

The Worcester Wassail

1300hrs – 9th December 2017

WASSAIL – A Baker's Hangover

Wassail - pron: \WAH-sul

Def: "A festivity characterized by much drinking.
To celebrate noisily, often indulging in drinking;
engage in uproarious festivities."



1. The Lamb and Flag

We hate change – (except when it comes to an empty barrel) – and it worried us to hear that change was afoot (ahoo?) at the Lamb. Long standing Landlord Gary Jones stepped down in 2016 (and we don't mean just down to the cellar). Now two crafty pissheads visit a pub run by "Two Crafty Brewers". In fairness they have attempted to retain the impeccably kept Guinness and its staring / starring locals (no word on its internationally streamed Backgammon Championships?). The first change were the opening hours: gone are the old-school lunchtime-only hours, so it's less of a rush which means you at least won't miss out on this gem. But is it still the Lamb and Flag we loved or now just of Mutton Standard?

Toast – "Civitas in Bello et Pace Fidelis - The City faithful in war and in peace".

2. The Dragon Inn

Head right up the Tything and you'll find a 1750s, Grade II listed, CAMRA pub that you won't need to be dragoned inn-to. See the blackboard for today's specials – these are not meal specials but rather a list of banned conversation topics. Exercise care as one of the banned topics is usually 'the banned topics' – so this guide is probably banned just by virtue of its discussion of the banned topics. This board is the genius solution to the problem of nobody wanting to directly tell some boring bastard regular that he/she were boring everybody. One recent website review warns of "glassy-eyed and broken staff" – sounds like our kind of place.

Toast – "Everybody should believe in something -- I believe I'll have another drink".

3. The Saracen's Head

Across the road in the same direction is our final pub on the Tything. An old coaching house, which seems to have changed hands again after a long spell run by a friendly, rugby loving, South African couple whose only fault was they didn't like the f___ rude language – so mind your c___ mouth! So there we have it, we HAVE met a nice South African. Phil and Steve hold the world record for the world's longest and shittiest game of darts in here risking both the completion of the Wassail and Russ's eyes in the process.

Toast – "Drinkers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your money, your woman, your liver, your kids, your sanity, your job....".

30 The Tything

51 The Tything

4 Tything

4. The Paul Pry

After a farce in three pubs we head to a pub named after a farce in three parts. So do what as the locals do and go "up The Butts" (turn right off Foregate onto Shaw Street and carry on up). It first reopened in 2013 and features a mahogany bar, majolica style tiling and terrazzo flooring – the challenge is to say that sentence out loud, this far into the Wassail, without spitting. It had closed again in 2016 but has reopened with it's own brewery though we're told that the brewery has now burnt down so the dry roasted nuts be a little over done?! I'm told there's even a collection of vinyl and a record player.

Toast – "A fine beer may be judged with only one sip, but it's better to be thoroughly sure".

5. The Imperial Tavern

Gently withdraw from the Butts, turn right on Foregate and then take the first left. The Imperial Tavern has bucked the recent pub closure trend and reopened as a Black Country Ales pub with open fires after years of being a rough and ready yoof pub. Next stop is the chippy (we still go to Lowesmoor for this). Ask for "The Special", twice the food, half the price and - probably so they remain in business - this is also apparently now only available off-menu, on the QT, so secret greasy handshake at the ready.

Toast – "There are only two times when I drink beer, when I'm alone and when I'm with someone else".

6. The King Charles House / King Charles II

Head back up Lowesmoor onto the City Walls Road, until New Street, a small turning on the right near the car park on the town side of the road. Those who have travelled from the North and missed the chippy, are rewarded with Pieminister pies just like the King himself used to eat (possibly) when he hid here. If memory serves correctly King Charles II is famous for scratching Oliver Cromwell's copy of a famous punk LP, he then had to flee to France as Cromwell was so outraged. We've walked past this place for years as it was a restaurant when the Wassail was first compiled but has since seen the error its ways. Despite this place being named after a loser it features giant pork scratchings, pies and real ale – long live the loser, runaway King!

Toast – "Here's to the King! What King? Fuc-King!"

7. The Swan With Two Nicks

Located next door is a nice looking pub with a good range of ales and authentic ciders. Its downside is they do insist on blaring music through a wholly inadequate, knackered PA. I wouldn't bother sticking money into the video jukebox – if you do, expect to wait two hours to hear your selection and, as we'll probably be behind schedule at this point, you won't make yourself too popular. Upstairs is the Lunar Bar where the décor is akin to a cross between a tart's boudoir and a scene from the third rate film Austin Powers!

Toast – "To alcohol! The cause of, and solution to, all of life's problems." Homer Simpson

8. Eagle Vaults

Continue up New Street and you'll find Eagle Vaults on the corner of Pump Street and New Street (which further on becomes Friar Street). Despite Waffle's continued campaign we return to the Eagle Vaults in the vain hope they might have another ace, brummie, rockabilly band on and it won't be full of a Rugby club drinking shots of Sourz. Clad in traditional Victorian tiles on the outside – the vomit just wipes off them – the Victorians really did think of everything (except how to catch Jack the Ripper and to not die of TB).

Toast – "Be one who drinks the finest of ales. Every day without fail. Even when you have drunk enough, Remember that ale is wonderful stuff"

6 The Butts

9. Farriers Arms

Now comes an opportunity to show off your nine-pint, eight-ball skills in one of the oldest pubs in town. Take a left out of the pub and head up Pump Street onto High Street. Take a left on High Street and Fish Street is the next right, just before Next, confused Tiger? – Topman! Resist the temptation to double up on pints here as people are beginning to struggle and if you needed another reason apparently Rik Mayall used to drink in here – this was his "Kebab and Calculator".

Toast – "Beer makes you feel the way you ought to feel without beer".--Henry Lawson.

10. The Plough

Continue to the end of Fish Street and on the left-hand corner you'll find the Worcester CAMRA pub of the year 2009. New to the Wassail in 2010 due to the sad (?) demise of the Pig & Drum and now one a firm favourites (except the one year Phil was in charge when it was questionably omitted). It's a bit pokey but very friendly so you might want to quietly slope out of the Farriers when nobody is looking to secure your pint, seat and to claim ownership of the pub quiz trivia books!

Toast – "I'd rather be with the people in this room, than with the finest people in the world! - Fred Willard in the film "Roxanne"

11. The Cardinal's Hat

Head left out of the Plough on Deansway and then on the left hand side of the roundabout you'll meet Eddie Elgar - quick photee and then next left up Friar Street. Nearly there!! Though claimed to be Worcester's oldest pub the purists used to have reason to scoff for its inclusion on the Wassail as it was an Austrian themed bar and only served half litres – which posed a challenge on a twelve pint pub crawl! After a "sensitive" refurb in 2013 it's now back to being a traditional ale-house. Those (still) with a death wish may wish to ask if they still have the five-litre stein glasses about though*. It has a great heated outdoor area for chatting up the laydeez should you manage to identify one in amongst all the beer guts – careful you're not just chatting up the resident ghost though. (PC note - laydeez may also have beer guts).

* Please, when drinking irresponsibly, be responsible.

Toast – "To alcohol - because no great story ever started with someone eating salad".

12. Heroes

Continue up Friar Street and on the left, keep your blurry eyes peeled for a free-standing sign for Heroes – there is a small doorway with a set of stairs you can fall down later. Watch your head and Jae R. Moggs* projectile vomit stains as you enter. This place has its fair share of nooks and grannies and seems popular with the Worcestershire yoof. Steve smooth talked his way out of being thrown out twice a few years ago despite only being guilty of standing next to an abusive drunk, ironic really as he'd spent all day with a large group of them without incident. Once you've drunk your giant bottle of ale it's on to a club or to fall over in the street clutching a "quick" chicken burger. At this stage manners and decency have probably caught that previously mentioned bus to Shitsville.

* Names have been changed to protect the guilty party's career prospects

Toast – "Here's to being Single, Drinking Doubles... and seeing Triple!"