

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

PINT in HAND

Number 126

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May 2013



*Wooden casks at the Junction, Castleford (see page 12)
Photo by Bill English*

FIFTY YEARS



1963 - 2013

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 2013 issue should reach the Editor by **25 July**.
- 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

Editorial address

Roger Jacobson, 2 Elizabeth House, St Leonards Street, London E3 3BX; email editor@spbw.com; Tel 020 8980 9093 or 07906 400056 (m)

Membership Secretary

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

Branch Liaison and Products

Bill English, email beeel@myway.com; tel 07910 657423

General Secretary

John Rooth, 20A Station Parade, Northolt Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 8HB; email john.rooth@gfk.com Tel: 07950 770921 [m]

National Chairman

Mike Hall, 15 Harvesters Close, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 7PP; 0208 8894 3901; email: mshall46@googlemail.com

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

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

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



OPENING TIME

Well, winter appears to be over and beer's a penny cheaper! All must be well with the world. Of course, it's not that straightforward; a combination of factors (poor grain harvests pushing up prices, increased transport costs etc) will ensure that the price of a pint will creep ever upwards but at least the Government has taken account of concerns of the pub industry and its customers – you and I that is. Perhaps we can now have some controls over the major pub-owning companies.

We're now well into the 50th year of SPBW and there have been a number of celebration events. These seem to have been well supported and it's always good to see some new faces as well as the usual stalwarts. We've long prided ourselves as a sociable bunch of people who enjoy a pint or two. If you've not previously been to an SPBW event, please do try and join the celebrations some time during the year. I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

It's fairly rare these days to see a new branch being formed so we're delighted to welcome the North Irish Sea branch (see pages 11 and 18). The far north west of England is far from a hot bed of SPBW so hopefully this enthusiastic new venture should stir up some interest in that region.

The other day I was given a link to an on-line blog where the writer accused the SPBW of being the 'origin of keg-bashing.' The writer appeared to be unable to distinguish between the dreaded kegs of yore – which were obviously well worth bashing, as are the contemporary 'smooth' beers – and the modern 'craft' beers. I don't want to repeat what I've written in this column in the past but I will state that the Society is not anti-craft beers *per se* but to actively support them would be outside our remit. But neither do we 'bash' such beers, many of which are perfectly agreeable. Instead we seek to promote beers brewed and served by traditional methods, and the pubs that serve them. I hope that's clear enough.

Enough of this – enjoy a good summer's drinking and I hope to see many of you to help celebrate 50 years of SPBW.

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; 86-125. These can be obtained from the Editor (address on page 2) in return for 15 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 2013

This year's event will be from **1 – 3 November**, based in Derby. We have arranged a visit to Marston's brewery in Burton on the Friday evening; a Saturday morning trip to Derwentio brewery near Derby, followed by a tour of some rural pubs in the area; and a Sunday tour of some of Derby's many excellent pubs. If you want to come along, please send a deposit of £30 to John Rooth (cheques to SPBW please). This covers the two brewery tours (including food) and part of the cost of coach hire.

LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

It's time to get your nominations in for the next LPotY competition. London is blessed with numerous fine pubs and it's always a hard task finding a winner. All SPBW branches and individual members *based in the London area* are invited to nominate their favourite pub (*one per branch/member only*); please contact Bill English (details page 2) for a nomination form. Note we cannot consider any pub unless a nomination form is submitted. Closing date for nominations is **9 June**.

Judging will be done through the summer and early autumn with a view to deciding the winner by the end of October. If you want to help with the judging please let Bill know. You will of course be obliged to visit pubs and drink beer!

BEER & BUFFET

We are holding our annual Eve-of-GBBF Beer & Buffet bash on **Monday 12 August**. Venue is Ye Olde Mitre, 1 Ely Court, Ely Place, Holborn, London EC1N 6SJ. Tickets are £5 (cheques to SPBW please) from John Rooth (details page 2). We'll be in the upstairs room from 7.00pm.

Ye Olde Mitre – SPBW's current London Pub of the Year - is a genuine historic pub, hidden away in a narrow passageway between Hatton Garden and Ely Place. Although owned by Fullers, it offers beers from Adnams and Caledonian as well as guest from smaller breweries, always well-kept and served by the redoubtable Scotty and his staff. Nearest tube stations are Farringdon (Circle, Hammersmith & City, Metropolitan lines) and Chancery Lane (Central line); several bus routes go along High Holborn.

TONY LITTLER TROPHY

Wantz branch won the latest inter-branch competition, held on 24 April at the Calthorpe Arms. The plucky east enders came out as comfortable winners over two teams from Central London, Campden Hill and a collection of waifs and strays calling themselves Kingston branch.

The beer mat flipping part of the event proved that this is not a skill yet mastered by London SPBW members. The four part quiz, covering subjects such as transport, Fantasia and beer, was entertaining and challenging. The Youngs beers and excellent buffet rounded things off nicely. Thanks to John Rooth and Adrian Parker who organised the event on behalf of Campden Hill branch; Wantz will have the pleasure next year.

BEER & CURRY

Our latest event took place on a particularly wintry Sunday in February. Details of what actually happened are hard to come by but some 10 or 11 members were involved at various times including a few making their B & C debut. The ever hospitable Eleanor Arms in Bow was the meeting point and the Hare and Camel (that's two pubs) in Bethnal Green were visited en route to the Pride of Spitalfields, which is handily placed for Brick Lane. Most of the party moved on to a nearby curry house; I've had no feedback on what was consumed but I gather that all have lived to tell the tale.

OUT AND ABOUT

In recent years we've run stalls at Beckenham, Ealing and Wallington beer festivals and we hope to do the same this year. The Ealing fest is from 3 – 6 July in Walpole Park. We always welcome volunteers to help out as this is a very useful way to recruit new members, sell products and generally publicise the SPBW. Contact John Rooth if you'd like to help out at Ealing.

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.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It was a return to old haunts for this year's AGM of the National Executive Committee. Ye Olde Watling was a popular meeting place for SPBW members back in the 1960s, even before the NEC was formed. It was the Society's official HQ as well as the NEC's regular meeting place for many years up to the late 1990s. On 11 March some 35 members (some from as far away as Cheshire and north Wales) gathered in the upstairs room for a convivial evening that passed without major controversy. A raffle raised £60 towards the cost of a buffet and we were able to avail ourselves of the fine range of beers via a dumb waiter system.

There were no changes to the Committee, which therefore remains:
Chairman; Mike Hall; Vice-Chair: Alasdair Boyd; Secretary: John Rooth;
Treasurer: Jim Woodcock; National Membership: Roger West
Branch Liaison: Bill English; Publications: Roger Jacobson
Products/R & D: Dave Samuel; Webmaster: Mark Hutchison
Wood Liaison: Garry Wiles; Without Portfolio: Patrick Deller

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The year was a busy one for your NEC. I would pay particular tribute to John Rooth for his tireless efforts in organising our meetings, our attendance at beer festivals and other events, notably the Beer and Curry Sunday and Beer & Buffet at Ye Old Mitre - all this in addition to his work for Campden Hill branch. Bill English has doubled up on branch liaison and products organised the London Pub of the Year competition and the results of his enthusiasm are clear to all of us. Dave Samuel has been invaluable in product development. Patrick Deller has also been involved on 50th anniversary products and acquired our new banner for use at beer festivals. Roger Jacobson is bidding for a place in the Guinness Book of Records for his superb editorship of Pint in Hand. Roger West has continued with the vital and unsung job of membership records. Mark Hutchinson in addition to his IT role has been drumming up support for us in Northern Ireland. Jim Woodcock has looked after our finances. Last and not least we have had the support of the vice Chairman Alasdair Boyd about whom what more can one say!

Last November the National Weekend was based at Chester. The latest London Pub of the Year competition was won by Ye Olde Mitre and the award, presented at the end of January, is now prominently displayed in the pub. The Tony Littler Trophy was won by Campden Hill branch which has have organised the next event in April.

The 2013 National Weekend will be based at Derby and we hope to make this the best yet! Throughout the year there will be a number of 50th anniversary events taking place which I hope will be well supported.

Finally to quote an old advert 'our roots are our branches' and of course our individual members - thanks to you all – keep drinking the real stuff!

MIKE HALL, NEC CHAIRMAN

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF BEERS FROM THE WOOD

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2012**

<u>YEAR</u> <u>2011</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>YEAR</u> <u>2012</u>	
760.13	Sales of Society Products and Donated Items		849.63
	<u>Less: Cost of Sales:</u>		
675.43	Opening Stock at Cost	709.23	
732.25	Purchases for Resale	990.24	
(709.23)	Closing Stock at Cost	(1043.83)	<u>655.64</u>
61.68	<u>Gross Profit from Sales</u>		193.99
(137.20)	Funding for Events and Miscellaneous	(104.00)	
245.00	Branch Affiliation Fees	245.00	
1508.00	National Membership Fees	1340.00	
5.14	Interest on Deposit Account	5.50	<u>1486.50</u>
<u>1682.62</u>			<u>1680.49</u>
	 <u>Expenditure</u>		
1429.66	Pint in Hand	1309.29	
195.25	National Membership Provision	656.35	
75.00	AGM Expenses	30.00	
154.99	Administration and Sundry Expenses	101.88	
35.78	Depreciation	30.41	<u>2127.93</u>
(208.06)	<u>Balance - Excess of Expenditure over Income (2011 - Deficit)</u>		<u>(447.44)</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2012

<u>YEAR</u> <u>2011</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>YEAR</u> <u>2012</u>	
5366.98	Balance at 31 st December 2011		5158.92
(208.06)	Excess of Expenditure over Income (2011 - Deficit)		<u>(447.44)</u>
<u>5158.92</u>	<u>Balance at 31st December 2012</u>		<u>4711.48</u>
	 <u>Represented By:</u>		
	<u>Fixed Assets</u>		
2392.69	Equipment at Cost	2392.69	
(2189.97)	Depreciation to Date	(2220.38)	
202.72			172.31
	<u>Current Assets</u>		
709.23	Society Products at Cost	1043.83	
-	Sundry Debtors	-	
74.51	Cash in Hand	104.70	
622.34	Balance at Bank	145.04	
4981.77	Current Account	5333.60	
<u>6387.85</u>	Deposit Account	<u>6627.17</u>	
	<u>Current Liabilities</u>		
1431.65	National Membership Provision	2088.00	
-	Sundry Creditors	-	
<u>1431.65</u>		<u>2088.00</u>	
4956.20	<u>Net Current Assets</u>		<u>4539.17</u>
<u>5158.92</u>	<u>Net Asset Value as at 31st December 2012</u>		<u>4711.48</u>

FROM THE ARCHIVES

30 years ago, PiH was very much a plain, duplicated newsletter with no pictures or graphics. Issue 6 had plenty of words in its 10 pages mind you. The lengthy NEC Chairman (Richard Graham)'s Annual Report reminds me that we were meeting in the Viaduct Tavern near the Old Bailey – the pub has changed little since, except that it's now owned by Fuller's. We learn of the newly-affiliated North Devon branch, led by Dr John Riddington-Young. This gentleman was the ENT consultant for North Devon and on permanent call; since he was not averse to a pint or two this may have led to some interesting diagnoses! The second National Weekend, based in Skipton, was about to take place and the Kings Arms, near Waterloo, had been voted as London Pub of the Year; I understand it's still a pretty good pub.

Elsewhere, there was a lengthy account of Wantz branch's 100th meeting weekend, based in Kington, Herefordshire, with a visit to the long-defunct Penrhos Court brewery. A special bottled beer (Wantzmore Ale) had been brewed to commemorate the occasion but, to be frank, it wasn't much cop. A good weekend mind you, with some 27 in attendance. Further west, a member from Dublin reported on the first real ale brewed in Eire for 20 years – Dempsey's was the brewery but, although there were apparently 60 outlets for the beer in Dublin, it proved to be a fairly short-lived venture.

On to May 1993 and the NEC AGM had returned to Ye Olde Watling after several years' break, We were without a Secretary, but a new name on the Committee was Chris Callow from Coate branch who became Vice-Chairman. Again, there was a new branch, Grimsdyke, based in north west London – the name came from a former local telephone exchange. Andy's words of wisdom reported on West Riding branch's recent trip to north Yorkshire, including Masham. The beer scene was inevitably dominated by the likes of Theakston, Black Sheep and John Smith.

A drawing of Palmer's brewery featured on the cover of PiH 86, 10 years ago. The brewery had responded to a mail shot by inviting us down for a visit and how could we refuse? It turned out to be a highly traditional set-up producing some very fine beers (as it still does) which we sampled at length. Our party stayed in Weymouth which had some worthy pubs. This was one of many events to celebrate SPBW's 40th Anniversary. A special beer was being brewed for us by Hopback to be sold in their tied pubs and selected free houses. Andy's article covered a few rural pubs in upmarket areas in the general vicinity of Leeds and York. He ended with the observation: "why do some of the cheapest pubs happen to be in areas that contain some of the dearest houses?" The other main article described a pub tour of Manchester by two individuals calling themselves 'I F Hadtewmuch' and 'Nantwich Gooner'. Their taste in pubs was superior to their choice of pseudonyms - but let's face it, it's hard to go wrong in Manc.

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.

STANDING ORDERS

Members can now renew their membership by standing order if you wish. This does mean that you can only renew by one year at a time at the going rate. A form will be sent as part of the standard renewal form.

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. You can also join SPBW on **Facebook** at www.facebook.com. Our online shop is now up and running – look at the Products page on our website and follow the links.

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

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.

MEET the BRANCHES

We have 18 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.

We're delighted to welcome a new branch, North Irish Sea, and basic details are below. Hopefully, we'll hear a lot more about this in future.

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.

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

NORFOLKSOAKS (formerly 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

NORTH IRISH SEA: The Isle of Man based branch meets on Friday evenings, usually in the Douglas area, but also has many unofficial visits elsewhere on the island, and from time to time in the coastal areas of the traditional Lancashire boundaries. Contact David Halliwell (07972807934) david.halliwell@manx.net Always happy to meet up with visitors to the IoM.

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 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).



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).

Branch reports are in pages 17 – 19.

2013 – 50 years of SPBW

6 December is the 50th anniversary of the founding of SPBW. This is a fine landmark and we want to make this a year of appropriate celebration, involving as many of our members as possible.

These events took place during the last quarter:

The Steve Quiller Memorial pub walk in Kingston on 16 February was organised by Kingston Branch in memory of Steve (or 'Q'), a branch member who died last year. Some 15 or so members came along for part or all the day. Starting point was the ***Kings Tun***, a typical Wetherspoon close to the rail station. A good selection of guest ales here, including two from Surrey Hills and, from rather further afield the excellent Inveralmond Ossian. From here we made our way into the town centre and the Market Place where we found the ***Druid's Head***, the oldest pub in town. Now owned by Greene King, it offers two guest beers (from the likes of Holdens and Coach House this afternoon) alongside the usual Bury St Edmunds fare. The pub has been rather modernised inside but is comfortable enough and provides relief from shopping.

To get to the third pub we went down to the river and walked downstream along the towpath for a quarter mile until we reached ***Boaters***, inevitably right by the Thames. This is a spacious pub providing excellent views to admire while you sup your pint. Two more local ales from Sambrooks were to be had and Hogs Back Hop and Dark Star Hophead were among the other choices.

It was a bit of a walk to our next destination through a maze of back streets to the ***Wyeh Elm*** on Elm Road. This is a traditional Fullers house where the landlord has been in situ for 25 years or so and the beer quality is high. Some of the party were able to watch Oldham v Everton on the pub tv but we were on the wrong evening for live jazz. Here we were joined by Rick Robinson, mine host of the ***Willoughby Arms***, which was to be our final pub.

The Willoughby is Kingston branch's HQ, a genuine back street community pub. Sport is big here and there are various tv screens in the larger bar. If that's not your thing, there is peaceful respite in the more traditional remainder of the pub, split into two drinking areas. Fuller's London Pride is always available, but there are always 3 or 4 guest beers as well, often from the likes of Surrey Hills. Rick dished out hot pasties to all those present and the evening ended with much beery bonhomie.

The Beer from the Wood festival at the ***Junction*** in Castleford on 30 March attracted a good contingent from West Riding branch as well as a few up from London. The Junction is a very traditional, lovingly refurbished pub, handily close to the station and the main shopping area. It has wooden floors, and real fires and traditional bars with lots of hand pumps. As well as the ones drawing beer from the cellar, this festival had a whole stillage of wooden barrels. The Wadworth Brewery cooper Alistair Simms, who had hand crafted many of the casks was present. The Ridgeside brewery was very well represented with 6 beers, including Templar (a Pale), Jailbreak and Cascade (also a

pale) amongst others. The 5 Towns Mango beer at 6% was an unusual, but welcome addition. Walls Brewers Gold and a couple of Concertina beers also slipped down well, and there were a few 7%+ beers including an Imperial Russian Stout for more hardy souls. The welcome was really warm (except when someone suggested that the casks were lined with pitch or plastic - which they always used to be. He was, in the nicest possible way, handed his head on a plate!) For at least one of our members it was the first experience of genuine beer from the wood. The most noticeable difference he thought is a slightly softer edge to the beer - very interesting.

On 11 April we had a '**SPBW Heritage' pub crawl** from the City of London to Holborn. About 20 members representing 8 branches (including RACS and West Riding) gathered at **Ye Olde Watling**. This ancient pub has SPBW connections back to the 1960s (see AGM report) and now offers a good range of ales. Like most pubs in this area it was pretty packed and it was just as well that it was a mild evening so quite a few were drinking outside. From here, **Williamson's Tavern** is just a couple of minutes round the corner. Like YoW this is part of the Nicholson chain and also had a good choice. Despite being tucked away down an alley way, this is quite a spacious pub with two large bars and a function room downstairs.

Third pub was the **Viaduct Tavern**, handy if you happen to be visiting the Old Bailey for any reason. Another historic and well-preserved pub, this was used by the NEC for its meetings in the early 1980s. Then owned by Allied it's since been acquired by Fullers and offered the expected selection. There were a few dark mutterings about short measures here. Across Holborn Viaduct to Holborn Circus where we ducked into an alleyway to **Ye Olde Mitre**. Our current London Pub of the Year (the award has pride of place next to the bar in the back room) and a regular host to social events, YOM was busy as ever but service was typically first class. Apart from the usual Fullers beers there were guest ales from Mighty Oak and Gloucester Brewery. Most of the party opted to stay here for the duration but a few did sneak up the road to the **Craft Beer Co** in Leather Lane, which has no previous SPBW connections, but does boast an impressive range of beers (draught and craft) and helpful and knowledgeable staff. Your scribe ended an enjoyable evening with a half of Chinook from the Weird Beard brewery in West London.

These are planned forthcoming events:

Friday 3 May Joint RACS/BMAD social at the Burnt Mill Social Club in Harlow (close to Harlow Station), including Meet the Brewers from Saffron and Bishops Stortford breweries. Beer sampling plus quiz and food.

Thursday 9 May SPBW Quiz Night at the Eleanor Arms, 460 Old Ford Road, Bow, London E3 5JP. 8pm start, 10.30 finish. Teams of up to 5. Topic of the quiz - beer and alcohol! £3 per person (£2 to SPBW funds) light finger buffet included, plus raffle. The Eleanor Arms is an excellent community pub serving Shepherd Neame beers and occasional guests. Number 8 bus passes close by.

Saturday 29 June Kent pub coach tour to the Golding Hop in Plaxtol and other selected rural Kent pubs. Departs Lewisham station 11.00 am. Almost fully booked, contact John Rooth.

Saturday 20 July 4th Alton classic bus and country pub day (not an actual SPBW event but being supported and promoted by Kingston Branch). A selection of single and double deck buses will operate a number of routes from Alton station from 10:40 until 20:50. Contact Peter Campbell for more details at chessingtonpete@aol.com or visit www.bristol-re.moonfruit.com.

Saturday 27 July Wantz branch trip to Macclesfield; this was a popular destination for the branch 30 years ago and still great for pubs; we'll be visiting 6 or 7 of these. Meet at the Treacle Tap, Sunderland Street (250 yards south of rail station), midday. Contact Roger Jacobson (details page 2) if you're interested.

Saturday 10 August Common and Aldbrickham branch is hosting a trip to four country pubs of a classic variety, not easily accessed by public transport: the Red Lion, Upper Basildon, the Bell, Aldworth, the Six Bells, Beenham, and the Plough, Little London. Leaving from Reading Station at about 10.20/30, and arriving back in Reading to the Nag's Head ca. 4 pm. Cost will be in the order of £10 and pre-booking required. Please indicate interest to John Dearing: 0118 9580377/ gpwild@btconnect.com.

Saturday 24 August A guided tour of Black Country pubs using public transport (and a bit of walking). Pubs include: Olde Swan, Netherton (Mrs Pardoe's), Park Inn, Woodsetton (Holden), Beacon Hotel, Sedgley (Sarah Hughes) and Old Bull's Head, Gornal (Black Country brewery). For anyone travelling to the area the day before, an additional pub crawl in the Dudley area can be arranged. Further details, including a full itinerary, from organiser Rod Richmond rod@aleaficiondo.co.uk.

Thursday 12 September Visit to the Chiltern Brewery, Terrick, near Aylesbury at 1pm. The brewery has offered this special tour outside the normal schedule as part of the SPBW 50th Anniversary celebrations, for the reduced price of £8.50 a head. The 1 hour tour includes a tutored tastings session. Travel by train from London Marylebone to Aylesbury, then by bus to Terrick Crossroads (approx. 10 mins), from where it's a 300 metres walk to the brewery. We'll let those attending have further information nearer the time. We return to Aylesbury by bus to visit the Chiltern brewery tap, the Farmer's Bar at the King's Head, and the Hop Pole, home of Aylesbury Brewery. If interested please let Garry Wiles know at grwiles@talktalk.net as soon as possible. We will then be requesting payment of £8.50 by 12 August.

Friday 6 December Anniversary Dinner at the Magpie, New St London EC2M 4TP (close to Liverpool Street station). Details of menu, costs etc in the next issue; get ready to book your places then.

We are hoping that some special Anniversary beers can be brewed for us. Hopefully we'll have more details by the next issue. You could drink them from our commemorative mugs – see Products on back page for details.

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

Andy's Roving Report

As Mark and his lady friend Susan were across from Belfast for a short break, I organised a taxi to take us up to north Leeds and ***Further North***. This minuscule bar is part of the ever expanding North Bar chain of hostelrys and opened in May 2007. It was previously a bar called "LS7" and before that was a shop selling parts for cars! This has to be one of the smallest licensed premises that I ever been in, although in the summer the French windows can be opened which might create a little more elbow room. Most of the décor is fairly basic; there's a plain wood floor and a few assorted tables and chairs. Two decorations that do stand out are 1) the large gilded mirror on a wall and 2) the evil lampshades that enshroud the score or so of light bulbs hanging from the ceiling and remind one just how ghastly popular tastes were in the 1970s. Later on we went to the "Alfred" (previously mentioned in PiH 122) which also has a rash of lampshades. Mark commented that it was like drinking in B&Q.

Various good tastes in beer are catered for at Further North however, and the very small (tile fronted) bar counter has two handpumps and 3 beers on font. The cask beers were Magic Rock's High Wire and one of Kirkstall Brewery's Prototype series. Bear in mind good people that, in keeping with the area, prices can be ouch inducing; one of the beers on font, Magic Rock's Rapture (4.6%), was £4.20 a pint. Further North also has a decent range of foreign bottles. The beer quality is very good and they seemed to be shifting a fair quantity whilst we were there.

Opening times: 17.30 Monday – Thursday; 17.00 Friday; 12.00 Saturday and Sunday.

Further North, 194 Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 4NZ.

Tel: 0113 2370962. See northbar.com/ for details about **Further North** and its sister pubs.

An excellent hostelry that is the other side of the railway lines from the city centre, the **Volunteer Arms** was still a Vaux house the last time I visited it back in the '90's. Things have changed in the 20 or so years since then!

As you enter the building, pay attention to the extremely good stained glass fanlight over the main door, depicting a soldier of the Napoleonic era. According to resident expert Schenker, who along with Ian accompanied me on this crawl, the figure is made from spectrum glass. Continuing inwards, the central bar counter is just to your left, flanked by two different areas; on your right is a sort of tap room, a largish space with a dart board. Presumably this is where the Saturday night blues bands set up their equipment. Up to your left, slightly raised up a couple of steps, is a more formal layout of tables and chairs. There's a fair few stained glass panels dotted about, including over the bar counter.

The **Volunteer Arms** sells 5 regular beers, plus 2 guest ales and 2 proper ciders/perries. The regulars were as follows; Treboom Yorkshire Sparkle, Marston Moor Mongrel, Leeds Yorkshire Gold, Tim Taylor's Landlord and

Brown Cow's thriller in Vanilla Porter. Guests were Yorkshire Dales Armistead & Wold Top Headland Red. We tried the Treboom offering - very good quality, costing £3.10 for a pint of this 4.0% beer. Certainly worth calling in for a pint or two and I think I am right in saying that the **Volunteer** is owned by the people who've got the "Swan" and "Slip Inn" off Bishopgate Road over the other end of York.

There used to be another pub just across the side road at number 4 Watson Street; this was the "Locomotive" which once sold Tetley's and later John Smith's. It was mentioned in the 2007 edition of Real Ale In York, but no longer exists. I called in there back when I last visited the **Volunteer** and seem to recall that it had a large screen in one of the rooms that was showing some music channel or other.

Opening times: 17.00 Monday to Friday; 12.00 Saturday and Sunday.

Volunteer Arms, 5 Watson Street, York YO24 4BH. Tel: 01904 541945.

Website is www.volunteerarmsyork.co.uk or you can check twitter at **@vollyarmsyork**

I can't say for certain that I've ever called in the street corner pub, the **Old Ebor** before, though I may have done so in the distant days of youth. I'd read that there was a good range of beers, so from the Volunteer Arms we got a taxi (as it is a bit of a hike) to see what was what.

From what I can glean from old York beer guides, the Old Ebor used to be a John Smith's house and it still sells their bitter plus four other cask beers and a cider. For our visit we had the choice of Theakston's Double Cross IPA, Rudgate Myraaj, Saltaire Pale Ale and Hop Studio Porter; the cider was from Gwatkin's. Beer prices start at £2.40 per pint and don't go very much above that, which is almost heresy in a place like York.

Ian bought the round, which was by far the cheapest that day; I chose the Hop Studio Porter whilst my fellow ratbags went for the Double Cross IPA. It is a fact that the porter had superbly smooth and rich chocolate flavour, though not sweet (I hasten to add) and really would be hard to beat. My companions also enjoyed their choice of beer; altogether the cost was nearly £2 less than a round in the next place we went in - guess whose turn that was?

The Old Ebor still retains some of its earlier layout and has only been opened out slightly - there's still a corridor that connects a former side room to the main bar area, so you are not drinking in a licenced shoe box. There's live music on Sunday nights from about 7.30 onwards and you can check twitter **@oldebor** to find out who is on, etc. Unlike lots of pubs in this city, its clientele seem to live locally and lucky they are to have a pub with such good beer at a decent price. As the Old Ebor is at the bottom end of Nunnery Lane it is easy to find and only a short walk from other hostelrys both inside and outside the walls. Call in if you are ever hereabouts.

Opening times: 14.00 Monday – Thursday; 12.00 Saturday and Sunday.

Old Ebor, 2 Drake Street, York YO23 1EQ.

BRANCHES IN ACTION

In March **Campden Hill** branch met at the Bree Louise in Euston, which is always very crowded. They claimed to have 17 beers and ciders available, although I think a few had been consumed. We were happy with what was left. We then adjourned to the famous Drummond Street for a veggie Indian curry in The Ravi Shankar. The Thali and the day special, both of which gave a taster of several things, were very good.

This year's Keith Hudson darts competition was at The Horseshoe, Clerkenwell. This now has 4 beers on hand pump, as well as the usual Sharps and Sambrooks, Jennings Cumberland and Brakspears Oxford Gold. John Rooth regained the trophy beating the dark horse challenger Robert McGowan in the final, the pair having fought through a small, but select field. Instead of a May meeting, we met in the Hole in the Wall at Waterloo before having an Italian Meal.

On Saturday 9 March the 6th Peter Smith memorial pub crawl took place in Canterbury, chosen in part because Peter was educated in the county of Kent. Six members, three from the **Common & Aldbrickham** and three from other branches assembled at St Pancras International, travelling on the high speed line as far as Ashford. On arrival at Canterbury West after a quick look at the Bottle Shop in the Old Goods yard, not yet "officially" opened we found our way, no thanks to the nominal guide, to the Dolphin, a slightly foody pub but serving good beer including the Kentish Gadd's. Next the Foundry, a newish brew pub, where some of us also sampled the menu. The New Inn on the eastern outskirts of the city was our third port of call, followed by the Wetherspoonery, Sir Thomas Ingoldsby, named, one assumes, after the supposed author of "The Ingoldsby Legends". The fitter members of the party then indulged in a route march to the south of the city to the King's Head in Wincheap, finally meeting up again at the Unicorn, which was conveniently close to the station. Some had time for a further trip to the Bottle Shop before returning to London and/ or Reading. The branch is hosting a 50th anniversary event on 10 Saturday (see page14).

Kingston Branch's Steve Quiller/SPBW 50th anniversary pub crawl was well attended by locals and fellow SPBW members from other branches. Thanks for supporting this event. Special mention should be made of the group who came all the way from Reading to attend.

Members attended the Bricklayers, Putney, Yorkshire beer festival on both the Friday and Saturday. Lots of beers on offer but just a list and no tasting notes this time. More importantly, it was so cold that the stillage outside in the garden was virtually offering refrigerated beer. The beer never warmed up properly even if you took it inside. As a result, several members decamped to The Cat's Back, the new Harvey's pub in Wandsworth (see over). Service was very friendly though the beer quality and the mild in particular could have been better. Not up to Royal Oak standards yet - but it is early days.



There was a good turnout for the social in The Edward Rayne, Wetherspoon in Raynes Park. This is one of the better Spoons and they had good beers including dark ones such as from Harviestoun Engine Oil on offer. Brentford FC had a 'pay what you like' match in February and we spent £1 each for seats. After the game, we visited The Brewery Tap - a Fullers pub under new management, which had trad jazz on. The Fullers Black Cab Stout was well appreciated.

We have the annual St Georges Day festival to look forward to at our branch HQ, The Willoughby Arms followed by the Kingston Beer Festival in May and the Ealing Festival in July. We'll hopefully be out on our bikes again once the weather improves hopefully visiting hostelries along the Thames.

Northern Ireland branch visited London in February and met some London SPBW members for a crawl starting in the Princess Louise and ending up in the Calthorpe Arms where, of all people, we met John Cryne (ex-Chairman of CAMRA) and had a pleasant chat about days gone by. I think it was around seven notable pubs and the range of beers was excellent. In March we were back down to attend the NEC AGM; the first occasion since the branch started way back in the early 90's that any of its members had the opportunity to attend - an excellent time to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. In April we set off for a long weekend around Leeds. On the Friday, making sure to get out of the cold and sample some local high street hostelries, we met up with our ever faithful guide, Andy Whitley, who took us on a taxi tour of some new establishments around Leeds. Susan was looking forward to the Saturday tour of the town and countryside of Holmfirth ("Last of the Summer Wine" country) and sample the local pubs. We sampled a few of the town pubs and had a tasty, and extremely filling, meal at The Nook: a place to be recommended for their food and own brewed ales. On the Sunday we had arranged a meeting at the excellent Palace at Kirkgate with members of the local SPBW branch to begin the pub crawl to some local establishments, most notably the Brew Dog with its very high alcohol beverages. An excellent day out and it was great to see old friends again.

The **North Irish Sea** branch was recently formed on 13 April 2013. Based in The Isle of Man, an area blessed with four breweries, there is almost 100% real ale availability across the entire island pub estate. The branch also has strong links and interest in the coastal areas of Lancashire, along the traditional Lancashire boundaries, from the Liverpool basin, as far north as Barrow in Furness, and members visit these areas a dozen or so times a year. **RACS** continue to meet monthly in various pubs around Sawbridgeworth. At the moment they are planning for the joint event in celebration of SPBW's 50th anniversary with BMADS (see page 13). The 2013 AGM (also our 200th meeting) is Wednesday May 29th in The Old Bell, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 8.00pm. Plans are being made to visit other local "country" pubs during the summer for our monthly meetings.

Special Branch, in its original incarnation, held its inaugural meeting on 18 May 1973. By coincidence our latest annual canal gathering begins on our 40th anniversary with three of the founding members present. We'll be in a pub of repute in the Potteries region and will no doubt have a pint to celebrate.

Wantz branch has been fairly quiet this winter. A few of us visited the Leyton Orient Supporters Club beer festival at the end of February. Once again there was an imaginative selection of beers, all served in excellent condition. A week later our latest eating evening was at Tayyubs in Whitechapel. This is a hugely popular Indian restaurant (it has a Crowd Control officer operating outside!) but the service and food was top class and at a reasonable price.

West Riding branch have a 50th anniversary branch trip on 11 May in conjunction with Harrogate and Ripon CAMRA to Theakston's cooperage in Masham followed by a visit to the Cover Bridge Inn at West Witton and also pubs in Leyburn. On Sunday 26 May the Branch Meeting is at the Horse and Farrier in Otley, starting at 12.15. On Saturday 8 June we have a trip to Prospect Brewery near Wigan followed by a visit to pubs in Wigan and calling at another Lancashire town on the way back to Leeds.

LAST ORDERS – FROM DENVER, COLORADO

Denver is one of the leading cities in the USA craft beer scene, now boasting 26 breweries. Most Stateside microbrewers are quite innovative, not least in the use of unusual ingredients. There are many so-called 'extreme beers', including one brewed by Denver's Wynkoop brewery: Rocky Mountain Oyster Stout is made with roasted bulls' testicles. That's right folks, some people talk bollocks while they're drinking, now they can drink bollocks as well! The beer first 'appeared' as an April Fool's Day spoof but generated so much interest that Wynkoop decided to actually brew the beer – which they describe as a 'seminal moment' in their brewing history! The beer weighs in at 7.5% and 3 balls per barrel. For more on this, check out www.Wynkoop.com.

Thanks to the Sunday Telegraph magazine 7 April

SPBW PRODUCTS

All the products below carry the SPBW 50th Anniversary logo, as shown on the front cover.

Ties Windsor purple, green, navy blue	£11.50 (£13 inc P & P)
T-shirts XL black, royal blue, jade, red; L black, royal blue, red.	£9 (£14)
Sweatshirts XL black, jade, royal blue, red	£15 (£21.50)
Polo Shirts XL royal blue, red, jade; L jade, royal blue, black, red	£13 (£19.00)
Hats Acrylic knitted, royal blue, red, burgundy	£5 (£7.50)
Baseball Caps black, green)	£7 (£10.70)
Glasses Straight handled pint mugs with etched logo	£8 (£14)
Please contact Patrick Deller if you wish to order a glass – pgadeller@gmail.com	

We also have sweats, polo and t-shirts, hats and caps with the 'old' logo, plus rugby shirts, fleeces, enamel badges and sew-on badges: check the website for details.

You can admire our product range on the SPBW website! And you can buy products through our on-line shop: <http://www.spbwshop.co.uk>

- **Please send your orders to Bill English** (see page 2)
- **Please make cheques payable to SPBW** and include a telephone number or email address with your order. Allow up to 28 days for delivery.
- **Products are cheaper if they can be collected in person; contact Bill to see if this can be arranged.**

