

The Langtons Revisited

The Langtons are made up of five villages which share three churches and four pubs. West Langton is by far the smallest village and has neither a church nor a pub. East Langton is also churchless and the residents of both share St. Peters church at Church Langton with that village's parishioners.

As it wasn't a Sunday, Jim Reay concentrated on the pubs...

I like walking and I like real ale so what better than a real ale ramble around the Langtons? All four pubs are linked by footpaths and I've described my route below so you can, if you so wish, follow my footsteps. The Langtons are served by Centrebus 44 which can be caught from Market Harborough or Kibworth which in turn can be reached from Leicester by Arriva X3 or 49B. It's worth mentioning that the only time of the week all four pubs are open whilst the buses are running is Saturday Lunchtime.

My first port of call was **The Bakers Arms** in Thorpe Langton, the home of Langton Brewery and, indeed, my home until over twenty years ago, so where better to start? Nestling in the middle of the village under a thatched roof the aesthetically pleasing Bakers Arms is enhanced by the floral displays in the large flower pots set in front of the pub. Inside, the linked areas with exposed ceiling joists and pine tables help to create a cottage ambiance. It is a mainly food oriented pub which sells one real ale supplied by the nearby Langton Brewery. Langton's Sovereign was the beer available on the day I called but they often have Baker's Dozen as their real ale. The Langton Brewery produce a house beer which Landlords can give their own individual name to, hence "Baker's Dozen".

The Bell Inn at East Langton was my next destination. Thorpe Langton and East Langton are joined by a stretch of the Leicestershire Round. Turning right out of the Bakers Arms front door, after a short distance I turned left into Church Lane then turned right at the top of the lane past St Leonards Church, through a hand gate and straight across the field through another hand gate and left into a track. Going through the gate at the end of the track and past an old shed I turn right into a field and then walked more or less in a straight line following the yellow way marker posts all the way to East Langton where I emerged on a road near some houses. Bearing right past the first two houses I turned right along a footpath, over a stile into a field, then crossing the field at an angle of about 45deg to my left to the yellow way marker post and down a narrow path to the road. The Bell Inn was now just a little way downhill to my left.

Portraying a chocolate box image with its ivy lined windows and large well-kept front garden the Bell Inn is in a quiet location just over the road from the entrance to the Langton Cricket Club ground. Inside consists mainly of a large bar/dining room with a smaller dining room off it. For good reason the words "Duck or Grouse" are written on one of the lowest ceiling beams in the

bar. Although diners seem to be the target clientele, drinkers are nonetheless still made to feel welcome by the proprietors and the locals standing at the bar “chewin’ the fat”. On the day of my visit four real ales were on sale; Langton Caudle, Fullers London Pride, Greene King Abbot and Hook Norton Hooky.

The walk between the Bell Inn and the **Langton Arms** in Church Langton is by far the shortest of the three walks between the Langton pubs. Crossing the road from the Bell Inn I took the footpath up the driveway to the cricket ground and turning left followed the yellow way marker posts around the cricket ground coming out on the road opposite to Church Causeway. After walking along Church Causeway for about 200 yards I took the footpath to the left which comes out next to the car park at the rear of the pub which is situated on the B6047 main road in Church Langton. The interior consists of a large L-shaped bar and a small snug to the front of the building with a restaurant and garden to the rear of the premises. Popular with both locals and visitors from further afield there is room for both drinkers and diners. Three real ales were on sale all of which originated from the Greene King collection; Abbot, IPA. and Morland Old Golden Hen.

The Crown at Tur Langton was the last pub on my list and the walk from The Langton Arms is the longest of the three walks between pubs. Crossing the road from The Langton Arms I took the footpath through a yard keeping the buildings on my right hand side and then followed the yellow way marker posts, crossing three fields, until I came to a grass lane. Turning right along the grass lane and past a small coppice I followed the grass lane until directed otherwise by a familiar yellow way marker

post. Soon after this point I caught my first view of Tur Langton in the form of the spire to St. Andrews Church. Encountering a yellow way marker post offering a choice of either straight on or turn right, I went straight on keeping the hedgerow close to my right hand side until I reached a tennis court whereupon I took the footpath to the left of the court and followed the yellow way marker post which eventually took me through someone’s back garden before reaching the road. The Crown was about 200 yards up the road to my right.

A former coaching inn situated almost opposite the parish church of St Andrews, the inside consists of two linked bars to the front of the pub, the largest of which has a real fire in the middle of the room set under an enormous brass fire canopy directing smoke into the flue above. To the rear is a large restaurant overlooking a pretty garden. This establishment appears to have the balance about right when it comes to meeting the needs of both drinkers and diners. The three real ales available on the day were from the Marston’s collection; Pedigree, Bank’s Bitter and Wychwood Hobgoblin.

So there we have it. The four Langton pubs between them had ten different real ales on sale on the day of my ramble. Whilst I’m sure each of the establishments would like to see you to have a meal, I can’t say that I was made to feel unwelcome in any of them as a straightforward drinker. If you do decide to do the Langton pub ramble I can assure you you’ll have a really pleasant afternoon; I certainly did. Now where’s that 44 bus stop?

Cheers,

Jim Reay