

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

*(founded 1963)*

*The original beer consumer organisation*

## ***PINT in HAND***

*Number 132*

*November 2014*



*The Conqueror Alehouse, Ramsgate (see page 18)*

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 February 2015 issue should reach the Editor by **25 January**.
- The Editor or the National Executive Committee of SPBW does not necessarily share opinions expressed in *Pint in Hand*.

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*All photos by Roger Jacobson unless stated otherwise*

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

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



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## **OPENING TIME**

One of the most interesting and refreshing developments in the last few years has been the emergence of micro pubs. This mini-boom started in east Kent but has been followed in many parts of the UK. A micropub is pretty much what you imagine – a very small premises (mostly converted shops) with minimal facilities, a basic range of beers and, possibly, ciders and nothing more than snacks by way of food. Inevitably, they are very sociable places – you can hardly ignore or avoid your fellow drinkers! – with no irritating electronic distractions. Since they are all (as far as I'm aware) privately owned, there is no ignoramus in a company head office inflicting unwanted policy.

The few micropubs I've visited have all been notable for being very friendly and a pleasure to drink in – far cry from the characterless hangars of some of the major pub groups. May this development continue to spread.

This issue marks 33 years continual and regular production of PiH. I'm happy to say that more often than not these days I have more contributions than I have room for. I'm certainly not complaining, please keep stuff coming in! So if you've sent in an article or a branch report that has either been omitted or severely pruned, you know why. I really am extremely grateful to anyone who plays a part in getting this thing together each quarter.

In our 51<sup>st</sup> year, the SPBW has had a wider media coverage than ever. Not just an extensive mention in a beer history (Brew Britannia, reviewed in the last issue) but our NEC Chairman Patrick and venerable member Derek 'Catweazel' Legg were recently featured on prime-time TV. Drinking free beer, strangely enough. Patrick's written revelations about this are eagerly awaited and should feature in the next issue.

As another year approaches its end I can say it's not been a bad one for the SPBW. We have a new and highly active branch in the North East and a small but steady increase in national membership. So let me send seasonal greetings and wishes for a happy 2015 to all our members, as well as publicans and brewers who take pride in their profession.

See you next year!

*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; 116-131. 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.

## ***ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING***

The 2015 AGM of the NEC will be held on Monday 9 March at a venue to be decided. Full details will be provided in the February PiH as well as via the usual e-channels. All SPBW members are invited to attend this meeting; we expect/hope it will be fairly brief and allow plenty of opportunity for socialising.

If you wish to volunteer for a post on the NEC please let John Rooth know.

## ***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!

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

We had hoped to have decided the winner by now. But the final voting has had to be delayed until mid-November. Once the judges' votes have been cast we'll announce the winning pub and details of the presentation via the usual channels.

## ***ANNIVERSARY GATHERING***

We are holding a get together on the 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Society's founding, on Saturday 6 December at the Rising Sun in Epsom (14 Heathcote Road KT18 5DX). A buffet will be provided but, since there's no such thing as a free lunch, we are charging £5 for the pleasure. If you want to come along please a cheque (payable to SPBW) to Roger Jacobson (address on p2). The Rising Sun serves beers from Wells/Youngs and a guest.

## ***BEER & BUFFET***

Our usual eve-of-GBBF gathering at Ye Olde Mitre was another success with more than 20 members present, including a few new faces. As expected, a good range of well-kept ales was on tap, including Wadworth 6X for wood buffs, and the buffet was plentiful and delicious.

## ***MIKE HALL MEMORIAL PUB WALK***

This will take place in Richmond, Surrey, on the evening of Monday 24 November. There's a good variety of pubs from local boozer to gastro pub. The schedule is: 7pm Triple Crown, 15 Kew Foot Road, TW9 2SS; 7.45pm Sun Inn, 17 Parkshot, TW9 2RG; 8.30pm Cricketers, The Green, TW9 1LX; 9.15pm White Swan, 26 Old Palace Lane, TW9 1PG; 10pm Watermans Arms, 12 Water Lane, TW9 1TJ. Come and join us to raise a glass to the memory of a good friend and former NEC Chairman.

## ***TONY LITTLER TROPHY***

The 2014 event was again held at the excellent Calthorpe Arms on 24 September. Some 25 people turned up to throw a few darts and tackle the quiz set by hosts Wantz branch. The winning team was a motley crew led by national member Steve Elliott, which isn't a branch, but who cares! A generous and tasty buffet was provided and the Youngs/Wells beers were on typically good form. Steve and co will be organising the next event, to be held some time next year.



*Steve (centre) looks suitable overwhelmed as Roger hands over the Trophy  
(photo by Di Kehoe)*

## ***.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 festivals at Bromley (September) and Wallington (October). These proved to be fairly successful for us; thanks to those who volunteered to help man the stands – and of course to those who brought products or joined SPBW.

## **ANDY FEDDEN**

Andy was a long standing member of the West Riding Branch and had been on the committee for many years. He worked in the accounts departments at Daleside Brewery for a number of years before joining Kirkstall Brewery in Leeds. He was active in the Harrogate and Ripon CAMRA branch and worked each year at the CAMRA beer festival in Leeds and at many Great British Beer Festivals. His sudden passing from a heart attack at the age of 56 in late October came as a great shock to everyone. Our sincere condolences go to his family and many friends. He will be sorely missed.

*Graham Hewitt*

## **FROM THE ARCHIVES**

The November 1984 issue of Pint in Hand commemorated the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the founding of SPBW, printing the minutes of the inaugural meeting (as in PiH 128). The celebration dinner was actually held in October for some reason; it was eaten in the Civil Service Club in central London and we had the honour of the company of two of the Founder Members, John Gore and John Keeble. Other celebratory events around the time included a visit to Youngs brewery.

Erstwhile NEC man Terry Jenkins contributed an article about Youngs as well as the first part of a series about the origins of the Big 6 brewing combines (remember them?) complete with 'family trees' to illustrate the various takeovers. Scottish & Newcastle were the first in the series.

Brewery visits were popular with branches: Central London enjoyed what seems to have been a VIP trip to Boddingtons; Ponds went to Ridleys, and Wantz spent an afternoon at Godson's in Bow. All these breweries are all long defunct. Also down the pan was SPBW's Wingfield branch which had been around since the 60s

The 1984 London Pub of the Year was the Star Tavern in Belgravia, which is largely unchanged since (apart from the removal of the SPBW mirror!) and is still a purveyor of Fuller's beers.

Ten years on, there was a strong northern flavour to PiH 52. Andy's 3-pager was an account of a visit to Bridlington; the Perfect Pub Page featured the White Lion in Wharfedale; while the old North Riding branch had visited Haworth and York. Meanwhile the National Weekend was based in Leeds and included a coach trip to Scarborough, to which "45 went and only 44 came back". The missing one had recently become Chairman of Campden Hill branch and is currently NEC Vice-Chairman.

The cover of PiH 92 depicted the Swan in Little Totham, a superb village pub in deepest Essex – now closed, I believe, a real shame. This was the Perfect Pub for this issue. John Rooth recounted a visit to Oakleaf brewery in Gosport; fairly basic premises as I recall but excellent beer.

Andy's Roving Report covered pubs in a variety of locations from Scarborough to Lincolnshire. Peter Ramsbottom contributed a short piece about beer in Canada, one Alan Lister wrote about Brakspear's (his former employer) relocation to Witney, while I provided a history of Wantz branch, then celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## ***THE CRAFT CONUNDRUM***

CAMRA appears to be in a state of confusion, regarding so-called Craft Beer.

A partner in a small North East brewery told me recently that if they call their filtered keg beer 'Craft' then it gets no flack from CAMRA. Let us be under no illusion, Craft Beer is just keg beer under a new guise, but it seems to be hoodwinking some of the drinking public.

There were no nasty adjuncts in the keg beers of the 1960s, but they were condemned by SPBW and by CAMRA when they came along, as it's what the brewers did to keg beers after they were brewed which was the issue.

The beers were filtered or centrifuged, Pasteurised, carbonated and served very cold. The end product was a shadow of the beer that came out of the fermentation vessels in the brewery.

Latter day Craft beer is not real ale, is bright beer and is served under gas pressure or in bottles and cans and is unacceptable to real ale connoisseurs. Maybe Bill Tidy should rebrand his monthly CAMRA What's Brewing cartoon *CRAFT BUSTER*.

I reckon the only difference between the old keg beers and current micro-Craft offerings is that at least the former were brewed by time-served brewers who had served a long apprenticeship and in many cases had university degrees in brewing.

I note that many of the draught Craft-keg offerings are high gravity and this comes as no surprise as strength tends to mask poor flavour.

I rest my case.

Quod erat demonstrandum.

*Hugh Price  
Tynemouth Lodge Hotel, Tynemouth*

## ***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.

*Our two websites are now behind secure defences!* This will also include our Forum. While this does not (and never can) give us full 100% protection from any sort of cyber-attack, we are close to that, and far less vulnerable than the majority of websites. This new level of security is a good thing as we do carry membership information, even if somewhat limited to name/email/location, and we want to be seen to be responsible owners of said information.

Our new URL's are: <https://spbw.com> and <https://spbwshop.co.uk>.

## ***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.

## ***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.

## ***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 Roger Jacobson and he will add you to the 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.



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

### Regional developments

Mark Hutchinson, NI Branch Chairman, has been in discussion with Norman McKinley, a local entrepreneur who would like to see beer in the wood on the bar counter. Ards Brewing Co is keen to get involved. Alastair Simms (White Rose Cooperage) will supply Mr McKinley with some 4.5 gallon reconditioned oak cask barrels. We wish this venture every success.

### Brewery activity

Russ Taylor at XT Brewery reported that the St Albans beer festival in September had three wooden casks from XT this year. The Royal British Legion in Marlow had a XT wooden cask at their last festival and Alan (an SPBW member) takes wooden casks on and off for the bar there. XT have had some of their firkins repaired by Alistair and now have a large oak barrel formerly a wine cask which they plan to age some beers in.

Hawkshead Brewery has a few beers ageing in ex-Bourbon wooden casks currently: No3, a Damson Oak Aged Imperial Porter; Brodie's Prime Export 8.5%; a wheat beer, which has been wild fermented and brett aged. They brewed a beer in collaboration with Wild Beer Co (from Somerset) in June, an Oat Wine, about 9% which is being aged in brandy barrels.

Three Kings Brewery in North Shields is supplying Billy Mill bitter in an old wine cask to the Bacchus pub in Newcastle. They anticipated taking delivery of 10 brand new 9G casks mid-August, and organised a beer festival (17-19 October at Oddfellows pub in North Shields) where they had 10 beers served from the wood.

Alastair Simms is also supplying some wooden firkins to the Ossett Brewing Company. They have initially ordered four, which have been filled with their 7.4% Russian Imperial Stout, Ratsputin, brewed at their subsidiary Rat Brewery in Huddersfield. The beer will be aged until Christmas. I've also heard that Fernandes Brewery Tap (another Ossett subsidiary) is producing their Black Voodoo Chocolate Orange Stout 5.1% in the wood exclusively for the Wakefield Beer festival 6-8 November.

Saltaire Brewery has ordered 2 firkins and 2 kilderkins from White Rose. They are being made out of old Chivas Bros whisky casks and will be used for specials in the Brewery Tap, Beer Club, festivals and one off sales.

The White Hart brew pub in Whitechapel, which brews under the name One Mile End has had two wooden casks in the bar, used for maturing beers: Belgian Red Rye and Russian Imperial Stout.

*Garry Wiles, Wood Liaison Officer*



*Wooden casks at the Oddfellows (photo by Robin Shacklock)*

## ***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 **Gunmakers, 33 Aybrook Street, London, W1U 4AP**. 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).

**FYCY:** 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**

⌘ In August **Campden Hill** branch had a Branch Meal in Whitechapel. We started at the White Hart brew pub, which served three beers, a golden ale and two fruit wheat beers. We then ate at Needo's Grill Indian restaurant. The food was excellent, reasonably priced and the service was very good. In September, we had a four pub crawl in Westminster: St. Stephen's Tavern, a Hall and Woodhouse pub which still has an MP's division bell; the Speaker, a busy one bar pub with two guest beers; the Sanctuary House Hotel, a Fuller's Ale and Pie House and hotel; finally the Buckingham Arms, the popular Young's pub.

In October we had a Branch Meal in Stockwell. After a few pints at the Priory Arms, the well-known and popular free house, we moved on to the O Cantinho of Portugal restaurant. The reasonably priced food and wine was excellent and so was the service. We ended up having a complimentary glass of port to finish off the evening. Future events include branch meetings on November 3rd and December 1st; 24th November the Mike Hall Memorial Walk in Richmond and in December the Not the Xmas dinner.

⌘ In September **Central London** branch had a pub walk in London SW1. We started at the Buckingham Arms (as above), then the Colonies, a Taylor Walker pub with an African colonial theme. Just around the corner was the Cask and Glass, a small, cosy, wood-panelled Shepherd Neame pub. Then lastly the Phoenix, a back-street gastro pub run by Geronimo Inns. In October, we took a trip to Tunbridge Wells. First stop was the Opera House, a Wetherspoon pub. Most of the venue has been left intact and is very spectacular. Next was the Compasses, a Greene King pub with a couple of guest beers. Then on to the Grove Tavern, one of the oldest pubs in town and an absolute gem. The landlady was friendly and remembered the trip's organiser from his previous visit. Next was the Ragged Trousers, a basic café-type pub. It served an excellent pint of Larkin's Traditional Ale had two guest beers. The last pub was the Bedford, a busy and bustling Greene King pub, opposite the station, which served several guest beers.

⌘ **Kingston** branch attended the 18th Egham beer festival, an event noted for having the more obscure beers which attract "scoopers". We also visited pub beer fests, at Woodies of New Malden, and the Bricklayers Arms at Putney. The Hampton Transport Gala in September celebrated 150 years of the Hampton railway-Thames Valley extension line. Apart from buses and trains, Twickenham brewery had a beer tent in the gardens at nearby Linden Hall. They were offering a specially brewed 'decade' ale at 5%. Also in September, we met at the busy Antelope in Surbiton. Their first new brew was on offer but it was not well regarded. Subsequent visits have been made to try further offerings from the "Big Smoke Brewery" which have included a very tasty Porter and a Red Ale. Beers are unfinned and unfiltered.

The branch managed a creditable second at the Tony Littler event and two days later were at St Albans beer festival, which had some excellent Hertfordshire beers. The "Private Brewery of Bob" beer called "Byngalong" was an intriguing one for tickers. No further information was forthcoming from the volunteers on the stand. Unfortunately, the beer in question was unremarkable.

The branch also enjoyed its annual cycling trip around SW London. Following the Grand Union Canal we enjoyed an excellent lunch at the ever popular Fox at Hanwell then on along the Thames to The Rocket at Putney then a final stop at the Roebuck for some sundown beers overlooking the river.

☞ **North East** branch goes from strength to strength. The second meeting, in August, attracted 4 new members, and the branch produced the first issue of its newsletter, *Hoppy Times*. In October there was a visit to 3 Kings brewery in North Shields. A beer from the wood festival was held in mid-October at Oddfellows in North Shields. We had 12 beers from the wood, 3 from 3 Kings and the rest from other microbreweries in the north east.

The November meeting is on Saturday 29th at Darlington Snooker Club (GBG listed) at 12.30, followed by a visit to 5 pubs serving beers from the wood. No meeting in December but the January meeting will be on Saturday 10th at Haltwhistle Comrades Club 12.30; again beer from the wood will be served. Friday 14 November it is hoped to have a branch visit to Castleford and Halifax and maybe meet up with some Yorkshire SPBW members.

☞ **North Irish Sea** branch had several visits to The Rosemount Hotel, an Okells community pub in central Douglas, currently being refurbished, and there was a visit to Hooded Ram brewery on the Isle of Man, which has recently increased its capacity fourfold. Further afield there were extensive visits north including a visit to Orkney brewery in The Northern Isles, where a 10% Dark Island Reserve bottled beer is brewed in small batches, aged in used malt whisky casks. The famous and supremely isolated Crask Inn at Lairg, Sutherland, was visited on the return leg to the mainland. An imperative visit for research purposes to The Jura Hotel, Isle of Jura, yielded only bottled beers, but compensation was in hand by way also of its splendid isolation and proximity to the Jura Distillery, only yards away from the bar. This was followed by a visit to Fyne Ales in Achandunan, where in the first of a collaboration with Springbank Distillery a peat smoked golden ale Fynebank has been brewed, aged in wood, but bottled as craft at this initial stage. It is hoped that this vibrant and renewed interest in wood will translate back into the cask market in this case. There was finally a visit to Sulwath brewery in Castle Douglas, following a trip on route to an award winning Scottish Pub of the Year The Steam Packet Inn, Isle of Whithorn, Solway- just north of North Irish Sea!

☞ Things have been quiet in **Northern Ireland** recently due to an extension on the Chairman's house keeping him very busy, but things will pick up with a branch housewarming party. Also on the cards are a Belfast pub crawl, a return visit to Dublin's Wetherspoon outlet, an imminent presentation of the branch POTY and the good news of two new Belfast Wetherspoon premises later in the New Year.

☞ It is rumoured that **Old Ford Pilgrims** held an AGM in October.

☞ **RACS** continue to meet monthly at various pubs around the Sawbridgeworth area. We have planned a couple of "all day" pub crawls – to Chelmsford on Saturday November 8th and Cambridge on December 6th. Since traditionally, we do not have a regular meeting in December, our Christmas celebration will be in the Rising Sun, High Wych on Wednesday November 26th at 8.00pm. As always, all welcome to join us.

☞ **Wantz** branch made a return visit to the Afghan Kitchen in Islington in August: a very cosy venue with good food at a decent price. At the beginning of October we

were back in the area for a short pub walk in the Angel district: 4 pubs in a very short distance. Best was probably the Craft Beer Co; the Three Johns had some interesting beers, The Joker had live blues and in the Alma we had to put up with all the other customers watching Arsenal on TV.

Coming up we have our usual meal at Singburi in Leytonstone and visits to east London's two beer festivals: Leyton Orient Supporters Club and Pig's Ear. Our November meeting marks the branch's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so I suspect we'll have a beer or two.

⌘ Among the main recent events for **West Riding** was a trip to Liverpool, visiting some of the many excellent pubs in the city. Also in October was a visit to the Oates Brewery in Halifax last Sunday by about a dozen members. The reason for the visit was to assist in the brewing of a Christmas beer commissioned by Christina at Jacobs in Bradford to be aged and sold from a wooden cask. The brewery itself is in a large industrial unit and the brew kit sits in about a quarter of it although an expansion is planned. Various members helped to measure out the hops that were added to the boil at precise intervals. We also took turns in shovelling out the spent grain, a very hard job indeed. The beer should end up as a 6% winter warmer with some fruity notes. It will go on sale at Jacobs on Sunday 21 December at 3.00pm so we can visit after our branch meeting in Haigy's that day. In the meantime the November meeting is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> at Guiseley Factory Workers Club and of course we're hosting the National Weekend. The Branch Christmas party is on Saturday 27 December at Guiseley Factory Workers Club from 3.00pm and the January meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> is at the Royal, Pudsey from 12.00 noon.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ***WEST BERKSHIRE BREWERY***

I recently attended the inaugural AGM of the West Berkshire Brewery. This was such an enjoyable day that I thought I would share it with you all.

The story starts back in 1978 when David Bruce – who I am sure many of you will be familiar with – opened his first brew pub, the Goose & Firkin. After two years of very hard work, this south London boozier was joined by a second Firkin pub, and this was followed by several more. In 1988 Midsummer Inns made David an offer he couldn't refuse so he reluctantly sold his successful chain. This pub brand was subsequently seriously mishandled and run into the ground within three years. David then went on to co-found the successful Capital Pub Co, Convivial Pubs and the City Pub Companies, amongst others.

Interesting as all this is, what has this got to do with the West Berkshire Brewery, I hear you ask. I shall therefore move to 1995 when Dave and Helen Maggs established a local Berkshire brewery with the mission statement to brew beers and ales of the highest quality using ingredients as local as feasible. Due to the popularity of their beers, the original site was soon too small, so they decided to incorporate the Company in 1998, bringing on board their good friends Helen and Andrew Baum, who injected further finance into the Company, enabling their first move to larger premises. Further growth necessitated another move in 2012 to their current very attractive premises at the Flour Barn, Frilsham Home Farm in

Yattendon – a few miles outside Reading. Since 2001, the Company has an average annual growth rate of 20%, which is pretty phenomenal.

This constant growth means that the current premises are already becoming a bit cramped and the founding shareholders are soon to be approaching retirement age. They had no intention of selling off and severing their ties with “their baby” so it was time for a strategic review to explore their options. As a result of this review, they decided to sell off part of the Company to family and friends and beer drinkers, licenced retailers and residents of Berkshire and neighbouring Counties such as Middlesex – which is where I come in. They also wanted an experienced Chairman who would help drive their plans for further development. They found someone who has been brewing and selling beer for his entire 47 year career – David Bruce. So now this article is beginning to make a little sense.

One of David’s first jobs was to set up the offer for sale for part of the Company. This attracted 278 new shareholders, the vast majority of whom attended the inaugural AGM. This was an interesting and very friendly affair – made all the more pleasurable by the bar being open before I arrived at 10.30 and was still open after the lift to Pangbourne Station that I had just blagged myself was due to depart at around 2.45. David was on excellent form, greeting me enthusiastically by (nick) name on arrival then going on to give full and frank answers to all the questions raised during the meeting and quite a detailed description of the Company’s exciting expansion plans. He will be bringing to bear his experience of raising over £66 million of investments in his various companies over the years by setting up a further share issue. It is the intention to structure this to qualify for Enterprise Investment Support, which – as any Fat Cat will tell you, means that the investment will attract Income Tax relief and be free of Capital Gains and Inheritance Taxes so start saving up your pennies and watch this space.

After the AGM had been concluded, the shareholders were taken on a tour of the brewery in several groups. I was lucky enough to be on the group taken around by Dave Maggs – the founder, Life President and original brewer. As you can imagine, over the years I have been on quite a few brewery tours, but the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of Dave made this tour special. He was also keen to drop into my local (the Queens Head, Uxbridge – West Middlesex CAMRA’s Pub of the Year) for a meet the brewer session sometime next year.

What are the plans for the Company? Well, they currently run one tied house in a little village. Despite all efforts, it has just not proved possible to successfully run this as a tied house, so they plan to divest themselves of this and take on a town pub. If this proves successful and David Bruce has plenty of past successes in this area, then other town pubs will also be acquired. The Company have obtained all the necessary approvals (and this wasn’t easy) to set up a subsidiary called Royal Berkshire Brewery Beers to oversee and drive their increasing presence in the export market. Following their next share issue, they will move to a bigger site and increase capacity further, and also install a bottling plant as they currently have to ship around the country at significant expense to get their beer bottled. This does not mean the draught side will be overlooked however so you can all look forward to enjoying a pint of Good Old Boys at a pub near you soon!

*Catweazle*

## ***THE RETURN OF.....ANDY'S ROVING REPORT***

There's been an amazing transformation at the **Griffin** in Leeds, which had been for quite a few years been a closed down, semi-derelict former hotel. Built in 1872 on the site of an older inn, the building is apparently a good example of Victorian "Gothic Revival"; I can recall it from just over a century afterwards when I and various cronies used to drink in the public bar, which was run by a genuine bar manager, who was invariably very smartly attired.

Compared to the size of the old hotel bar, the place now appears to have grown enormously; as you enter in over the eye-catching Taylor Walker mat, the main bar area stretches before you. Notice the wallpaper in the small area off to your right, as this is actually a large scale copy of the ordnance survey map of Leeds from about the time that the Griffin was built: well worth a perusal.

The bar counter and back are on a grand scale; while you are here, remember to have a look at the (brass?) Griffins that hold up the foot rail. As the Griffin has an extensive pub grub menu there's lots of seating and tables for those who munch. As for those who just drink, you have four hand pumped beers available. I think 2 were from Leeds Brewery, but I tried the 4.2% Chinook from Goose Eye Brewery. Very nice but far from cheap at £3.60!

If you continue to the bottom end of the room and look to your right, you'll see two smaller rooms. One is en route to the gents and is simply refurbished with tables and chairs. The other, to its left, resembles part of the London underground, with white tiles, an arched ceiling and those old 1950's British Rail tourist posters on the walls. This is where the live acoustic sessions are held (in fact there was a young lady singer warbling on the Sunday night that we called in).

Overall effect? Pretty impressive I'd say. The plethora of glass and mirrors, the subdued lighting and traditional lounge style furniture give the **Griffin** a sort of "Opulent Edwardian" image. The only jarring notes to this are the television screens dotted about the place. Still, you can pretty much guarantee that this will become a very popular meeting place and is yet another hostelry worth visiting within 5 minutes' walk of the train station.

**The Griffin, 31 Boar Lane, Leeds LS1 5DF. Tel: 0113 2445220**

No, the next pub has no connection with a certain Lancashire town, the name being that of a Chemist, whose shop this building once was. **Preston** is one of the ever expanding number of "North Bar" hostelries and is situated in a pretty upmarket row of shops (twixt a stationers and a bath showroom) just over from the Oakwood Clock. By the way, I scribbled these notes down back in March, but I imagine they are still pretty accurate.

**Preston** is quite plainly furnished, though there's a nice bit of mosaic tiling by the door I seem to remember that the rest of the flooring was wooden boarding. The furniture is somewhat varied, ranging from a leather sofa and padded bench style seating to those hideous little chairs that I recall from school. There's not a lot on the walls except some vintage French adverts for beauty products which may be a reminder of the old chemist shop perchance?

There are/were 4 hand pumps and 6 fonts on the bar and we bought excellent pints of "Prototype" which is the North Bar chain's house beer, made by Kirkstall Brewery. I noticed a rather interesting range of bottled beers as well.

The bus journey here from Leeds town centre seems to take forever and you're probably much better advised to get a taxi - I'd say that **Preston** is certainly worth a look in.

Opening hours: Mon - Wed 1500 to 2300; Thurs and Fri 15:00 to 2330; Sat 1300 to 2330 and Sun 1300 to 2230.

**Preston, 468 Roundhay Road, Leeds LS8 2HU. Tel: 0113 2494709**

And yet another conversion from shop to bar, being formerly a sort of tat emporium, selling just about anything from mirrors to Betty Boop figurines and suchlike horrors. I'd be interested to discover what business the building originally housed as there's some (sadly broken) mosaic tiling in the doorway. It could have been anything from a butchers to a department store once upon a time.

**Social** is under the joint ownership of the "Sela Bar" just around the corner on New Briggate, and the Brudenell Social Club up Leeds 6 way; the latter named being well known as a live music venue. One enters into a large square shaped room with the bar counter on the right. Furniture consists largely of the dreaded school chairs (again) and low tables; at the back of the room is a proper table football game. Décor is kept to a minimum with plain brick walls - I am informed that the brickwork is English Garden Bond by the way, which proves that the ratbags of my acquaintance are not of the common variety. There are two handpumps, which serve beers from the likes of Magic Rock, Revolutions, Kirkstall and Moorhouses. A pint of Magic Rock Ringmaster (3.9%) cost £2.90 when I called in at the start of October. Anywhere selling beer like this at less than £3.00 a pint in Leeds is a bit of a rarity. **Social** has a good reputation for the quality of its beers and there's a pretty decent selection of the bottled version as well, plus 8 fonts.

I was surprised to learn that there is a beer garden out at the back, which provides a good view of nearby St John's church tower. Alas, I am unable to provide the opening times for **Social**, though you can always ring up for details. Definitely recommended.

**Social, 21 Merrion Street, Leeds LS2 8JE. Tel: 0113 2441635.**

Newly reopened and extended, the **Friends of Ham** is about 4 times its previous size and I must say it is a real improvement! The owners bought the premises next door (previously one of those ghastly "cheques cashed & pay day loans" places) and closed for about a fortnight while the staff scratched their way through the wall. We now have a large central bar with 4 handpumps, 10 fonts and even more unusual bottled beers as they have extra coolers now. No more having to dodge from side to side every time someone wants to pass by and the staff can turn around without knocking anyone over. The **Friends of Ham** has a national reputation for the quality of its food and the beer is good too. Deservedly popular.

Opening times: Mon - wed Noon to 2230; Thurs - sat Noon to Midnight; sun Noon to 2200. Food served until 1 hour before closing.

**Friends of Ham, 4 - 8 New Station Street, Leeds LS1 5DL. Tel: 0113 2420275.**

## ***RAMBLE IN RAMSGATE***

What could be better on a fine late summer day than an excursion to the seaside? Ramsgate is a popular Kent resort, a pleasant town with an abundant supply of pubs. I managed to drag myself away from the beach to visit a few of them.

Towards the north end of town, the **Montefiore Arms** is set in quiet cul-de-sac off Hereson Road. There is one main, U-shaped bar with a smart little snug tucked away at the back. The pub is neat and tidy with pine-panelled walls. There is a dart board and plenty of trophies to show off the prowess of the local team. Very much a community pub with a warm greeting from behind the bar. The three handpumps are all from the Ramsgate brewery, now based up the road in Broadstairs. All their beers are badged as Gadd's which is how I shall henceforth refer to them. My pint of Gadd's No 7 cost £2.50 and was very pleasant indeed. The pub is named after Sir Moses Montefiore, a local philanthropist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Montefiore Arms, Trinity Place, CT11 7HJ; [www.montefiorearms.co.uk](http://www.montefiorearms.co.uk)**



*The Hovelling Boat Inn*



*The Artillery Arms*

The Thanet area is the birthplace of the micropub movement and Ramsgate has two such examples. The **Conqueror Alehouse** is fairly typical. Just two or three tables, no bar counter, three beers and a cider, direct from the cask, no food or electronic distractions. The owner told me he'd once had 32 people in the pub, which must have been cosy! I had pint of Gadd's Seaside and the alternatives were from Nethergate and Rudgate. This former florist shop is decorated with old maritime photos – the Conqueror was a paddle steamer operating between Ramsgate and France over 100 years ago - and there are some interesting etched windows commemorating former local breweries Cobb & Co and Thomson & Wotton.

**Conqueror Alehouse, 4c Grange Road, CT11 9LR; [www.conqueror-alehouse.co.uk](http://www.conqueror-alehouse.co.uk)**

In the town centre is the other micro, the **Hovelling Boat Inn**. This is a fraction larger than the Conqueror and seems to offer a much wider selection of drinks, including wines and spirits, even tea and coffee. The owner will serve you at your table, dispensing your change from an apron pocket. More Gadd's here – No 3 – plus XT4 and Flipside Dark Denomination. Converted from a shop in 2013, this had actually been a pub called the Hovelling Boat until 1909.

**Hovelling Boat, 12 York Street, CT11 9DS; [www.hovellingboatinn.co.uk](http://www.hovellingboatinn.co.uk)**

The nearest pub to the rail station I visited was the **Great Tree**. This corner pub is run by the splendidly named Scheherezade Pesante, a Puerto Rican opera singer, a splendidly voluptuous lady who you could quite easily imagine performing at La Scala. Whatever, Ms Pesante is a charming and friendly hostess and the pub is pleasantly quirky, with café-style furniture and an assortment of board games on offer. My beer of choice was Hopdaemon Green Dragon, from an assortment of ales and ciders.

**Great Tree, 1 Margate Road, CT11 7SP; [www.thegreattreepub.co.uk](http://www.thegreattreepub.co.uk)**

My favourite pub of the day was the **Artillery Arms** in Westcliff Road. This pub is on two levels: the bar area is on the 'ground floor' and a short flight of stairs leads to a larger seated area. The AA is thought to have been built in 1812 and boasts some remarkable stained glass windows depicting scenes from the Napoleonic wars. 6 handpumps here dispensed mainly Kent beers including Gadd's Rye Pale and She Sells Sea Shells (that's almost as hard to write as to say!) and the pub is run by very friendly people. In fact just about all the pubs I visited were very friendly, which is more than I can say about the greedy seagulls who stole my lunch! Wildlife apart, Ramsgate is a fine place to visit.

**Artillery Arms, 36 Westcliff Road, CT11 9JS.**

RJ



## ***CLOSING TIME***

The Ostrich Inn in Colnbrook (between Heathrow Airport and Slough) is believed to be one of the oldest in the UK, the present building dating from around 1500. It was often the first stopping point for travellers heading west from London. Travellers then tended to carry a lot of cash with them, which sparked an idea in the mind of one landlord, a Mr Jarman.

He would offer his 'best' room to the more wealthy-looking guests. The room had a trap door under the bed and a hinged bedstead which allowed him to tip his victims into a vat of boiling liquid in the kitchen below. The bodies were ditched in the river Colne while Mr J pocketed the money. By the time his scheme was discovered and he and wife hanged for murder they admitted to at least 60 such killings. By all accounts the pub is rather safer these days!

*Thanks to CamraAngle, magazine of the Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead branch of CAMRA; original article by David Jackson*

## 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.**



Members of North East branch at the Beer from the Wood Festival (see page 13)  
Photo by Robin Shacklock