a couple of years later to make way for a ring road. Such is 'progress.' Not far from the Royal Oak was the Ind Coope brewery, which Ossie Tillett profiled in the same issue, lamenting that several of the brewery's pubs in town were still keg only. The brewery no longer functions and is now the site of a shopping centre. We need more cars and shops don't we?

Ten years later the cover illustration celebrated the failure of Greene King to take over Morlands of Abingdon. This turned out to be a temporary respite, Morland being bought and closed down well before the decade was out, although a beer called Old Speckled Hen is still brewed in Suffolk. We had run a stand at the GBBF at Olympia and apparently recruited over 100 members. That's a very impressive figure indeed! Also an unlikely one, but it can't possibly have been a misprint!

There was a letter from Frank Bingham, a great SPBW stalwart who for many years ran the Stagg Inn, Titley, Herefordshire, these days a noted gastropub. Andy continued his account of a visit to Northern Ireland and his fellow Yorkshireman Barrie Pepper provided a review of the *Guinness Book of Traditional Pub Games* by Arthur Taylor, which persuaded me at least to buy a copy.

On to August 2002 and this time the cover laments the closure of Brakspear and Tolly Cobbold breweries. Inside I had decided to split the text on each page into two columns which, looking back, didn't really work. I also introduced a section on brewery news which I was unable to sustain due to lack of news, or perhaps my inertia at gathering it.

Andy was once again on his travels, this time visiting the far north east of Scotland – Helmsdale in Sutherlandshire to be precise, a 444.4 mile road trip from Leeds. The object of the journey was to visit old friends in exile, taking along a cask of Ecky Thump from the now defunct Boat Brewery. Much of the contents seems to have been lost due to a mishap when tapping the cask but Andy reported favourably on what remained. Just to demonstrate our comprehensive coverage of the UK, Jason Lever recounted a tour of South Wales.

## **AMAZING FUNCTION AT THE JUNCTION THE WOODEN CASKS OF JOY**

In early 2010 Maureen Shaw and Neil Midgley took the plunge and bought a closed run down pub group hostelry in the centre of Castleford called the Junction. Having worked in the trade for a number of years they saw the potential of the pub and decided to not only bring it back to life but to also restore it to its former glory. They had transformed it from a total mess into a work in progress pub which opened its doors within a few months in July. Banks of Melbourne handpumps were installed on a restored traditional bar and real ale was introduced.

Being a qualified all-rounder in the building trade, Neil set to work on the pub and today, having done most of the work from floor to ceiling, even with work to do, it is looking fabulous. Already finished are new fireplaces and a separate snug has been reintroduced. Neil is currently working on the parquet floor which was purchased from an old church in Sheffield.

Regular real ales are supplied from Yorkshire breweries, with excellent beers from Simon Bolderson's Ridgeside Brewery being constant. Indeed, the pub's first anniversary was celebrated in July 2011 with a Ridgeside beer festival with all nine handpumps dispensing Simon's fabulous beers.

Having spent years working for a traditional Yorkshire brewery, Neil was familiar with wooden casks and he decided to experiment and purchased a re-made wooden cask from Alastair Simms, the only remaining Master Cooper left working in the UK brewing industry. Alastair spent sixteen years at Theakstons and is now at Wadworth Brewery and now includes restoring and remaking wooden casks amongst his skills. At first, Neil bought one wooden cask and used it for a Ridgeside beer. This went so well, that it was not long before he purchased twenty more. Recently ten pins were purchased and twenty more casks are to follow soon. The intention is to become self-sufficient with wooden casks (see photo on page 11).

In early July Neil and Maureen hosted a beer festival featuring nine Yorkshire "Beers from the wood". Six beers from Ridgeside along with two from Five Towns and one from Kirkstall were available. All were in fabulous condition and the many SPBW visitors from far and wide were well impressed.

*B F H*

*The article Out of the Wood in the last issue contained a few errors, for which I apologise big time. I am indebted to Neil Midgley as well as 'B F H' for setting the record straight; the Junction is obviously to be recommended to all SPBW members - RJ*



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

**COMMON & ALDBRICKHAM:** Meetings usually held in Reading; contact John Dearing 0118 958 0377 or [gpwild@btconnect.com](mailto:gpwild@btconnect.com) to find out where and when.

**CROYDON REAL ALE PRESERVATION SOCIETY:** Meet on the first Tuesday of each month in **The Green Dragon**, High Street Croydon CR0 1NA, and also every subsequent Tuesday at a pub somewhere in, or easily reachable by public transport from, Croydon. Contact Pete McGill 07831 561296 (m) or John Smith 02071884844 (w).

**FÝÇÝ:** A social group formed by ex-pat SPBW stalwarts Peter Willett and Dave Brightwell. Contact Peter for more details: [peterwillettuk@yahoo.com](mailto:peterwillettuk@yahoo.com)

**IPSWICH:** Contact Phil (01473 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](mailto: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](mailto:marksalehousecom@hotmail.com)

**RACS:** The Real Ale Club of Sawbridgeworth meets last Wednesday of each month in various pubs in Sawbridgeworth. Contact Jan Mead (01279 864398) or email [meadspanner@ntlworld.com](mailto:meadspanner@ntlworld.com) or the website [www.racs.org](http://www.racs.org).

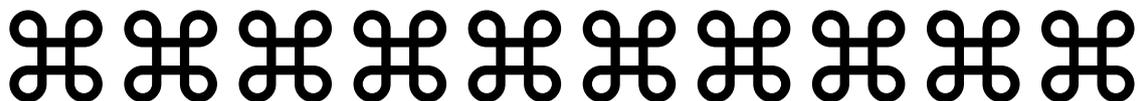
**SPECIAL:** The branch holds annual, week-long gatherings around the inland waterways network. There are also unofficial visits to pubs of renown in London, Cumbria, Cheshire and Shropshire, or wherever we happen to be.

**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).

**WEST RIDING:** Meets (usually) on last Sunday morning in month in various pubs in and around Leeds. Brewery trips, day trips and crawls and other socials. Contact Graham Hewitt (0113 2624574; [graham-hewitt@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:graham-hewitt@tiscali.co.uk)) for further details.

**WOOLWICH:** Meetings held first Thursday of each month at 8.30 pm at the Prince Albert (Rose's), Hare Street, Woolwich. Usually four handpumped guest beers are available. Contact Bill Smith (020 8310 5907).

*Are the details for your branch correct on these pages? If not please the Editor know before the deadline for the next issue; thanks!*



*Wooden casks in the cellar of the Junction, Castleford (photo by David Litten)*

## ***BRANCHES IN ACTION***

In May, **Campden Hill** branch went on a Putney crawl. Starting off at the Bricklayers, this was pleasantly quiet (apart from the unnecessary background music) 5 beers were on, 4 from Milestone and all very pleasant. In the Dukes Head by the river the Youngs Ordinary was the best drop of the night. By the bridge to another Youngs pub, the Boathouse, where the ordinary was the worst drop of the night. Finally into the Rocket (Wetherspoons) for a mediocre selection, where the cloudy Adnams Ghostship was the best bet. In July, we visited the Chella Persian restaurant in Chiswick for some very good Iranian food, including the home made flatbread, various lamb stews. We had an aperitif at the Duchess of Cambridge which had a good collection of recent new micro beers.

**Common & Aldbrickham** Branch has selected the Retreat in Reading as its Pub of the Year, marking the tenth anniversary of the present licensees taking over. Please contact John Dearing if you would like details of when the presentation is to be made.

**Kingston** Branch has been out and about checking out the best beers and pubs South West London has to offer as usual, although in reduced numbers as two of our longstanding members have been seriously ill recently. Hopefully they are both on the road to recovery. An enjoyable afternoon was spent in June taking in some of Central London's finest watering holes, namely the Euston Tap, the Bree Louise (surprisingly a rather disappointing visit), the Craft Brewery Co in Farringdon (best pub of the day!) finishing up at The Harp at Charing Cross. At the beginning of July we had our annual branch BBQ at The Willoughby on one of the few dry evenings of the summer. Members have been regularly attending the meet the brewer tasting sessions at RealAle.Com in Twickenham (Windsor & Eton Brewery/Hepworth/Ilkley/Dark Star). We have a brewery in the Royal Borough of Kingston for the first time in several decades in the form of the Adventure Brewery in Chessington, so far we've struggled to get hold of any of their brews but will report back when we do! We have plans to visit the Surrey Hills Brewery on 22nd September for a long overdue branch brewery trip and also pencilled in is a visit to the Windsor and Eaton Brewery.

**Norfolk Bears** are contemplating a name change. There was also a temporary change of meeting venue in June when they decamped to the newly opened sister pub to the Fat Cat – the Fat Cat & Canary in Thorpe Road. They also enjoyed a trip to London taking in such notable pubs as Ye Olde Mitre and Craft Beer Co, and an outing to Sheringham for a beer festival on the station.

**Special Branch's** annual canal gathering enjoyed a rare sunny week in May. We returned to the Kennet & Avon Canal and headed west through Bath and down to Bristol. Some of the best pubs we visited are recounted in page 17. Our visit to the Lake District a month later was somewhat damper but we enjoyed some good walking and drinking, although our scouts failed to find any new pubs of note. Plenty of excellent Cumbrian beers were consumed.

**Wantz** branch visited East London Brewing at the end of April – more about ELB elsewhere in this issue. We hope to visit another new local enterprise – Hackney Brewery – in the near future. Eating exotic food features regularly on our programme and one of our favourite haunts is Singburi, a small Thai restaurant on Leytonstone High Road. Not far from here is the Red Lion where we took aperitifs and we were delighted to find ELB Pale Ale in fine condition. We'll have eaten out again by the time you read this, at the Bavarian Beerhouse in City Road, a short stroll from our HQ the Old Fountain and undertaken another pub walk in Hackney at the very beginning of August. In mid-July we enjoyed a day trip to Leicester. A quick guide to the pubs I visited: the Ale Wagon is just a few minutes' walk from the rail station and is owned by Hoskins, the beers being brewed by Belvoir. 3 Hoskins beers (I tried the IPA) were joined by a guest and a cider. The Western is a suburban pub not far from the football ground. It's the tap for Steamin' Billy brewery; actually this is another 'contracted out' brewery, the beers being produced by Grainstore. It's a traditional 2-bar pub decorated with old pub adverts (including one for Churchman's 'Counter Shag'). The Swan & Rushes offers up to 9 draught ales and a large selection of bottled beers in comfortable two room layout. The Shakespeare's Head is a real time warp, a red brick 60s house now owned by Oakwell whose Barnsley beers sell at under £2 a pint. Around the corner from here is the Criterion, a busy pub offering another large range of beers. In a quiet back street in the city centre is the Salmon, current local CAMRA pub of the year. This former Banks pub serves six ales mostly from obscure micros. Finally the Pub in New Walk, a modern bar with twelve handpumps – a couple of Oakham beers joined by the likes of Nutbrook, Full Mash and Partners ales. Definitely a city to visit for its pubs.



*The Western and Swan & Rushes, Leicester*

**West Riding** forthcoming events include a 'Mystery Pub to Pub Tour' on Saturday 18 August, visiting a selection of quality pubs, some in places not so easy to get to and you may not have visited before. The August meeting will be at the Rat and Ratchet in Huddersfield on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>. Pub opens at 12.00, meeting 12.30 in meeting room.

## ***BEERS, HAM & CHEESE***

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

We commence with an update; **Mr Foley's** in Leeds has a new manager! Former boss Dean went off to run the Brewdog pub in Manchester, so Chris has been elevated through the hierarchy to the top spot. Not only does he have to keep sales up (currently 20+ firkins of beer per week sold) but also has to oversee the half a dozen staff there (all superior) including the svelte Kirsty, barmaid par excellence, who moonlights as the rhythm guitarist for the band Esper Scout (she insists that you check them out on Facebook and YouTube). The range of cask beers is as before, four handpumps for York Brewery beers and six for ales from all over the place, including brand new microbreweries products. As for the bottled section, it now has offerings from America like Odell, Left Hand, Coronado and Maui (from Hawaii) plus their English counterparts like Hawkshead, Summer Wine and Redwillow amongst a host of others. Always worth calling in when you're in Leeds city centre and you can check what's going on via Facebook and Twitter.

**Mr Foley's Cask Ale House, 159 The Headrow, Leeds LS1 5RG; tel 0113 2429674.**



*Mr Foley's – you're assured of a good pint*

Over the years I've been to a good number of beer fests held in pubs, church halls and the like, but on the first Friday in July I attended one in the public bar of a rather swish hotel complex to the north west of Leeds, which is part of the De Vere Village Urban Resorts chain. Normally, ratbags like my companions would be shooed away at the gates but as the Hoteliers were hosting their first (I think) beer and cider festival we managed to sneak through the portals. The event was held in the **Victory Bar** to the right of the main entrance and this room is a fair size; as it needed to be as it turned out. At the top end was a

pretty solid looking temporary bar counter where the cask beers (about 29 in all) were dispensed, plus a smaller version against another wall nearby where 9 or so ciders/perries awaited their enthusiasts. I really have to say that the beers I tried were of a very superior quality and had plainly been looked after by someone who knew their job. There was even a beer from the wood, Ridgeside Brewery's 5% special, called A Long Way From Home. Whilst perusing the selection, we were joined by, amongst others, the charming and highly organised Katie, formerly of Mr Foley's and now employed at the **Victory Bar**. Katie pointed out that the permanent bar there had four handpumps, always with a couple of beers on from local companies like Leeds Brewery as well as guest ales. For the peckish, the bar also does straightforward pub grub at reasonable prices.

The place was definitely getting crowded as the evening wore on and it was as well that the weather had dried up a bit by nightfall, allowing the beer garden to be used as an "overspill". The two bands that performed were certainly good and played various styles; I mean, how often do you hear "Riot in Cell Block Number 9" these days? As it was quite easy to converse while they were playing and yet hear them perfectly, I got the impression that a better than average sound system was being used.

Overall impression? An extremely enjoyable festival; excellent beer and I hope they repeat the event next year.

**De Vere Village Leeds North, 186 Otley Road, Far Headingley, Leeds LS16 5PR. Tel: 0871 222 4594. <http://www.village-hotels.co.uk>**

And finally folks, in the centre of Leeds (near to the railway station) a new cafe bar & charcuterie opened on the 10th of July. For those of you that think I am speaking in tongues, I shall inform ye that "charcuterie" is from the French and is a generic term for products traditionally sold by pork butchers, known as charcutiers. Therefore, the fact that the licensed premise in question is called **Friends of Ham** should now make sense. Situated on 2 floors the place is certainly bijou, especially the upstairs room where the bar is. There's 3 handpumps & 6 fonts selling a range of beers from various parts of the western hemisphere and to the right of the bar counter there's a fridge with some really unusual bottled ales, like the exquisite Redchurch Brewery IPA from London. Though I scarcely ever touch the stuff, someone seems to have put a bit of imagination into the selection of wines and I am informed, though I never noticed at the time, that there are no spirits on sale here. Downstairs there's rather more space and comfy seating to lounge about on, but the centre piece has got to be the shuffleboard table; I wonder how many other pubs in Yorkshire have one of these?

Now to the charcuterie bit; one can dine on matured ham like the Prosciutto Di Parma Sant-Marino Reserve, or does a salami seasoned with wild fennel appeal? This is called Finocchiona (Finocchio is Tuscan for fennel) and the origins of it go back a long time. The Alejandro Magno Chorizo on the other hand is seasoned with smoked paprika, which strikes me as possibly being a thirst provoker. Then again, you are in the right place if that is the case.

Should dairy products be more your bag, there's an exceptional cheese menu, examples being Cornish Yarg, Shropshire Farmhouse Blue and a goat's milk cheese from Fivemiletown in Co Tyrone. Does this come from the creamery there which was started as a cooperative in the late 1890s by the wonderfully named Hugh de Fellonburg Montgomery and now specialises in cheeses of various strengths and styles.

To sum up; the beers on cask, font and from the bottle are of a very high standard and thus I say unto ye "go forth and visit **Friends of Ham**" but take lots of money or generous friends who think you are a worthy cause.

Opening times as they were told to me - Mon-Thurs, 12-11.30; Fri & Sat 12-12.30 and Sunday 12-11. Check on this and everything on their Facebook page.

**Friends of Ham, 4 New Station Street, Leeds LS1 5DL. Tel: 0113 2420275**

## ***EAST LONDON BREWING***

It's not so many years ago that London was becoming almost a brewing desert. You'd have thought that a major city with a proud and substantial brewing tradition – not to mention a huge population – would be able to boast more than the mere handful that survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The closure of Young's revered Ram Brewery just about put the icing on this dismal cake.

But what's happened? It seems that barely a week goes by these days without news of another brewery going into operation. As of writing (late July) the latest estimate is 26 and counting. Quite a few of these are based in east London (in fact, in the last couple of days I've visited two new brew pubs in Hackney alone), which had previous been a brewing dead end – major plants like Charrington, Watney and Truman have long closed down and the only micro (remember Godson's?) put up only a fleeting presence in the mid 1980s.

East London Brewing (ELB) was set up in August 2011 by Stu Lascelles in a basic industrial unit off Lea Bridge Road next to the railway. Stu runs a 10 barrel plant, the brew kit provided by David Porter (PiH 75), who is a major adviser to the microbrewing industry these days.

ELB's regular beers are Pale Ale (4.0%), Foundation (4.2) and Nightwatchman (4.5, a darker, red-tinged ale) and they can be found in discerning pubs around the capital. When Wantz branch visited the brewery in late April Stu invited us to sample some trial brews of a summer ale, along with his regular brews of course!

At the time of our visit Stu was brewing and running the business virtually on his own, with help from his wife and the local CAMRA branch chairman. Hopefully trade will expand sufficiently for his wife to spend more time involved with the brewery. Stu is a good bloke who seems to know what he's doing – so keep an eye out for ELB beers and give them a try.

*RJ*

## **AVON CRAWLING**

Special Branch's annual floating gathering was again on the Kennet & Avon canal, this time between Bradford on Avon and Bristol (so in reality we were mostly on the River Avon). The sun shone for most of the week and we were able to slake our thirsts in some very decent pubs. I wrote about the Castle in Bradford and the Cross Guns at Avoncliffe in PiH 119, so let me just repeat that these pubs are highly recommended. On the river Avon between Bath and Bristol there are only really two towns so these are inevitable stopping places. In Saltford there is a large Wadworth pub opposite the lock, but we took our refreshment at the other end of town in the ***Bird in Hand***. This is a pleasant country pub with a large garden at the back offering superb views of the surrounding countryside. The four handpumps offered fairly local brews (Butcombe, Bath, Otter) as well as a widely available brew from Cornwall. Draught cider was also available and one of our number overindulged on this. Not surprisingly the BiH does a big food trade but it's very much a traditional pub – there's even a dart board tucked away in a corner.

The other town on the river is Keynsham which may invoke nostalgia among those who can recall Horace Batchelor on Radio Luxembourg. There is a riverside Youngs pub named the Lockkeeper but I recommend a half mile walk into the town centre for a pint or two at the ***Old Bank***. This can hardly be missed due to its rather garish exterior; inside it's fairly basic, just one room with an outside drinking area out back. The pub was indeed once a bank and the walls of the bar are liberally adorned with old photos of the town. On the beer front the ubiquitous Doom Bar is a regular but we were able to choose beers from Cotleigh, Plain, Bath and Glastonbury breweries on our two visits. Monday night is quiz night and two of our three teams took first and third place. I got the impression that the pub is under new ownership; it certainly deserves good support.

Arriving at Bristol in Brunel's Floating Harbour was a truly memorable experience and we moored our boats right in the heart of the city. Since the Olympic flame was coming through the following morning there was much celebration and activity in the area that evening. Bristol has countless pubs of note and we only visited a very few of these. I would pick out the ***Grain Barge*** on Mardyke Wharf, if only for the fact that it is indeed a pub in a converted barge and, located across the harbour from SS Great Britain, it provides superb views. It also provides very pleasant beers from the Bristol Beer Factory. Not far from here is the ***Three Tuns*** on St George's Road, another free house where we sampled one of the best beers of the week, Amaris from Arbor, another Bristol brewery; some half dozen ales were on tap here along with a selection of ciders.

Finally to Bath, another city with a plethora of pleasant pubs. I'll just mention two that we graced with our presence: the ***Raven*** in Queen Street is right in the heart of the city. I found out later that I drank here many years ago when it was named Hatchett's. These days it's a free house with two bars (one upstairs) offering up to 6 beers. I recall that Blindmans Ravens Gold and

Dorset Ammonite were both very tasty. However, our pub of the week was the **Old Green Tree** in Green Street, not far from the Raven in the city centre. The OGT is a 300-year old pub of no little character: there is a small stand up drinking area around the bar counter, a small lounge at the front and a cosy wood-panelled room at the back. There is a house bitter brewed by Blindmans and I believe Butcombe bitter and RCH Pitchfork are also regulars. An interesting guest beer was Apachi, an American style IPA from a new Somerset brewery named Devilfish; we had another brew from this outfit on the last evening so it seems to be one to look out for.

*RJ*

## ***ICH WOULD BIN EIN BERLINER***

Although my knowledge of German is limited to “three beers” and “the bill please”, I have always enjoyed winter breaks in German-speaking countries. Berlin has a resonant history with landmarks to commemorate such diverse names as Kaiser Bill, Adolf Hitler and John F. Kennedy. Parts of the Berlin Wall have survived its joyous destruction, with the world's longest art gallery---murals posted for a mile along its eastern end. Since reunification, many of the tired 1960s shoebox blocks of East Berlin have been swept away to be replaced by some of Europe's most progressive architecture.

As to the drinking with my partners in crime Dave and Russell, my guide book was strangely silent but correspondence on the trusty Tripadvisor revealed some leads. Since we were staying in the lively Kurfurstendamm area, some civilised places in the wedge between the Ku-damm itself and Kantsrasse---an exclusive quarter comparable to Kensington in London---readily came out of the woodwork. Measures usually came in 0.3, 0.4, 0.5 or 1 litre glasses, although “kleine” and “grosse” would get us understood.

A good place to start is the Dicke Wirtin in Carmerstrasse, a small and quirky place with wooden panelling and an intellectual-looking clientele who could be modern-day Goethes or Nietzsches. Konig Pilsener and Flensburger Pilsener are two standards here, two light, fresh pilseners which put to shame any English draught lagers with phoney German names. They have a large sports screen here but it was off when we went there, which could be regarded by some as a bonus.

The Mommsen-Eck in Mommsenstrasse is known as the Haus den 100 Biere. These are what to Germans are foreign beers, so if you want anything from Belgian St. Louis Kriek (known in German as Kirschenbier) to Samuel Adams Pale Ale, you've come to the right place. More interesting perhaps in the interests of German research are Berliner Pilsener and Warsteiner (“eine konigen unter den bieren/a king among beers”). My own favourite was Kostritzer Schwartzbier, a black, chocolatey brew with a smoky finish. Fans of Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis and the Three Tons of Joy (headed by Marie Adams, a first for me) would be delighted to hear their works playing discreetly in the background. When getting the bill, just make it clear that you want

change, otherwise the waitress may think she's getting a 7 Euro tip from a 20 Euro note.

The last of this trio is the Zillemarkt in Bleibtreustrasse, with a small frontage but an interior which seems to stretch back to the Berlin Wall. They do their own beer, including a very respectable Dunkel (the local term for a dark beer). It gets more unusual with Erdinger Hefe, a white wheat beer with an acidic, slightly peppery flavour and Weihenst Hefe, a dark wheat beer which has a tarry sort of finish. Most German bars do good food and if you want meat balls, schnitzel or a giant knee of ham (sorry, these are the English equivalents of local terms with 20 letters to the word), you should miss out lunch and get yourself hungry for dinner here.



*Treffpunkt Berlin – photo by James Collonette*

Elsewhere in Berlin, bars seem to be thin on the ground but there is a nice little place near the Brandenburg Gate called the Treffpunkt Berlin which does the Berliner and Schultheiss Pilseners and a delicious Currywurst in case you want to ignore the above and lose your appetite for dinner. And for a nightcap back in the Ku-Damm, there's always the King's Pub. I couldn't honestly recommend it for research but if you want some nice bar staff and 1980s pop (e.g. "Sledgehammer" and "Sweet Dreams") it's got to be done!

*James Collonette*

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*The Bird in Hand, Saltford; Old Bank Keynsham (see page 17)*