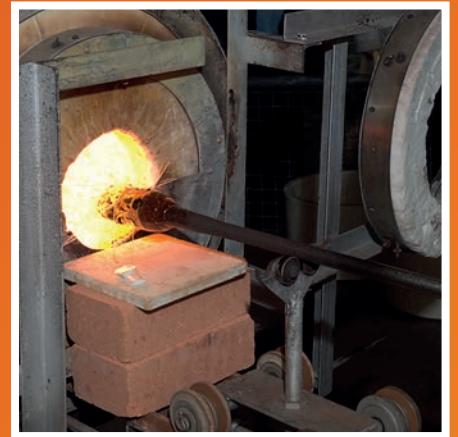


Stourbridge Canal & Glass Quarter

HERITAGE TRAIL



Funded by
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Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council



West Midlands
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Stourbridge Canal & Glass Quarter Heritage Trail

Stourbridge's Glass Quarter is world famous for its glass making heritage. This booklet accompanies our two self guided circular walking tours, to ensure you get as much out of the experience as possible. By following this walk you will learn about Stourbridge's 400 year association with this industry and the important landmarks along the routes - it is not an exhaustive account, but a shortened version for the purposes of the tour.

The shorter circular walk is around one and a half miles long, starting at the Bonded Warehouse in Stourbridge and ending at the Red House Glass Cone and Stourbridge Glass Museum in Wordsley. It should take around an hour to complete, but please allow extra time for your return journey.

The longer circular walk is around five to six miles and will take around three hours to complete non-stop and more depending on whether you stop for refreshments and choose to include the optional detours as mentioned in the guide, depending upon the pace of your walk.

There are refreshments and toilet facilities available along the trail.

Free car parking is available beyond the Bonded Warehouse, alongside the canal, (**SAT NAV DY8 4LU**), at Ruskin Glass Centre, the Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge Glass Museum and Sainsbury's in Amblecote. There are also opportunities for return bus services back to the beginning of the walk at the Bonded Warehouse.

Wayside interpretation is available at some points along the route to help you gain further information on the history and heritage of the Glass Quarter.

For further information and to download a copy of our abridged version of this leaflet please visit www.glassquarter.org.uk or www.discoverdudley.org.uk

We hope you enjoy the walk.



Lower main floor of Stourbridge Glass Museum

Brief history of the Stourbridge glass industry

Stourbridge is located in the borough of Dudley, in the Black Country. The Black Country is so named because of its major part in the industrial revolution with its coal mines, iron foundries, steel mills, glass furnaces and glass making industries. Quite often referred to as 'a country black by day and red by night'.

Stourbridge is internationally renowned for its glassmaking heritage and this goes back over 400 years. Its timeline runs from the Baptism records at Kingswinford Parish Church where the first written evidence is an entry dated 26 April 1612, recording John, son of Paul Tyzach. The father's occupation is recorded as 'glassmaker'.

In 1615, King James 1st decreed there was to be no mass coppicing of forests for charcoal or other fuel for industrial uses. This included the making of glass as the majority of woodlands were to be preserved for growing trees for the building of his fleet. Alternative fuels such as coal were needed and the coalfields were the best places to settle industry. In the case of glass making they also provided other raw materials such as fireclay.

Three notable families moved to Stourbridge in the 'South Staffordshire or Black Country Coalfield' around this time, the Tyzacks, Henzeys and Titterys. These families had moved to Britain from Lorraine in Northern France where they were specialists in the making of window glass. They were attracted to the area because of the rich geology which provided a huge abundance of raw materials needed for the making of glass, coal, sand, fireclay and access to the River Stour.

The first glasshouse was established at Hungary Hill just on the outskirts of Stourbridge in the Stour Valley.

The transportation of a fragile product such as window glass on rough tracks by packhorses was not ideal and in 1779 saw the completion of the building of the Stourbridge Canal.

Over the next 150 years a chain of 16 glasshouses emerged along the main Stourbridge to Kingswinford road - this is today referred to as the Crystal Mile. You will find the canal and main road are in close proximity to each other to make the process easier as the calm waters of the canal ensured a safe passage for the fragile glass.



The Stourbridge Canal Main Line is a little over five miles long, has 20 locks and links the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal with the Dudley No.1 Canal. Its Town Arm runs lock free from Wordsley Junction for 1.2 miles to its terminus at Stourbridge.

The construction of the canal provided a wonderful service to the glassmaking industry bringing in bulk loads of raw materials such as fine silica sand, red lead oxide, potash and saltpetre. It also gently floated finished products out of Stourbridge destined for worldwide distribution through Liverpool docks via the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal connecting to the Trent and Mersey Canal, or down to Stourport to journey along the River Severn to Gloucester and Bristol docks.

Many crystal manufacturers contributed financially to the building of the canal and most established their companies on the canalside. Several even had branches of the canal going into the heart of their factories for easy unloading and loading of products.

The Old Dial Glass works was moved 800 yards down the bank to be on the canalside, where it still stands. Today it operates as Plowden & Thompson at the New Dial Glassworks.

Start of the walk



We begin both trails at the Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge (**SAT NAV DY8 4LU**). Please park beyond the Bonded Warehouse, alongside the canal as shown in this picture. Please do not park outside the Bonded Warehouse or in the private parking bays.

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. There is an option of a public bus service to return to the Bonded Warehouse.

The longer walking route option is approximately five to six miles and also returns to 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. It is located on the Stourbridge Arm of the canal and is the terminus for this branch of the canal at this wharf. It is now home to several activity groups and clubs. Every October the Stourbridge Navigation Trust hold a very popular open weekend with stall holders and family fun activities which are enjoyed by the public.

Boat trips along the Stourbridge Canal and the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal regularly operate, including special events held throughout the year on the Blackcountry Man boat trips.

For more details visit

www.thebondedwarehousestourbridge.co.uk

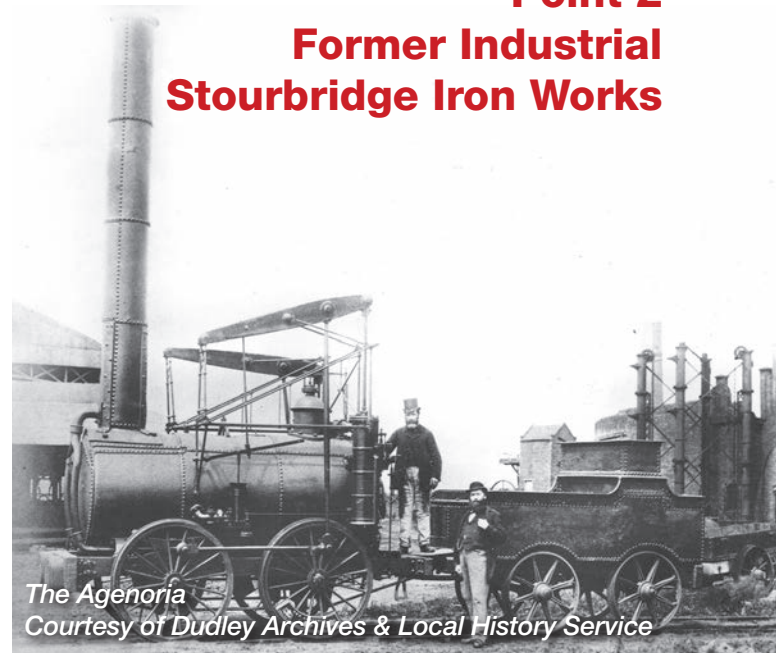


Blackcountry Man boat trip

If you look over the car park wall you will see the River Stour, reputed to have been one of the most industrial of the smaller rivers in the country during the Industrial Revolution. There were many small craft workshops established on its banks using the natural resource of water to power dozens of mills.

In the 1600's a leading engineer, Andrew Yarranton, attempted to make the river navigable between Stourbridge and Stourport as a means of transporting goods in and out of the Black Country. It was reported that due to floods (and maybe sabotage by the boatmen of Bewdley whose livelihoods were threatened by this new water route into the area), the scheme failed. From here, walk westwards along the Stourbridge Town Line canal.

Point 2 Former Industrial Stourbridge Iron Works



*The Agenoria
Courtesy of Dudley Archives & Local History Service*

You will see former buildings alongside the canal which once belonged to the Stourbridge Iron works, Foster, Rastrick & Co. This company was a pioneer in manufacturing steam engines and is most famous for the making of the Stourbridge Lion steam locomotive, the first locomotive to be run on rails in the United States. In 1829, the steam engine named 'Agenoria' was built here and carried coal on the level section of the track from the Earl of Dudley's Shutt End colliery down to the canal. The 'Agenoria' is now on display at the National Railway Museum at York.

As part of this important industrial heritage area one such development has been Riverside House. 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 for open day events and more details.

You will come across the Neville Garratt Bridge. It was cast in 1873 by John Bradley & Co. As you continue to walk westwards and northwards along the canal be sure to look out for wildlife, listen to birdsong and wave to the occasional canal boat sailing by. The canals are now the focus of many outdoor pursuits including walking, cycling, canoeing and angling, all enjoying the wonderful environment the canalside offers.



Point 3 Ruskin Glass Centre and Glasshouse Heritage Centre



Coalbournbrook Bridge

As you approach the Coalbournbrook Bridge at Wollaston Road you will see on your right the moorings of Glasshouse College. This site has a major significance in the heritage of the Stourbridge glass industry. In 2014, two archaeological digs revealed the workings of two glass houses - Coalbournbrook c1692 and Coalbourn Hill c1691. During the excavation work a canal arm was revealed which brought the raw materials into the heart of the factory. This was then serviced by a tunnel. On close examination of the canal wall on the opposite bank, at the top end of the mooring you will see a curvature in the canalside wall. This was the entrance to the factory canal arm just before Coalbournbrook Bridge.



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. Webb Corbett Crystal was purchased by Royal Doulton in 1966 and it later became Royal Doulton Crystal. Crystal production ceased in 1999. In 2000, the site was purchased by Ruskin Mill Land Trust, who specialise in educating young people with learning disabilities through a craft and land based curriculum.



Ruskin Glass Centre

Converted with the aid of Heritage Lottery and regional development funding, the Ruskin Glass Centre is now home to talented glass blowers, glass repairers and many more craft workshops. Why not pop in and take a look while you are here? Leave the canal towpath, turning left and walk over the bridge towards Ruskin Glass Centre.

There are several craft workshops, normal opening hours are Monday to Saturday 10am to 4pm. If you are interested in visiting any of the workshops please note they are independently owned and operate their own opening hours. We recommend you contact them directly to check before making your journey. The Ruskin Glass Centre has an organic cafe and toilet facilities.

The larger Lower Glasshouse has been converted into a 400-seat theatre known as Glasshouse Arts Centre. This amazing space is one of Stourbridge's largest performing arts venues with a regular calendar of events. Visit

www.ruskinglasscentre.co.uk or telephone **01384 399410** for more details.

At the lower level, the old stoke house room, known as the 'Caves', houses the Glasshouse Heritage Centre.

The centre offers visitors the chance to learn about the manufacturing process of Webb Corbett/Royal Doulton hand cut crystal which has been made on this site since 1914. Opening hours vary. Please telephone **01384 399419** to check before your journey.



Glasshouse Heritage Centre

You can retrace your steps and rejoin the canal towpath at this point. Alternatively, continue past where you would rejoin the towpath and just walk a little further up Wollaston Road to 'Doulton Brook'.

Point 4 - Doulton Brook (optional)



You will see a housing estate 'Doulton Brook'. This has transformed an industrial brownfield site into a beacon of regeneration for the local borough with affordable homes for the local community. During the excavation of the site they unearthed a quantity of sandstone grinding wheels, which have been incorporated into the flower bed at the entrance of the estate.

There is documented evidence from the 16th century that there was a water mill on the River Stour at Wollaston Mill and in the 17th century, the river was harnessed to drive a slitting (iron) mill.

Trade directories show Samuel Hodgson & Co started making spades and shovels on this site. Eventually it was taken over by Isaac Nash Jr who made a range of hand tools for agriculture and the building trade. The factory closed in 1957.

Point 5 Wollaston Road Canal Bridge and Richardson Drive

This bridge once carried the Kinver light railway, an electrified tram service which ran from here to Kinver from 1901 until 1930. During recent road repair work on the road above, the tram rails were found buried below the road surface. It is reported that at its peak it carried 30,000 passengers over one weekend to Kinver Edge.

Carry on along the tow path, under the road bridge. Observe the brickwork structure under the bridge where you can clearly see evidence of the widening of the road above.

You will notice on your left a housing development 'Richardson Drive'. During the excavation of this site, the remains of a glasshouse cone were revealed by the canalside. Occupants of Richardson Drive frequently find glass fragments in their gardens which came from 'The Canalside Glassworks'.

Point 6 - Site of the old Dial Glass Cone

In 1704, at the bottom of Brettell Lane, the Dial Glass cone was built (which is now the site of a large supermarket). With the building of the Stourbridge Canal in the 1770s the owners of the glassworks realised the benefits the canal would bring. It enabled the supply of raw materials to be brought directly into the factory and the transportation of finished products out. They decided to relocate their operation and in 1788 rebuilt a glasshouse cone on the side of the canal, known as the New Dial Glassworks.

The date of move can be confirmed by a plaque which can still be seen in the truncated glass cone with a date of 1788 - nine years after the canal was opened.

The cone would have been 170 feet tall, but the height was reduced in 1935 due to the top half becoming unstable. A metal canopy was installed which you can clearly see today. As you approach the works you will see an arched opening into the canalside wall which was a service tunnel into the glassworks.

Since 1922 the site has been occupied by Plowden and Thompson. For many years they have supplied mostly industrial glassware, with a speciality of making glass tubing and other known products such as Bullseye window glass, Victorian



Inset: Service tunnel which allowed for the removal of ash from below the furnace

cellar lights and cat's eyes for road safety. They even had decorated pieces of glassware at the 1851 Great Exhibition. In 2013, the company was taken over by an American firm who specialise in military products and this company is now using its old craft skills for producing products for new cutting edge technology in the 21st century.

Stourbridge Glass Company was established in 1922. They were located at Junction Road, Audnam and changed their name in 1972 to Tudor Crystal. Unfortunately, the site was sold and the factory closed in 1991.

In 1995 the Tudor Crystal name was purchased by a group of redundant craftsmen from Thomas Webb. They called the company Denis Hall Crystal, and they worked from a factory in Brockmoor. The business was short lived.

The company was then purchased by the proprietors of Plowden and Thompson who transferred the production of the Tudor Crystal range to its factory at the New Dial Glassworks, Audnam. Tudor Crystal no longer exists but Plowden & Thompson remains.

Point 7 Wordsley Canal Junction & The Black Country 'Venice'

As we approach the Wordsley junction of the Stourbridge Canal it is worth reflecting on the history of the construction of the canal. "Canal Mania" swept across the UK starting in the 1760's and peaked in the 1790's. It is often reported that the Black Country has more canal mileage than Venice.

At the canal junction the canal widens considerably and we turn right at a finger post sign for Birmingham/Black Country, following it to the northeast and onwards into the heart of the industrial Black Country.



The Battle for Stourbridge Cut

With the emergence of the railway network and improvements in road transport the need for canal transport declined. Gradually the result was the disbandment of much of the canal network and many canals became blocked by overgrown vegetation and silt due to the lack of boat traffic clearing the routes. The Stourbridge Town Arm of the canal was a prime example of disbandment. 1962 saw the "Battle of the Stourbridge Cut", where a group of volunteers took it upon themselves to start a restoration project of this section of the canal. This was to become a catalyst for many other canal restoration projects around the UK.

This was the first recorded example of volunteers working alongside the canal authorities in restoration and established a model that continues to this day.

Point 8 - Concrete Boats

As we approach Glasshouse Bridge, on the far bank of the canal you will notice a concrete structure just above the waterline, immediately below the outflow and just before lock 13. This was one of two concrete narrow boats located on this stretch of the canal made by the firm "A H Guest Builder" of Coalbournbrook Wharf, Amblecote and placed here as bank protection. Made in the First World War, the materials used were concrete to conserve steel and timber. The other one of these narrow boats has been preserved and is on display at the National Waterways Museum, Gloucester.



Concrete narrowboat

There were reportedly six originally made and four remain unlocated.

Point 9 **The 'heart of the Crystal Mile'**

Here once stood the biggest concentration of glasshouse cones. The wall on your left would have been the boundary wall of the Wordsley Flint Glassworks (established 1750 and ran until 1930). Records show the cone was demolished with explosives in 1946 and German and Italian prisoners of war were used to clean off the bricks. During much of its production life, the works were run by the Richardson family and was renowned for its pioneering work in developing coloured glassware.

To your right, you will see the refurbished building. These walls were part of the Stuart Crystal factory up until 2001.

As we approach the bridge, immediately behind the roadside wall on the right-hand side would have stood the White House Glass Cone c.1780. The furnace within would have been fuelled by coal.

In 1897, Webb & Corbett was founded in the White House Cone. On Tuesday 31 March 1914 there was a devastating fire in the works and the company relocated to Coalbourn Hill Glassworks, Amblecote.

The site was bought by Stuart Crystal in 1916. In 1934, the company built a new factory alongside the White House Cone, and the original cone was then truncated for safety reasons and used as a warehouse. Within the new factory, they installed a multi pot furnace. This was fuelled by producer gas which is gas made on site from coal. Some years later it was converted to fuel oil and later converted back to gas. This multi pot furnace ran continuously for over 60 years until it was replaced by a tank furnace in 1987.

In 1945, Second World War production was diverted to making aircraft landing lights and Cathode ray tubes for the war effort.

Stuart Crystal factory produced some of the world's finest hand cut crystal in the 20th century. At its peak, they employed over 500 staff around the

UK with factories in Scotland and Wales. Stuart Crystal was taken over by Waterford Wedgwood in 1995 and closed in 2001 with a loss of 220 jobs.



New housing behind Stourbridge Glass Museum

After years of neglect and vandalism the derelict site was acquired by a developer for regeneration and affordable homes. They generously agreed to develop the site of the old White House Cone into a new state of the art Glass Museum. Stourbridge Glass Museum is home to the best of the globally significant Stourbridge Glass Collection.



Set in the heart of the Glass Quarter, Stourbridge Glass Museum is home to hundreds of important artefacts, complemented by engaging interactive digital displays exploring the area's 400-year history of glass making including a replica of the Stourbridge Portland Vase on display. Interestingly, Joseph Locke/Richardson & Son also made a replica Portland Vase for the 1878 Paris exhibition and this is now on display along with the John Northwood's replica in Corning Museum, New York state. The Museum also features a live Hot Shop, run by glass artist Allister Malcolm and his team, enthralling visitors with demonstrations of the craft and Terri Colledge, cameo glass engraver.

Within the museum gallery, multi-sensory interactives enable museum goers to experience the sights and sounds of a busy glasswork 200 years ago. Additionally, the create-your-own glass interactives allow visitors to design cameo glass masterpieces and send them to their email address.

The Museum also runs a lively events programme for all age groups, featuring children's activities, talks, artist workshops and exhibitions.

Stourbridge Glass Museum is open Tuesday to Sunday 10.30am to 4.30pm from 1 April to 31 October and 10.30am to 4.30pm Thursday to Saturday from 1 November to 31 March. Admission charges apply.

Visit stourbridgeglassmuseum.org.uk or call **01384 900447** for further information.

Frederick Stuart started work at the Red House Glass Cone at the age of 11 years old in 1827. He went on to become one of the proprietors of Mills, Webb and Stuart in 1853 operating in the Albert Glassworks.

In the 1870's, a new innovation was installed into the Red House Glass Cone - a Frisbie Furnace which fed coal directly into the furnace which made it far more efficient.

The first glass replica of the Portland Vase was produced in 1873 by Daniel Hancock and his glassmaking team in the cone. In 1876, John Northwood finished engraving the Portland Vase replica after three years' work.

Frederick Stuart took over the lease on the Red House Glass Cone in 1881 and in 1883 formed a partnership with his sons to become Stuart & Sons.

In 1910, through one of its subsidiary companies "Stonier" based in Liverpool and Southampton, Stuart's provided the crystal tableware for the ill-fated Titanic.

Stuart & Sons became a limited company in 1911.

During the early months of the First World War, Stuart and Sons' manufacturing switched to light bulbs for the War Ministry.

In 1920, the company purchased the lease of the Red House site and 1936 saw the last production at the Red House Glass Cone. Production was transferred to the new factory on the opposite side of the road in Vine Lane.

The Red House Glass Cone in its heyday was nothing like what you see today. It was cold, draughty, dirty and wet. It was a hazardous working environment as recorded by Ralph Bowater, the last person who worked at the Red House Glass Cone.

In 1984, a single pot furnace was installed for demonstration and product development work and opened as a museum.

Throughout the late 1990's the site was used for sales offices, a retail factory shop, a warehouse for factory seconds and a glass repair unit. In 1995, Waterford Wedgwood purchased the company, Stuart Crystal and site.

In 2001, the ownership of the Red House Glass Cone site transferred to Dudley Council and a large-scale refurbishment took place. This enabled the site to be converted and opened in 2002 as a major visitor attraction.

Crossing over the main road you will see the magnificent structure of the Red House Glass Cone, Grade II listed building. It was built by Richard Bradley in 1790, for the purpose of making window glass. The cone is 110 feet tall, 60 feet in diameter and one of only four in the UK with the others at Lemington, near Newcastle upon Tyne, Catcliffe and Alloa.

The Red House Glass Cone is certainly the Cone in the best condition and has recently undergone major restoration works to preserve it for generations to come. Today, the Red House Glass Cone has a gift shop, a variety of artisan craft studios and a programme of events and activities throughout the year including adults and children's craft sessions. Pre-bookable guided tours are also available.

We are currently redeveloping our hot glass studio and plan to have live glassblowing demonstrations running very soon. Please check our website, social media or TicketSource for up to date information and events.

This is an opportunity to stop for refreshments or use the toilet facilities. There is plenty of seating by the canal to enjoy your picnic and we are hoping to have an on-site cafe up and running very soon.

The Red House Glass Cone is open from Monday to Friday 10am to 3pm and Saturday & Sunday 11am to 4pm. For further information visit www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums or call **01384 812750**.



At this half way point in the longer walk you have the options of walking back to the Bonded Warehouse by retracing your steps along the main A491 road towards Stourbridge (approximately one and a half miles) or you can catch a 16, 17 or 17a bus from just outside the Cone back to the Bonded Warehouse. If you take this option you will find there is a bus stop just beyond the Bonded Warehouse on the opposite side of the road going into the town centre. The bus stops just before the Stourbridge Ring Road where you can alight and walk back to your car.

If you wish to continue beyond the Red House Glass Cone and Stourbridge Sixteen Locks, the walk will last approximately another two or more hours, depending on the pace of your walk.

Point 10 (optional) The Glassmakers Church



At the Glasshouse Bridge, you will see a ramp leading up to the main road, bear left and you will see on the horizon the church tower of the Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley. This is known as the Church of the Glassmakers. As many of the famous names of the glassmaking fraternity are buried here including Northwood, Stuarts, Carder, Richardson, Webb's, to name but a few. It is also famous for its wonderful stained glass windows, many of which were sponsored by the local glass manufacturing families. Retrace your steps back to the canal.



Continue to walk along the canal towpath passing underneath Henderson Bridge, with lock 14 just afterwards.

Point 11 Crossing a great geological fault onto the coalfield

As you continue along the next section of canal towpath we cross a great geological fault - (The Western Boundary Fault of the South Staffordshire or Black Country Coalfield).

As we carry on towards the staircase of locks, on your right hand side used to be the Albert Glass works formerly the site of Wordsley Iron Foundry Mill. In 1853, Webb and Stuart commissioned a new glass cone to be built on this site.



Both the West and East branches of the Western Boundary Fault are just above the Samson & Lion public house and extend onto the exposed coalfield itself. This entire landscape was created from the minerals extracted from the ground.

Underneath the glass industry buildings covered so far there is a great thickness of solid red sandstones. This was formed in hot scorching deserts about 250 million years ago in a time that geologists call the Permo-Triass. They provide a

good, strong foundation zone on which heavy buildings, like large glassworks could be built. These sandy rocks are quite porous and water drains away through them easily meaning they don't become waterlogged and boggy when it rains. That is why the canals in this area have brick and clay linings to keep their precious resource of water in them!

Only 50m to the east and north of these glasshouses you cross this 'boundary fault' and the rich mineral wealth contained within the Coal Measures sequences of the exposed coalfield is just beneath the turf. The rocks immediately beneath the surface at this point are very different. They comprise a series of thick beds of fine fireclay and coal. Fireclay, in contrast to rough or brick clay was the essential material for making bricks suitable for lining furnaces and glass kilns which can resist the high melting temperatures and aggressive chemistry of molten glass. Good quality fireclay was found to be particularly abundant in this part of the coalfield and is the primary reason the glass industry settled here.

The second most important reason was a rock which burned called coal. Abundant coal was the fuel required to burn to create heat within the furnaces. It was used to melt the imported silica sand and other special powdered constituents which made coloured and complex glass products.

The coal was the industrial mineral providing the energy which powered all of the heavy Black Country industries. Its extraction and burning turned the whole region dark and smoky, and is one of the reasons this area became known as the Black Country in the nineteenth century. In the 1800's where you now stand would have been a landscape of Pitheads and chimneys linked by the canals. Much of this heritage has now disappeared from the landscape and been replaced by newer buildings, but if you know how to look, traces of the past can still be seen.

The geology and human heritage within the Black Country are very special indeed. They are internationally important as we are a Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark. Within such a large heritage area a number of its best, most accessible and rarest special places are used to tell its story. These are its 'geosites'. The Stourbridge Glass Quarter is the basis of this walk and is one such geosite. It contains truly world-class geological and glass heritage. For more information visit

<https://blackcountrygeopark.dudley.gov.uk/bcg/>

Point 12 - Climbing the Stourbridge Sixteen



Continue to walk up along the Stourbridge Sixteen locks canal and Dadford's Bridge just beyond the Red House Glass Cone. You will be walking towards an attractive lock cottage and other buildings dating back to the days when this was a thriving settlement which included the canal company's dry dock. The canal has changed considerably in character because of its route uphill. At some locks a wide pond allows boats to moor and pass. If you stand over a small bridge and look back down the flight of locks you will see a spectacular view of the Red House Glass Cone.



Eventually you will pass Swan Lane Bridge approaching the Samson & Lion Public House in Brierley Hill, adjacent to lock 5 and lock 4. Here you will see the rope marks along the coping stones of the wall where the horse drawn narrowboats once worked the towpath. Continue to walk straight ahead crossing Brierley Hill Road Bridge and you will come across a sign for Buckpool Nature Reserve on your left.

There was a colliery here in the 1800's which claimed the death by fire-damp (suffocation and explosion) of several men.

A few hundred metres beyond here is a canal junction. Continue to walk straight ahead and eventually turn right over Top Lock Bridge between

lock 1 and lock 2 and you will find yourself on the opposite side of the canal as you cross over the bridge.



You will see a view in the distance of a very tall white industrial chimney and just around the corner you will come to Leys Bridge. Follow the canal towpath eventually passing beneath Farmer's Bridge and continue along the towpath.

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.

Continue to walk along the towpath beneath Brierley Bridge and eventually Bull Street Bridge.

Point 13 (optional) **Historic brickworks office** **made of firebricks**



If you choose to continue, after 200 metres further along the canal, you will pass beneath a railway bridge across the canal. 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 opposite. As a short detour, go under the bridge and back up the ramp, turn right at the main road. 50 yards on the opposite side of the road is a beautiful yellow-brick building with a sign showing Harris & Pearson (1860). This building was constructed from the bricks made from clays extracted from the local mines. As its peak, 28,000 bricks per week were produced and transported via the Stourbridge canal system for use in local industry.

The clay from this area was also used to make crucibles, or pots, for melting of the raw materials for glass making.

Retrace your steps and rejoin the canal towpath. Continue to walk until you come across the old Silver End railway bridge on to Bowen's Bridge. The Lion Court Homes development is on the site of the former Delph Bottle works. In 1893, two men were killed after being engulfed by molten glass while working under the furnace. The Delph Bottle works were 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 you will see the flats of Brierley Hill in the distance. This area is known as Withymoor and in its heyday was once an open cast colliery. Nowadays, it is a large residential housing estate built in the 1980's. You will see from the black and white photograph the opencast mining taking place.

The area all around the Delph across Withymoor and down to Wordsley was the prime fireclay mining area of the Black Country.

The place 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



Open-cast mining c. 1960s

various times over the last few centuries. Their abandoned shafts and galleries were dug out completely by a huge opencast coal mine called the Amblecote Opencast which operated between 1965 and 1972 that stretched all the way to the canal. The rock waste from the opencast was then layered and recompactd to make a platform to build the new houses and store on.

One of the old abandoned collieries (which stood adjacent to the canal, immediately next to the railway bridge you can see from the footbridge on the walk) was called Hardingsfield Colliery. Records from this colliery show the range of minerals worked beneath the surface to a depth of 112m. They included more than 20 workable mineral seams including Thick Coal at 9m in thickness. Records from nearby collieries show the geology beneath the area was relatively simple. The strata gently inclines to the North West at an angle of 2 - 3 degrees from the horizontal outcrop at the surface places or at a very shallow depth with many more occurring with increasing depth below.

Point 14 Refreshment opportunity

As you approach Seven Dwellings Bridge you will see a signpost and a path towards your right leading downhill towards Sainsbury's. Follow the path downhill. Here you can turn right, eventually leading to Kirkstone Way.

This is your final opportunity to stop for refreshments at the cafe inside Sainsbury's where there are also toilet facilities. For more information visit www.sainsburys.co.uk



Seven Dwellings Bridge



Withymoor Village on the site of former open-cast mine

If you wish to return to the Bonded Warehouse, after leaving Sainsbury's, cross over the zebra crossing outside the supermarket entrance opposite Withymoor Health Centre, 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 roundabout. Turn right onto Vicarage Road and walk down past Corbett Hospital on your right hand side.

The site of Corbett Hospital

John Corbett Esp MP was one of the greatest philanthropists of his time and was born locally at The Delph in 1817, the son of a canal carrier. He became known as "The Salt King" and built and lived at Impney Park, now known as The Chateau Impney in Droitwich. He died in 1901.

He always remembered his origins and in 1891 purchased a mansion estate of 30 acres, known as "The Hill", which he converted into a hospital to serve the people of the area. The original hospital and the remains of the mansion were demolished in 2007. His name lives on in a new hospital building in Vicarage Road.

Previous owners of "The Hill" were industrialists, including glass makers, John Grove, Thomas Rogers and George Mills. George Mills was the owner of the Albert Glassworks.

At the traffic lights at the bottom of Vicarage Road turn left past the church. Holy Trinity Church, Amblecote was built in 1842. It was decided to construct the church from firebrick which gives the building its 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 15 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. These include Joseph Webb, glass manufacturer of Holloway End and Coalbourn Hill, Adolph Zinke, glass engraver, William Fritsche, glass engraver both originally from Bohemia circa 1860s.

As you leave the church, directly opposite is Stourbridge Football Club. To the right hand side of the football ground is Westland Gardens where stood the Holloway End Glasshouse reputed to be one of the older glass cones. Famous names linked to the glasshouse were James Keir who was friends with Josiah Wedgwood and Matthew Boulton (all three were members of the Lunar Society).

Point 16 Bonded Warehouse, end of journey

Retrace your steps and continue to walk towards Stourbridge ring road until you approach a pelican crossing. Cross the pelican crossing and walk back towards the Bonded Warehouse, (past Johnson's Dry Cleaners) turning right into Canal Street and back to where you started the walk.

We hope you have enjoyed the walk and learning about the Stourbridge Canal and glass heritage of the Stourbridge Glass Quarter

*Accompanying this leaflet is a short film showing some of the highlights from this walk. To view go to **youtube.com/user/dudleymbc** and enter *Crystal Mile* in the search or follow the QR code.*



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 including:

Jewels on the Cut by Graham Fisher MBE

Jewels on the Cut II by Graham Fisher MBE

Whiskers on Kittens by Graham Fisher MBE

In Our Time by Graham Fisher MBE

The Portland Vase by Graham Fisher MBE
(foreword by Ian Dury, Glass Heritage Specialist)

Stourbridge Glass Museum by Graham Fisher MBE

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/walking/walking-routes>

www.discoveringbritain.org/activities/west-midlands/walks/stourbridge-canal.html



Further visitor information

Please visit www.glassquarter.org.uk

For further information on places to visit and things to see and do in the borough of Dudley visit www.discoverdudley.org.uk

There are refreshments and toilet facilities including free car parking at Ruskin Glass Centre, Stourbridge Glass Museum, Sainsbury's Amblecote and The Old Wharf Inn, Stourbridge along the heritage trail. The Red House Glass Cone has toilet facilities and there are plans to have refreshment facilities available in the future.

Please visit www.ruskinglasscentre.co.uk
www.stourbridgeglassmuseum.org.uk
www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums
www.sainsburys.co.uk and
<https://oldwharfinn.co.uk/> for further details and opening times.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to check the accuracy of information included in this booklet. 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 booklet, please email tourism@dudley.gov.uk

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