

JOLLY BOYS VISIT TO WESTON SUPER MARE

21ST MAY 2015

The seaside resort of Weston-super-Mare started as a small fishing village and since its heyday, similar to coastal resorts across the Country, has declined over the years and changes are constantly being made in an effort to attract visitors.

The tidal rise and fall in the Bristol Channel can be as great as 14.5 m (48 ft), second only to Bay of Fundy, in eastern Canada. The low tide mark in Weston Bay is about a mile from the seafront and although the beach itself is sandy, low tide uncovers areas of thick mud, hence the colloquial name, 'Weston-super-Mud'.

The Bristol and Exeter Railway arrived on 14 June 1841 but this was not the route that serves today's station, but rather a single-track branch line from Weston Junction, mid-way between the present day Worle and Uphill junctions, about 1½ miles from the town centre. It is understood that Weston was therefore one of the first seaside towns in the world to receive a rail link. The coaching stock was originally horse drawn and the line terminated at a small station in Alexandra Parade, in the area of the present day Floral Clock (now minus its clock and cuckoo!) and the model of 'North Star'.

In 1881 the current loop line, of double track, was constructed with the station in its present location. In 1914 further excursion platforms were added near Locking Road, to cater for the thousands of visitors which came from Bristol, the Midlands and further afield, on annual works outings and Bank holidays. Inevitably, when the number of daily visitors dropped off, the platforms became redundant and were eventually removed. The land is now used as a coach park and Tesco's. Also under the 'Beeching Axe' the loop line's double track was singled.

A second railway, the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway, opened on 1 December 1897, connecting Weston to Clevedon and later to Portishead. Known as the 'W.C. & P.' it had its terminus in Ashcombe Road, which is quite a way from the town centre. The line was closed in 1940. Electric trams also operated in the town between 1899 and 1937.

Whilst Weston has the luxury of a 'Freehouse' bar on the railway station that is licensed from 7am. and two Wetherspoons, it has a shortage of other good real ale pubs and the best are clustered in two pockets at opposite ends of the town. There are a few others, all with at least three pumps available, but due to lack of demand in the current 'off season' have only one in use. It's about a 15-minute walk to No.1 but there are frequent (about every 12 mins.) buses; either from the stop at the Town Hall (Service 7, 5 or 105 from stop 'Q') (at the time of writing not available because of major road improvements but hopefully the work will be completed by the time of our visit?) or Regent Street (No 7, 5 or 105 from stop 'V' or No. 100 or 14 from stop 'S') opposite the tall ornamental structure known locally as 'The Carrot'. Get off the bus just after the Grand Pier at the Winter Gardens; the Wetherspoons is on the opposite side of the road.

Pubs	Beers	Food	Suggested Timings
1. Cabot Court Hotel Knightstone Road BS23 2AH Tel: 01934 427930	Wetherspoon	Yes	Until 11.20
2. Majors Bar & Grill 10 – 14 Upper Church Road BS23 2DT Tel: 01934 415147	3 Guests	Yes	11.25 to 12.00
3. Criterion 45 Upper Church Road BS23 2DY Tel: 07886 570838	Directors, Tribute + 4 guests	Rolls only	12.05 to 12.50
4. Regency 22 - 24 Lower Church Road BS23 2AG Tel: 01934 633406	Bass, Bombardier, Butcombe Best, Courage Best + 1 or 2 guests	Yes Recommended food stop (outside seating area)	12.55 to 13.50
5. Dragon 15 Meadow Street BS23 1QG Tel: 01934 621304	Wetherspoon	Yes	(If desired could be mid-way break on way to No.6?)
6. Off the Rails Platform 2 Railway Station BS23 1XY Tel: 01934 415109	2 local Ales (<u>Very small</u> single bar)	Snacks	14.10 till end