

## London Trip: AKA-The Search for Dark Mild

Our first ale in London was near the British Museum in a Holborn area pub – “The Bloomsbury Tavern” (which was a Shepherd Neame pub). Your guys would probably turn their noses at such a place, but for me (especially having the first U.K. beer) the poorest grade is “good”. I had a Master Brew Kentish ale and Di had a Late Red Autumn ale. Most important was a chat with our bar side neighbor who told us of a fabulous sounding Christmas fete in the town of Rochester. They do Dickens Christmas (homeboy?) and augment the costumed pageantry with snow making equipment!

Our first ‘recommended’ stop was “The Market Porter”. Loved the place loved the section of town. From the London Bridge stop (Northern of Jubilee line) exit toward the market. I had a Leeds Midnight Dark (4.8%) – no dark mild. Di had some (which I finished) and we both had Harveys ESB (4%). Both in my uneducated assessment were superb. Most importantly, the ‘Harveys’ was recommended by one of two guys I chatted with (the other said he didn’t recommend beer – just pubs – which he did – “The Royal Oak”) and both said that our timing was perfect for the “Wenlock” - Friday was a CAMRA festival.

Note: Your guy said that the “Wenlock” was ‘worn’. The bar guys said ‘scruffy’ and the bartender at “Jerusalem” said ‘tatty’ – and her ‘favorite place’. I’ll add my adjective – ‘unpretentious’.

The next day we went to “The Jerusalem Tavern” for, as John Cleese would put it, “something completely different!”

*The Jerusalem Tavern 55 Britton Street Clerkenwell London EC1M 5UQ From Farringdon station go up the stairs and exit left. At the corner of Turnmill Street/Cowcross Street turn left. At the next corner turn right onto Benjamin Street. Turn left onto Britton Street and the Jerusalem is 2/3 down on the right.*

This place is small, really small, smaller than the downstairs of our small house. We walked in, I looked for the bar and saw only 3 nitro(?) taps. UH-OH!

Then I saw the 6 cask ales – and Dark Mild. All the cask ales were from St. Peters ([www.stpetersbrewery.co.uk](http://www.stpetersbrewery.co.uk)). The ‘bar’ was a small wooden counter. No one would sit at the bar except to wait for his or her beer. Seating capacity couldn’t have been more than 30 in the whole place. The bartender (the only staff in evidence) – female – was great. Pleasant, witty and helpful.

The big news is that St.Peters started bottling D.M. 2 days before our arrival. Since they ‘ship’ to the U.S. is it possible that D.M. would make the trip? I of course had the Dark Mild and Di had the Organic Best Bitter.

Next stop the fabled “Wenlock Arms”

*26 Wenlock Street, Hackney, London. From the Old Street station turn onto City Road North. Go past the Eye Hospital and then a bit more. Turn right onto Shepherdess Walk. Go approx. 3 ½ blocks to Micawber Street and turn left. Make a right onto Wenlock Road. “The Wenlock Arms” is up a couple of blocks on the right.*

We both had All Gates “Mild at Heart” (3.8%). We also ate lunch there with Di having the homemade beef stew and I had Salt beef sandwich with horseradish.

Our pub mate this time was Keith from Kent, who also recommended “The Royal Oak” (‘Good food, good prices, American portions’).

The Royal Oak

*44 Tabard Street Borough SE1. From the Borough station (Northern line) which is one stop south of London Bridge (your directions involve quite a walk) go north on Borough High Street. Turn right onto Tabard Street. It’s at the corner of Tabard and Nebraska Streets.*

Keith also recommended “Ye Old Mitre” (note: no E on Old).

*1 Ely Court Ely Place Holborn EC1. From Farringdon station turn right to go south (left) on Farringdon Street. Make a right onto Charterhouse. Just before Holborn Circus on Holborn High Street, make right onto Ely Place then left onto Ely Court.*

This is so close to the Jerusalem that it's a 'twofer'.

Another recommendation from Keith, and #13 on your list, was the "Bricklayers Arms" which is owned and operated by an American woman.

Keith mentioned that he sympathizes with the tourists. They get poor service and high prices from pubs in touristy areas. The next tourist is just around the corner. The Wenlock has a reputation to uphold and has to give value. (His assessment of the Wenlock – "A Treasure".) He said there is so little profit margin on beer that pubs have to make their money on food.

One quotable quote – Di and I were both wearing waxed cotton coats. Hers from U.K. (Oxford) mine from Seattle (Filson). Keith asked if Diane was wearing a Barbour. She said no but it was made in the U.K. I knew Keith would comment on my label (which says, "Why not have the best") but I didn't think I'd use his quote. "My Father always said – 'Self-promotion is never a good recommendation'". Enter much laughter from us.

Finally the new CAMRA top 11 list:

Wenlock Arms : Royal Oak : Ye Old Mitre : The Harp : The Jerusalem Tavern : The Penbury Tavern : The Speaker : The Bricklayers Arms : Trafalgar House : The Palm Tree : The Selkirk The first 6 rated 7.4 and the rest 7.2.

A final note. Di's sister lives in Kensington on Prince's Gate – Ennismore Gardens. Our annotated London map showed a pub not 300 yards away on Ennismore Mews – "The Ennismore Arms" (a cozy local). I looked and did not find it. I discovered later that it had been demolished to make way for a private residence costing (in that high rent district) between 15 and 25 million pounds! I guess at even 3 pounds per pint selling out was a no brainer.

Yours in suds,  
R & D  
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