

This leaflet attempts to paint a picture of the history of the street by describing some of the buildings and the people who lived in them.

It is not possible in a leaflet this size to mention all of the fine Georgian buildings that occupy the "street", buildings like the Oakleigh Guest Hotel and the building occupied by the solicitors "Morton Fishers". Much lies hidden behind the front facade of the Street. Here would have been stable yards and storehouses and there is talk of the existence of the "hovels?"

It is hoped the reader will be inspired by this leaflet enough to want to seek out the history of these buildings for themselves.



In Memory of Sarah wife of Jonathon Worthington of Stourport who died Dec 22nd 1796 aged 27 years

Also Mary wife of Aaron who died Jan 29th 1817 aged 78 years.

Also Aaron his son who died August 10th 1793 aged 24 years.

In Memory of Aaron York who died March 19th 1797 aged 55 years.

The chest tomb of the York family situated in St Michael's Churchyard. The inscription reads:



Dates of interest

- 1742 Aaron York born
- 1766 Act of parliament passed for the construction of canal.
- 1771 Canal declared open.
- 1774 The Hop Pole built.
- 1775 Aaron York moves to Stourport.
- 1775 First bridge across the Severn built linking Areley Kings to Stourport.
- 1780 Shakespeare Inn mentioned in rate books.
- 1797 Aaron York dies.
- 1818 Savings Bank opens in temporary offices in York St.
- 1820 The Lord Nelson, first reference.
- 1820 Duke of Wellington, first reference.
- 1820 Population of Stourport 2000.
- 1825 Toll office built.
- 1826 Lock side cottage built.
- 1840 Population of Stourport 3500.
- 1840 First police station established in New St. Later to move to York St.
- 1842 The Foley Arms (beer house) first reference.
- 1902 Doctors Robinson and Giles buy York House to use as a surgery.
- 1922 Dr J. Brockett buys Oakleigh House to convert into a surgery.
- 1938 Wallfield Bridge rebuilt.
- 1972 The police station closes and is moved to Bewdley Road.
- 1997 The last pub in York St., The Lord Nelson, closes.



Julius Harrison Composer and Conductor 1885-1963

The son of Walter Harrison he lived for a while at No. 11 York Street where his father ran a grocery shop. He was a keen cricketer as well as a musician and singer. He was organist at Areley Kings church for many years. A good friend of Edward Elgar he founded the Elgar Festival at Malvern. His two greatest works were his "Mass in C" and his "Requiem". His Requiem was composed to commemorate the centenary of Elgar's birth and was first performed at the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester in 1957.

Beside the lock is the old toll office, built in 1825. Here the barges would pay such tolls as were due on the cargoes they carried. The following year a small cottage, now the Goodnight Sweetheart Tea Rooms, was built beside the toll office for the use of the lock keeper. In the early days the locks could only be used during certain hours but with the coming of "fly boats", the "pony express" of the canal trade, lock keepers were forced to allow passage through the lock both day and night. Not much fun for the poor lock keeper.

Further along the canal side the remains of an old crane can be seen. The buildings at the far end are all that remain of the early Canal Company workshops where boats would have been built and repaired. These have recently been converted to dwellings.

At the east end of the street is Wallfield Bridge which crosses the York Street lock. The present concrete bridge was built in 1938 and replaced an earlier brick built bridge. (Wallfield was the old name for this area of Mitton.) The lock is the link from the canal to the basins, and then through the basins to the River Severn.

Many of the houses on the basin side of the street had tunnels leading from their cellars to the basins to allow for easy transport of goods to and from the basins.

The first police station for Stourport was built in New Street but later moved to new premises built next to The Lord Nelson, very handy for the boys in blue. It is said that one proprietor of the pub hung some coats in the alleyway between the buildings for the "boys" to don over their uniforms, so that they could slip in unnoticed for a "warmer" after a cold night on the beat. It was closed in 1972 when the present police station was built in Bewdley Road. It is now home to a dental practice, but retains the name "Mercian House" to reflect its past use.

Over the years York Street grew and at one time supported three pubs and at least one beer house, indeed Aaron York once owned a pub called The Shakespeare's Inn situated in York Street. Its exact location is unknown but its name may have been changed to The Wellington which is known to have stood at No 2 York Street. Today there are no pubs left, the last to close was The Lord Nelson in 1997. This building is now the York Pharmacy. The exterior of the shop is probably little changed from its days as a pub and the shop sign, resembling as it does a pub sign, helps to retain the image of its past.

York the Street

Unlocking York Street's Past

This leaflet has been produced by The Stourport Civic Society as part of the "Unlocking Stourports Past" project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The opening of the canal in 1771 was to change the little hamlet of Lower Mitton for ever. With it came the need for more housing, stables, pubs and of course churches to fulfil the spiritual needs of the good folk. Industries were to spring up not only along the edge of the basins but ever further into Lower Mitton. Iron foundries, carpet manufacturers, timber merchants were soon demanding the delivery of vital supplies. All these supplies either travelled by barges along the canal from Wolverhampton or from places like Cardiff and Bristol by Severn Trows into the basins via the River Severn.

York Street holds a special place in the development of the "New Town" since it is here the first house, "York House", was built and from that building a "street" emerged and from that street a town was born to be known as "STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN".

For further information on Stourport's history the following books are recommended:

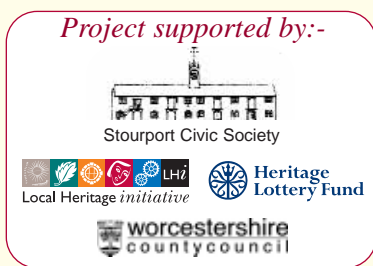
Stourport Pubs a Search for their History
By John Cook

Images of England: Stourport-on-Severn
By Anna Carter.

George Nicholson Printer at Stourport
By Audrey Cooper.

DVD: Stourport-on-Severn A Georgian Canal Town
By Albert Mogg.

These books and DVD are available from the Stourport-on-Severn, Civic Society.



It must have been very disappointing for the good folk of Bewdley when Brindley announced that his new Worcestershire and Staffordshire canal would join the River Severn at the small hamlet of Mitton instead of using the established port of Bewdley. After surveying the route from Bewdley it was found there were too many obstacles to overcome and there was an easier and cheaper route following the Stour valley from the point where the River Stour meets the River Severn. However one Bewdley man, Aaron York, decided that if you can't beat them join them. He moved to Mitton in 1775 and built himself a fine house on an embankment overlooking the Upper Basin. Here he set himself up as a wharfinger and boat builder. Aaron worked closely with Jonathan married Worthington a canal carrier. When Jonathan married Aarons daughter, Sarah, the two became partners and the businesses were merged. Aaron was a great benefactor of the Wesleyan Methodists and invited John Wesley to preach in Stourport on three occasions. It is said he purchased the land used for the building of the Wesleyan chapel in Parkes Passage.

Aaron died in 1797, but his house, named "York House" still stands proudly above the basin in the street named after him.



York the Man

Unlocking York Street's Past



York House

