

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

*PINT in HAND*

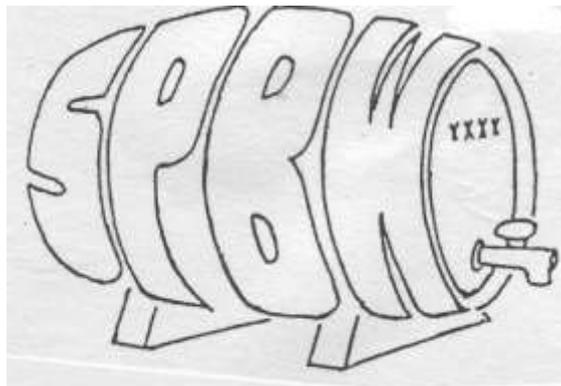
**Number 94**

**May 2005**



*The Navigation, Stockport – no frills just great beer (see page 18)*

*The best of pubs and beers from around the country*



## ***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*.

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

## **OPENING TIME**

One of the SPBW's main aims these days is to highlight the best in pubs and beers and it's the former I want to concentrate on right now. It's long been my contention that a pub is rather more than just somewhere to drink beers or other intoxicating beverages. Some might regard the pub as a home from home but I prefer to see it as a kind of stage, the basis for an ongoing drama in which we all play a part. It is, of course, perfectly possible to sit with your pint and ignore everyone else, but this hardly sits well with the idea of the pub as a social centre (and there's another idea!). An ideal pub, to my mind is one where the individual can engage socially and sociably with friends and other pub customers.

But what of the actual fabric of the pub itself? The design of a pub can give away a lot of what the owner expects from the customers. In recent years the trend has been for major pub owning chains to build large, barn-like places to cram in the maximum number of punters. I rarely feel at home in such places and maybe this is not surprising. I can't understand someone regarding, say a Wetherspoon pub as a 'local'; in my experience the attitude of the bar staff is so indifferent (not to mention inefficient) that it hardly encourages any kind of rapport.

I don't think it's any coincidence that, since we revived our London

Pub of the Year competition, the three winners have been independently owned in two cases and, in the other, owned by a small regional brewery (Harveys) that has lavished much care on creating a 'real' pub. Let's face it, how many pub owning concerns would create or restore a pub with two separate bars?

The great era of pub building in England – in the major cities at least – was the 1890s and 1900s. There are still plenty of surviving examples of the grand, ornate so-called 'gin palaces' that were created in those days. No doubt the target clientele was seen as rather different in those days; the average working person doubtless lived a very drab existence and to visit a pub with etched mirrors and other glasswork, bright lights and tiled floors would have been an uplifting experience. Sadly, far too many of these pubs have been vandalised or destroyed by breweries and 'developers' but they are a key part of our heritage.

The Perfect Pub Page is regular feature of this magazine and a chance for you to share your favourite boozers with fellow members. Whether it's a grand gin palace, a basic alehouse or just a good honest pub – selling good beer of course – please write to me about it so we can spread the word.

*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. Our current venue is the Royal Oak, Tabard Street, London SE1. This top-class Harveys pub should

need no introduction in these pages.

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

## ***ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING***

The upstairs room at the Royal Oak was bursting at the seams as 30 or so members crammed in for the AGM. Some had come from as far away as Cheshire and Ipswich, and there was a delegation from RACS as well. In these cosy surroundings the meeting passed off peacefully and in the usual good humour, despite the absence of the

Treasurer and the accounts. The superb Harveys ales were washed down by a top class buffet and a raffle for a selection of high quality prizes raised useful funds to pay for the food.

The new Committee is the same as that which came into the meeting; come on down:

Chris Callow: *Chairman*  
Mike Hall: *Vice-Chairman*  
Jim Woodcock: *Treasurer*  
John Rooth: *Secretary*  
Bill English: *Branch Liaison*  
Roger Jacobson: *Editor, PiH*  
Peter Willett: *Products*  
Roger West: *Membership Secretary*

## ***EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING***

Because the SPBW NEC's accounts could not be presented to the Annual General Meeting in March, an EGM will be held. This will take place on **Monday 12 September**, at the Royal Oak,

London SW1. Details will be confirmed in the next issue of PiH. As well as agreeing the accounts, there will be one or two minor changes to the NEC's constitution to be agreed.

## ***CHAIRMAN'S REPORT***

Welcome to the Royal Oak here in London. This is my 12<sup>th</sup> AGM.

This year was not as hectic as 2003; it took some time to recover from the SPBW's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. We had a number of trips out and about, as well as the annual London Pub of the Year competition, won again by the Dog & bell in Deptford.

We missed out on the GBBF at Olympia, due to the vast expense levied by CAMRA, but we have visited some provincial beer festivals. The Clacton beer festival over the August bank holiday was manned by Dave Brightwell and Peter Willett; and a team of NEC members handled the Wallington festival. We will look out for other festivals that we can get to.

Other socials events included SPBW buffet socials here at the Royal Oak and the Wenlock Arms, which were well attended and enjoyed by all. These have all the hallmarks of becoming annual events.

At last year's AGM we promised to publicise events that the branches hold. So we have extended the capabilities of the SPBW website to include a bulletin board for anyone to view. I strongly encourage each branch to nominate someone with access to the Web to keep this up to date; registration is easy. The NEC has visibility of this bulletin board and it helps to supply information for PiH. Mark Hutchison is kindly maintaining all things internet-based for us. He can be

contacted at [webmaster@spbw.com](mailto:webmaster@spbw.com).

Our new look PiH had a setback this year with an unexpected failure of the printer. We are looking at getting the printing done in a cost effective way, but with the problems we've had, we will be more careful and not pick a machine with hidden costs. Temporarily we are using the printing capabilities of Design & Print at Wiltshire County Council. This is a service available to any non-profit making group; it has doubled the cost of production, but there are advantages. The whole print run takes about an hour and included collation and stapling. Please do not stop the flow of articles to our editor.

As I explained last year, we have had an unfortunate hit on our finances. I reported that we are trying to get monies back from various sources. The good news is that this happened in all cases apart from one. One individual who used to be a trusted member of the NEC collected monies for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Hopback beer in cash rather than via cheque to the SPBW. We are leaning on this individual to recover the balance and it is coming in slowly.

Remember, the monthly NEC meetings are open to all so please make an effort and drop in sometime, dates and times are well publicised.

Thanks to all of you for attending tonight. PiH has reported some obituaries, so let us raise a glass to those who cannot be here tonight.

*Chris Callow, Devizes, 13 March 2005*

***Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 December  
2004***

<u>INCOME</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>Year 2003</u>	<u>Year</u>
Sales of SPBW Products and Donated Items	571.70	1979.50
<u>Less: Cost of Sales:</u>		
Opening Stock at Cost	1174.88	1097.29
Purchases for Resale	<u>276.34</u>	1289.70
Closing Stock at Cost	<u>(1079.29)</u>	<u>1634.07</u>
<u>Gross Profit from Sales</u>	217.77	345.53
Surplus from Events	134.65	118.48
Branch Affiliation Fees	343.00	375.00
National Membership Fees	1161.00	1130.00
Interest on Deposit Account	<u>7.48</u>	<u>9.69</u>
	<u>1863.90</u>	<u>1978.60</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Travel Expenses	39.60	-
Beer Festival Attendance	622.10	-
Pint in Hand	773.97	982.46
National Membership Provision	(15.05)	556.60
AGM Expenses	180.00	-
Administration and Sundry Expenses	567.08	-
Depreciation	<u>131.29</u>	<u>11.60</u>
Balance – Surplus of Income over Expenditure (2003 – Deficit)	<u>(435.09)</u>	<u>327.94</u>

**Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2004**

<u>GENERAL FUND</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>YEAR 2003</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
Balance at 31 December 2003	2865.77	2430.68
Surplus of Incoming over Expenditure (2003 – Deficit) (435.09)	<u>(435.09)</u>	<u>327.94</u>
Balance at 31 December 2004	<u>2430.68</u>	<u>2758.62</u>
<u>REPRESENTED BY:</u>		
<u>FIXED ASSETS</u>		
Equipment at Cost	2392.69	2392.69
Depreciation to Date	<u>(1648.71)</u>	<u>(1760.31)</u>
	743.98	642.38
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Stock of Printer Consumables	298.00	-
SPBW Products at Cost	1097.29	752.92
Sundry Debtors	419.60	1434.01
Cash in Hand	179.38	16.68
Balance at Bank – Current Account	77.68	1.71
Deposit Account	<u>1028.49</u>	<u>1375.42</u>
	<u>3100.44</u>	<u>3580.74</u>
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
National Membership Provision	907.90	1464.50
Sundry Creditors	<u>505.84</u>	-
	<u>1413.74</u>	<u>1464.50</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>1686.70</u>	<u>2116.24</u>
Net Current Asset Value at 31 December 2004	<u>2430.68</u>	<u>2758.62</u>

***FUTURE FESTIVALS***

Once again we have had to decline Camra's kind offer of a stand at the GBBF at Olympia in August. For all the benefits of being represented at this event, the expense makes it unviable. Instead we are looking at local festivals where we are not obliged to forfeit arms and legs to be there. For starters we were represented at the St George's festival at the Willoughby Arms in April. We'll also have a stand at Beer on Broadway, the Ealing festival from 15 – 18 June (at Ealing

Town Hall, Uxbridge Road - opposite the cinema -5 mins from Ealing Broadway on 207 bus route) and we hope to get back to Clacton over the August bank holiday weekend.

We're interested in running stands at other beer festivals wherever we can. If there is a festival local to you that will have us, let us know and we'll see if we can get there. Our attendance does of course depend on having sufficient volunteers, so all help will be very welcome.

### ***NATIONAL WEEKEND***

This year's gathering will take place in the East Midlands over the weekend 18 – 20 November. The one event organised so far is a visit to Hardy & Hansons brewery in Kimberley on the evening of Friday 18 November. We expect the rest

of the time will be based around Derby, which boasts some top class pubs. Put the date in your diaries and let John Rooth know if you are interested. The 2004 event was a great success so don't miss out this time.

### ***NEW PRODUCTS***

Summer's almost here and it's time to invest in some quality SPBW leisure wear. We are ordering a new stock of T-shirts and polo shirts in exciting colours and they're bound to be what the really cool

beer drinker will be wearing while imbibing a cool pint or two. We'll publish details of colours, sizes and prices via email and our website as soon as they're available. Don't miss out!

### ***WENLOCK BEER & BUFFET***

What a great combination – a superb range of ales at the celebrated Wenlock Arms, London N1 and the fine cuisine of the SPBW's gourmet chef, Mr Alasdair

Boyd. We're planning the third such eating and drinking evening for a date in August and details will be published as soon as things have been finalised.

### ***THE PERFECT PUB PAGE***

About 2 hours from London on the Waterloo to Exeter railway line you will find the small market town of Sherborne, probably best known for its public school and Abbey. It also boasts two castles, one (the old castle) a ruin, and the other very much intact, the home of the Digby family. Both are open to the public. Just 2 minutes from the rail station just before you reach the Abbey you would be well advised to turn sharp left down a little lane where you will find the guide-listed **Digby Tap**. Named after the aforementioned Digby family who, incidentally, own much of the small but historic town, this pub is a real haven for us ale drinkers.

On my last visit I was treated to Moles Bitter, Hop Back GFB, Sharp's Cornish coaster and Greene King IPA (OK not such a treat but quite rare in this part of the

world.) The range changes frequently but with Sharp's beers making regular (and welcome) appearances. The best bit is that all of the beers on offer were under £2 a pint. (Read 'em and weep Londoners!)

This comfortable but atmospheric pub has 3 main drinking areas and is patronised by folk of all ages, from all walks of life and is run by welcoming and friendly staff. There is also a wide corridor at the entrance to the pub which acts as another supping area for regulars to congregate. The pub closes in the afternoon every day. The town is home to around another half dozen pubs which personally I wouldn't bother with. At least two of them cater to the 'yoof' market and are guarded by large gentlemen at the weekend.

*Somerset Mark*

*As ever, contributions for this page will be very welcome; even more so if accompanied by an illustration!*



## **MAKING AN EXHIBITION**

The Royal Oak held a small exhibition in its upstairs room in the week before Nation Pub Week in February. This was titled 'The British Pub and the Hop Trade in Southwark'; and it was dominated by some fine exhibits relating to pubs in CAMRA's National Inventory. There was also a small

presentation about the SPBW and we're grateful to Frank at the pub for allowing us some space and helping to get our exhibition set up. As a climax to the week there was an illustrated presentation by Geoff Brandwood about the history of the English pub, making for a very interesting Saturday evening.

## **BEER & CURRY**

As spring at last threatened to break out, the SPBW celebrated with the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual pint and curry

event on 20 March. A small but select crew of 10 attended, perhaps deterred by the usual weekend

closure of about half of the London transport system, and delayed recovery from their Saturday evening excesses (a few of us had been on a pub crawl around Marylebone). We started off at the large Wetherspoons, the Hamilton Hall, on Liverpool St station where beers included Brewster's Grace O'Malley as a remnant of the weeks St Patrick's day festivities.

Some members had started in Bow at the Bow Bells and the excellent Young's pub the Coburn Arms. We drew all the disparate threads together at the Black Bull in Whitechapel Road, where we enjoyed the free hot bar snacks and Nethergate beers, as well as Adnam's Oyster stout & bitter. At this juncture a well known Scottish chef\* eschewed the curry for the delights of a traditional Sunday Lunch (Haggis, neaps & tatties) at his Mums'.

The final pre-food port of call (or so we thought) involved the Pride of Spitalfields for Crouch Vale Brewers Gold, Moles Tap bitter and Fullers.

However our esteemed Vice Chairman\* obscured the view of the Liverpool v Everton match, much to the dismay of a largish Newcastle United supporter who, after a free and frank exchange of views, involving some reference to tablets, invited him to step outside and enjoy the spring sunshine. This led to breakaway group of 3 making a hasty retreat back to the Black Bull,

pursued by the largish Newcastle United supporter and his mate's unruly dog.

The rest of us unselfishly remained in an attempt to avoid a North-South incident, and because the Brewers Gold was in particularly fine fettle. On its return, the unruly dog (which I don't think was a Newcastle United supporter), chewed through the strap of my bag, which one of the locals rescued and hid behind his back to prevent further damage.

Mobile telephony was engaged to get the 2 groups back together again, via the off licence to top up with Cobra and Bangla beer. It is difficult to choose from so many different curry houses in Brick Lane, but we opted for the Nazrul, which was very good and came to about £14 per head for pops, starter and main. As is customary for an Indian meal, many diners either forgot what they ordered or couldn't recognise it any way, but at least we stuck to the old rule of (order exactly the correct amount of food X 1.7).

Apart from the odd breakage and spillage from a semi-comatose NEC member\* (Not the VC this time), the meal passed without further incident.

\* Note some names have been withheld for legal reasons, and some incidents exaggerated for dramatic effect.

*John Rooth*

## ***MEET the BRANCHES***

*Most social activities in the Society take place within branches so it makes sense to get involved with one. You're sure to get a good welcome and most branches prefer to keep things very informal. 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 hope to have a new branch up and drinking in Cheshire very soon. On the downside we must say goodbye to North Riding branch, which has not met for a year or so and is thus deemed to be defunct.*

**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 (see page 2).

**CHESAPEAKE BAY:** Based in the area around Baltimore, Maryland USA - a great area for microbrews and brewpubs. Contact Dominic Cantalupo, email [DominicCantalupo@ChampionRealty.com](mailto:DominicCantalupo@ChampionRealty.com).

**CHESHIRE:** A bunch of beer lovers mainly around the Crewe/Nantwich area are getting together and we hope they'll decide on a name and get properly set up very soon.

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

**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](http://www.spbwkingston.co.uk).

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

**NORTHERN IRELAND:** Contact Mark Hutchinson for details of meetings and events: [marksalehousecom@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:meadspanner@aol.com).

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

[www.geocities.com/canalnav/SPBW1.html](http://www.geocities.com/canalnav/SPBW1.html)

**WANTZ:** Meetings are 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).

*Are the details for your branch correct on these pages? If no please the Editor know before the deadline for the next issue; thanks!*



## **BRANCHES IN ACTION**

On 21 March 9 **Camden Hillers** dined at Porters in Henrietta St, Covent Garden. Porters was opened by Richard, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bradford in 1979 and is famous for reasonably priced typical English fare, such as soups, pates, smoked mackerel for starters, followed by a selection of pies, steaks, sausages & fish and chips for main. With wine the cost is about £25 for 3 courses & tea or coffee. They usually serve 4 pint jugs of Fullers Pride or Boddingtons for £9.75, but sadly due to a plumbing problem we had to console ourselves with the wine. We met earlier at the Harp in Chandos Place, a small, friendly pub serving Taylor's Landlord & Harvey's Best, and usually but not tonight another guest. This outlet also sells O'Hagans sausages.

The Keith Hudson darts competition was again won by John Rooth after contesting 2 hard fought qualifiers against 'Arry Hart & Mike Hall - he managed to peg back Ken Davison's large lead in the final, after Ken became marooned on 5 allowing me to hit the finishing double and wrap it up. Ken had beaten Sue Hart & Bill English on his path to the final. The beer at the Sekforde Arms was in prime form as usual.

**Mayday** (Hastings) branch is perhaps a little unusual as our 'meetings' usually involve walking 15 or so miles through the glorious Kent and Sussex countryside in

search of interesting pubs and good beer. This is thanks to Geoff Wentworth, one of our founder members, who arranges the walks, checks train timetables and ensures lunch and pub stops are at some of the best hostelrys that the two counties have to offer. These walks are usually once a month with details appearing on the FILO (First In Last Out)'s notice board, courtesy of Steve Cook, incorporating stunning views of the pertinent countryside. The FILO – which has its own brewery - holds mini beer festivals on most bank holiday weekends. Mayday weekend is inevitably very busy – and enjoyable - with a town full of Morris dancers and their followers who gather for the Jack in the Green Festival.

**RACS** had a very lively April with visits to breweries in Ramsgate and Whitstable, beer festivals in Ware and Hitchin, a St George's Night at the Gate and a darts marathon in aid of cystic fibrosis. The AGM is on 25 May, three days after a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary BBQ at the Queen's Head, Allens Green. On 4 June there is a combined trip to the Rare Breeds Farm and the adjoining beer festival.

**Wantz's** recent activities have been confined to pub visits, in Hackney (Dove House), Harringay (Salisbury and Oakdale Arms) and Woodford (Cricketers and Travellers Friend).

*Once again, only a few of our branches have contributed to this section. I'm sure these can't be the only active branches, so please keep me informed of what you are, and will be, up to.*

# **YORKS AND MANC MEDLEY**

## **Andy's Roving Report**

### **Wakefield**

First out of the bag this issue is one of the more intriguing hostelries in the West Riding town of Wakefield. I speak of course of **Elliott's**, a relatively modern concern that lies on George and Crown Yard off of Silver Street (off Marygate!) The yard is definitely part of antique Wakefield and looking up it one can plainly see the town hall clock, quite attractive when illuminated at night. Walk along past the first two bars and, still on the left hand side, you will see the sign for Elliott's, the building surely being as old as the yard itself.

This must be one of the most diminutive licensed premises I've yet seen, but it still manages a raised dais, plus seating and tables, along with a cubicle the size of a phone booth for the DJ (weekends only). Wall décor is sparse but indicates Elliott's speciality – bottled beers from the Continent and further afield. On draught there's the relatively common Leffe Blonde, Lindeboom Pilsener and Erdinger Weisse, but it is the bottled collection that catches the eye: brands like Mort Subite, Floris, Kwak, Leifman's, Chimay and Duvel from Belgium alongside the Erdinger range from Deutschland. There's numerous other beers from as many countries, and as befits any Belgium bar. Elliott's provides the customer with a beer menu, displaying goods and prices; the following may serve as an example (in March 2005): Chimay Blue (9%) £3.15, likewise Delirium Blond; Erdinger Dunkel (5.6%) was £2.95 for the big bottle and Anchor Liberty

Ale (5.6%) £2.80. All the offerings are served in the correct glass as well, including the bizarre Kwak container.

Elliott's, which has been opened for 4 or 5 years now, is infinitely superior to any of the bars that deface nearby Westgate and I have no doubt that the readership would approve of it. Call in when in the area.

### **York**

One of the County's newer brewing concerns – the York Brewery – opened its fourth hostelry in that city a few months ago. Named the **Yorkshire Terrier**, it stands on Stonegate, one of the main tourist thoroughfares in York, just across from another pub called the Punchbowl. I mention this last part as it is very easy to walk past the *Yorkshire Terrier* as, not only do just about all the other premises on Stonegate have an outhanging sign, but the entrance to the premises is also somewhat concealed. The front of the building, which is a 17<sup>th</sup> century town house, is taken by an off-license, selling the company's goods, with the door being immediately to the left. If you are heading for the bar, as you should be, go straight down the short passageway in front of you.

Although this is easily the smallest of the brewery's quartet of inns, the *Yorkshire Terrier* has three quite distinct drinking areas that almost qualify as separate rooms, each having its own style. I sat in the part to the rear of the pub in what might be the lounge in other hostelries. The décor throughout is quite plain (wood floorboards etc) although the

imitation fireplace looks somewhat unauthentic. Over to my left I noticed the small conservatory, with its bistro-style furniture and slanting mirror ceiling that is quite unusual. The very traditional looking tap room is nearest to the entrance/exit and possesses an eclectic variety of bar stools to suit almost any conceivable shape and size of patron.

Staff service here was very good and the range of ales can also be recommended. There were eight beers available on the second Sunday in January, and I think that four were York breweries own offerings whilst the others were guests from around the country. Apart from these, there's the normal range of foreign bottled beers that you find in the company's houses. Considering that the *Yorkshire Terrier* is only a few months old at the time of writing, one could be forgiven for thinking that it had been around since Moses was knee-high to a lemur. One very modern contraption that I noticed though was the 'Stannard' style stair lift to the loos upstairs. And no, I didn't need to avail myself of it.

### **Manchester**

Manchester still retains a good number of traditional back street pubs, unlike such places as Leeds, which has lost virtually all of them. One such hostelry stands on Mason Street, a short cut for folk travelling between the pubs on Rochdale Road and those on Swan Street. I draw your attention to the ***Hat & Feathers***, one of the city's authentic inns. From what I could see from the tap, this is a triple roomed pub that still retains some original internal wall tiling, as well as proper leaded lights. Our

resident expert declared these to be pre-1920s examples and therefore Art Nouveau as opposed to Art Deco. There is a brass foot rail for those energetic souls like myself who prefer to stand at the bar and please note the genuine snecklifter latch on the main door; unfortunately I didn't have time to do a more thorough survey of the pub. A touch from the days of my youth was the advert for the one-time almost obligatory Saturday rock & rill disco. I'd say the *Hat* is plainly popular with the locals to judge by the huge spread that had been laid on in a back room for a presentation to the pool team. The beer, Holt's bitter, was very good and it was a shame that there wasn't any mild on as well. Now for the gloom input: I am informed that the area around the *Hat* is to be redeveloped and we all know what that means – adios pub.

Down in the southern edge of the city, on Grosvenor Street in the University sector, stands a most unusual hostelry. One could walk past the ***Sands Bar*** thinking it to be a semi-derelict building awaiting either the wrecker's ball or redevelopment into yuppie flats. This is, in fact, the winner of South Manchester Camra's pub of the month for February this year. Here one can find not only three cask ales but also an imaginative range of German and other foreign beers on draught and in bottle.

There are two entrances next to each other; the right hand one leading into the bar proper. I think the left hand door leads to a sort of overspill area. The *Sands Bar* is totally different to most student-oriented pubs or bars, there being very little spent here on silly

fripperies. There's a bare wood floor and solid tables and chairs, but don't look around for sofas and settles. I noticed two original fireplaces in this room (plus an intriguing vertical wall radiator) and I think the building is late Victorian to judge by some of the original ornamentation on the ceiling (a rose motif being prominent) but I don't insist upon it and would welcome further info regarding this.

What I can insist is that the range of beers is way above average and that the Sands Bar is worthy of repeat visits. Two of our quartet chose pints of Paulaner Weisse whereas the others went for Maisel

Weisse and a Helles respectively. I noticed numerous other Teutonic beers on tap and in the bottle cabinets. The beer is served in ordinary pint/half pots, possibly due to the fancy glasses going missing. There was a '*Made in Manchester*' beer festival being hosted, promoting the city's smaller breweries. So, alongside the regular Phoenix Navy were two guests, one from Facers and the other from Three Rivers – all beers at £1.85. Verdict? Call in – it's only about 15 minutes walk from Piccadilly rail station at the Oxford Road end of Grosvenor Street.

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

London-based members should be getting ready to nominate their favourite pub in the capital. We'll be launching the next competition in the August issue and it would be nice to see some hitherto unconsidered contenders. Some new blood on the judging panel would also be welcome; if you fancy visiting some decent pubs during the autumn – and let's face it who

deesn't – get ready to put yourself forward.

As an aside I recently had the pleasure of visiting the first-ever winner of this award: the ***Express Tavern*** at Kew Bridge. This charming two-room pub had three draught beers on tap and still displayed the SPBW mirror with which it was presented back in 1979.

## ***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](mailto: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.

## ***SPBW WEBSITE***

Our website (<http://www.spbw.com>) has been much revamped and is better than ever. Please do take

time to visit and perhaps sign the guest book. Our thanks to Mark Hutchison who generously

volunteered his services as our Webmaster.

Another of Mark's initiatives is the SPBW Bulletin Board (<http://www.spbw.com/bb/>). This is intended as a way for members to exchange information. There was more about the Forum in recent issues; basically it's very easy to

get involved with and, as with most things, the more the merrier. We are particularly keen to see representatives of branches acting as moderators to help keep their sections up to date; contact Mark at:

[marksalehousecom@hotmail.com](mailto:marksalehousecom@hotmail.com).

## ***TONY LITTLER TROPHY***

This is the annual(ish) and keenly contested competition, originally for London branches but really open to all. Having won the Trophy last autumn, Wantz branch will be organising and hosting this year's event. Date and venue will be published in the next issue; it will be in September or October but don't worry – we don't intend to drag you all out to Barking!

## ***FROM THE ARCHIVES***

The cover of the May 1995 issue of PiH depicted the Pear Tree in Hook Norton, the 'tap' of that estimable brewery. Our visit to the village last November confirmed that this is still an excellent pub serving top quality beer.

The reports from the NEC AGM reveal that this was Ossie Tillett's swansong as Chairman and indeed as a member of the Committee which he served with distinction for many years. Jim Woodcock had been elected as Treasurer for the first time – a post he still holds – and the Branch Liaison was one Nick Leggett who must have attended at least one meeting subsequently.

A new branch had just held its first meeting; this was Norvic Nippers, based at the Fat Cat in Norwich.

The branch only lasted a few years but the pub has survived and prospered – indeed it was recently crowned as CAMRA's National Pub of the Year. It serves a mind-boggling 23 draught beers so we must assume it is quite popular!

An intriguing article by Nigel Parsons told of a project to build a medieval-style brewery entirely of wood. This was the brainchild of one Iain Turnbull, former brewer with Courage and Brains. Iain's intention was to produce an old Welsh drink called 'Braggett', a 12% brew using wild yeasts and flavoured with herbs and spices. Sounds good, doesn't it? – but we never heard from Iain again and we can only assume that his project never got off the ground.

## ***A MOTHER OF A WALK***

The Mayday Branch's March walk/meeting took place (perhaps inadvisedly) on Mothering Sunday.

This mostly accounted for the relatively poor turn out of just four die-hards, namely Geoff, Larry, Ken

and myself. Due to the low numbers Ken kindly offered to drive us to Lewes, our starting point. We parked at Cliffe at about 8.45 and set off up the hill to the golf course (deserted thankfully). Here we stopped briefly to admire the view, drink coffee and eat sandwiches before continuing. Pausing then only briefly to admire some fields of alpaca before arriving at our 'lunch' stop, the **Halfway House**, Rose Hill on the A26 at Isfield. Not surprisingly the lunches were fully booked but the Harvey's Porter (only available on draught in March I'm afraid) was excellent. The Armada was unfortunately not of such good quality, but when two (by now) half pints of these were returned the (by now) very busy barman took the time to clean the lines and put on a new barrel which was in tip top condition, with the distinctive hoppy nose that Armada has. Two new pints were furnished and everyone was happy.

Tearing ourselves away from the fire and the beer, we went outside, put our boots back on and continued our way to the **Anchor Inn** on the banks of the river Ouse a short distance away. Here the Festive Feasant (sic), a Hall & Woodhouse brew, was enjoyed by those who had it but one pint was rather flat and of much different taste and quality. On tasting this I suggested it was probably Harvey's

best. Beer here is served straight from the barrel 'out back' and probably the Harvey's was less fresh than it might have been and the barman had been confused after a Harvey's shandy was ordered for the driver when a third pint of Festive was ordered.

Off we set again, arriving back at Lewes, where we were obliged to pop into one of our favourite Lewes pubs, the **Gardeners Arms**, where there is always a friendly welcome from the friendly and knowledgeable landlord. Hailing as he does from Swindon as he does there is often Archers beer available here, but the Harvey's Best is always on good form as well. The Shamrock stout ran out just as we ordered it but the replacement Archers Golden was enjoyed by all. Incidentally, Larry's advice is to avoid Archers beers under 4% abv and also those with a train on the pump clip, but I can't say I agree completely.

And so back to Hastings. With thanks to Geoff for arranging the walk and Ken for driving us there and back. Having arranged to meet a friend in the FILO I was obliged to pop in for a quick pint (I think it was about 7 pm) and ended up staying for the quiz, which is always fun and with Armada as the guest beer a fitting end to a very enjoyable day.

*Andrew Nash*

## ***HATS OFF TO STOCKPORT***

Stockport may be thought of as just a suburb of Manchester with a dodgy football team, but there's a lot more to it than that. It boasts, in its railway arch, the largest brick

built structure in Europe; there's a thriving hat industry; and of course there's Robinson's brewery, an imposing building in the town centre. It would be remiss of

anyone to visit Stockport and not try one of their pubs. Two in the town centre of architectural merit (on CAMRA's National Inventory) are the Arden Arms and the Swan with Two Necks. In fact you won't have any problem finding a Robbo's house but let me point you to three other gems, serving not quite such local brews, encountered on a recent visit.

The first pub is strictly speaking in the Heaton Norris area, being across the tracks (actually the M66) north of Stockport town centre. Walk up Lancashire Road and look out for the large flour mill. Right by the roundabout is the **Navigation**. This is one of a handful of pubs owned by the Beartown brewery of Congleton (where the Beartown Tap is highly recommended, just to digress) who have totally revitalised the place. There is a smallish vault with a pool table and a large lounge with a variety of seating. At least five Beartown beers should be on – all priced at £1.55 on my visit – and I've never been disappointed by any of their range. If you are, there is also a selection of Belgian and German beers, plus a choice of draught ciders to try. Overall a comfortable community pub. If you wonder about the pub's name, there's no longer a canal here but there used to be a short branch of the Ashton canal that served the mill next door.

Back over the motorway and head east into the Great Portwood area, passing the shopping centre. On Avenue Street we find the **Railway**, one of three pubs owned by the Porter brewery (see PiH 75) of Rossendale. Consisting of one L-shaped room, this friendly pub serves up to seven Porter beers

and two or three guests at weekends – not to mention a big selection of foreign bottled beers. All the Porter beers I've tried (including a porter!) have been highly acceptable and there is a varied range, as you might expect. Prices are only slightly less cheap than the Navigation and you can play bar billiards as well. Since the pub is some distance from the existing railway it presumably takes its name from a defunct line. Sadly the pub itself faces the same fate, the surrounding area being doomed to redevelopment.

We have to cross town to reach our third pub – no easy matter since the town seems to be on several levels. But there should be no excuse for not visiting the **Crown** on Heaton Lane, underneath the viaduct arches. The pub is much bigger than it appears from outside – there is a drinking area around the long bar counter and five separate rooms to choose from. There are plenty of beers to choose from as well, at least ten as I recall, including a mild. Like all the best pubs of this kind, the beer range with abvs and prices was clearly displayed, in this case, above the bar counter. Most of the beers were from small breweries in the Greater Manchester area; the Good Beer Guide says this is the tap for the Three Rivers brewery but I don't remember seeing any of their beers on sale. No matter, those that I sampled were in top condition, service was friendly and efficient and the pub was pleasantly bustling on a Saturday night. As, indeed, was I by this time!

Stockport is easily accessible by train and you could do much worse

than pay an extended visit. If you don't enjoy, I'll eat my hat!

R.J

## ***STRANGE TIMES***

Readers of *The Times* may have come across an interesting article in its Saturday Magazine of 29 Saturday. Written by one Richard Brass it covered the phenomenon of beers festivals, and the beer itself. Needless to say Brass left few clichés unturned in talking about beards and suchlike. His main point of reference was the Reading beer festival, which took place some nine months earlier. I was interested to learn that the SPBW ran a stall there, although I have yet to find out which individuals were responsible for this. What do *Times* readers learn

about us? "Pre-dating CAMRA and committed to the downfall of all beers not dispensed by methods approved by its National Executive Committee, the SPBW is the nearest the beer world comes to fundamentalists. This year the woodies for the first time chose not to run a stand at the Olympia festival, clearly troubled by the prospect of besuited young City gents crowding around the shove ha'penny and shuffleboard, whatever they might be drinking." The first bit of that is correct; otherwise you have to conclude that where there's muck there's Brass.

## ***The Last Word – from the Potteries***

This has been lifted from *Potters Bar*, the free magazine from CAMRA Potteries branch.

A man walked into the Coachmakers Arms in Hanley. "Can you tell me where the Coachmakers Arms is, please?" He was told "Turn left when you leave the pub, then

turn left, turn left again, left again and then turn left. You'll find the Coachmakers on your left." Off he went and was back inside five minutes saying "I suppose I deserved that really!" He went on to enjoy a well-earned pint or two.

## ***PRODUCTS***

SPBW products currently available are as follows:-

### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tankards**

*(white bone china with colour motif)*

£10.00

**T-shirts** *(cask motif on red/navy/black; M, L, XL, XXL)\**

£5.00

**Sweatshirts** *(cask motif on black/red/navy; M, L, XL, XXL)*

£11.00

**Polo Shirts** (grey, L, XL, XXL; or navy, XXL)\*

£10.00

**Ties** (multiple motif on blue)

£6.50

(multiple motif on brown, maroon or green)

only

£5.00

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

£3.00

\*New T and Polo shirts should be available by now; please contact Peter for details.

- **Please add £3.00 per order to cover postage and packing; if only ordering badges add only £1.00**
- **Please send your orders to: Peter Willett (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; 84-93. 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.



*Possibly the best pub in Whitechapel – the Black Bull*