

# Stourbridge Canal & Glass Quarter

## HERITAGE TRAIL



Funded by  
UK Government

**Dudley**  
Metropolitan Borough Council



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

# Stourbridge Canal & Glass Quarter Heritage Trail

## Two self-guided walking tours

*Discover the glass making history and heritage of Stourbridge over the last 400 years*

Both walks start at the Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge, DY8 4LU (park in parking bays just past the Bonded Warehouse)

**Short trail** 1.5 miles, duration approximately 1 hour (longer if you walk back to the beginning)

Finish at: Red House Glass Cone and Stourbridge Glass Museum, Wordsley

**Long trail** 5 to 6 miles duration, approximately 3 hours non-stop and longer depending on whether you stop for refreshments and choose to visit the optional detours along the walk.

Finish at: Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge, DY8 4LU

There are refreshments and toilet facilities available at points along the trail(s).

Free car parking is available beyond the Bonded Warehouse, alongside the canal (please do not park at the Bonded Warehouse or in the private parking bays) and around the route at Ruskin Glass Centre, Stourbridge Glass Museum, the Red House Glass Cone and Sainsbury's in Amblecote. If you prefer, you can use the return bus service back to the Bonded Warehouse.

For a detailed version of the Stourbridge Canal and Glass Quarter heritage trail please download a copy from [www.glassquarter.org.uk](http://www.glassquarter.org.uk) or [www.discoverdudley.org.uk](http://www.discoverdudley.org.uk)



Lower main floor of Stourbridge Glass Museum

## Brief history of the Stourbridge glass industry

Stourbridge, located in the borough of Dudley, is internationally renowned for its glassmaking heritage which dates back over 400 years. Canals were hugely important to the glass industry of Stourbridge. The transportation of a fragile product such as window glass on rough tracks by packhorses was not ideal. The calm waters of the canal ensured a safe passage for the fragile glass. In 1779, saw



the completion of the building of the Stourbridge Canal. 'Canal Mania' swept across the UK, starting in the 1760's and peaking in the 1790's. It is often reported that Birmingham & the Black Country have more canal mileage than Venice.

Over the next 150 years a chain of 16 glasshouses emerged along the main Stourbridge to Kingswinford road, which is now referred to as the Crystal Mile. Here you will find the canal and main road are in close proximity to each other. Many crystal manufacturers contributed financially to the building of the canal and most established their companies on the canalside.



*Wordsley c.1900*

**Start of the trail** Both begin near the Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge. Please park alongside the canal beyond the Bonded Warehouse. Do not park at the Bonded Warehouse or in the private bays. **SAT NAV DY8 4LU**

The short walking route is just over a mile and a half long and ends at the Glasshouse Bridge, Red House Glass Cone and Stourbridge Glass Museum, with an option of a public bus service returning to the Bonded Warehouse.

The longer walking route option is approximately five to six miles depending on whether you visit the optional detours mentioned within the leaflet and also returns to the Bonded Warehouse.



*The Bonded Warehouse*

The Bonded Warehouse is a short walking distance from Stourbridge bus station and Stourbridge Town train station.

## Point 1 - The Bonded Warehouse

Built in 1799 its original use was to hold goods such as tea, tobacco and spirits. High value goods were taxable and held in secure or 'Bonded' warehouses. The building is now owned by the Stourbridge Navigation Trust.

Boat trips and special events along the Stourbridge Canal and Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal take place throughout the year.

Visit [www.thebondedwarehousestourbridge.co.uk](http://www.thebondedwarehousestourbridge.co.uk)



*Blackcountry Man boat trip*

Continue your walk along the Stourbridge Arm canal.

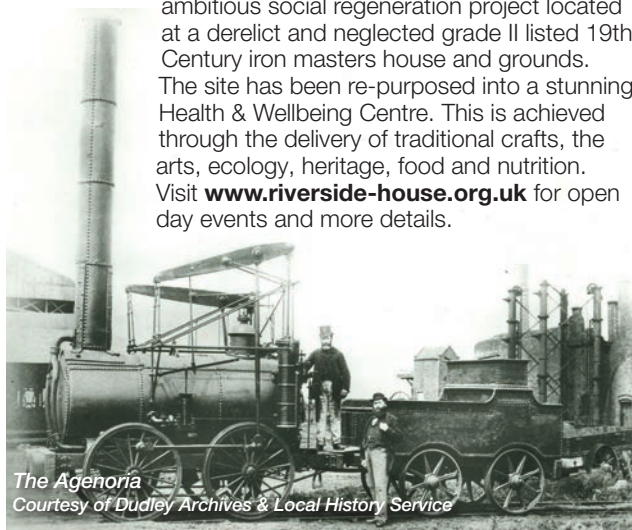
## Point 2 - Former Stourbridge iron works

You will see former buildings alongside the canal which once belonged to the Stourbridge iron works, Foster, Rastrick & Co. As you continue along this part of the canal, an important industrial heritage area, one such development has been Riverside House. As a slight detour, this can be found by leaving the canal towpath and following a path to your left, passing through a couple of gates as you continue

along a wider open stretch. This is an ambitious social regeneration project located at a derelict and neglected grade II listed 19th Century iron masters house and grounds.

The site has been re-purposed into a stunning Health & Wellbeing Centre. This is achieved through the delivery of traditional crafts, the arts, ecology, heritage, food and nutrition.

Visit [www.riverside-house.org.uk](http://www.riverside-house.org.uk) for open day events and more details.



*The Agehoria*

*Courtesy of Dudley Archives & Local History Service*



Retrace your steps back to the main towpath along the canal and you will eventually come across the Neville Garratt Bridge which was cast in 1873 by John Bradley & Co. Continue to head North-West along the canal.

### **Point 3 - Ruskin Glass Centre and Glasshouse Heritage Centre**



*Coalbournbrook Bridge*

As you approach the Coalbournbrook Bridge at Wollaston Road, on your right you will see the moorings of Glasshouse College - a site of major significance in the heritage of the Stourbridge glass industry.

An archaeological dig took place on this site in 2014 which found the remains of two glasshouses dating back to the 17th century. The artefacts from the dig can be seen in the Glasshouse Heritage Centre.

There has been glass working on this site for over 325 years. In more recent times it was the manufacturing home of Webb Corbett Crystal/Royal Doulton Crystal until 1999 when crystal production ceased. In 2000, the site was purchased by Ruskin Mill Land Trust which specialises in educating young people with learning disabilities through a craft and land based curriculum.

The Ruskin Glass Centre is now home to glass blowers and glass repairers, plus many more craft workshops and a 400-seat theatre known as Glasshouse Arts Centre. You can stop here for refreshments.

Visit [www.ruskinglasscentre.co.uk](http://www.ruskinglasscentre.co.uk) for more details.

At this point, you can retrace your steps and rejoin the canal towpath, or continue past ahead a little further up Wollaston Road to 'Doulton Brook'.



*Ruskin Glass Centre*

## Point 4 - Doulton Brook



You will see a housing estate called 'Doulton Brook' which has transformed an industrial brownfield site into a beacon of regeneration for the local borough. During the excavation of the site they unearthed a quantity of sandstone grinding wheels, which can now be seen incorporated into the flower bed at the entrance of

the estate. Retrace your steps and rejoin the canal towpath at the Coalbournbrook Bridge.

## Point 5 - Site of the old Dial Glass Cone



In 1788 a glasshouse cone was rebuilt on the side of the canal known as the New Dial Glassworks.

Since 1922 the site has been occupied by Plowden & Thompson which for many years has supplied mostly industrial glassware, with a speciality in making glass tubing and other known products such as Bullseye window glass and cat's eyes for road safety. They now specialise in military products and use old craft skills to produce items for new 21st century cutting edge technology.

You will pass a row of canal cottages on the approach to Longboat Lane Bridge and continue to walk along the towpath.

At the Wordsley Canal Junction the canal widens considerably. Turn right here and follow northeast and onwards into the heart of the industrial Black Country.



The short trail ends at Glasshouse Bridge and you have the option to walk back to the Bonded Warehouse along the main A491 road towards Stourbridge (approximately 1.5 miles) or catch a local bus service into Stourbridge.

## **Point 6 (optional)**

### **Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley**



Just a short walk from Glasshouse Bridge, walk up the ramp and bear left. You will see the church tower of the Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley. It is known as the Church of the Glassmakers, as many of the famous names of the glassmaking fraternity are buried here - Northwood, Stuarts, Carder, Richardson, Webbs, to name but a few.

To continue the trail, return to the canal towpath, passing beneath the Henderson Bridge with lock 14 just afterwards.

## **Point 7 - The 'heart of the Crystal Mile'**

The biggest concentration of glasshouse cones once stood here.



As we approach the Glasshouse Bridge, immediately behind the roadside wall on the right-hand side is Stourbridge Glass Museum, which is situated on the site of the former Stuart Crystal Works and the White House Glass Cone c.1780.

The museum proudly hosts the best of the globally significant Stourbridge Glass Collection along with interactive digital displays that detail Stourbridge Glass Quarter's 400-year history. Admission charges apply. It is also home to artist Allister Malcolm's Hot Shop, which delivers regular live glassmaking demonstrations and Terri Colledge, Cameo glass engraver.

[www.stourbridgeglassmuseum.org.uk](http://www.stourbridgeglassmuseum.org.uk)

Crossing over the main road you will see the magnificent structure of the Red House Glass Cone, a Grade II listed building built circa 1790s. Today, the Red House Glass Cone has a gift shop, a variety of artisan craft studios for you to explore and a programme of events and activities throughout the year including adults and children's craft sessions. The Red House Glass Cone has recently undergone major restoration works to preserve it for generations to come and we are currently relocating our Hot Glass Studio and hope to have glass blowing demonstrations soon. You can stop here and enjoy a picnic by the canal. Pre-bookable guided tours are also available for a fee. Please check our website, social media and TicketSource for up to date information. Admission is free and there is also free car parking.

Visit [www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/) or call **01384 812750**.



## **Point 8 - Climbing the Stourbridge Sixteen**



Continuing the walk, just beyond the Red House Glass Cone, along the Stourbridge Sixteen locks canal and Dadford's Bridge, you will be heading towards an attractive lock cottage. The canal has changed considerably in character because of its route uphill. If you stand over a small bridge and look back down the flight of locks you will see a spectacular view overlooking the Red House Glass Cone.





*The Samson & Lion*

Eventually you will pass Swan Lane Bridge as you approach the Samson & Lion Public House, which is adjacent to locks 4 and 5. Here you will see the rope marks along the coping stones of the wall (left) where the horse drawn narrowboats once worked the towpath.

Continue to walk straight ahead crossing underneath Brierley Hill Road Bridge and you will come to a sign for Buckpool Nature Reserve on your left. A colliery stood here in the 1800s which claimed the death by fire-damp (suffocation and explosion) of several men.



*Top Lock Bridge*

A few hundred metres beyond here there is a canal junction. Continue to walk straight ahead and eventually turn right over Top Lock Bridge between locks 1 and 2. You will now find yourself on the opposite side of the canal as you cross over the bridge. Although not part of this walk, a short distance along the towpath, once stood the world famous Royal Brierley Crystal Factory formerly Stevens & Williams. The site has now been redeveloped as housing but the house of the famous cameo glass engraver John Northwood, Honeybourne Cottage has been renovated and is still standing.

In the distance you will see the view of a very tall white industrial chimney and just around the corner you will come to Leys Bridge. Follow the canal towpath eventually passing underneath Farmers Bridge. Continue to walk along the towpath underneath Brierley Bridge and then Bull Street Bridge.



## **Point 9 (optional) Historic brickworks office made of firebricks**

If you choose to continue a little further along the canal, after 200 metres you will pass beneath a railway bridge. This was the railway which ran to Round Oak Steelworks and then to the freightliner depot in Dudley.

After another 200 metres you will come to Brettell Lane road bridge. Go under the road bridge and walk up the ramp to the roadside. Turn right and walk for 50 yards - the Harris and Pearson building is on the opposite side of the road. This building was constructed from bricks made from clays extracted from the local mines. The clay from this area was also used to make crucibles or pots for melting the raw materials for glass making.

Retrace your steps and rejoin the canal towpath. As you continue you will come across the old Silver End railway bridge on to Bowen's Bridge where the Lion Court Homes development is on the site of the former Delph Bottleworks. In 1893, two men were killed after being engulfed by molten glass while working under the furnace. The Delph Bottleworks was a major producer of a wide range of glass bottles during this period.

## **The mineral wealth beneath your feet**

As you continue to walk along the towpath opposite the Lion Court homes housing development, on the left hand side you will see Chapel Street and the flats of Brierley Hill in the distance.



*Open-cast mining c.1960s*

Approach the Seven Dwellings Bridge and turn right down a path towards Sainsbury's, Amblecote. This area is known as Withymoor and latterly was an open cast colliery. Nowadays, it is a large residential housing estate built in the 1980s. This area, all around the Delph across Withymoor and down to Wordsley, was the prime fireclay mining area of the Black Country. Where Sainsbury's and the housing estate now stand was all part of a large mining area of more than 50 pits and collieries at various times over the last few centuries.



*Seven Dwellings Bridge*

## **Point 10 - Refreshment opportunity**

As you approach Seven Dwellings Bridge you will see a signpost and a path on your right leading downhill towards Sainsbury's. Follow this path. You can catch a bus from outside the Withymoor Surgery opposite Sainsbury's to return to the Bonded Warehouse.

If you stop for refreshments inside Sainsbury's, to continue to the Bonded Warehouse cross over the zebra crossing outside the supermarket entrance opposite Withymoor Surgery, turn left and continue along Kirkstone Way.

Continue to walk straight ahead along Kirkstone Way through the housing estate until you come to a mini



*Withymoor Village on the site of the former open-cast mine*

roundabout. Turn right onto Vicarage Road and walk down past Corbett Hospital on your right hand side. At the traffic lights at the bottom of the road turn left past Holy Trinity Church Amblecote (built in 1842). The church was constructed from firebrick which gives it the distinctive old gold colour. Opposite Holy Trinity Church Amblecote, is Stourbridge Football ground. It was once part of the site of one of the first glasshouses in Stourbridge. Holloway End Glasshouse, dating back to the 16th century, James Keir one of its former owners was the much celebrated engineer of this time and member of the Lunar Society. Other famous owners circa 1850 include Joseph Webb who went on to become a big influence in the Stourbridge Glass industry and also Edward Webb who took over the Red House Glass Cone in the 1850s. A pencil drawing of the inside of Holloway End Glassworks apparently now hangs in Derby Museum.

## **Point 11 - Holy Trinity Church, Amblecote**



*Holy Trinity Church, Amblecote*

As a slight detour, take a look inside the graveyard of the church and you will see the headstones of some famous glassmakers including Joseph Webb - glass manufacturer of Holloway End and Coalbourn Hill, Adolph Zinke - glass engraver, William Fritsche - glass engraver. Both originally from Bohemia circa 1860s.

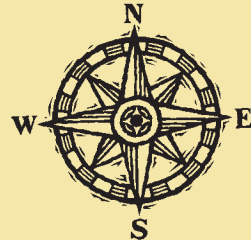
## **Point 12 - Journey's end, Bonded Warehouse**

Retrace your steps and continue to walk towards Stourbridge Ring Road until you reach a pelican crossing. Cross and walk towards the Bonded Warehouse in Canal Street, back to where you started the walk.



**KEY**

- Trail
- Canal
- Road
- River
- Railway
- Freight line
- Locks
- Museum





Accompanying this leaflet is a short film showing some of the highlights from this walk. To view go to **[youtube.com/user/dudleymbc](https://www.youtube.com/user/dudleymbc)** and enter Crystal Mile into the search or follow the QR code.

## **Stourbridge Canal & Glass Quarter heritage trail**

Visitors are requested to remain on designated footpaths and not to enter any safety fenced areas. The heritage trail provides good access to the main features of interest. Many of the paths are surfaced but may be muddy when wet. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear.

### **Other publications**

There are other publications on the Stourbridge Glass Quarter. For further historical and heritage information throughout this walk in more detail download a copy of the heritage trail at **[www.glassquarter.org.uk](http://www.glassquarter.org.uk)** or **[www.discoverdudley.org.uk](http://www.discoverdudley.org.uk)**

### **Further visitor information**

For further information on the Stourbridge Glass Quarter visit **[www.glassquarter.org.uk](http://www.glassquarter.org.uk)**

There's lots to see and do in the borough of Dudley. To find out more visit **[www.discoverdudley.org.uk](http://www.discoverdudley.org.uk)**

### **Disclaimer**

Every effort has been made to check the accuracy of information included in this leaflet. Dudley Council and the places featured cannot guarantee the accuracy of the details included and therefore accept no responsibility. Visitors should check details with attractions before travelling.

Should you have any comments about this guide, please email **[tourism@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@dudley.gov.uk)**

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