

## Jolly Boys cultural visit to Ledbury

**Ledbury** is a Herefordshire market town, lying east of [Hereford](#), and south of the [Malvern Hills](#).

It has a significant number of [timber-framed](#) structures, in particular along Church Lane and High Street. One of its most outstanding is the Market House,<sup>[2]</sup> built in 1617, located in the town centre. Other notable buildings include the [parish church](#) of St. Michael and All Angels,<sup>[3]</sup> the Painted Room<sup>[4]</sup> (containing sixteenth-century [frescoes](#)), nearby [Eastnor Castle](#) and the St. Katherine's Hospital <sup>[5]</sup> site. Founded c. 1231, this is a rare surviving example of a hospital complex, with hall, chapel, a Master's House,<sup>[6]</sup> almshouses and a timber-framed barn.

Ledbury is a [borough](#) whose origins date to around 690 AD. In the [Domesday Book](#) it was recorded as Liedeberge. It may take its name from the [River Leadon](#) on which it stands. [Old English](#) *burg* (fortified or defended site) has been added to the [river](#) name.

As a town it was created on a bishop's manor, probably, like [Leominster](#), [Bromyard](#), and [Ross-on-Wye](#), in the episcopate of Bishop [Richard de Capella](#) (1121-1127).<sup>[7]</sup> It returned members to [Parliament](#) in the reign of [Edward I](#). The *Feathers Hotel* was a famous 16th-century [drover's inn](#).<sup>[8]</sup>

Ledbury was home to [poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning](#), who spent her childhood at Hope End. It is also the birthplace of [poet laureate John Masefield](#), after whom the local [secondary school](#) is named. [William Wordsworth's sonnet St. Catherine of Ledbury](#), dated 1835, begins "When ... Ledbury bells broke forth in concert".<sup>[9]</sup> In 1901 St. Katharine's priest was Charles Madison Green, whose wife, Ella, was the eldest sister of author [H. Rider Haggard](#).

The [Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal](#), which opened from Gloucester as far as here in 1798, passed through the lower part of the town with wharves at Bye Street and at what is now the Ross Road near the Full Pitcher public house. After closing in 1885, part of the Ledbury-to-Gloucester section of the [canal](#) was used by the [Great Western Railway](#) for the [Ledbury and Gloucester Railway](#). The original line of the canal northwards towards Hereford can still be seen, where it went underneath the Ledbury-to-Hereford railway. When the Gloucester railway closed in 1964 as a result of the [Beeching](#) cuts it became overgrown, but the route through Ledbury then was used as a footpath. In 1997 a 1.6 mile (2.5 km) section from the bypass / Ross Road roundabout to the railway station was upgraded to a 2 m (6.5 ft) wide path with a surface of compacted limestone chippings that could be utilised by cyclists and wheelchair-users. This included creating several access points, thinning out but retaining many of the trees that had grown since the 1960s and reopening the [skew bridge](#) across the A438 Hereford Road. Unfortunately the proposed bridge to take the Town Trail (as it is now known) across the B4214 Bromyard Road into the station yard was never built. The Trail ends at the Hereford/Bromyard road junction.

For many years the [Robertson's](#) factory, a subsidiary of [Rank Hovis McDougall](#), produced [jam](#). Production was moved to [Histon](#) in [Cambridgeshire](#) in September 2007 following the parent company's acquisition by [Premier Foods](#).<sup>[10]</sup> The site is now used

by Universal Beverages to process fruit for [cider](#) producers such as [Bulmers](#) and includes two giant [fermentation](#) tanks, each capable of holding 800,000 litres.<sup>[11][12]</sup>

[Ledbury railway station](#) is near the western end of the [Cotswold Line](#) and offers direct services to [Hereford](#), [Worcester](#), [Birmingham](#), [Oxford](#) and [London Paddington](#).

That's the culture over with now down to the serious business. There are no Weatherspoons in Ledbury so suggest that early comers drop off at Worcester Foregate.

On arrival at Ledbury exit station. There is a slope on exiting the station. Walk down this slope and continue walking on the left hand side along the main road. The first pub is a 10 minute walk on the left hand side of the High Street.

There are 5 establishments which we plan to visit on our trip in this order,

1. The Retreat                      7 High St.                      Opening time 10:30 hrs

Beer - Wye Valley & Butty Bach                      Food deal on the day of recce. 2 meals for £10 which was good value.

Out of pub and cross street at traffic lights which are close to the pub. Turn right and take the next left off High Street into Bye St. The Brewery Inn is 50 yards on right hand side.

2. Brewery Inn                      Bye St.                      Opening time 11:00 hrs.

Beer – Banks and Marston Bitter.

Out of pub turn left and head back to High Street. At Junction with High St. cross over and Church Lane is opposite. Prince of Wales is 20 yards up on the left.

3. Prince of Wales                      Church Lane                      Opening time 11:00 hrs

Beer – Otter, Hobson, Ledbury Dark, Butty Bach, Wye Valley HPS, Butcombe Bitter plus a guest. By far the best for choice of beer and food is of good value also.

Out of pub turn right and head back to High St. Turn right at High St. the Seven Stars is 15 yards up on the right.

4. Seven Stars                      11 Homend                      Opening time 12:00 hrs

Beer – Ringwood plus one other.

Out of pub turn right. Horseshoe in is 60 yards up on the right.

5. Horseshoe Inn                      Homend                      Opening time 11:30 hrs.

Beer – Wye Valley and Butty Bach.