

## Jolly Boys Outing - Chester 27<sup>th</sup>. May 2010

This walk originally was going to be round the walls dropping off at various hostelryes. Unfortunately when we did the reconnaissance Les had already discovered that sections of the wall were closed, and still would be when we did the actual walk - so no wall walking. The other factor was the great difficulty in finding pubs open at 11:00 - although we have solved that.

### The Pubs

1. The Square Bottle, 78-92, Foregate St., CH1 2JE. 01244 312281. Wetherspoons - 10:50. About 10 minutes to
2. The Falcon, corner of Watergate St. and Bridge St. 1100. Sam Smiths £1.47 (don't get too excited). As pubs 2 to 4 are close together leaving time is flexible but as 3 and 4 don't open until 1200 this is when we leave the Falcon. 2 minutes to
3. Brewery Tap, Bridge St. (up the steps). An old Jacobean banqueting hall. The brewery tap for Spitting Feathers. Had Spitting Feathers plus guests on Spitting Feathers £2.50 guests £2.90+. Food available, I thought all the food was pretty pricy - suggest you stock up at Wetherspoons, if you get really desperate you could always call in at Wetherspoons on the way back to the station. 1 minute to
4. Bear and Billet, Bridge St. 17<sup>th</sup>. Century, timber framed, multi windowed. Once the townhouse of the Earls of Shrewsbury but sadly, in this celebrity obsessed world, people now get more excited at it being the birthplace of John Lennon's grandmother. You're getting some culture on this trip like it or not. Owned by Okells but does have guests, food available. Beer was £2.90 I think seemed to be average price in Chester. 15 minutes to
5. Old Harkers Arms, 1, Russell St., CH3 5AL. 1130. [www.harkersarms-chester.co.uk](http://www.harkersarms-chester.co.uk) Down the steps off City Rd. to the canal towpath. The pub was converted from a run down basement of a Victorian warehouse situated alongside the Shropshire Union Canal. Brunning and Price Bitter £2.80 plus various guests. The only pub in GBG 2010 on this trip about 5 minutes from the station but I would allow at least 10 minutes to get through the barriers and cross the foot bridge.

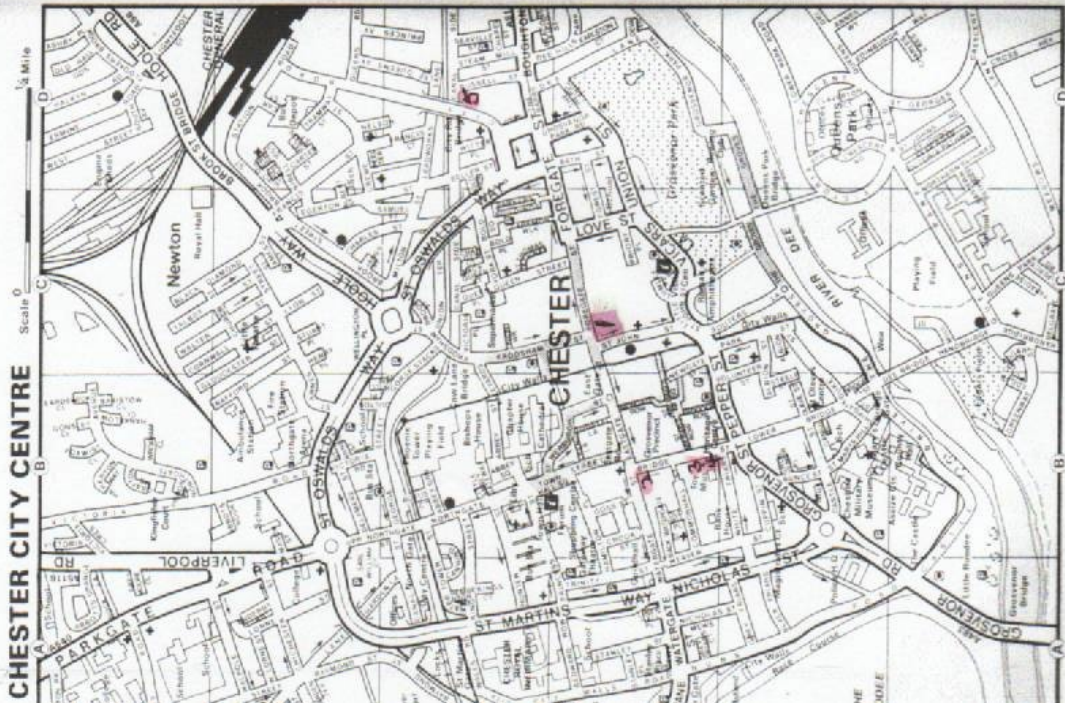
### Trains

Euston	0810	0840	Repeatedly hourly	1638	1704
Crewe		1010			1529
		1023			1518
Chester	1009	1046		1435	1455
Long Eaton	0718		0759	1719	
Tamworth	0800	Derby	0809	1710	
	0831		0840	1623	
Crewe	0939		0959	1507	
	0949		1023	1454	
Chester	1009		1046	1435	
Wakefield W.	0737	0807			1732
Leeds	0752	0830			1719

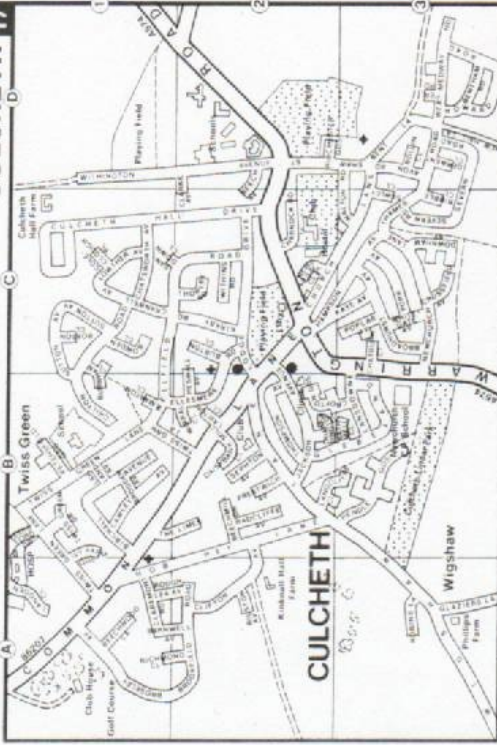
	0808	0840		1709
Manchester Picc.	0905	0936		1607
	0917	0950	Manchester Oxford Road	1548
Chester	1045	1053		1451
Poulton Le Fylde	0928	1650		
Preston	0947	1634		
	0958	1551		
Warrington Bank Quay	1020	1527		
	1026	1518		
Chester	1053	1451		
Crewe	0949	1023	xx46 yy12	
Chester	1009	1046	xx23 xx49	(xx49 Virgin)

BGs and LB - 11 March 2010.

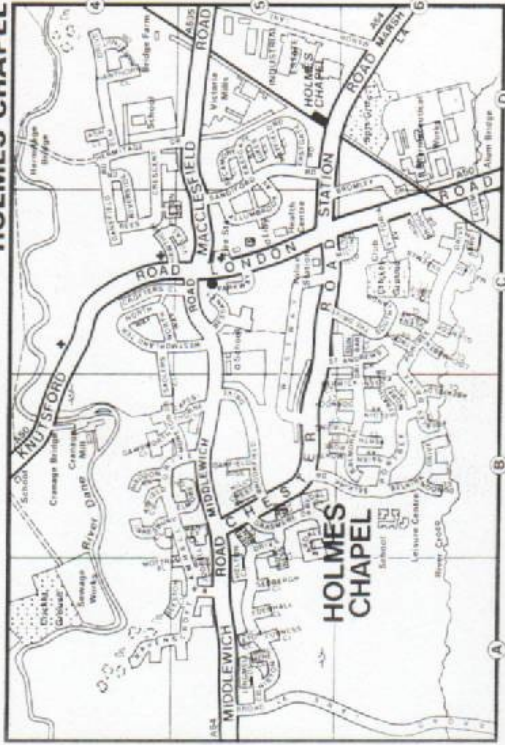
# CHESTER CITY CENTRE



# CULCHETH 17



# HOLMES CHAPEL





## CHESTER WALLS CRAWL

Author Jonathan Swift, when visiting Chester, once wrote "The Walls of this town are full of renown, and strangers delight to walk round 'em, but as for the dwellers, both buyers and sellers, for me, you may hang 'em or drown 'em".  
Hmmm. Wonder what upset him so much? Are we Chesterians really that bad? Maybe the poor fellow had had a bad experience exploring the town and ended up in the 17th Century equivalent of today's raucous binge bars selling exclusively bottled Blue Grog and flags of Fizzleale.  
Anyway, with the Walls more popular now than they were in Swift's era, we'd hate to see today's tourists have a woful time of things on the beer front. With some cracking pubs to be visited here's a brief guide to would-be mural circumnavigators in need of a tipple during their near two mile yomp.

Preferably armed with a guide book so you can read up on the sites, as you go along, commence from Chester's most famous landmark, the Eastgate Clock, and head southwards. After crossing Newgate, with views of the under-utilised amphitheatre, you can look down on the Roman Gardens before arriving at the Albion on the right occupying a corner section of Victorian terrace housing. This pub really is a classic with more than a touch of the eccentric. Outside, blackboards declare itself "family hostile" and boast of the absence of fry-ups, silly foil portions, designer drinks and so on. Inside, reflecting the landlord's passionate interest, all three rooms (decorated with William Morris wallpaper) are festooned in memorabilia of the Great War (as pictured here). Beers usually Taylor Landlord, Jennings Cumberland and Black Sheep Bitter plus the odd unusual guest ale. The grub is superb, good value and traditional.  
Our recommended food stop.

Back to the Walls, and take care down the Wishing Steps whilst admiring the splendid panorama of the tree-lined Groves, the River Dee, its weir and the sandstone Old Dee Bridge. Just before the approaching Bridgegate, take a slipway to the right as this leads you out opposite the visually stunning, 17th century, timber framed, multi-windowed **Bear & Billet**.



This popular pub was once the townhouse of the Earls of Shrewsbury but sadly, in this celebrity obsessed world, people now get more excited at it being the birthplace of John Lennon's grandmother. Sigh.

As it's owned by Isle of Man brewer Okells expect their ales on the bank of hand pumps (seen here) alongside a couple of guest beers and some genuine cider.

The walk continues on the next page. >>>

Next, head up Lower Bridge Street on the same side as the Billet and just before Castle Street and the Old Kings Head you'll find steps leading to the **Brewery Tap**. Opened in November 2008, the pub belongs to micro-brewers Spiring Feathers who have done a fabulous conversion job on what was once, and still resembles, an old Jacobean banqueting hall. Another feast for the eyes are seven hand pumps dispensing four ales from the owners plus three rotating guests and a real cider. Marvellous.

Grab your loins for the next stretch of the walk as what follows is the longest without any cask refreshment. Rejoin at the Bridgegate and the Walls take you by the County Hall and castle with views of Grosvenor Bridge. Once over a pedestrian crossing you come to the Roadie's tightly meecourse. On nice days you can enjoy free close-up action of the runners and riders as well as hordes of *labeled* bikes with Racing Posts sticking out of their back pockets and cackling women wearing silly hats and ill-fitting gaudy dresses.

Exit at Watergate and no distance up the street on the right is the **Fat Cat** - a cellar-bar which often includes Cheshire-brewed Stormi Brewing beers amongst its range. If that doesn't tempt you, carry on only briefly.

After crossing the railway and reaching the Water Towers, Telford's Warehouse lies ahead of you accessible by some steep descending steps. This airy, converted warehouse overlooks the Tower Wharf canal basin and is the city's premier live music venue. Inside a cosmopolitan crowd enjoy some unusual micro-brewery beers including a **LocAle**; Westwood Cheshire Cat.

The food's good too.

For our next ports of call, retrace your steps and clamber back onto the Walls. Cross over the inner ring road and get off at the Northgate.

Walking into the city, first up on the right is the **Pied Bull**, a former coaching inn with six guest ales including two from a SIBA approved list.

Rejoin the Walls as they now run alongside a vertigo-inducing canal cutting until you reach the Kings Charles Tower. After a further fifty yards or so, take some steps off leading down to the canal towpath.

Turn right and at the first bridge, climb the stairs onto Frodsham Street. Turn left and at the traffic lights, look left again to spot the **Ship Victory** standing almost alone in a sea of cars at Gorse Stacks, the old cattle market. This Good Beer Guide regular is a small, friendly community-focused pub which sells Tetleys alongside one impeccably kept guest beer.

Back one last time for the final short leg of the mission. After passing Chester's underrated sandstone cathedral and its stand alone campanile you'll be back where you started. If you're still up for more action (surely yes), head along Eastgate

passing the swanky five-star Grosvenor Hotel on your left. Immediately after the junction with St Werburgh Street access the Eastgate Row North via some steps. Two options now. Not far ahead is the historic **Boat Inn**, a popular Sam Smiths house which once witnessed the murder of royalist troops in the civil war. Nowadays it's busy with people enjoying the cheapest pint in a generally expensive town. Alternatively head down Godstall Lane - a little boutique alley leading off the Row to the cathedral. Down here you'll find a modern bar called **Duttons** which has rare outside seating and gets wedged with diners during the day. Tied to Manchester brewer Lees it serves their standard bitter plus one seasonal ale.

So, there you have it. The approximate two mile circuit is complete.



Next hotel of choice (43) - Back to Station