

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

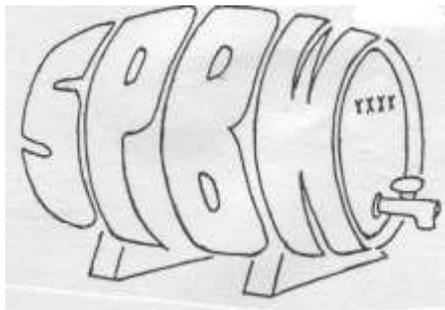
PINT in HAND

Number 90

May 2004



The Royal Oak – possibly the best pub in London



PINT in HAND

- ***Pint in Hand*** is published quarterly, in February, May, August and November. It is issued to all subscribing members and affiliated branches of SPBW.
- All members are invited to contribute articles for publication on beer-related subjects. Contributions for the August issue should reach the Editor by **20 July**.
- The Editor or the National Executive Committee of SPBW does not necessarily share opinions expressed in *Pint in Hand*.

Editorial address

Roger Jacobson

email editor@spbw.com

Membership Secretary

Roger West, Four Winds, 70 Chalfont Road, Seer Green, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 2QP; email

membership@spbw.com

Branch Liaison

Bill English, email blo@spbw.com

Products

Rodger Molyneux-Roberts

email products@spbw.com

General Secretary

John Rooth

email secretary@spbw.com

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

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

OPENING TIME

Have you noticed how much advertising is devoted to real ale, traditional beer, call it what you will, these days? I don't know about television commercials, not wasting my time with such a device, but in the national press and magazines puffs for proper beer are becoming quite common. The likes of Greene King (for Abbot and Old Speckled Hen), Charles Wells, Shepherd Neame and Wychwood (the lager-baiting Hobgoblin ads) are all very much on this bandwagon. I know that all these beers are widely available in processed and packaged forms, but they are all primarily draught beers. Can this mean that breweries large and smaller no longer feel embarrassed about their products when sold on draught, but are actually quite happy (and proud?) to proclaim the virtues of traditional ales. Or is it that they realise that there is a genuine and lucrative market for non-dustbin beers?

I have often wondered what the expectations of the advertiser are. I guess that what they are seeking in this case is brand awareness. So the unwary drinker ventures into an unfamiliar alehouse and spies the likes of Hobgoblin among the pump clips. Having had the name impressed on her/his consciousness, said drinker no longer has to linger over the choice of drink. Of course, the danger is that an even better brand name, such as Tetleys, is on the adjacent clip and our drinker opts for that instead.

Propaganda continues to issue from the major beer producers that hardly anyone drinks proper draught beer any more, but it appears that

'smooth' dustbin beers and ersatz lagers are no longer flavour of the month either. It took massive advertising campaigns to establish the large share of the market these liquids can claim. No beer has been promoted more heavily in the last thirty years than Guinness; so much so that it is best known by the brewer's name, rather than a brand name or beer style. How many swillers of the black stuff know that it's actually a stout? Or that the concept of the large white head was dreamt up by the advertisers? Or that numerous small breweries produce far more tasty (and no doubt cheaper) stouts and porters?

I suppose it's easy to get blinkered here. Most of my beer drinking acquaintances (actually I suppose that means *all* my acquaintances!), and most of you I'm sure, are independent minded, enterprising folk who are not easily swayed by mere hype, but will seek out and sample different brews, as well as having their favourite, regular beers. But there are still vast numbers of beer drinkers who wouldn't consider joining a beer-related organisation, but who still prefer the proper stuff. It's these people who may be swayed by the adverts I've mentioned. Is it too much to hope that these adverts might make a few converts as well?

Just a final line to say that there have been continuing problems in getting PiH produced (not least this totally crap PC I'm using). But we are persevering and we'll get it right before long. Please stick with us, we're all volunteers and we're doing our very best! Have a good summer.

Roger Jacobson

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The SPBW National Executive Committee holds its regular meetings on the second Monday of each month, hopefully starting at 7 pm. Venue is Old Kings Head, Borough High Street.

These are strictly business meetings, but they are kept as brief as necessary. All members are welcome to attend, particularly representatives from branches.

PINT IN HAND 89

Those gremlins just won't go away. Some of you may not have received your copy of the last issue of PiH (erroneously dated January). This is due to the incompetence and inefficiency of one wretched

individual. If you are missing number 89, please let me (Roger Jacobson) know and I'll make sure one goes in the post. Apologies for this foul up; we will get things right before very long, I promise!

* * * * *

NATIONAL WEEKEND

The 2004 event is being organised by Wantz branch to help celebrate their 30th anniversary. The Weekend will be based around a visit to **Hook Norton** brewery in deepest Oxfordshire. This is on **Saturday 13 November** at 10.30 am. Hook Norton is a prime example of a traditional Victorian tower brewery, producing some top class ales. For the weekend we will be based in Banbury and we expect that a visit to the **Plough** at nearby Bodicote – which has brewed its own beer since 1982 - will be on the agenda.

Banbury is served by main line rail and the M40. Anyone wishing to come along should let Roger Jacobson (see page 2) know. I will let applicants have details of accommodation in due course. There is a charge of £7.50 for the brewery tour (includes sampling and a commemorative glass to take away) and we will have pay for transport to and from the brewery. This should be a highly enjoyable weekend and we hope to see a good few of you there.

* * * * *

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Summer's on the way so what better time to think about Christmas? It's been a few years since the SPBW produced its own Christmas card, but we're planning to resurrect this tradition. All we need is a design – which is where you, the members

can help out. We're inviting you to submit suitable designs – send your artistic efforts to John Rooth (see page 2) and the winner will receive an appropriate prize, of the beery persuasion. Get to it!

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 (secretary@spbw.com) 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.

GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL

The SPBW's attendance at the GBBF dates back to the first Alexandra Place event back in 1978 and we've followed the event to Leeds and Brighton before it settled at London Olympia. Sadly we have decided not to run our usual stall this year. Quite simply it was proving uneconomical to run, however

enjoyable it was to meet our members and recruit new ones, as well as sample a wide range of good beers. Instead we are turning our attention to smaller, local beer festivals where, hopefully, we won't have to stump up a substantial rent. So keep your eyes open.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The May 1994 issue of PiH was also number 50 and featured a picture of Bateman's brewery in Wainfleet on the cover. This was in connection to Wantz branch's recent visit to this worthy establishment in a quiet and friendly village.

Meanwhile Andy Whitley was over in Cheshire and reported on the choice pubs of Chester and Stalybridge. Ten years on these towns still have plenty to offer the discerning beer drinker. So, of course, does Bateman's brewery.

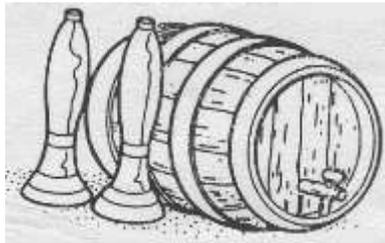
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004

The 2003 AGM of the SPBW National Executive Committee was held on Monday 8 March at the Old Kings Head, near London Bridge.

Nearly 40 members showed up, mainly the usual suspects but some new, and most welcome faces were also in attendance. There was the usual bonhomie and the pub's range of ales were eagerly imbibed. Thanks to Rick Robinson from the Willoughby Arms for the sandwiches!

There were no changes to the Committee, the current team being returned unopposed. They are:

Chris Callow, *Chairman*
Mike Hall, *Vice-Chairman*
John Rooth, *Secretary*
Jim Woodcock, *Treasurer*
Rodger Molyneux-Roberts, *Products*
Roger Jacobson, *PiH*
Bill English, *Branch Liaison*
Roger West, *National Membership*



LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

The winning pub for 2004 is the ***Royal Oak***, Tabard Street, London SE1. This outpost of the Harveys tied estate has often been mentioned in these pages and rightly so. To be honest, I'm biased, having used the pub regularly since it reopened under the Harveys banner in 1997. But the excellence of the beer range, the wonderful atmosphere of a two bar pub free of gimmicks, the friendly welcome and service – oh, and the food's superb as well – make this a worthy winner. If you've not visited yet, you're missing something special.

The presentation of our prestigious trophy was made on Monday 29 March with a good turn out of SPBW members and friends, as well as some of the other locals. We were delighted that Miles Jenner, Head Brewer, Managing Director and Thoroughly Good Bloke, came up from Lewes to join us – and even more delighted when he announced a free bar for 20 minutes. Naturally we were all too polite to refuse! Trays of solid refreshments also appeared to wash down the top class ales. Well done to John and Frank at the Royal Oak.

Chairman's Report 2004

Welcome to the Old Kings Head here in London. As usual I shall give a running total of the number of meetings I have been attending on the NEC, we are now up to year eleven. Remember, the National Executive Committee is open to all so you should all make an effort and drop in sometime, dates and times are well publicised.

The past year marked the 40th anniversary of the Society and to celebrate a veritable action packed calendar was arranged. Thanks to all that took time to arrange something, and although I did not visit every event, I know someone who did! Since last year's AGM we have had a weekend in Bridport; Special Branch losing to Coate at skittles; an SPBW beer festival; day at the Proms; beer & buffet at the Wenlock Arms; Great British Beer Festival; National Weekend in West Riding; Chesapeake Bay USA Real Ale Challenge; Wantz Derby event; Dripping Spring beer festival; and a lavish celebration 40th birthday party dinner. I think you can agree that we had a busy time and should thank all of those organisers who put so much into the year. These events have been well documented in Pint in Hand and on our website.

The events have not passed without the odd problem or two. It came to light towards the end of

the year that Hopback, who had been commissioned to brew a beer for us, had not been paid for their endeavours. This has now been rectified, but it is down to the Committee to recover the money from various sources as it has made a large hole in our finances.

The latest winner of the London Pub of the Year is the Royal Oak and the presentation will be made on Monday 29 March. This was decided from a large field of excellent pubs and our troopers as usual had time to pick out this Harvey's pub.

This year marks a 'new look' PiH with our new printer. There have been a number of technical problems with this, mainly judging the amount of printer ink that we require to do a run. These teething problems will be resolved and I am sure that the new format will from strength to strength. By the way, do not stop the flow of articles to our Editor; the quality of our magazine is measured by the reports sent in. I would like to thank the volunteers who help with the printing and collating, it has shown me what an unsung hero Ossie was!

Thanks to all of you for attending tonight and I wish everyone a good year.

Chris Callow, Devizes

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 2002

<u>Year</u>		<u>Year</u>	
<u>2002</u>	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2003</u>	
793.05	Sales of Society products and donated items		571.70
	<u>Less: Cost of Sales</u>		
1425.18	Opening Stock at Cost		1174.88

374.09	Purchases in Year for resale	276.34	
<u>(1174.88)</u>	Closing Stock at Cost	<u>(1087.29)</u>	<u>353.93</u>
168.66	<u>Gross Profit from Sales</u>		217.77
-	Surplus from 40 th Anniversary events	134.65	
200.00	Branch Affiliation Fees	343.00	
825.00	National Membership Fees	1161.00	
<u>19.75</u>	Interest on Deposit Account	<u>7.48</u>	<u>1646.13</u>
<u>1243.41</u>			<u>1863.90</u>
	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
39.00	Travel Expenses	39.60	
770.14	Beer Festival Attendance	622.10	
674.94	Pint in Hand	773.97	
(130.55)	National Membership Provision	(15.05)	
150.00	AGM Expenses	180.00	
48.58	Administration and Sundry Expenses	567.08	
<u>79.85</u>	Depreciation	<u>131.29</u>	<u>2298.99</u>
<u>418.75</u>	Balance-Excess of Expenditure over Income		<u>(435.09)</u>
	Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2003		
<u>2002</u>	<u>GENERAL FUND</u>	<u>2003</u>	
3284.52	Balance at 31 December 2002		2865.77
<u>(418.75)</u>	Excess of Expenditure over Income		<u>(435.09)</u>
<u>2865.77</u>	Balance at 31 December 2003		<u>2430.68</u>
	<u>REPRESENTED BY:</u>		
	<u>FIXED ASSETS</u>		
1756.99	Office Equipment at Cost	2392.69	
<u>(1517.42)</u>	Depreciation to Date	<u>(1648.71)</u>	
<u>239.57</u>			743.98
	<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
-	Stock of Printer Consumables	298.00	
1174.88	Society Products at Cost	1097.29	
143.00	Sundry Debtors	419.60	
34.46	Cash in Hand	179.38	
417.84	Balance at Bank : Current Account	77.68	
<u>1781.25</u>	Deposit Account	<u>1028.49</u>	
<u>3551.43</u>		<u>3100.44</u>	
	<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
922.95	National Membership Provision	907.90	
<u>2.28</u>	Sundry Creditors	<u>505.84</u>	
<u>925.23</u>		<u>1413.74</u>	
<u>2626.20</u>	<u>NET CURRENT ASSETS</u>		<u>1686.70</u>
<u>2865.77</u>	Net Asset Value as at 31 December 2003		<u>2430.68</u>

The audit of these accounts had not been completed at the time of going to press

BRANCHES IN ACTION

Ponds branch's annual dinner was eaten at the Racehorse in Carshalton on 20 March. About 20 members and

partners enjoyed a hearty meal and a good selection of ales. Our midsummer Wandle Walk will take place on Saturday 26 June,

starting at the Sultan, South Wimbledon from 5 pm. We will be walking towards Carshalton, stopping at various hostelrys en route. How far we get will depend on how fast we walk and/or drink!

RACS were the subject of a full page feature in its local rag, not just for being such a successful outfit with over 100 members, but for its charity fund raising. There's an account of how RACS had its origins in treading on Pam's guide dog's tail by the SPBW stand at the GBBF 10 years ago.

The last few months have seen a Burns Night of feasting and drinking and a long weekend trip to Lille. Members also ventured to the capital for the London Drinker Beer Festival, and the SPBW AGM! RACS's own AGM is on Sunday 26 May.

Special Branch is girding its drinking loins for its annual gathering afloat, kicking off this year at Stoke on Trent. From here we'll be pottering about on the Caldon and Trent & Mersey canals.

Wantz branch has been enlivened by the return of the errant former Chairman Alan Martin who reappeared at our March meeting. Earlier that month we went to Peterborough to visit the Oakham Brewery. We didn't actually see much of the brewery, but were entertained by an account of the brewery's origins and its future. Oakham will have to give up its

Brewery Tap near the town centre (to make way for more shops) and are ready to move to a much bigger plant. Among the city's other pubs visited were Charter's, by the town bridge, and the Palmerston Arms with its wide selection of gravity beers.

A month later we ventured on our first overseas trip, a long weekend Brussels. Many of the city's finest bars were visited and a wide range of the best of Belgian beers were consumed.

By the time you read this we have visited Sawbridgeworth with the aim of meeting some of the RACS crowd in the Gate.

West Riding presented its Winter 2003 Pub of the Season to the Legger's Inn, Dewsbury on 28 March. A specially engraved plaque was presented to Graeme Marsh, owner, and John Smithson, licensee by branch Chairman Ian Cole. Nearly 30 SPBW members from around West Yorkshire attended the presentation. The Legger's is featured on the Perfect Pub Page in this issue.

You will notice that only five branches are covered here (of which I'm a member of two). If your branch is not featured it's because you've not bothered to send me any reports. Please put this right in future.

MEET the BRANCHES

Most social activities in the Society take place within branches so it makes sense to get involved with one. Details of our branches are listed below; if there isn't one in your area you are welcome to start one? Bill English, (Branch Liaison Officer, address on page 2), will be pleased to tell you what you need to know.. We will be happy to put you in touch with other local members.

We are pleased to report that we finally have a branch in Northern Ireland; see the list below. If you live in Ulster, please try and get involved.

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 **Britannia Tap**, 150 Warwick Road, Kensington. Contact John Rooth (see page 2).

CENTRAL LONDON:

Meetings held on the 18th of each month mostly in the form of pub evaluation walks - usually in central London. Contact Roger West (address on page 2).

CHESAPEAKE BAY: Based in the area around Baltimore, Maryland USA - a great area for microbrews and brewpubs. Contact Ron Kodlick mr.gladys@worldnet.at.net.

COATE: Meetings held third Monday of each month at the **New Inn**, Coate, near Devizes. Contact Eric Clark (ericclark@aol.com) or email coate@spbw.com.

COMMON: Meetings now held in Reading at the **Retreat**, 8 St Johns Street, every Sunday from 2.30. Contact Peter Smith 01189 670647.

IPSWICH (Sid's Kitchen): Contact Phil [01473 644923] or Iain [01473 251586] to find out in which pubs in Ipswich and when meetings are held..

KINGSTON: Meetings held first Wednesday of each month in the **Willoughby Arms**, 47 Willoughby Road. Contact Rick at the Willoughby [020 8546 4236]; or our website: www.spbwkingston.co.uk.

MAYDAY (Hastings): Based at the **First In Last Out** brewpub, 14-15 High Street. Contact the pub on 01424 425079 for further details.

NORTH RIDING: Meetings held in various pubs in Scarborough. Contact Bill Broadmore (01723 397066 [daytime] or 01723 351315 [evening]).

NORTHERN IRELAND: Contact Mark Hutchinson for details of meetings and events: marksalehousecom@hotmail.com

PONDS: Meetings held third Monday of each month in the Swan Bar of the Greyhound Hotel, Carshalton. Contact Dave Hamer (020 8395 8716 or email davehamer@btinternet.com).

RACS: The Real Ale Club of Sawbridgeworth meets last Wednesday of each month at The Gate, London Road. Contact Jan Mead (01279 864398) or email meadspanner@aol.com.

SPECIAL: Now reborn after 14 years, the branch holds annual, week-long gatherings around the

inland waterways network. Check our website at: www.geocities.com/canalnav/SPBW1.html

WANTZ: Meetings held third Monday of the month at the **Britannia**, Church Street, Barking (Youngs), starting at around 8 pm. Contact Roger Jacobson (see page 2).

WEST RIDING: Meets on Sunday mornings in various pubs in and around Leeds. Contact Graham Hewitt (0113 2624574) for further details.

WOOLWICH: Meetings held first Thursday of each month in Greenwich or Woolwich. Contact Bill Smith (020 8310 5907).

WOOLLEN WANDERINGS
Andy's Roving Report

Huddersfield Railway Station (grade 1 listed, folks) is exceptionally fortunate in having no less than two licensed premises on Platform One. At the west end there's the local **Head of Steam**; on the eastern side is the **Station Tavern**, of which I wrote a year or so back. There have been various changes since, so it deserves an update. Firstly, a new landlord (Bruce Travis) in charge, Wilbert Cock having retired after being here forever. The number of beers on offer has gone up to eight, no small number. On the occasion of our visit, breweries thus represented included Holme Valley, Greenfield, Whitley Bridge, Marston Moor, Timothy Taylor and Oakham. You will notice the preference for smaller breweries in the list. The quality is first rate and it is a worthy entrant in the GBG.

Renovations of a positive sort have taken place as well. Out has gone the pool table in the side alcove and the carpet in the main room has been removed also, revealing the bare mosaic floor beneath. This was laid down directly onto the cast iron beams and brick arches of the cellars beneath, there's no false floor in between. The landlord says that he would like to get rid of the false ceiling as well but the possible expense attached to repairing any dodgy woodwork etc means that a pools win might be needed to fund this. The snug remains untouched.

The building dates from the 1840s and was the station Refreshment Rooms up till 1962, with separate areas for 1st and 2nd class travellers at one point seemingly. It was then used as a GPO parcels office until 1969, when Wilbert Cock opened it as the Station Tavern. Worth getting off the train for.

Out of the Railway Station and into St George's Square, comparing the magnificence of some of the buildings here with the 1960s garbage that assails our eyes as we

wander through the town centre towards the second of the three inns that we planned to visit. Pub number two is a bit of a walk south of Huddersfield centre, but it is worth the stroll as it is the **Star Inn**. It stands on Albert Street at the bottom of Chapel Hill in the area called Folly Hall. It is an ex-Bass house that had been shut for about 2 years before the present licensees acquired it in October 2001. I can remember calling in here once or twice about 20 years ago but am unable to recall specifics. Anyway, Tyrone and Sam consigned juke box, pool table and gambling machines to history, deciding to concentrate on bringing in the customers by dint of good ale. In this they have been remarkably successful, having been the local CAMRA Pub of the Season, plus the Yorkshire PotS; have won the Best Mild Pub award and also have a Lions Club Certificate of Appreciation – all inside 3 years!

It is a smallish, single room with normally 8 beers available, 3 regulars and 5 guests; the latter change rapidly and I am pleased to say that there's always a mild/porter/stout available. For those with more esoteric tastes, there are plenty of bottles from the Lowlands, the Spanish Netherlands and points east of the Rhine as well as a Hoegaarden font on the bar. Some liken this unto germolene, but I don't mind the odd glass. You can also rub it on spots.

The Star also runs 4 beer festivals every year – the next is from 15 – 18 July, when 56 beers will be available, the site being the beer garden at the rear of the pub. Please phone 01484 545443 for more information and details of opening hours. The Star does not open on Mondays and keeps the old hours on Sundays for instance. Do not assume all day opening!

The area name, Folly Hall, is unusual: apparently, the pub is on

the site of the Hall and I asked Dave, a local council employee, to see what he could discover. He reports that the first edition OS map from 1854 shows a building on the site with its surroundings dominated by foundries, mills and suchlike examples of the Industrial Revolution. A little further out of town is Thornton Lodge, which now consists of terrace housing, but in the mid-19th century it was an actual country lodge on the fringe of the town. The gardens extended into the Folly Hall area and Dave theorised that the placename comes from a 'folly hall' built at some time in the distant past in the grounds of the lodge's estate. Perfectly plausible. Apart from this, I came across a 1743 mention of Folly Hall being the place where waterworks were constructed by the Ramsden family. The water came from the River Colne and the pipes were constructed from hollowed out tree trunks; this system was ecologically sound to the extent of once getting blocked by a large trout. Rather more noisily, on 8 June 1817, hundreds of Luddites gathered at Folly Hall to await reinforcements from other towns, but were dispersed following a brief shoot out with local Yeomanry. So the present pub, though only dating from 1935, has plenty of history around it.

Back up Chapel Hill towards the town centre and cross over the road: about 5 minutes walk brings you to the **Rat & Ratchet**, formerly the Grey Horse. This is a sturdily built street corner hostelry, made of Yorkshire Stone and has plainly been around for a years. Note the stone slabs on the roof – you won't find them on top of a Barrett House! Quite large inside, there is a very sizeable lounge on two levels along with a separate room up which is a small flight of stairs. Most of the seating in

the lounge is at the raised end at the back.

In its incarnation as the Grey Horse, this was a themed pub owned by Bass. It was bought by the 'Rat' group in 1986 and sold to the present landlord 2 years later. The R & R is a long time regular in the GBG and the beer range reflects this. There are no less than 14 handpumps which dispense ales of all styles from all over our islands. These include the pub's own brews of course; brewing started on site in 1994. As far as I am aware, just one beer at a time is brewed as there is only a 3.5 barrel plant installed. Like the Star down the hill, it has won various awards over the years and is one of the better pubs in Huddersfield.

Over to Wakefield now, and the Flanshaw Estate to be exact, lying just to the south of the city centre. Here on Flanshaw Road stands the, yes, **Flanshaw**, a large road house-style hostelry, dating from 1936. This type of public house was once common in Yorkshire cities, being built in the 20s and 30s to cater for the inhabitants of the housing estates that sprung up in this period. Possibly part of the Melbourne Brewery estate at one time, it spent the war years being used as an annexe for the local hospital!

The Flanshaw has retained a lot of the original multi-roomed/area design that was typical of its type, there still being the snug, pool room and lounge. Note also the leaded lights with their individual stained glass figures; rather more attractive than the plate glass so common today.

Also unusual is the guest beer policy here: when we visited, Yakima Pale Ale from the Red Lion Brewery at Ossett was on sale, along with Archers Golden Orchid. Both were in excellent form and we noticed a wide variety of pumpclips behind the bar, plainly showing that imagination is

used in choosing beers. Well worth visiting and only a short bus/taxi ride

from the bottom end of Westgate.

Andy Whitley



CONTINENTAL DRIFT

RACS and Wantz branches have both been over (or under) the Channel in recent months, to Lille and Brussels respectively. Here follow brief accounts of what happened.

RACS: Thursday 11 March, 9 am sharp we were on our way. Vic (plus ears and eyes and a guidance system named Doris) was our driver. A calm crossing, arriving at the Ibis Lille Centre – no great thanks to Doris who stopped concentrating at one stage and allowed us off the motorway one stop too soon. Booked in and off to the bars – most congregating in the Copper Kettle at Les 3 Brasseurs, sampling the beers on offer.

Friday: Several people looked the worse for wear at breakfast, but it did not stop them setting off for a pint at 10.30. Some tried out the Metro and tram system with good results. The meet for a trip round the distillery was at 2 pm in the hotel bar – on to the coach and off. Well no! There was a huge demonstration about unemployment (rumoured to have 30,000 marching with banners and shouts), the police shut all the roads and it took Vic an hour to go round the block to get people back to the hotel. The distillery when we phoned to explain we were stuck, merely said if we weren't there on time don't

bother...so back to the bars again. Seventeen of us had an evening meal together before coming back to the hotel via Les 3 Brasseurs.

Saturday: At breakfast we found that Rob and Graham had stayed up drinking until 6.30 am when the barman started to prepare *le petit dejeuner*. After lunch we set off, successfully, for a return trip to Brouwerji de Dolle Brouwers in Esen, Belgium. Madame (now 87) was running the trips just as amusingly and efficiently as ever. A good long session the bar made up for anything we might have missed the day before. No one (except Timothy Edward, 4 months) was allowed to sleep! Doris was unhelpful in getting us back to the hotel by announcing we had reached our destination while we were still driving along the motorway.

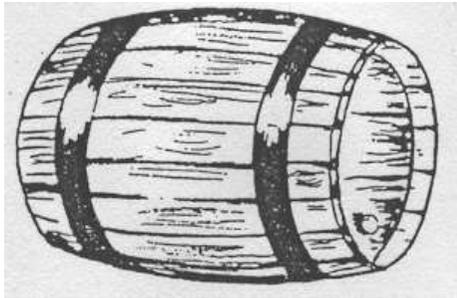
Sunday: A trip to Tobacco Road, the Cash and Carry and then on to the ferry. Back to Sawbridgeworth by 6.30 pm. A splendid weekend.

Wantz: we took Eurostar, leaving Waterloo in the early hours, arriving in Brussels at lunch time. Our hotel was good and central, close to the Grand Place and, once checked in, we set off for a guided tour of the city, with stops at selected bars along the way. And that, basically, was the pattern for the weekend. Between us we visited most of the renowned bars – such as La Becasse and Mort Subite – and sampled a wide range of the many and varied Belgian ales on offer. One of my favourite bars was the Poechnenelkelder, close to the Mannekin Pis, a typically eccentric place with a helpful beer list with 45 varieties on offer.

On Saturday morning we took our hangovers to the Brasserie/Brouwerij Cantillon (this is a bilingual city). This is a family business, more than 100 years old, producing tradition lambic beers. It's a 'do it yourself' tour – you

get a leaflet in the language of your choice and follow the signs around the small compact site. Although all the beers will ultimately be bottled, they are matured in chestnut or oak pipes (650 l) or hogsheads (250 l) and there is an impressive array of these casks to see. At the end of the tour you get small samples of a geuze (a blend of lambics) and a kriek (made by macerating cherries in 2 year old lambic for up to 6 months. I have to admit that these are not my favourite styles of beers, but it's good to know these traditions survive.

We arrived back at Waterloo (the station, not the battlefield) in the Monday evening rush hour, with sore heads but thoroughly entertained and enlightened.



THE PERFECT PUB PAGE

Described as Dewsbury's best kept secret, the **Legger's Inn** brew pub was West Riding branch's Pub of the Season 2003. Located in Robinson's Boatyard off Mill Street east, Legger's is a short distance from Dewsbury town centre. Though not easy to find the first time but once found, it's never forgotten. After a visit, it's easy to see why this gem of a pub has attracted such a large

following among real ale fans and become a 'must visit' pub. In 2000 it was also voted Pub of the Year by the local Heavy Woollen branch of CAMRA.

Graeme Marsh, owner and brewer, said he had always wanted to create a pub where he and others could enjoy a good pint of real ale and hold a decent conversation. Legger's was hopefully that place.

The name of the pub originates from the days of horse-drawn canal barges, when the horses were unable to pull the barges through tunnels because of the lack of tow paths. Leggers were the people who lay on planks placed across the tops of the barges and physically walked on the tunnel walls to propel the barges.

The pub has been converted from the hayloft of the original stable building which used to house the barge horses. It also now features a separate function room across from the top of the stairs. The interior and the bar area have been returned to the original brickwork with exposed roof beams, and features a real fire place with a stove from a Dutch collier barge dating back to 1919. Armchairs and settees provide a comfortable surrounding in which to enjoy a drink, a meal or a chat.

The décor is an interesting combination of canal and brewery memorabilia which includes posters,

bottles, lamps and photos. Three large interlocking gear wheels form the centre piece of the room which divides the bar area from the games area. Here there is a pool table and darts board, and TV for sports events. However, the emphasis is on good beer and conversation but not loud music.

The bar serves six hand-pulled real ales featuring regular beers such as Everard's Tiger and Rooster's beers, and guest beers from regional and micro-breweries. In addition there is a wide selection of bottled Belgian beers and occasional beers brewed on the premises. Consult the large blackboard next to the bar for the list of current and forthcoming beers, which incidentally are very competitively priced. Food is generally available throughout the day and Legger's is open all day every day.

Bob Tomlinson

SOME ANIMADVERSIONS ON BEER IN WOODEN CASKS

Inspired by the launch of Innis & Gunn of their revolutionary oak-aged bottled beer

PiH 89 featured the first part of an article about the use of wood for beer. Here goes with part 2.

Oak

Oak has always been the most suitable timber for casks. Among the many tree species, oak is unique in the size of its radial rays which gives strength when shaped into a barrel. Many others have been tried, but most failed on account of cost or some other characteristic that made

them unsuitable for cask making or beer storage. Despite more than 100 species of the genus *Quercus* world-wide remarkably few are suitable for making casks for holding beer. It was important for the brewer and cooper to know how the oak had been seasoned and when it was cut. There

were many views about how long the oak needed to be seasoned, the purpose of which was to get rid of loose water in the wood. In an early experiment, a piece of oak, of a cubic foot, was taken from a tree cut down on November 15th 1791 and placed in a warm room in Somerset House. It weighed 62 lbs. On January 20th following it weighed 37lbs. This, and similar examples, supported the view that three months under cover was a sufficient period of seasoning to produce staves for the original brewers' casks. With regard to the cutting down of the tree all the experts agreed that it was important that felling should be in the winter, with January and February the best months.

Originally almost all casks in this country were made with English Oak. But by the 16th century concern was growing about the tremendous demands being placed on English Oak which was used for a wide range of purposes such as ship building, as well as for casks. Laws were passed in 1543 and 1585 prohibiting the export of casks larger than barrels.

By the 19th century, although some English Oak was still being used, the main supply was from the Baltic. The finest staves were said to come from the Wielogurski provinces of Poland, seized by Russia in the 18th century, and shipped from Memel (now Klaipeda in Lithuania) and Riga (now in Latvia). The Crown Memel Oak Stave was regarded as being near perfect. As the Memel supply declined oak was also imported from Danzig, (now Gdansk in Poland) Stettin (now Szczecin in Poland) and Lubeck (North Germany). Oak from these sources was known as Memel or Baltic and gave brewers a cask that would not leak, was moderate in its first coat, easy to clean, inexpensive to repair, and would not

impart any injurious flavour to the beer.

A second source was from the southern parts of Austria (as it was then) and several provinces of Turkey. It was shipped from Trieste and elsewhere in the Adriatic, and was known as Bosnia. Next was American White Oak, which overwhelmingly used species of *Quercus alba*, grown in the Eastern United States and Eastern Canada. Finally there were English, French, Dutch and Belgian Oaks.

During the First World War the import of Memel Oak was temporarily stopped, and other oaks were used: English Oak being used again quite extensively, and, increasingly, American Oak. American Oak, both red and white, was dense, tough and hard wearing, but it was difficult to eradicate the acid-tasting tannins in the wood, which tended to leave a tang in the taste of the beer stored in them, and with its susceptibility to take up strange flavours it was not popular at first. It was found that some darker and reddish timbers gave a flavour to beer even if only a stave was used as a replacement in a cask of Memel or Baltic Oak. Beer kept in casks of American oak was often described as 'musty' or 'casky' in the trade. Many brewers overcame this by lining their casks. However as the supply of Baltic Oak dried up, it was increasingly replaced by good American White Oak and it became more widely accepted. Whitbread's cooper remarked that "without it we should have come nearly to a stand still".

By the early 1920s most brewers reported that casks of American Oak after long usage in the trade lost their objectionable taste and smell, and could be distinguished from Baltic Oak only with difficulty. However the value of American Oak continued to be the subject of a considerable

amount of different opinion. This period saw various chemical examinations of oak to try and find why some timber was more suitable than others, and to ascertain which reagents were most efficient in removing the extractives from wood. English oak was still used, but the "quantity available is so small that an average London brewery would take all the staves that can be produced". American Oak was at first used mostly for lager beer, and often for stout or black beer. One very large brewery, noted for their stout, used to insist on their casks being made of American red oak, with the inside pompeyed, that is charred and blistered in the firing and bending process. This was said to help give stout its tempting distinctive flavour. Different oaks served different purposes. A 1933 guide for coopers recommended American Oak for spirit casks; Bosnian Oak, preferably from oak grown south of 50 degree latitude, for wine casks; and Baltic Oak for port wine casks. For beer casks European oak grown north of 50 degree latitude was best, shipped from Danzig, Memel and Riga. Memel and Baltic continued to be the preferred Oak.

Considerable difficulty continued to be experienced in making American White Oak for use for all classes of beer, and numerous failures to eliminate entirely the flavour from these staves caused many brewers and coopers to condemn them as quite unsuitable brewers' casks, without lining. Not everyone agreed, however, and several used American Oak casks for their beers without encountering any problems.

One problem was that American Oak staves could not be used to repair Memel casks. Repairs had to be carried out by using staves from existing casks, and only new ones

could be constructed of American Oak.

After 1934 Memel became unobtainable in England, although Polish Oak continued to be supplied. A limited amount of Polish and Yugoslavian Oak was imported just after the Second World War but this soon stopped. In the 1950s Persian Oak, grown in the hill forests, came on the market. Until shipments stopped in 1956 90% of all casks made for brewers were made with Persian Oak.

Before the First World War when popular beers and stouts were much stronger some casks were charred inside during the firing process to allow the beer to mature more effectively in the cask. Modern light gravity beers, however, required a high degree of sterility, and this was difficult to maintain on the somewhat coarse-grained surface of oak, the porosity of the wood made it hard to sterilise, a serious handicap since beer suffers from attack by acid producing organisms and wild yeasts. Most brewers dealt with this problem by lining the cask, whatever oak had to be used, with an inert, non porous, flavourless, pitch like lining which sank into the pores of the wood and firmly adhered to it, giving a hard and smooth surface.

Meanwhile the drawback of the porosity of wooden casks was resulting in the growing use of steel and aluminium containers. Although more expensive they were particularly useful for carbonated beers, avoiding the loss of gas which was incurred in unlined wood, as well as being more convenient for bulk pasteurised beers. Most other aspects of the brewing process, fermenting vessels etc had already ceased to use wood in favour of copper, steel or aluminium linings. They were more easily cleaned and required little maintenance. By 1980

wooden casks had all but disappeared. Today beer is delivered in wooden casks by a handful of brewers, notably, Wadworth, T. & R. Theakston and Sam Smith's. All of them use unlined casks. All of them use oak from Germany and Poland. As was the case 100 years ago, American White Oak, with its tannins, remains unsuitable for unlined casks

for English beers. All the Unions at Marston's, again unlined, are of Polish Oak. A trial Union of American White Oak in 1992 found that it did have an effect on the beer and it was withdrawn.

Anthony Redman

To be continued

The Last Word – from Islay

SPBW member Paul Hathaway moved with his family from Derbyshire to the Isle of Islay last year with the intention of setting up his own brewery. Islay Ales produced its first brew – Finlaggan Ale - on 22 March. This 3.7% abv beer was brewed using pale and crystal malts, Golding, Mount Hood and Styrian

Golding Hops. Four barrels were brewed and were available at selected outlets on Islay the week before Easter. It was joined by 4.2% Black Rock Ale. Paul is hoping to bottle both beers so they should be more widely available. Good luck Paul!

PRODUCTS

SPBW products currently available are as follows:-

T-shirts (<i>cask motif on red/navy/black; M, L, XL, XXL</i>)	£5.00
Sweatshirts (<i>new! cask motif on black/red/navy; M, L, XL, XXL</i>)	£11.00
Pint Glasses (<i>35th anniversary, straight, lined</i>)	£4.00
Polo Shirts (<i>grey, L, XL, XXL; or navy, XXL</i>)	£10.00
Ties (<i>multiple motif on blue</i>)	£6.50
<i>(multiple motif on brown, maroon or green)</i>	only £5.00
Tie Slides (<i>cask motif on black background</i>)	£5.00

Scarf Rings £7.50

Enamel Badges (*gold motif on black rectangle or brown motif on white oval*) £3.00

- **Please add £1.50 per order to cover postage and packing.**
- Please send your orders to: Rodger Molyneux-Roberts (details on page 2)
- **Please make cheques payable to SPBW** and include a telephone number with your order. Allow up to 28 days for delivery.

Some back issues of ***Pint in Hand*** are available:- numbers 43; 44; 46-57; 60-62; 68; 70-81; 84-89. These can be obtained from the Editor (address on page 2 or via SPBW website) in return for twelve second class stamps to cover postage.