



A Beer Lover's Tour of Worcester City



THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE





Worcester City



Worcester is a Cathedral City in the English Midlands. Situated on the River Severn it has a long history with the 12th century Cathedral and connections to the English Civil War.

The City has a lot to offer those seeking good beer and fine pubs. There is enough variety in the city centre within a short walking distance to keep the connoisseur occupied all day. Better still trains from Birmingham, Oxford, Bristol and Hereford adequately serve the town centre, so the car can be left behind and all the city has to offer can be enjoyed to the full.

Worcester has two railway stations. Foregate Street is centrally located on the high street and is the best place to start and finish if your train goes there. The other station, Shrub Hill, is only a bit further out - if your trains take you there it adds only a few minutes walk extra on the tour. The bus station is also conveniently situated in the city centre.

The full tour is an all day expedition visiting twelve pubs, though with only 45 minutes walking in all, but it is easy to miss some out to fit your timetable.



Walking Times

Worcester Foregate Street Station

5 minutes

Dragon Inn

1 minute

Saracen's Head

5 minutes

Bus Station

5 minutes

1 minute

Cricketers

6 minutes

Plough

4 minutes

Hand in Glove

3 minutes

Cardinal's Hat

3 minutes

Swan with Two Nicks

30 seconds

King Charles II

13 minutes

Worcester Shrub

5 minutes

Hill Station

10 minutes

Firefly

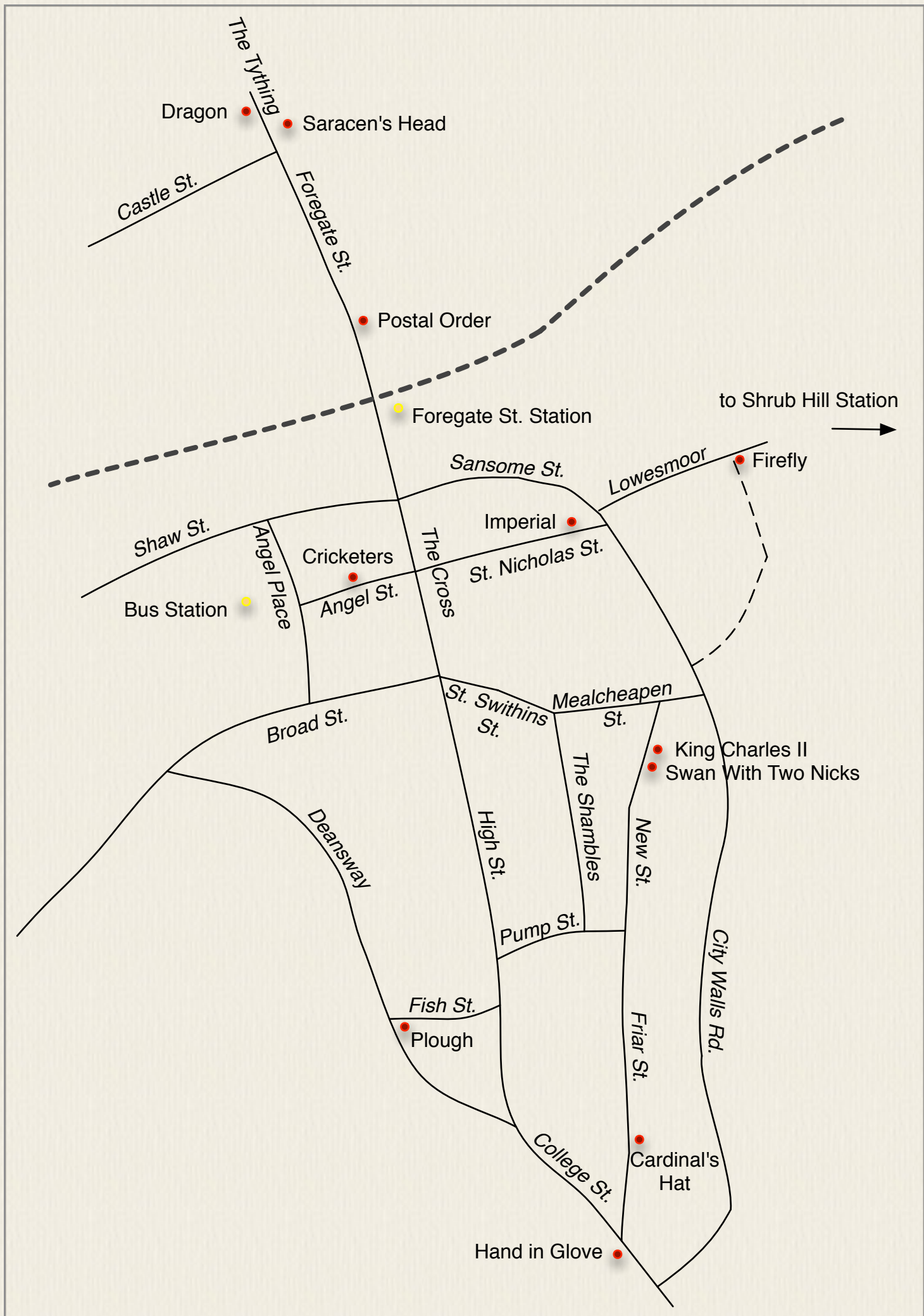
6 minutes

Postal Order

1 minute

Worcester Foregate Street Station

The City of Worcester





The serious beer drinker must not miss out the [Dragon Inn](#) on The Tything to the north of Foregate Street station – turn right on to the main street outside the station and head past the Postal Order (don't panic, we will return later) and beyond the junction with traffic lights. On the left you find a single room bar owned by Church End brewery – there are normally at least 5 of their beers available including a mild

or a stout. The pub is still undergoing development to the upstairs area.

Just across the road from The Dragon is the [Saracen's Head](#). Enter through the cobbled yard at the side, now doubling up as a retreat for smokers. There are two bars, both divided into two creating a series of small cosy rooms. Two or three beers from local breweries supplement two or three brands from the national breweries and real cider.



Head back past Foregate Street railway station and then take the second right onto Angel Street. Towards the entrance to the bus station is the [Cricketers](#). The entrance leads to a horseshoe bar with four beers to choose from along with real



cider. The bar area is split into a wood panelled area to the left with some interesting cricket memorabilia to view and a smaller area with tables on the right, which is a popular stop for lunchtime food. The pub opened in 1781 and as The Shakespeare served the adjacent Theatre Royal - there's a nice photo in the right hand bar. Eric Clapton played his guitar here in 1996.

The next leg of the journey takes you to the other side of the city centre near the cathedral. Continue down Angel Street and turn left at Angel Place and along a pedestrianized area past some ornate toilets. At the end turn right down Broad Street to the busy Deansway at the end. Turn left and head towards the Cathedral. After passing the technical college you reach your target at the end of Fish Street.



The Plough is another essential stop on the tour. A short flight of steps from the entrance of this Grade II building takes you to a small bar with rooms to either side. Beyond the right hand room is a patio with a marginal view of the Cathedral. More interesting is the beer on offer. You are likely to find Black Pear from the Malvern Hills Brewery and Hobsons

Best Bitter, plus two or three others from local microbreweries such as Kinver. There is also cider and perry from local producers including Barbourne.



From the Plough, turn left onto Deansway once more. Cross the road at the lights and pass in front of the magnificent Cathedral before heading down College Street, the busy main road through the city. Along here you will find a modern bar to contrast the traditional venues visited so far.



The [Hand In Glove](#) is in a 1960s style office block of the kind that scars the Faithful City, but here you should find two decent beers from local breweries, such as Wye Valley. This is a bar with comfortable furniture and a “wine bar” feel. Also of note is the historic Sega Mega Drive available to test your skills.

Cross the road at the lights and return back to the road opposite the Hand In Glove. This is Friar Street. Head down here and on the right you will find a real gem – the [Cardinal’s Hat](#). In the 1990s it was home of the Jolly Roger Brewery but then served time as a traditional Austrian bar serving only imported lager, until recently being restored as an English pub – Worcester’s oldest as the first reference to the Cardinals Hat was in 1497 when it was designated as one of the depots for the city’s fire hooks. A front-to-back corridor leads to two bars and separate snug and on to an enclosed outdoor drinking area. The bars are wood panelled with stone fireplaces and make a perfect setting for drinking beer from several small breweries and real cider.



The tour now continues along Friar Street, leaving behind the monstrous 1960s concrete car park past some wonderful old black-and-white buildings. At the corner of Pump Street you will find the [Eagle Vaults](#), which is a sight to behold with very ornate tile work and etched glass. Pop in for some beers from the Marston’s empire, though not just the usual brands.

Follow the tour by carrying straight on into New Street. There are more old buildings, several bars and some pubs along here but the destination is towards the end.



The [Swan With Two Nicks](#) is another historic pub. The building dates from 1550 and the first reference to it being a pub is in 1746 making this Worcester's second oldest pub. The unusual name relates to the practice of marking swans belonging to the company of Vintners with two nicks on their beaks. Enter by the side passageway and you will find a split-level bar with three areas served by a

small central bar offering four beers from small breweries. The food here is well worth sampling too. The front bar is half-timbered while the central area has low beams and leads to the smaller area behind which features a games console table, but on sunny days try the patio out the back. Worth visiting the toilets upstairs just to experience the steepness of the stairs. You'll also find the Lunar bar here (no cask ale) on Friday and Saturday evenings.

The next leg of the journey takes you next door. Until recently this old building was a restaurant, famous for having hidden King Charles II after the battle of Worcester. Now it's a pub, the [King Charles II](#), run by Craddocks Brewery and so obviously you will find some of their beers on the bar – four usually. Downstairs the bar is adorned with wood panelling and there's a trap-



door into what looks like an oubliette so be on your best behaviour. Upstairs the floor sits on old beams warped beyond credibility so it is like a rollercoaster, so perhaps at this stage in the tour it would be wise to remain on the ground floor. Pies, mash and peas are a feature of the well-priced menu.

Continue down New Street to the end. Here is the old Cornmarket, with another excess of tilework in the form of the Royal Exchange. But for the tour veer off to the right and head along St Nicholas Road to the [Imperial Tavern](#). This is the latest of Worcester's real ale palaces and



has made an immediate impact on being converted from a closed disco bar – it won Pub of the Year for 2016! The pub is owned by Black Country Brewery and there are normally 3 of their beers available amongst a swathe of guests – up to 7 covering the whole spectrum of beer styles. Real cider is also on offer.

From here cross the busy City Walls Road into the newly developed Worcester Vinegar Works area. Head down Lowesmoor and towards the end on the right you will find the [Firefly](#). This old Georgian building was once the residence of the manager of the vinegar works, but now it is an excellent bar. Enter up the curving steps and you will find a bar with soft furnishings and modern lighting that create a great atmosphere. There's a cosy snug downstairs with bench sofas around the edge and from here there's a door to the outside patio. Best of all is what greets you at the bar. Four handpulls serve beer from the pub's own microbrewery (doesn't brew in summer months) as well as beer from breweries both near and far – pale and hoppy is often the order of the day here. Two ciders are also on offer.

From the Firefly, turn left and head back along Lowesmoor back towards the city centre. Turn right at the end and walk along Sansome Street, first past the church and then past the arts centre. When you reach Foregate Street take a right and you will see the ornate railway bridge cross the road in the distance. Walk back to the station, but keep going. It is now time to complete the tour in the first pub you passed.

Just past the station is the [Postal Order](#). This is a Wetherspoons pub housed in the old city telephone exchange – where did the name come from then? While the concept is pure Wetherspoons, this particular venue is special in the beer department. A wide range of beers is offered, both in terms of strength and style, and they are presented perfectly – well above the average ‘spoons. The only thing it lacks is a departure board for the railway station next door.



The Campaign for Real Ale, CAMRA, is an independent, voluntary organisation campaigning for real ale, community pubs and consumer rights. This tour guide has been produced by the Worcester Branch of CAMRA to help you get the most out of a visit to Worcester.

If you find any mistakes or have anything to add, please send us a message and let us know what you've found: contact@worcestercamra.org.uk.

Visit worcester.camra.org.uk for detailed information on the pubs mentioned in this tour guide and all the others in the City and South Worcestershire.



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