

From Durham to the Lake District

I travelled from Paignton to Durham on the 22nd of June and having arrived in Durham at 16:15 I walked down the hill from the station and found a pub which Bob Southwell had been in called The Station. A converted shop with a large choice of cask ales all dispensed by gravity and stored on a stillage. The bar person picked up on my South Devon polo shirt, as they support CAMRA.

On Sunday I travelled to Durham City, to have a pint with my uncle Tommy. I met him in the Three Bridges, a modern like Wetherspoons pub. They had three real ales with Doom Bar on special at £1.80 a pint, which rather pleased me, as the average pint, in the city varies from £3.80 - £4.00. I then went up to Ye Olde Elm Tree, one of the oldest pubs in Durham, where they also had three real ales on. Next I went over to the Crossgate Working Men's Club, but no real ale to be had. So I caught the bus back to Peterlee, and met family in the 5 Quarter, a Wetherspoons pub, followed by the Peterlee Lodge, unfortunately no real ale.

The following day, I went to Carville to visit the Belmont Inn, unfortunately it did not open until later in the day, so I decided to go back into Durham City, and went into The Water House, another Wetherspoons, opposite the bus station, offering a good choice of local ales. I walked up Silver Street to the oldest pub, and my favourite, the Shakespeare Inn where excellent ales were served, mainly from the Durham brewery. The weather got very wet so I returned to Peterlee.

On Wednesday 26th June, my birthday, I went to Newcastle by bus. I went on a grand tour of St James's Park, as I am a Newcastle United fan, including the Alan Shearer bar for a pint of John Smiths, (not real ale). I then went round to the back of the East Stand and went into a pub I used when attending home games; The Trent House Inn, the bar of which has not changed since I was in there 45 years ago. I met a brewery owner who brewed Cassini Ales. I had a pint of brew out there, lovely pint. Next I went to a pub in a newly converted shop, called the Mean Eyed Cat. I met a fellow CAMRA member from the Newcastle branch and he recommended the Osset Ale. Following this I went to another old haunt, The Strawberry, had many a pint in there years ago. I was offered a few tasters, which was very generous of them, and had a great pint of River Catcher. After leaving The Strawberry, I got on the Metro to Sunderland only £3.95 for a single, 15 miles from Newcastle. I walked round the corner to another Wetherspoons called The William Jameson, very convenient for the rail and metro station. Afterwards I walked up to the bus station, just up the road, and went to Seaham. I visited the statue of George - a hero soldier from the First World War. I then went into another Wetherspoons, The Hat and Feathers, a good choice of ales.

The next day I travelled to the Lake District where I spent a second week. I stayed at The Ship Inn, Sandside, which my sister runs. First trip was to the Ravenglass narrow gauge railway, which I really enjoyed. I visited a pub at the end of the track

in a little village called Boot. Returning to Ravenglass I had a pint of Lancashire Blonde on the main station before going back to Sandside.

Next day I went to Skipton, a nice little town, went into the Cock & Bottle and had a good pint of Skipton Ale. I then caught the train which took me over the Ribble Viaduct, on a lovely journey to Carlisle. Then got on a train to Dumfries, where I went into The Waverley, unfortunately there was no real ale. So I went back to Carlisle to a Wetherspoons called The William Rufus, a great pint of Jennings Wainwrights, before going back to Sandside.

Next day I went to the Lakes starting at Keswick. Went into the George & Dragon and had a good pint of Wainwrights, followed by Churchills for a good pint of Robinson's. I then got on the bus to The Kings head, just outside Keswick for a nice pint of Lancashire Blonde. Next stop, just down the road The Travellers Rest, another pint of Lancashire Blonde. Then a ride to Ambleside, where there are some delightful pubs. I went into The Royal Oak, friendly staff, good atmosphere and good beer. Went to Kendal had a pint in the George & Dragon one of the oldest pubs in Kendal, good pint. I then visited The Miles Thompson Wetherspoons for a pint, a good choice. I then went back to the Ship Inn for a good pint of Teachers Pet Old School Brewery. My sister has 3 real ales on, good quality food and drink.

On my last day I went into Milnthorpe for a few. First The Cross Keys, for a pint of Robinson's Bitter, then over the road to The Bulls Head, for a pint of Wainwrights, followed by The Coach & Horses, for a great pint of Lancashire Blonde.

The following day, I travelled back to Paignton.

Richard Wilson