

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

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

Finish at: Red House Glass Cone, Wordsley

Long trail 3.5 miles, duration approximately 3 hours

Finish at: Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge, DY8 4LU

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

Free car parking is available at the start of the walk in parking bays just past Stourbridge's Bonded Warehouse and around the route at Ruskin Glass Centre, 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. It has been necessary to produce a summary of this circular walk. For a detailed version of the Stourbridge Canal and Glass Quarter heritage trail please download a copy from www.glassquarter.org.uk or www.discoverdudley.org.uk



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. 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. "Canal Mania" swept

Start of the trail Both begin at the Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge. Please park in one of the side parking bays just past the Bonded Warehouse. Please do not park outside the Bonded Warehouse. **SAT NAV DY8 4LU**

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

The Bonded Warehouse

The Agnora
Courtesy of Dudley Archives & Local History Service



across the UK, starting in the 1760's and peaking in the 1790's. It is often reported the Black Country has 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 mail road are in close proximity to each other. The calm waters of the canal ensured a safe passage for the fragile glass. Many crystal manufacturers contributed financially to the building of the canal and most established their companies on the canalside.



The longer walking route option is approximately three and half 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. 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

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 or www.discoverdudley.org.uk

Further visitor information

Dudley Council Plus
259 Castle Street, Dudley DY1 1LQ
Tel: 0300 555 2345
Open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm
Saturday 9am to 12 noon

For further information on the Stourbridge Glass Quarter visit 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

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

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Many thanks to Ian Dury, Glass Heritage Specialist for assistance in the production of this leaflet



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. You will come across the Neville Garratt Bridge which was cast in 1873 by John Bradley & Co. Continue to head North West along the canal.



Continue your walk along the Stourbridge Arm canal.

Point 1 - The Bonded Warehouse

The longer walking route option is approximately three and half 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. 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



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.

Point 11 - 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 1860's.

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.

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



The Ruskin Glass Centre is now home to glass blowers, engravers, 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 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 'Douton Brook'.

As you approach the Coalbournbrook Bridge at Wollaston 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 who specialise in educating young people with learning disabilities through a craft and land based curriculum.

Point 3 - Ruskin Glass Centre and Glasshouse Heritage Centre



Approach the Seven Dwellings Bridge and turn right down a path towards Sainsbury's, Amblecote. This area is known as Withymoore and latterly was an open cast colliery. Nowadays, it is a large residential housing estate built in the 1980's. This area, all around the Delph across Withymoore 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.



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 Withymoore Health Centre 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 Withymoore 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





Point 4 - Doulton Brook

You will see a new 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 and Thompson who for many years have supplied mostly industrial glassware, with a speciality of 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 products for new 21st century cutting edge technology.

Their site is also the home of the Tudor Crystal. The factory shop is open Wednesday to Friday 10am to 4.30pm.

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 would have stood the White House Glass Cone c.1780.



The site of the Old White House Cone is being developed into a new state of the art glass museum to hold the Dudley Council glass collection. The White House Cone museum will be managed by the British Glass Foundation and will open to the public in summer 2019. Visit www.britishglassfoundation.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 1790's. Today the Red House Glass Cone has a gift shop, a variety of artists studios, glassblowing demonstrations at weekends and during school holidays. There is a programme of events and activities throughout the year including adult and children's craft sessions. You can stop here for refreshments.

Visit 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.



Eventually you will pass Swan Lane Bridge as you approach the Samson & Lion Public House, which is adjacent to lock 5 and lock 4. 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 1800's which claimed the death by fire-damp (suffocation and explosion) of several men.



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

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 Farmer's Bridge and continue along the towpath. 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 new Lion Court Homes development is on the site of the former Delph Bottleworks. In 1893, two men were killed while working underneath the furnace and were engulfed by molten glass. 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.

