

Sixty SOWERBY BRIDGE – through the C.A.M.R.A. LENS.

Sowerby Bridge has been quietly turning itself into a centre for real ales served by hand pump. There are six such outlets in a pleasant stone town. Some of them serve food too. These facts combined with a very good train service make this a must for Eccles real ale drinkers.

Catch a train from Eccles to Manchester Victoria. From here use a Leeds or Bradford train via Rochdale, but check that it calls at Sowerby Bridge! Alight at Sowerby Bridge. *I have done at least two research runs to be able to vouch for the quality of the beers on offer.*

Descend the slope from the platform and turn right down the steps. Go left along Holmes Road past the large stone mill building. *Notice the large cast beam over a former entranceway.*

Follow the road under the railway and turn right down Station Approach.

Cross the bridge over the stream and then go left along the main road to The Long Chimney. Go in. *(I am serious – don't just admire the faded exterior. This is a free house serving up to four guest beers on hand pump. Other than this the early 1970's is thoroughly preserved in this friendly, red plush interior.*

On leaving The Long Chimney turn right and cross Station Approach.

Cross the main road at the pelican crossing under the railway viaduct *(there are some crazy drivers on this road).*

Continue ahead *towards the impressive Lloyd's Bank building.*

Cross the river Calder *with it's canoeing and slaloming.*

On the corner of Hollins Mill Lane is the Fire House. *This is a pleasant new café bar with four real ales on hand pumps. (Timothy Taylor's and at least two guest beers, foreign lagers and a pizza and grill restaurant separate from the bar.*

Turn left along Hollins Mill Lane. On the right after a few yards is The Works – *a tasteful conversion in an old mill building. There are at least four real ales on sale here and a good range of food available.*

On leaving The Works go right along the lane. *The canal is above you.*

On the left you come to the main point of the trip – The Puzzle Hall Inn. *Eccentric and delightful it is indeed. That's an old brewing tower you can see. The beer 'garden' can serve as a barbecue area or outdoor performance area.*

The tiny interior has a small concert room – live music is frequent here – and a tiny bar with at least four real ales (Timothy Taylor’s and guests).

If, sorry, when you leave here head back into town. At the main road (Town Hall Road) go left then cross towards the mill building and continue a few yards.

Fork right along Old Cawsey and on the right is the rough stone built Turk’s Head. *At least two real ales and a beer garden nicely perched above the river.*

Continue a few yards on. Turn right over the footbridge.

At the end of this path go left and then right up the steps into the station.

Go ahead in the subway and up to the Manchester platform.

U-turn right. *You will see that the original station building is now The Jubilee Refreshment Rooms. The orange-red was the corporate colour of British Railways North Eastern Region.*

Cross where the tracks were (*Sowerby Bridge had four platforms*) and go in. *The style is simple clean austerity – a long, traditional style of refreshment rooms. The bar serves tea, coffee, cakes, sandwiches, and hot snacks, meals and a range of guest ales.*

Return to the Manchester Platform for a train back to Victoria where you change for Eccles.

CLASSIFICATION: SHORT, EASY

PUBS and FOOD. STONE PENNINE TOWN.

RAIL FARE: category three.

MAP OS 1:50 000 sheet 104 Philip’s Street Atlas West Yorkshire.