

Birmingham Jolly Boys Itinerary 20 January 2022.

Issue 2 10/1/2022.

Having recently visited Walsall in the Black Country, well some of us at least, we now plunge into Birmingham itself, or at least a small part of it going by the name of Digbeth, which is roughly south of the city centre. It is probably known by many as the place where Birmingham's main bus/coach station was (and I think still is). I certainly remember using it many moons ago. Also there is a very large market. Be under no illusions this is definitely an URBAN Jolly Boys experience, and may not be suitable for those preferring nice market towns with half-timbered pubs as seen in Midsomer Murders. Recce carried out on 9th December by Howard Lowndes.

Stop Press :

I had expected to revisit Digbeth to resolve a couple of questions as normally we would be in Brum a couple of times around Christmas/New Year for shopping etc. However due to a combination of circumstances, not least Covid for which I am still under "house arrest", this has not happened. But I have found out that the Lamp Tavern does not open until 1pm which messes up the 11-12 slot, and I haven't been able to find anything else in Digbeth open at that time. So the 1st 2 pubs will be ones most of us already know in the City. I have replaced the Spoons **Dragon Inn** with the **Briar Rose**, which is on Bennetts Hill, near to New St station, and also further up Bennetts Hill is the **Wellington**, which replaces the **Lamp Tavern**.

Itinerary :

The Briar Rose : 25 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RE. This is our JD Wetherspoon for the day and most, if not all JBs will have visited it before. Leave at 11.00 and further up the street is :

The Wellington : 37 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5SN. Opens 10. An excellent city pub and I'm very happy to be going to it even though it wasn't on the original list. Leave at 11.45.

Now suitably fed and watered for the trek to Digbeth, which is south Birmingham so we need to get to the "other" side of New Street station. So back down Bennetts Hill to Stephenson St, then into Navigation St. which goes over the railway, and left into Hill St. which takes you past the "John Lewis" end of Grand Central (although sadly the John Lewis store closed a while ago). Continue along Hill St until eventually crossing a dual carriageway (the Smallbrook Queensway) and through a sort-of precinct emerging on to Hurst St. We are now in the wilds of Digbeth. Past the Sly Old Fox pub on the left and continue along Hurst St until it ends at Bishop St. Turn left, then right into Sherlock St which sweeps to the left, becoming Barford St in the process and 1st right into Moseley St, 1st left into Rea St. before meeting Bradford St. On the opposite corner is **The Anchor** : 30 Bradford St Digbeth B5 5RH. Another good example of an old city pub with a very friendly lady behind the bar. Opens 12. 4-5 real ales including Wye Valley, Castle Rock and Birmingham Brewing Co. Leave at 12.30. Exit left along Bradford St and on the next corner is :

The White Swan : 276 Bradford St, Deritend, Birmingham B5 6EP. Opens 12. Had 6 real ales including Hobsons, Saltaire, Nailmaker, Backyard and Mallinsons. An imposing street corner pub. Leave at 12.30.

Exit left along Birchall St to High St which is a sort of dual carriageway, cross over carefully and go right along this road. On the left is :

The Old Crown : 188 High St Digbeth B12 0LD. Opens 12. 3 real ales. Reputedly the oldest secular building in Birmingham. Going back to 1368, or some of it anyway, it's a magnificent half-timbered building, and a nice contrast to the monumental brick pubs on the rest of our itinerary, although it was besieged by road works at the front for the recce. Should be a reasonable choice for food. Leave at 13.45 (or earlier as it's a fair ramble to the last pub).

For our final pub we embark on a wonderfully un-scenic walk through an urban twilight zone of railway viaducts and old industrial streets where we may get chased by "mean junkyard dogs" (that's from a Jim Croce song).

So after leaving the Old Crown we go right and head for the city centre, take a right into Meriden St and after going under the railway (the line into Moor St), and across Bordesley St and we are now in New Canal St. Under another railway (the line into New St) and emerge in the middle of a monster building site. **This is HS2 Land so beware ye huge bulldozers, diggers and other monstrous contraptions.** Just to our right used to be The Eagle & Tun, demolished a few months ago, but the old Curzon Street Station is still there further up the street on the right, neatly wrapped in scaffolding, and opposite now standing in magnificent isolation is :

The Woodman : New Canal St B5 5LG. Opens 12. 5 real ale handpumps + 5 ciders. Available on the recce were Castle Rock Harvest Pale, 2 ales from Totally Brewed which is a Nottingham brewery and, the "piece de resistance", Titanic Plum Porter Grand Reserve at 6.5% - almost an honour to drink it - I just hope they still have it on the 20th. Along with the White Swan and the Anchor it is another fine example of Birmingham pub architecture. Depart at 14.30 or whenever you like.

When finished (or full) head back to the city centre which you can see in the distance. The walk takes you past Moor St. station, where some Jolly Boys may be departing from. Then through the tunnel which brings you out at the end of New St. and it's a short walk to New Street station (or Grand Central as it is otherwise known).

I haven't included any train information, as with Birmingham there are way too many possibilities and the stuff's on everyone's mobile anyway. I am not aware of any major problems at the moment likely to affect New St. or Moor St. on the 20th, which definitely isn't to say there won't be any, so be sure to check out your journey, as I'm sure all Jolly Boys will.

