

Stone (Staffs) Jolly Boys Itinerary 12 October 2023.



Stone is a market town and civil parish in Staffordshire, England, situated approximately 7 miles north of the county town of Stafford and 7 miles south of Stoke-on-Trent. Stone is on the A34 and back before the M6 came into being, this was the main road south from the Crewe area and getting to the A34 entailed a trip across to Newcastle-under-Lyme. The A34 had stretches of dual-carriageway which were virtually unknown where we lived, so it was all very exciting! However the A34 skirted Stone itself (it was effectively a by-pass before it's time). So I must admit that despite not living that far away I don't remember ever visiting the place.....until the Jolly Boys!

Stone was home to 2 breweries Joules and Bents, both of which were taken over and closed down, the former in 1974 and the latter in 1968. However that is not quite the end of the story, as Joules is now reborn although no longer in Stone but nearby Market Drayton, and doing very well. And Stone does now have the Limestone Brewery which started brewing in 2008 on the Mount industrial estate, making use of part of the former Bents brewery, almost next to the location of one of the pubs on our itinerary, The Borehole.

Itinerary

Stone station is in the apex of the “V” formed by the junction of the Trent Valley line to London, looking south to the left, and the line to Stafford and Birmingham and only this latter part of the station is still in use. It's worth taking a moment to admire the North Staffordshire Railway architecture of the station building, and those who did the Stoke Jolly Boys should recognise the similarities with Stoke station.

There seems to be no bus service to the station and it's about a 15 min walk into town. Take the Station Approach which isn't particularly short, a fact you should remember for the return journey. Then turn right down Station Road until you are in the town centre which is marked by the appearance on the left of an imposing brick-built building. Yes it's today's JD Wetherspoon :

1. **The Poste of Stone** : 1 Granville Square, Stone ST15 8AB. Apparently the postal service in Stone was established in 1575 probably because Stone was on a stagecoach route and this probably explains the olde spelling. Used to be a Post Office. Offers what you would expect of a 'Spoons and also has its own beer “Poste of Stone” brewed by the local Limestone brewery.. Depart at the traditional 11am. Cross the busy road and Station St becomes High St and a short stroll brings us to :

2. **Bod** : 40 High St, Stone ST15 8AU. Opens 0830. Those Jolly Boys who were at Stoke may remember the Bod at Stoke station. There are several of these associated with the Titanic brewery all on a cafe bar theme rather than the traditional pub. Has many of the Titanic beers including I am glad to say Plum Porter. Does food as well. Depart about 11.40. Exit to the left and find a narrow alley called Joules Passage which brings us out onto Crown St.. To the right is

3. **The Crown Wharf** – Crown St, Stone ST15 8QN. Opens 11. A warehouse-y style place by the canal. A Joules pub. As you'd expect from a modern pub there's a good menu so I would imagine this would be the place for hungry Jolly Boys to get something to eat. Depart about 12.40. Back on to Crown St, turn right for a few yards then right again back to the canal and over the bridge. Left down the canal path and a nice stroll will bring us to the next pub :

4. **The Star** : 21 Stafford St, Stone ST15 8QW. An exterior plaque commemorates the pub's place in the Guinness 'Book of Records' for the most differing floor levels in a public house! A Marstons pub. Depart about 13.30. Back over the canal and across Stafford St.

5. **The Swan** : 18 Stafford St, Stone ST15 8QW. Allegedly opens at 12 or 1pm depending on what you read, but on the recce it was open at neither of these times. Hopefully it will be for our visit as it has 8 handpumps all in use, including Oakham, Beartown and Three Tuns.

Back over the road and along Crown St and Station Road. If any customers require further refreshment there is a newly-refurbished pub just before the station on the right, with a newly-refurbished name **The Butchers Block** although a month or two ago it was unexcitingly called **The Talbot**. A much better place, although a bit further away is **The Borehole** which is about a 5 min walk on the other side of the station. You come to a mini industrial estate and it is just on the right, and further along is the **Limestone Brewery**, which supplies its beer.

STONE Town Centre Map

