

Jolly Boys Tamworth 11th July 2019

Culture & Stuff :

Once again we are in the Trent Valley this time in Tamworth which is a market town 14 miles NE of Birmingham. It has an 11th century castle which unusually was left largely intact after the Civil War. This is situated just off the town centre between Market St and the River Anker. Also worth seeing is St Editha's church which we pass enroute to our 4th pub. Most famous "old boy" is Sir Robert Peel, Victorian Prime Minister, MP for Tamworth and founder of the "Bobbies" the forerunners of our police force. Also, and perhaps most famously, it was home to the Reliant Motor Co. and I well remember passing their factory several times in the late 60's on my trips along the old A5, which was how you got from the M6 to the M1 in those days, and seeing the fibre-glass body-shells of their cars piled up outside waiting to go in for assembly, one of which attained legendary status by ending up with 'Del Boy' in Peckham.

Itinerary :

Due to me picking up a nasty bug (perhaps from Norwich last week) the recce planned for last week has regretfully been cancelled, but I did pay a visit at the end of April and this itinerary is from notes taken then with a bit of added info from t'internet.

From the station take the Victoria Road exit from the roundabout nearby and after about 5 mins walk turn left down Bolebridge St. On the left is The Bole Bridge. This is the Wetherspoons and is a Grade 2 listed building which apparently used to be Tamworth Working Men's Club, although it seems odd to me that one of these should be listed, so maybe it was something grander before. Leave at 11.00 Back along Bolebridge St. and into Colehill, which eventually becomes Lower Gungate where we find our next pub which is on the right and is the Penny Black (opens at 8.30am). This emporium used to have a previous life as a Yates Wine Lodge, and as such would probably not have been on most Jolly Boys visiting lists. It now has 6 hand pumps with 4 ales on when visited. Leave at 11.35. Back down Colehill turn right along George St and on the right is the Phoenix (opens at 10am). I didn't go in this pub but noted 4 or 5 real ales on and it seemed busy enough, a bit similar to the Penny Black. Leave 12.05. Further along is Market St. Pass by the Old Market Hall and statue of Sir Robert Peel and on the right is the Market Vaults (opens at 12am). This is a Joules pub with their usual range of 4 real ales plus something called No Stout About It at 4.8% which is new to me. No guest ales on when visited. This pub also does food which in Joules pubs is usually good so could be a food stop. Leave 12.45.

Retrace our steps back past the old Market, and left through a shopping precinct. On emerging ahead of us is the imposing church of St Editha. This is a mainly-medieval church, which also boasts a couple of nineteenth century stained glass windows by the pre-Raphaelite artists Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown. We walk to the left of this and arrive again on Lower Gungate. Further up on the left is Hogarth's (open 11am). This has 6 hand pumps but only 2 real ales on when visited. However one of these was Cheadle Citra at 4.3%, one of a range of beers they brew themselves and which was very nice. Leave at 13.30. Continuing up Lower Gungate we come to our final pub the Globe Inn (open 11am). This is also a traditional town hotel and serves 4 real ales including Hobgoblin and Wainwright. There is also a bar menu. Leave whenever.

At the road junction further up turn right into Albert St and it's about a 5 min walk back to the station.

Train Info :

Jolly Boys travelling from/via London can get an hourly direct LNWR service from Euston at hh:56 (return at hh:20) which takes about 80 mins. This service runs to/from Crewe, so starting from there is the corresponding southbound service, roughly hourly eg 09.33 arr 10.16, or there is an earlier direct Virgin at 08.29 which only takes 37 mins and arrives a bit early, but which certain people (eg Les) might get just for a free coffee. These trains arrive at/depart from the "low level" part of Tamworth station, platforms 1 & 2. Anyone travelling via Birmingham or Derby/Nottingham will use the

"high level" platforms 3 & 4 and there are frequent Cross Country services, either 170's or Voyagers, along this route. Please note the station entrance is off platform 1 and when departing from any of the other platforms it is a fair distance from the entrance to get to the overbridge followed by what may be a panic-stricken stagger up 3 flights of stairs (and the lift probably won't be working). This is not ideal after consuming a lot of beer, so allow enough time. You have been warned!

Cheers! Howard 11th June 2019.