

BLABY PUB CRAWL



The Tom Thumb



The Bulls Head



The Fox & Tiger



The Black Horse



The Bakers Arms

Blaby has five public houses. With the exception of The Tom Thumb all are within a furlong of one another. As The Tom Thumb is furthest out from the centre of Blaby it seemed to be the best place to start my Blaby Pub Crawl.

Arriving by Arriva 85 bus from Leicester, when you see Aldi and The Bulls Head on your left ring the bell and get off at the next stop. Having alighted from the bus, cross the road and take the jitty immediately opposite. At the end of the jitty go straight on to the end of the road, turn left then right and the pub is a short distance on the next right hand corner.

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Probably the newest pub in Blaby now that The Egyptian Queen has been demolished and replaced with new houses The Tom Thumb basically consists of one large room with two conservatories adjoining. One conservatory is utilised as a pool room whilst the other one is a designated dining area. Although five hand pumps adorn the bar, alas only one was in use on the day I was there dispensing Everards Tiger Best Bitter.

On leaving The Tom Thumb turn right down The Fairway and follow this road to its end then turn right into Queens Road. After about 75 yard take the jitty to the left and at the end turn right then almost immediately left into another jitty. On leaving this jitty turn right and walk on to the end of the road from where The Bull's Head is visible to your left across the road.

Consisting principally of one large room incorporating quieter nooks & crannies The Bull's Head is a traditional local committed to serving real ale from a range of microbreweries through the Punch list and SIBA direct deliveries and a cask mild is always available. Unusually these days The Bull's Head does not do meals but does sell reasonably priced filled cobs and from which 25p is donated to the Mind charity for each one sold. The Bull's Head offers a 20p per pint discount to card carrying CAMRA members and on the day I visited five real ales were available; Adnams Southwold Bitter, Brakspear Oxford Gold, Grainstore Rutland Panther, Keltek Golden Lance and Prescott Ruby Stout.

Less than a furlong away on the same side of the road to your right when leaving The Bull's Head is The Fox & Tiger. This pub consists of one large open plan room and, as its name would suggest, is frequented by supporters of Leicester City (The Foxes) and Leicester's premier Rugby Union Club (The Tigers) who gather on match days to watch their teams on television. Other entertainment is provided in the form of a Thursday quiz, karaoke or acoustic nights on Fridays, a disco on Saturdays and rock & roll on Sundays. On the day of my visit three real ales

were available: Caledonian Bitter Winter, Greene King Abbot Ale and Theakston Best Bitter.

On leaving The Fox & Tiger turn right into Cross Street and you'll see The Black Horse a short distance in front of you at the bottom left hand corner of the street.

The Black Horse comprises of a lounge and, unusually these days, a separate traditional public bar. Entertainment is regularly provided by live music on a Friday and Saturday evening and a quiz every Monday evening. Only one real ale is on sale at any one time; more often than not it is either Wells & Young's Courage Directors (the beer available on the day I called) or Marston's Pedigree but other beers occasionally make an appearance. On leaving the Black Horse cross over to Wigston Road and The Bakers Arms is a short distance in front of you on the left hand side of the road.

Without doubt The Bakers Arms is the oldest pub in Blaby. Built in 1485 and first licensed in the mid-19th century, there are three separate rooms formed from the cottages that were converted into the pub. The largest of the three rooms is designated for diners with the other two more welcoming to those wanting only liquid refreshment. Five real ales were available on the day I called; the four Everards beers (Beacon Bitter, Tiger Best Bitter, Original & Sleighbell) and the guest beer was Greene King Morland Old Golden Hen.

From the Bakers Arms turn left and left again through a jitty and onto Northfield Road. Walk to the bottom of this road and at the bus stop immediately opposite you can catch an 84, 84A or 85 Arriva bus back to Leicester.

So there we have it. On the day of my Blaby Pub Crawl the five Pubs between them had fourteen real ales available. Not so much walking as my previously published meanderings so ideally suited for a winter's day jaunt.

Cheers,

Jim Reay