

# ***SOCIETY for the PRESERVATION of BEERS from the WOOD***

*(founded 1963)*

*The original beer consumer organisation*

## ***PINT in HAND***

*Number 131*

*August 2014*



*The Old Barbridge Inn, Cheshire (see page 14)*

Founded 1963



## ***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 November 2014 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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### Editorial address

**Roger Jacobson**, 2 Elizabeth House, St Leonards Street, London E3 3BX; email [editor@spbw.com](mailto: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](mailto:membership@spbw.com)

### Branch Liaison and Products

**Bill English**, email [beeel@myway.com](mailto:beeel@myway.com); tel 07910 657423

### General Secretary

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

### National Chairman

**Patrick Deller**, [pgadeller@gmail.com](mailto:pgadeller@gmail.com)

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

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 or visit our website.*



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## **OPENING TIME**

The cuts in beer duty rates in the last two Budgets may have been minimal (though welcome), but they appear to have had a most positive effect on the brewing industry. According to a report by the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA), beer sales increased by 9.5 over the second quarter of this year, the highest such increase for 17 years. (The BBPA's members account for 96% of beer brewed in the UK, and about 20,000 pubs.) Another factor has been the removal of the much-disliked duty escalator.

A downside to this is that much of this increase is in sales in supermarkets and off-licences, although there has been a 2.6% increase in pub sales in the period under review. Also, a big factor in the increase in pub sales is thought to be the surge of 'craft' beers, meeting consumer demand for niche products with 'different taste profiles'.

Meanwhile, pubs keep closing and breweries keep opening (187 in 2013). That means a considerable number of new beers – where do they all go? Might we be getting to a situation where there are too many beers on the market? In many pubs the policy seems to be to have a constant turnover of different beers, meaning you may find a brew you particularly enjoy one day, but may never see on the bar again.

One of our number who's unable to visit pubs at the moment is NEC Secretary John Rooth, whose mobility is restricted by doctor's orders following a knee replacement operation. This has led to his having reduced opportunities for sending out email notices to members. So, keep an eye on our website or contact one of the other NEC members listed on page 2. In the meantime we wish John a full recovery and hope to see him drinking in the pub again – in moderation of course! – before too long.

With the SPBW approaching its 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary it's good to see that membership is gradually increasing. We've also had two new branches spring into life in recent months, one in the north-east of England, an area that's been something of a 'desert' for us over the years – a very welcome venture indeed.

We're enjoying another warm summer so make sure you slake your thirst with some good ale and boost pub sales even further!

RJ

*Articles on beer/pub related issues for Pint in Hand are always welcome! 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; 86-114; 116-130. 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.

Every issue of PiH can now be found on the SPBW website, in PDF format (see page 9).

## ***NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE***

The SPBW NEC 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 branch representatives.

## ***NATIONAL WEEKEND 2014***

This year's National Weekend is based in Huddersfield from **14 – 16 November** and is being organised by West Riding Branch. This is now fully booked – 30-odd members from around the country will be there, not to mention the massed ranks of West Riding members!

## ***TONY LITTLER TROPHY***

The next inter-branch competition will be held on **Wednesday 24 September** at the **Calthorpe Arms**, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR. Events will kick off at 7 pm in the upstairs function room. Buffet will be provided. Wantz branch is hosting the competition which will consist mostly of a quiz covering various topics with some darts thrown in just for fun. We hope as many branches as possible will be represented. Don't worry if you don't belong to a branch – come along and we'll find a team for you to join. The Calthorpe is an excellent community pub serving Youngs beers and a couple of guests.

## ***BEER & BUFFET***

Our annual Eve-of-GBBF Beer & Buffet is on Monday 11 August, but it's quite possible this issue will have reached you too late. Unless, of course, you were one of the 20 or so members to have booked your place. On the evidence of past events at the excellent Olde Mitre it should be (or was!) a very good evening.

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

The 12 pubs nominated for the 2015 LPotY are:

**Blythe Hill Tavern**, Catford; **Calthorpe Arms**, Bloomsbury; **Door Hinge**, Welling; **Harp**, Covent Garden; **Hope**, Carshalton; **Ivy House**, Nunhead; **Old Bear and Bishop**, Paddington; **Old Fountain**, City Road; **Olde Mitre**, Holborn; **Royal Oak**, Southwark; **Sussex Arms**, Twickenham; **Wenlock Arms**, Hoxton

Four former winners there as well as three first time nominees. Our thanks to members who nominated pubs. Judging started in July and the winner should be announced by the end of October via our usual e-channels and in the November PiH. You can also follow the highly indulgent judging blog on our website.

## **'ARRY HART MEMORIAL TOUR 2014**

The pub tour of Carshalton on Saturday 30 August will be as follows:

1pm The Railway, 47 North Street (Fullers); 2pm The Sun, 4 North Street (Freehouse); 3pm The Greyhound, 2 High Street (Youngs); 4pm The Racehorse, 17 West Street (Free house); 5pm The Hope, 48 West Street (Freehouse, community owned pub). The first and last pubs are close to Carshalton Station. Bus 127 from Tooting Broadway or 157 from Morden also stop very close to the Railway. All who knew 'Arry or wish to pay their respects are welcome.

## **ANNIVERSARY GATHERING**

We are planning a get together on the 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Society's founding. This would be on Saturday 6 December at the Rising Sun in Epsom. We've yet to confirm arrangements with the pub so look out for more details in the next issue or via the usual e-media.

## **NI SPBW IN PRINT**

Those of you who venture into Wetherspoon pubs may have looked at the Summer 2014 issue of Wetherspoon News and found a half-page article about NI SPBW. This is a report of Mark Hutchinson's presentation of a plaque to the manager of the Bridge House, Belfast, in recognition of their support for SPBW. The accompanying photo shows Mark and others standing behind handpumps serving a SPBW Jubilee Ale brewed by Hilden. This is good publicity for us and thanks to Mark for making it happen.

## **OUT AND ABOUT**

Running stands at beer festivals is a good way of meeting the beer drinking public to publicise the Society, hopefully recruit new members and sell products. We were represented at the Ealing Beer Festival in early July; we also hope to be at Bromley (September) and Wallington (October). However, we do need people to man the stall and the more helpers there are, the easier it is for everyone. Please contact John Rooth if you want to volunteer to help out.

## **PINT IN HAND ARCHIVES**

If you want to follow the history of SPBW over the last 30 or so years, as well as the development of PiH, you can look at all back issues, and some of the SPBW newsletters which preceded it, on our website:

<http://www.spbw.com/magazine.html>. We also intend to set an Archive section, featuring all kinds of artefacts: photos, press cuttings, correspondence etc. If you have any such material I (Roger) would be delighted to receive it – either scanned by email or originals by post.

## ***FROM THE ARCHIVES***

30 years ago, in PiH 11, my Editorial said that 'too many pubs look like licensed amusement arcades with a disco thrown in. Where will it all end? Watch this space in 21 years time.' 30 years on, many pubs have gone for the bare floorboards, second hand furniture look. 'Background' music might not appeal to all, but at least there are plenty of pubs serving good beers.

We note that the NEC had given up on the Viaduct Tavern as a meeting place. The VT was then badged as a Friary Meux pub under the Allied Breweries umbrella; these days it's owned by Fuller's and has been quite well preserved. There's an account of the National Weekend (held in May back then) in Devon. No brewery visit (not much of a brewing county back then) but we did meet members of the North Devon branch.

Among the branches, Central London had visited Tetley Walker brewery in Warrington including 'the impressive computer console'. Wantz had spent a weekend in Lincoln and, a few weeks later, visited Ridley's brewery (a swift tour and lengthy sampling!). Ridley's were beginning to move to metal casks as their wooden ones wore out.

This issue included a reprint of an article about Founder Member Arthur Millard which originally appeared in *the Guardian* in 1971. Finally there was a feature on Australian beers, highlighting the spread of national brands at the expense of regional beers. Sounds familiar – but you can now find micro-brewed beers down under, in the big cities at least.

10 years later, PiH 51 featured the Kitchen Bar & Parlour (Belfast) on the front cover. This was one of several NI pubs covered in Andy's lengthy article. The Kitchen Bar, with Theakston's bitter, was a rare outlet for real beer in those days. There were also a couple of pages on Scottish beer and an article about pubs handy for the Grand Union Canal in the midlands.

Moving on to 2004, PiH 91's cover depicted the Gate in Sawbridgeworth, for many years the home of RACS, although the branch seem to have abandoned the place. There was an obituary of Peter Roberts, a stalwart of CAMRA and SPBW whose highly active life had been ended far too soon by cancer. Andy turned his attention to the best pubs in the East Riding of Yorkshire while John Rooth wrote about the Ayinger Brewery in Bavaria. This issue was made up of just 16 sparsely-filled pages so I was presumably grumbling about lack of contributions.

## ***SPBW ONLINE***

The SPBW **Members Forum** is [www.spbw.com/bb](http://www.spbw.com/bb). The Bulletin Board is intended as a way for members to exchange information. You can also join SPBW on **Facebook** at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). Our online shop can be found on the Products page on our website; just follow the links. We are aware people change emails for various reasons and we would like everyone to log on to the Forum and make sure their details are up to date - otherwise they will miss out on information mailed out by the SPBW.

## ***THE WOOD BEER GUIDE***

It's been a relatively quiet time in the world of beers from the wood, but there have been one or two encouraging signs of activity, as below. Meanwhile, don't forget to let me know about any breweries or pubs you know of have heard are selling beers from the wood, even if it's just intermittently.

### Brewery activity

According to CAMRA's summer 2014 edition of *Beer*, in an article about sour beers and lambics, Wild Beer Co has more than 140 wooden barrels and uses *brettanomyces* for many of its beers, plus its farmhouse location is leading it towards spontaneous fermentation in the future. The people from Wild Beer were at the Great Peak Weekender Beer Festival, 4-6 July, which was organised by Thornbridge Brewery.

Pilsner Urquell Brewery is serving its Pilsner Urquell lager from oak casks. I've checked the website and it seems they have a long heritage of serving their lagers from the wood, and according to their website, they have a team of seven coopers handcrafting the oak casks where the beer matures. This is a bit of a departure from the usual information I send round, but if there's enough interest in lagers from the wood I'll get in touch with the brewery to see if they can tell me any more. Over to you, the forum members...

News from the Thornbridge Brewery in Bakewell (and from information posted on the SPBW forum) is that they are maturing beer in wood. Their Double Scotch ale is available in bottles and keg; some of their Beadeca's Well, Raven Black IPA and Bracis are barrel-aged in small batches, and the St Petersburg Russian Imperial Stout, probably their best-know 'wood' beer, is more widely available.

### Pub activity

That stalwart of wood news, the Junction in Castleford had yet another "woodfest" weekend June 26th – 29<sup>th</sup>, see article in following.

Sean Garvey, Manager of Dirty Dick's Food & Ale Emporium, 1 Clare Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 2LH reports the exciting and encouraging news that he has purchased 3 wooden casks from a company specialising in high quality European White Oak barrels for beer. They were reportedly going to be used to condition and dispense Empire Brewery's Golden Warrior. If it gets popular they will introduce the other barrels into Dirty Dicks dispensing ale from a wooden cask. Reported via SPBW's newest Branch (North East) – at the Branch's next meeting on Aug 16th at Bacchus pub in Newcastle, Three Kings' Billy Mill bitter will be available from the wood, and at Durham beer festival the same beer plus Dragons Teeth will be available.

*Garry Wiles, Wood Liaison Officer*



**“CAN YOU TASTE THE DIFFERENCE?”  
ROGER PROTZ TASTES BEERS FROM THE WOOD AT THE  
JUNCTION, CASTLEFORD**

In 2010 Maureen Shaw and Neil Midgley reopened the Junction pub on Carlton Road in Castleford. It had been closed for some time and was in a sorry state. They have turned around the pub’s fortunes, making it a place where the past is the future. They have refurbished the pub themselves, and serve superb real ales. Neil set about purchasing over 100 wooden casks from renowned Yorkshire Master Cooper, Alastair Simms with the aim to only serve real ales from wooden casks. He now distributes them to enthusiastic breweries to fill and return with amazing beers to sell in the pub. Mention must be made of the late Simon Bolderson, who was the first to believe in Neil and supply his fantastic beers which really show that “beers in the wood” have that extra something.

Now, as Maureen and Neil celebrate four years of running the pub they have made a dream reality as the real ales served are only from the wood! That is, with the exception due to a one-off request in early June from Roger Protz, one of the world's leading beer writers, historians, lecturers and tasters. Roger had heard about the “Wood Revolution” taking place at the Junction and offered to come and lead a “taste the difference” session where beers from the wood were to be compared with their counterparts in plastic and steel casks.



*L- R: Maureen, Neil, wooden cask, Roger P (photo by David Litten)*

Appropriately, as the aromas of roasting malts from the local Fawcett's Maltings drifted across Castleford, it came to pass on a Thursday evening in late June that 25 enthusiasts comprising of locals and members of CAMRA and SPBW gathered in the snug of the Junction with Roger.

He began by outlining the history of beer in the wood and its decline with the advent of metal casks and more latterly plastic ones. First up was Gun Dog Bitter (3.8% ABV) from Wall's Brewery at Northallerton. A glass from a plastic pin container was followed by a third from a wooden cask, both from the same brew batch. Both were very good but also very different. This was described as a traditional amber bitter with a full hoppy flavour. The wood version had oaky, dry slightly smoky flavours whilst the plastic version was very much fruitier.

After a short break to recharge our glasses Neil gave us all an insight into how real ales in wooden casks continue to develop flavours and it was then on to beer number two. Again from the same batch, Beyond the Pale (4.2%), a golden hoppy bitter from Elland Brewery was tasted from both wood and steel casks. The wooden version was bursting with numerous flavours – peachy, hop resins, biscuity, vanilla hints, fruity, creamy, fully rounded and mellow. We agreed with Roger that although the steel cask version was pleasant it was a much more one-dimensional beer than its wooden counterpart. Roger's verdict was that the wood version was "fantastic" and that the difference between the two Elland batches was much greater than that between the two from Wall's.

Another short interval was followed by tasting the superb 1872 Porter (6.5%) from Elland Brewery. This was part of the batch which received the ultimate accolade at the 2013 CAMRA Great British Beer Festival as the "Supreme Champion Beer of Britain". However this was no ordinary champion beer. It had been aged in a whisky cask for a further period of almost a year. It was the oldest and yet the most alive of the beers tasted during the evening and numerous superlatives went round the room. Roger was heard to say "absolutely amazing", "a revelation" and "fantastic".

There followed some informal discussions, photos and indulgence in copious amounts of these and other brilliant beers in the wood from Ridgeside, Five Towns, Axholme, Elland, Hobsons, Wentworth and North Yorkshire breweries. Sadly, the time to leave came around all too quickly, but not before most of us had signed the new visitors book where Roger had written "Great pub, amazing beer, brilliant dedication to beer from the wood".

What a way to celebrate four years and a dream achieved! Thanks must go to Roger for coming lead the tasting and proceeds from the event go to his chosen charity Stop the Traffik which campaigns against the modern day slave trade.

*David Litten*

The Junction, Carlton Street, Castleford WF10 1EE;

<http://www.thejunctionpubcastleford.com/>

Roger Protz : <http://protzonbeer.co.uk/>; <http://beer-pages.com/protz.shtml>

Stop The Traffik : <http://www.stopthetraffik.org/>



## ***MEET the BRANCHES***

*We have 20 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 are delighted to report that two new branches have been formed: one in east London and one in the north east of England, the latter an area where we have been hitherto poorly represented.*

*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 Crosse Keys, 9 Gracechurch Street, London EC3V 0DR. 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, 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 at the Hop Leaf, Reading, on an ad hoc basis; 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)

**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: [admin@spbwni.co.uk](mailto:admin@spbwni.co.uk). Event details can be found at: <http://spbwni.co.uk/events.html> - for those not online send Admin your mobile number for event notification.

**NORTH EAST:** Meetings held on Saturdays at various locations across the north east, to be decided at the previous meeting. Contact Rob Shacklock [robinshacklock@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:robinshacklock@yahoo.co.uk) 07512257837; or Gordon Heal [tooncheers@hotmail.com](mailto:tooncheers@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](mailto:david.halliwell@manx.net) Always happy to meet up with visitors to the IoM.

**OLD FORD PILGRIMS:** Meet at the Eleanor Arms, 460 Old Ford Road, Bow; dates and times to be advised. Contact Frankie at the pub: 07896 208707; [frankie707@gmail.com](mailto:frankie707@gmail.com)

**RACS:** The Real Ale Club of Sawbridgeworth meets last Wednesday of each month in various pubs in Sawbridgeworth. Contact Caroline Macy, e-mail: [cj43@intosawbridgeworth.co.uk](mailto:cj43@intosawbridgeworth.co.uk) 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).

## **BRANCHES IN ACTION**

⌘ On Saturday 26 July, following a successful similar venture by **Common & Aldbrickham** branch in 2013, a group of 16 SPBW members and “fellow-travellers” convened at Reading Station for a mini-bus crawl of country pubs in the Reading area kindly arranged by Common and Aldbrickham branch member, Andy Church. First stop was the **George**, Wallingford, a market town on the Berkshire bank of the Thames, although currently, thanks to the confusion of the political classes, located in Oxfordshire. This was quite a posh hotel with a pleasant “tavern bar” dispensing beers from Rebellion of Marlow and some comfortable outside seating. Not to mention the only civilized loos encountered on country part the jaunt. Second port of call was the **Black Horse** at Checkendon, one of those pubs of which it can be truly said they are off the beaten track. So far off it that our driver missed his turning. Here West Berkshire brewery beers were enjoyed, particularly Old Father Thames and Good Old Boy.

After a pint or more it was off to the **Bell** at Aldworth, the only pub also visited on last year’s trip, no doubt because it is a personal favourite of the organiser and most of the other active branch members! One of the classic pubs in the area, it is a genuine free house run for generations by the McAuley family. The party enjoyed the excellent Arkells and West Berks beers, including Maggs Magnificent Mild from the latter and fed themselves on the simple but nourishing bar snacks. Back to Reading final port-of-call at least officially was the **Hop Leaf**, where the C&A Branch award of Pub of the Year 2013/14 was presented to the licensees, David and Claire Richards, in recognition of their “outstanding contribution to good ale and pub community life in Reading”. They have run the Hop Leaf for nearly seven years and that makes them the longest-serving mein host and hostess since the pub reopened under Hop Back Brewery colours in 1995. And three new members of SPW were signed up!

⌘ On 1 May **Kingston** branch members travelled to SE London to attend the 1st Kidbrooke beer festival. We managed to get completely drenched on the way there. However, it was an interesting venue with plenty of space available. Shame it is not closer to a rail station. Kingston beer festival on 16 May, was well attended by Kingston SPBW, as was the Ealing beer festival in May, which was blessed with glorious sunshine and a marvellous selection of ales.

SPBW and CAMRA joined forces for an event at the Bricklayers Arms in Putney on 10 July – the pub is under threat of closure. There was a good crowd and beers on all pumps. Disappointing to hear then, that only a week later the pub was offering just one ale.

Alton RE Running Day was 19 July. Enthusiasts run a free bus service using old Bristol RE single deckers and VR double deckers. Kingston branch and friends were joined by other London SPBW members and also met up very briefly with Kingston CAMRA. Another gloriously sunny day, we were there early for an English breakfast and to catch the first bus to Cheriton.

This year we went to The Star in Bentworth, which now eclipses Cheriton as the favourite venue - a marvellous pub in the Hampshire Village of the Year with thatched roofs and a gold post box to celebrate a local Olympian gold medallist. We sat on the green for a good while enjoying our ales. We were saved from a

fruitless walk to the other village pub, the Sun when one member, arriving in a taxi, informed us that the Sun closes on Saturday afternoons! We finally managed to see Jane Austen's local pub in Chawton and wander around her garden afterwards. Then back to Alton town for a few more pubs.

⌘ As usual, the minutes of **Norfolksoaks** meetings might as well be written in hieroglyphics for all the sense they make. Maybe it's the beer in the Fat Cat. One item that did make a bit of sense is that some of the branch were planning to visit Belfast at the end of July and would be meeting SPBW Webmaster Mark Hutchison. Formal Dress is apparently *de rigeur* for this rendezvous!

⌘ The newly formed **North East** branch had its first meeting on 26 July at the **Bacchus** in Newcastle. A great day was had and we had 3 new joining members bringing our branch total up to 11. Three Kings brewery reported that they have purchased 10 new casks from White Rose cooperage along with a member already purchasing one last week which is now being seasoned. Our next branch meeting will be Saturday 16 August at the Bacchus at 2pm when the first wooden cask will be used. There will also be a beer from the wood at Durham beer festival which starts on 28 August at Dunelm House student union, so there will be 2 wooden casks in operation over those 2 weeks which will be the first in the north east for many years. Sometime in October we hope to have a beer from the wood festival at the Oddfellows in North Shields.

⌘ **North Irish Sea** branch has been very active in the last quarter. It launched its own branch logo, now available on embroidered clothing. In July, there were visits to **The Prince of Wales** (Foxfield) north of Barrow in Furness. A well-known and award winning brew pub, the Prince of Wales stocks several of its own ales amongst the seven on offer, to accompany very generously proportioned meals at Sunday lunchtime. An impressive whisky selection is also available, advertised by distillery regions on a large notice board. The friendly welcome makes the pub difficult to leave, as the train outside beckons, invariably always a quart earlier than one would wish!

There was also a rare foray for the branch inland, to **Ye Horns Inn** at Goosnargh, six miles inland from Preston. Along with local pheasant on the menu, Goosnargh Ruby Red ale was sampled, in this superb 18<sup>th</sup> century rural inn, now with its own brewery since 2013. The pub features an extremely rare seating area arrangement, actually behind the bar serving area. This trip was followed by a return to the branch's nautical roots, visiting the **Baltic Fleet**, another brew pub, close to Albert Dock in Liverpool. Here a chance meeting with the new brewer of Wapping beers associated with the pub took place; he hails originally from the outer Hebridean, Isle of Harris no less. In the coming months further trips to Arnsdale, Silverdale and Carnforth, north of Lancaster are planned.

⌘ **Old Ford Pilgrims** branch held its inaugural meeting at the Eleanor Arms on 12 May. It includes a (beer drinking) dog and the local vicar (the Rev James) among its members. The Chairman is one Stephen Beer. The AGM will be on 11 October, which is Queen Mathilda Day. The branch constitution states that members cannot vote at meetings without a pint in hand!

⌘ **RACS's** June meeting (2014 AGM) in The Bell, Sawbridgeworth, saw a fond farewell to Jan and Harry Mead before they set off to Dawlish. They were presented with an album of photographs of RACS over the years and

fleeces bearing the RACS logo. Spencer Richards is our new Chair - promoted from many years as Vice Chair. Our July meeting was at The Queen's Head, Allen's Green.

We had a very successful trip to the Chelmsford Beer Festival on a warm summer evening and our next "away day" is the Chappel Beer Festival at Wakes Colne Station in Essex in September. Before that we shall be holding our annual Summer Show on Sunday August 24th at George IV, Sawbridgeworth. All welcome to enter. Schedule available from [cj43@intosawbridgeworth.co.uk](mailto:cj43@intosawbridgeworth.co.uk).

⌘ **Special Branch's** annual canal gathering in May took mostly in Cheshire with bits of Shropshire and Staffordshire. We were very pleased with the consistently high standard of pubs and beers, of which we took full advantage. I'll just highlight three of these: the **Old Barbridge Inn**, canalside near Barbridge Junction, is a comfortable large open-plan pub serving a selection of beers from the fairly local Woodlands brewery; the **Fox & Hounds** in Cheswardine, a mile from the canal but worth the walk for well-kept Joules' beers and superb food. But our pub of the week was the **Haberdashers Arms** in Knighton, a tiny and remote hamlet in Staffordshire. This genuine traditional community pub dates from 1840 and has four small rooms, including a tiny snug which just about contained 6 of us! Banks' mild is the regular ale on tap and we were also able to choose between excellent beers from Rowton and Three Tuns breweries.

⌘ **Wantz** branch's biannual evening in Leytonstone for beer (Red Lion) and Thai food (Singburi) was the usual enjoyable time. We're also had two contrasting pub walks. The Smithfield district of central London offers a good selection of pubs in small area, including some classics like the Hand & Shears and Fox & Anchor. Anyone looking for bargain beer should tread carefully since £4+ is the norm in most pubs – sadly it wasn't my round in Sam Smith's Rising Sun where a pint cost a mere £2.80. A couple of weeks later we did a small brewpub crawl of east London: the **People's Park Tavern** on the north side of Victoria Park was once a Firkin brewery pub in one of its many previous incarnations and the new brewing plant is open to display at one end of the large bar. Six of their beers were available that evening; it was a warm evening and the large garden was very popular. After a walk through the park and along the Hertford Union Canal we arrived at the **Crate Brewery** next to the River Lea Navigation, close to the Olympic Park. This has become a very popular venue and I've found the beers here to be of consistently high standard. It specialises in pizzas if you need more solid sustenance. Finally a bus to Stratford Westfield and the **Tap East**, possibly the only brewpub in a major shopping complex. Three house beers are complemented by three guests. Most definitely unpub-like but a pleasant retreat.

⌘ **West Riding** branch's July meeting was held at the Firehouse in Sowerby Bridge, a small town with a worthy and varied selection of good pubs. A few days after this was the SPBW Yorkshire gathering at the Cross Keys, Halifax, beer festival, with some 25 members present. Also in early August was the SPBW BBQ at the Grove in Holbeck. The next meeting, on Sunday 31 August, is at the Horse & Farrier, Otley. 13 September is the date for a branch outing to Leek and Buxton.

## **DAY TRIP TO NEWARK**

The SPBW West Riding Branch July trip saw a merry band of 36 beer enthusiasts dodging the showers on a visit to Newark. A very interesting day was in prospect with opportunities to follow a maltings and brewing trail, meet up with members from other branches, attend some “meet the brewer” sessions and of course try plenty of real ales in some exciting pubs new to us.

Until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Newark had been the centre of the English brewing and malting industries for well over two hundred years. With its excellent water quality, unrivalled transport links by river, rail and road and easy access to barley growing areas it was often called the Metropolis of Malt. Such was its importance that it had its own malthouse design known as the Newark Pattern. The town remains at the forefront of the industry as the home of The Maltsters' Association of Great Britain.

My first pub was the **Prince Rupert** on Studman Street. Dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it has a number of separate rooms over two storeys and usually serves a range of six ever changing real ales. However, on this day the main attraction was outside where Oakham Brewery had its own bar. I joined a number of fellow members to chat to Matthew and Martin from the brewery.

The second “meet the brewer” session was at the **Organ Grinder** on Portland Street. Formerly a Marston's pub called the Horse and Gears, this is Blue Monkey Brewery's third pub. It has undergone some considerable sympathetic refurbishment and has guest beers in addition to the Blue Monkey range. I arrived with other members of our group and we had a good old yarn and a beer with the brewery's production manager Simon King (of the jungle – we are advised).

A shortcut through a major supermarket soon led to the **Just Beer** Micropub. Opened in 2010 by four local beer enthusiasts, this one room cosy venue has a constantly changing range of four microbrewery cask ales, no lagers and no spirits! Of particular local interest was Chaos a 5% pale-coloured, fruity premium bitter locally brewed at the Funfair Brewery in Elston by David Tizard. This was because David was in attendance with his pop-up display fielding our questions. He told about the history of the brewery and his pub, the Chequers.

Next up was the **Fox and Crown** for some excellent Castle Rock beer and we were not disappointed – great beers as always. I also had a secret mission to check to see if our SPBW West Riding Branch Summer Pub of the season 1998 award was still there. I can confirm that it is still proudly on display.

Heading back towards the river I visited a new pub on Castlegate called the **Flying Circus** (previously the Crown and Mitre). It had changed beyond all recognition and is now light and airy and very comfortable indeed. Amongst the several handpumps on the bar were a beer from the Newark Brewery (the first sighting of the day) and a house beer from Milestone Brewery called The Red Fokker.

Back over the road at Just Beer it was time for Oldershaw Brewery's Kathy Britton to take the spotlight in the final “Meet the Brewer” session. She knows a thing or two about beer as the Managing Partner and fielded all questions with ease. On the bar was her 4.4% Blonde Mosaic, a nice refreshing beer, which was, for that sunny part of the day very appropriate.

*David Litten*

## ***A WHALE OF A TIME IN DUNDEE?***

Having spent two enjoyable nights exploring the delights, liquid and aesthetic, of Edinburgh's alehouses, we opted for a day trip to sample Dundee's pub scene. The rail journey north is notable for crossing the Firth and Tay bridges, two stupendous feats of Scottish engineering. One hour from Waverley, we alighted at Dundee Station, opposite Scott of the Antarctic's R.S. Discovery, on a dreich Caledonian morning. Overhead, black and blue.

In the city centre our beer guide nominated five pubs worthy of a visit. Two are Wetherspoon's, the Capitol in Seagate, an Art Deco transformation of a former cinema, and the Counting House on Reform Street, predictably housed in a defunct bank, and positioned in the shadow of the magnificent McManus gallery which tells the story of Dundee's shipbuilding, jute, jam, journalistic, whaling and cake making heritage. The aforementioned establishments are stereotypical 'Spoons: cheap food and a good range of inexpensive regional brews including Double Gold from the Phoenix Brewery, Dengie Dark from Wibblers in Essex and Saltaire Blonde.

A hop across the street took us to Nicoll's (formerly Town) on Commercial Street, an ostentatiously grand former insurance building. A vast venue with imposing neoclassical columns and an ornate tiered plasterwork ceiling rising to a glass dome; it provided a disappointingly meagre ale choice. We both downed halves of Inveralmond's honeyed and quaffable Lia Fail, previously supped at Holywood's Dirty Duck. Easing ourselves out of luxurious soft leather chairs, we took the short stroll to Union Street and the warm and welcoming Bank Bar, a former TSB branch. En route we paused for the obligatory snap of D.C. Thomson's iconic creations, bronze statues of Desperate Dan with Dawg and Minnie the Minx. The Bank is a cosy spot with timbered ceilings, exposed brick and terracotta coloured plasterwork. Walls were decorated unsurprisingly with bank memorabilia. The ale selection was satisfactory and we imbibed pleasant halves of the ubiquitous Stewart's Edinburgh Gold and Inveralmond's Independence. Following a relaxing sojourn, we finished our central crawl in Duke's Corner on Brown Street, a five minute dander away.

Situated in a former school, Duke's is an eye-catching stone edifice adjacent to the Textile Heritage Centre. The interior is cavernous with high ceilings, trestle tables and benches. Plainly catering for the city's substantial student custom, its layout was shrewdly versatile with a stage for gigs and a DJ booth. Food was also on the go. Here we encountered our first serious ale choice. We plumped for half measures of Wharfebank's Yorkshire Stout and Fyne Ale's Vital Spark, an amber libation with bitumen notes. Also on tap were Wild Beer's Put it in your Pipe, Magic Rock's High Wire, a range of Thornbridge ales and William's Joker.

Next, a short distance away, in Nethergate, we arrived at the Phoenix, a bustling, vibrant local with green leather seating, Art Nouveau glass screens, maroon walls and garish stained glass windows. This pub was the gateway to the West End and some generally superior establishments. The proselytising proprietor pulled us halves of Mor Brewery's Ish and Ticia, the former perkily spicy and the latter deliciously dead on. Other ales available included Taylor's Landlord, Deuchar's

and Well's Bombardier. Departing to the strains of Fleetwood Mac's "Go your own Way", we headed to the heart of the cultural quarter along Perth Road.

Our primary objective was an Edwardian howff or People's Palace, the Speedwell Bar, known locally as Meenie's. Its splendid interior features an L-shaped bar with two side rooms separated by glass partitions and an anaglypta Jacobean ceiling with heavy cornicing and pendant globular lighting. Ensnoring ourselves in a relaxing side room we supped two pre-prandial halves: Wadsworth's Henry's IPA and Caledonian Brewery's Golden XPA.

Exiting, we walked back towards the city centre to Drouthy's on Perth Road, a pub eaterie, where we lunched. In this spic and span modern space with a spiral staircase leading to a cellar bar, we washed our meals down with Yule Smile and Burning Aurora, two ales from the pub's extensive selection of regional craft and cask ales. Finally, a little further down the road we stopped at the Brae's, another fashionable pub diner targeting students with bargain meals and cheap drink deals. We enjoyed two halves of Eden Brewery's St. Andrews Blonde, distinguished by its mellow apricot notes, before making our way to the Edinburgh train.

After a lengthy siesta in our hotel, we headed out for a last bevy in Auld Reekie, a perfect place for pubs and pints. Our tap ten, melding ale and aesthetic, are Kay's, Bow Bar, the Oxford, the Guildford, the Abbotsford, the Blue Blazer, Café Royal, Cask and Barrel, Cloisters and the Stockbridge Tap. Honourable mentions can be made for Jingly Geordie and Halfway House; two taverns situated picturesquely on Fleshmarket Close, an ancient wynd connecting Waverley Station with the Royal Mile. Exit Music.

*Peter and Mike Andrews*

## **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 (page 2) know and a bundle of leaflets will be sent. If you can just recruit the odd friend or colleague, this would be ever so helpful as well. Thanks to those of you who have already helped in this way.

## **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.

## **BREW BRITANNIA**

A couple of years ago we were approached by Ray Bailey who, with his partner Jessica Boak, runs a beer blog (boakandbailey.com). They were writing a book about the British beer revival of the past 50 years and he had been researching the history of SPBW. We helped Ray as much as we could, including putting him in touch with surviving Founder Member John Keeble (in the Acknowledgements, Ray describes me as 'something of a co-conspirator'). Last June Ray, having almost completed the book, came along to an NEC meeting at the Royal Oak to get an idea of the SPBW today. He seemed like a decent bloke and we enjoyed a few beers with him.

Ray and Jessica's book has now been published: *Brew Britannia – the Strange Rebirth of British Beer*. Chapter 1 covers the founding and early years of the SPBW, taking the story up to 1972 and the demonstration at the 'Festival of Fraud' (PiH 65). At this event the SPBW was joined by a new organisation named CAMRA and Chapter 2 is an interesting account of that organisation's early years. Thereafter the authors chart the revival of real ale – including pioneering free houses and movers and shakers such as David Bruce - and the microbrewing boom and move on to cover the trend towards so-called craft brewing. The book ends with an Epilogue – an account of the aforementioned NEC meeting, which is of particular interest to those of us who were present!

All in all a very interesting read and a valuable overview of events which many of us have been closely involved with. Needless to say, this is a recommended read for all SPBW members.

*Brew Britannia – the Strange Rebirth of British Beer* by Jessica Boak & Ray Bailey; Arum Press, ISBN 9781781311868; available from major booksellers at £12.99, or cheaper via an on-line retailer which doesn't pay UK taxes.

RJ



## **EMAIL ADDRESSES**

If you want to receive up to the minute news about SPBW events, you can get this information in the comfort of your own PC monitor. Send your email address to John Rooth and he will add you to his circulation list. We promise that your email details will only be used for the transmission of SPBW material. 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.

## **WORKSOP & RETFORD BREWERY IN PRINT**

Regular may remember a few short pieces by member Dave Pickersgill the long-closed Worksop and Retford Brewery (PiHs 118, 119, 129). Since then, he and colleague and John Stocks have published two beer-related books: 'Beer, Balls and the Belgian Mafia,' (BBBM), an 85,000 word novel; and 'The Worksop and Retford Brewery Company,' (WRB), an illustrated, anecdotal history of a long-closed regional brewing company. Research has included visits to archives and a considerable number of mentions in CAMRA publications, including 'What's Brewing.'

BBBM is set in the early 1990s. It is a fast paced read which encompasses locations in Worksop and Belgium. Integral to the novel is the sense of a local brewery being the philanthropic centre of a community, inspiring positive and creative change. It includes an upbeat in the fortunes of the local football team, a revival of the Worksop brewing scene and many references to both UK and Belgian beer. It is a novel which targets many markets and potentially has global appeal.

WRB is an extensively researched history tome which provides the historical background to the novel. It documents the fortunes of the WRB, an essential backdrop to the fictional escapades. This book has recently been reviewed by the long established and prestigious Nottinghamshire Historical Society, the Thoroton, who stated, 'an excellent addition to the history ... of Worksop ... highly recommended,' - full review at

<http://www.thorotonsociety.org.uk/publications/reviews/bookreviews40.htm>

In an attempt to gauge interest, both publications have been made available as e-books:

<http://www.beerballsbelgianmafia.moonfruit.com/sales/4582798197>

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Worksop-Retford-Brewery-Telegraphic-ebook/dp/B00HWV41R8>

The books have also had some interest in the local press and the authors presented a talk at Bassetlaw Museum (Retford).

## **CLOSING TIME**

As with the last issue, we close with the story of another nutter from Canada. 34 year-old James Neilsen has set a new world record for the 'beer mile.' He ran 4 minutes 57 seconds for the event, which requires runners to sink a can of beer every 400 metres. Neilsen, who claimed to have 'mastered the physics of fluid dynamics and air displacement', later described the experience as 'really painful'. No idea of the capacity or contents of the can but I do suggest that this is a challenge not recommend to fellow members.

*From the Metro, 30 April*

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## SPBW PRODUCTS

**All the products below carry the SPBW 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo.**

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

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.spbw-shop.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.**



*The Baltic Fleet, Liverpool (see page 13)*