

## DECEMBER EVENTS:

Tuesday 1st December:

**Bangor Beer Club**

The Bangor Beer Club meets on the first Tuesday of each month in The Salty Dog. Featuring a guest brewer from one of NI's ever growing band of breweries. Tasting of some of the Brewers winter specials! A great start to the Christmas season.

Sunday, 13th December:

Christmas party with Filipino food. BYO to the Chairman's House. Starts 6pm.

Sunday, 18th December:

Beer Tasting at the Sunflower with the Belfast Beer Club, 7:30pm.

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Each member of SPBWNI receives a specific NI membership card which gives them access to special discounts at various places: <http://www.http://spbwni.co.uk/benefits.html>

THE SUNFLOWER BAR - 10% off cask ales

THE JOHN HEWITT - 10% off bar meals

THE HOUSE OF HOMEBREW - 5% off brewkits & equipment

GET 'er BREWED - 5% off brewkits & equipment

THE BREWERS DEN - 5% off brewkits & equipment

THE HUDSON BAR - 10% off drinks & food (except specials) until 8pm

HILDEN BREWERY & MOLLY'S YARD - Free glass of ale with a main meal

THE HORATIO GROUP - £10 one-off voucher plus ongoing offers.

**CAN YOU GET MORE? DO LET ME KNOW WHO IS INTERESTED.**

### GETTING INFORMATION:

For those who do not have email, if you would like notification by mobile text please get in touch with me - initially by TEXT please - at **07791762823**. I can then keep you up to date about any forthcoming events or meetings. Or write to me at

Mark Hutchinson  
1 Hollymount  
Belfast  
BT10 0GL

### HELP & ASSISTANCE:

I do a lot of the background housework & campaigning and this takes up a lot of my time. I am hoping that there would be some people who would have the time to volunteer to assist me in some of the work. It is all very simple: leave membership forms into pubs and off-licences, talk to people, Tweet, generally spread the word.

**PLEASE HELP!**



DEC: 2015

# SEASON'S GREETINGS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

The SPBW National Weekend was a total success and a real eye-opener when it came to the number of breweries using wooden casks and the amount of pubs serving beer from the wood.

SPBWNE did an exceptional job with almost 40 people on their bus tour & pub crawls, plus another large crowd who came visiting from West Riding. Read the report inside.



### So, what word of 2016?

Well, with a bit of luck it could be here in Belfast. Patrick Deller current SPBW NEC Chairman told me he would like to have Belfast as a venue either as a National Weekend or a Campaigning Weekend. Either would be good news for the branch but we may not hear until after January. The bad news would be all the planning and preparation required beforehand. This is a major event for the branch, and for the province. We would need to make this work as everyone will be looking at us to see what happens and that includes beer orientated people from the South.

We need to see if we can get some more cask outlets. We need to talk to publicans & brewers and make contact with various other people who can help us when people start arriving for a weekend's enjoyment. We need lots of people and premises to support both SPBWNI and the dream of cask ale being served from the wood.

The NE of England started with nothing and it is now the hub of cask in wood for the whole of the British Isles. The RoI was ruled by Guinness and now has some 80 odd micro breweries, several using wood to condition beers. We need to do the same, and by "we" I do not just mean "me". I have kept the branch going since 2004 but I need your support, your effort to make 2016 a major year for the branch and have a great National Weekend hosted in Belfast.

**PLEASE! ASK YOURSELF HOW CAN YOU HELP? VOLUNTEER!**

## SPBWNI PRODUCTS

Don't forget, you can always purchase our own SPBW NI products locally:

**Insignia Embroidery & Printing**  
23 Bruce Street, Belfast, Co. Antrim, BT2 7JD  
028 9023 5115

T-shirts (printed) - £10:

Rugby style (embroidered) - £25: Sweatshirt (embroidered) - £18

Alternatively, bring along your own clothing and pay for the stitching/printing.

<http://spbwni.co.uk/products.html>

## ASSOCIATIONS INVITING SPBWNI TO ATTEND

### HOME BREWERS:

The Belfast Homebrewers have asked if SPBWNI people would help them by being part of their judging panel. No need to panic! They have set criteria and will explain everything. They also said that they would give constructive criticism of home brews if SPBWNI members brought along samples. Obviously this is a great way to gain knowledge and perfect your own beers. If anyone is up for this do get in touch.

### BELFAST BEER CLUB:

The Club has invited SPBWNI to come along to their taste sessions in the Sunflower Bar, Belfast. Some of us have taken up the invite and can say how enjoyable & entertaining it has been. We would all like to see more members attend.

### BANGOR BEER CLUB:

The Club has invited SPBWNI to come along to their taste sessions. Meets are on the first Tuesday of each month in The Salty Dog. Featuring a guest brewer from one of NI's ever growing band of breweries.

### HOP ON CRAFT BEER TOURS:

Craft brewery & pub tours around Dublin & Ireland. Customised tours available if we had enough member to go for it! Their tours tend to be advertised at the last minute so are hard to arrange as an SPBWNI event, but we are invited to come along with them.

**As this goes to print we have just heard that the Sunflower Bar, SPBWNI POTY Winner, is threatened with demolition as part of the Belfast Council scheme to redevelop the North Street area. We have informed Pedro Donald that SPBWNI will fully support his premise.**

**The branch has opened up a twitter page - this has been gaining quite a few followers and has been of value with publicising the branch and its endeavours with over 4,000 Tweets. If you are on Twitter make sure you "follow", but especially, please tweet to us!**



<https://twitter.com/SPBWNI>



## THE NEWCASTLE WEEKEND

Some eager few braved the elements to arrive on the Thursday, making sure bed & board were secured before making tentative steps round close-by pubs. The SPBWNE had worked hard to set out a huge itinerary for this weekend and maps, badges etc. were handed out at the gathering come Friday morning. After a substantial repast in the Victoria Comet courtesy of SPBWNE we wended our way on, not one, but a choice of three pub crawls. It all depended on personal energy and stamina but each crawl (short or long) had its own SPBWNE guide. Several of the premises we visited had a choice of beer from the wood or standard cask. Pumpclips serving from the wood were well labelled with a special tag for all to see. An excellent range of premises and beers.

Although Friday had been a long day everyone was keen to make the bus trip on the Saturday morning. While over three dozen of us were driven round the pleasant countryside a contingent of hardy West Riding souls bussed it up to Newcastle where they had their own tour of local hostleries. Sadly we did not get to meet them as they were booked to return after 7pm. But a big thank you to Graham and all the WR folk who made it to the National Weekend.



10am found us splitting up the coach load to visit two breweries. The main contingent were ably toured round Hadrian-Border by Martin Hamill who surprised us all with a lovely brew from Farne Island taken from a wooden cask. Our Chairman, Patrick Deller, presented Martin with a certificate from the SPBW. Then it was on the bus and a tour of country pubs, starting with an old fashioned Comrades Club and ending up in a modern Tavern for some excellent food courtesy of the local branch. Then back into Newcastle for a nightcap.

Unfortunately one of the hotels had a fire evacuation. After about half an hour in the rain we got back into the hotel. Just time enough to boil the kettle for a cuppa when the alarms went off again. Another 20 minutes and back in again to finally get a hot cup of tea. Imagine the zombies coming down to breakfast the next morning! And so it was off on a Sunday trip round the far east of the city, taking in the town tap for Wylam Brewery and the Tyne Tank & Out There Breweries. Then a few more pubs and Northern Alchemy Brewery. Thankfully sustenance was laid on to keep energy levels high. A couple more pubs and arrive at the Bacchus for a few nightcaps and catch up with those who did their own (much shorter) crawls. The time bell rings and it is farewells all round, with a huge thank-you to our weekend organisers from SPBWNE.



All too soon it was a bright but cold Monday morning and a good substantial breakfast to see us through the day and our travels home. An excellent, action-packed weekend for all.

Our thanks go to Robin Shacklock, Gordon Heal and all the other SPBWNE who turned up to welcome us, be our tour guides and generally be great folk to imbibe with.