



# Unlocking Stourport's Pubs



## Did you know....?

**The Tontine** got its name from an early form of life insurance devised by an Italian, Lorenzo Tonti in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, although there is no evidence the building was founded in this way. Members paid into a sharehold scheme which finally paid out to the sole surviving member.

**The Round of Beef** pub was located in Mitton Street.

**The Lord Nelson** (The Barrel) located in York Street, was named in honour of the great British Admiral, who defeated the French and Spanish fleets at The Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The building is now used as a pharmacy.

**The Red Cow** and **The Woolpack** pubs were located in Gilgal.

**The Wilden Inn** was on Wilden Lane and originally called The King of Prussia but hastily renamed during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War because of anti-German feeling.

**The Severn Trow** in High Street, had a most distinctive pub sign. A model of the Severn Trow 'Norah' was carved in 1939 by Robert Panheri of The Bromsgrove Guild of Craftsmen. It had brass sails painted silver and stood proudly on carved wooden waves, above one of the doors of the pub. This sign is now located at Burlish Middle School.



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written by John Cook for Stourport Civic Society. This 200-page book, printed by Dash Graphics of Bewdley, contains the history and previous licensees of pubs past and present.

## "STOURPORT'S PUBS A search for their history"

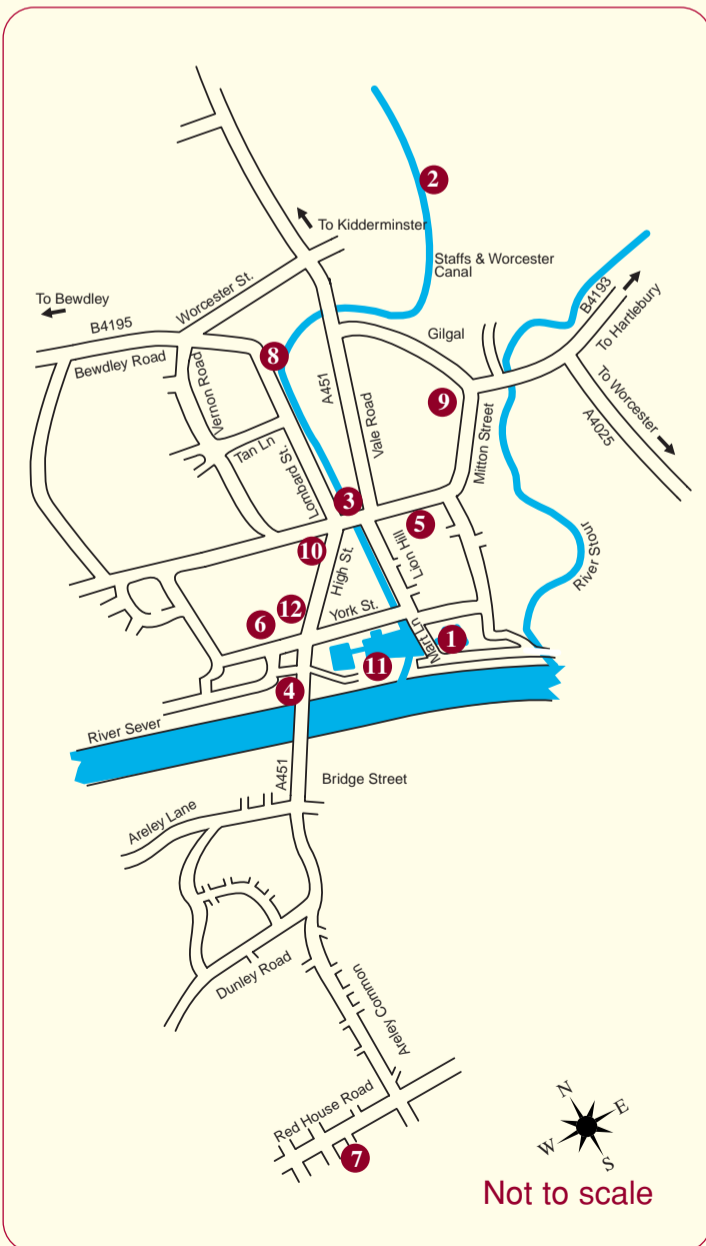
Information and illustrations are taken from both past and present.

interesting facts behind some of Stourport's pubs, insight into the people, buildings, culture and social life of the town. This leaflet gives a brief early days played a prominent role in the Mitton to become a thriving canal town. From Worcestershire Canal was opened, Stourport grew very rapidly from the small village of Lower After 1771 when the Staffordshire and

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

# Unlocking Stourport's Pubs

## Pub Finder



Not to scale



**The Union** in Lichfield Street (Severn Way) was undoubtedly named after the 1801 Act of Union, which saw the formation of The United Kingdom and Ireland.

**Church Ales** were held to raise funds for the Church and Parish. Villagers gathered originally in the church nave and then later in the churchyard for fun, frolics and the consumption of ale, specially brewed in the church. These drunken events were, however, outlawed from church property in 1529 by Church Authorities.

**The Church House**, Areley kings was built as a village hall in 1536, to allow for the continuance of such events. It is one of only two surviving in Worcestershire and had recently been restored as part of a Heritage Lottery project.



**The Beer House Act** of 1830 established the right of any householder to retail beer. Two guineas purchased a permit from the Excise. This brought about an entirely new tier of drinking place - the Beer House. Many pubs emerged about this time. They were licensed for six days a week, not Sundays, opening hours 4am-10pm, for the sale of beer and cider only. They were not allowed to sell wine and spirits and there was a £20 penalty if they were caught selling these. Many tradesmen paid their two guineas and sold beer from their shops. This inevitably led to an increase in the number of drinking places.

**The Station Inn** (Brindley Arms) was located next to the station and level crossing in Minster Road.





## 1 The Angel (Virgins Inn), Severnside

In 1780 The Virgins Inn (The Angel) was already in use and is reputed to be 300 years old. It may well have been Stourmouth's original Ale House. The land on which it stood was called Virgin Inn Close and stretched from the Inn to the River Stour. The Inn was well established before the coming of the canal and was popular with the boatmen who called at the riverside wharf to load or unload goods when passing on their journey up the River Severn to Bewdley. This Inn was more suited to the pockets of men who worked the river than its grander neighbour The Areley Inn (Tontine).

The 2nd floor was a later addition as can be seen from the different style of brickwork. Outside, next to the chimney on the southern side, there is evidence of a smoke house used for smoking bacon. On the other side of the chimney, against the wall to the front of the pub is possibly the original Gents Toilet. When the men sat outside with their drinks, they would relieve themselves against the wall of the pub in full view of passers-by. Some licensees would put flagstones against the building and a bit of a wall for modesty's sake.



The Angel

## 2 The Bird in Hand, Canalside



The Bird in Hand dates back to the building of the canal in 1771, although certain features predate that. This section of the canal had its

own wharf where goods and materials were loaded and unloaded for the mills and factories of the area known as Farm Bed. Across from the pub is a 'winding hole', now clogged up with rushes, where barges could turn around without going into Stourport basins. Next to the pub are cottages where canal workers lived. This was a busy place and a pub was essential for the men and their families. Workers from the canal and industries would find welcome refreshment at the Bird in Hand at the end of the day. In the early years of the 20th Century, Benjamin Evers, a very talented musician, took over the licence. He founded the Stourport Town Band and had a room built upstairs where the band practised until 1966.

## 3 The Black Star, Mitton Street

Although the first mention of The Black Star as a pub was in a directory of 1820, the pub is traceable back to several decades earlier. The rates levy book for 1780 has an entry for The Star, and this is the name given to the pub at the side of the Mitton Street Bridge on Sherriff's map of 1802.

The present day pub comprises three main buildings that have served different purposes through the years. The front section, nearest the street, was the original pub, while the middle section may have been a chapel, before becoming Mitton House. This part bears a plaque with the letters EH and the date 1883. These are the initials of the then licensee Eli Hitchon. The end section is believed to have been a school for children of the canal workers, the clue being that there were separate entrances for boys and girls. The land around the Black Star was originally a farm, the farmhouse being demolished in the 1930's.



## 4 The Bridge Inn, Bridge Street



The Bridge

Built just after the opening of Stourport's first bridge in 1775, The Bridge Inn, and its neighbour, The Crown, were among the first pubs in the town. It had an ideal riverside location that has continued to be popular with both locals and visitors from Birmingham and the Black Country. There have been few changes to the outside of the building since the end of the 18th century although in the 1920's the licensee, Herbert Owen, replaced the 'Good Stabling' with a petrol pump on the side of the building, a sign of the changing times.

## 5 Holly Bush, Mitton Street

A beer house permit was taken out by a Henry Pratchett sometime before 1836 although the building had been in existence for some time before that, as it is shown on the Sherriff map of 1802. It was one of the buildings of the original hamlet of Lower Mitton before the canal and Stourport were built. It was an ideal location for a pub, standing as it did, on the main route between Bewdley and Worcester. It was not the only place to get refreshment on this busy stretch of roadway. Maybe that was the reason that Mr Pratchett still carried on as a boot and shoemaker. The Holly Bush only gained its full Publican's Licence on 13th February 1962 and from then was allowed to retail wines and spirits.



The Holly Bush

## 6 Hope and Anchor (Crown and Anchor), New Street



The Hope & Anchor

It is possible to trace The Hope and Anchor back to about 1830. In Pigot's Directory of 1835, there were two Crown and Anchor public houses in Stourport. One of these was in New Street. The first licensee, E H Broadfield, was also listed as a shopkeeper selling groceries and tea from premises in High Street. By 1840 he was just running his shop, perhaps his double role got too much. By the time the second licensee had taken over its name had changed to The Hope and Anchor. In 1855, a horse-drawn omnibus left the Hope and Anchor at 9am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays to go through Ombersley to Worcester. A close look at the present day pub shows an archway of brickwork that was the entrance to the stable yard.

## 7 King's Arms, Redhouse Lane

Opened sometime just before 1840, the Kings Arms stands on what had been the main thoroughfare between the Redstone river Ferry and the road to Bromyard and Hereford. Unfortunately, by the time of its opening, that route had become no more than a side road, and The Kings Arms never enjoyed the busy trade of a Coaching Inn. Although it is nearly 170 years old it has only had 14 licensees. For many years the Allen family were in charge and Alice Allen holds the record behind the pumps. She ran the pub for 31 years from 1927 to 1958.



## 8 Rising Sun, Lombard Street



The Rising Sun

On 28th April 1828 this property was assigned to Thomas Shutts who sold groceries and sundries until the Beer

Act of 1830, when he opened a beer house on the premises. The property was re-assigned to a Thomas Bucknall, a Maltster, in 1844, and in 1850 it passed to Thomas Evans. It seems for many years that Evans was the licensee whilst Bucknall ran the brewing part. Their beer, like most of that brewed in the area, had a reputation for being a 'drop of good stuff'. The Rising Sun was the last pub in town to brew its own beer. The vat was removed in 1946 and due to the shortage of timber post war, was taken to the Vinegar Works and re-used.

In 1872, William Hardwick became the first of a line of six of his family to take over the pub. They were to keep it for 87 years, during which time; they acquired the property next-door and doubled its size.

## 9 Steps House (Red Lion), Gilgal

Steps House was one of Lower Mitton's most prestigious private homes. It was built in the first quarter of the 18th century and was ideally situated for watching the comings and goings of the town. It stood facing the bridge over the River Stour that had to be crossed by all those who left or entered Lower Mitton. Its first mention as a pub was in 1779, when The Rates Levy Book showed James Cartwright as responsible for 'The Lyon'. It appears the name changed to the Red Lion the following year.

Henry Millman, licensee from 1863-1894 was a well known figure in the public houses of Stourport, having been at the Bird in Hand from 1850-1860 and The Bell from 1861-1863.

During the 1930s, Stourport Swifts, who played their home games nearby, where Parsons Chain is located, used The Red Lion for changing rooms. In 1979/80 the pub was renamed Steps House.



THE STEPS HOUSE (ex Red Lion)

## 10 Swan Hotel, High Street



The Swan Hotel

The Swan, built by Richard Hornblower, stands at the junction of Long Lane (Lickhill Road) and Bunces Lane (Lombard Street), it was built following the erection of Stourport Bridge in 1775 and the subsequent growth in importance of the route up from the Bridge along Bridge Street. It became the headquarters of the local Whig Party in the first half of the 19th century. Soon it gained a reputation that put it on an equal footing with The Stourport Inn (The Tontine). The balcony above the front door, complete with carved swan to the front of it, was the ideal place from where election results might be read to the crowds below. It became the main Coaching Inn for the town. Slaters Directory in 1850 described the inn as 'a capital commercial building and Posting Inn, well known for its comforts'. There is a large lintel visible in the outer wall on Lickhill Road which was probably a gateway, large enough for horses and carriages.

In 1851, the licensee, Thomas John King was the 'Hotel Keeper, Postmaster and Appraiser'. Nineteenth century Postmasters were Inn Keepers who hired out Post Chaise and Post Horses.

## 11 The Tontine (Areley Inn), Severnside

The Tontine was built for the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Company and opened in 1773 as The Areley Inn. This fine Georgian building stood high up from the flood plain of the River Severn and made a fine sight to welcome those entering the town from the river. People sailing along the Severn knew by certain sights which town they were travelling through and this grand building shouted out, 'This is Stourport'.

The Inn was only the central part of the building, which included, houses, a Boardroom for the Canal Company, accommodation for Merchants and Repts and Entrepreneurs, and even a Ballroom for special occasions. In its heyday, The Tontine could accommodate 100 guests. There was also stabling and Coach Houses. Sometime before 1820 the name changed to The Stourport Inn, and by 1850, it had become The Tontine. After 228 years of service the doors finally closed in 2001.



The Tontine

## 12 The Wheatsheaf (Buck's Head), High Street



The Wheatsheaf

The Buck's Head was opened as a Beer House in the premises of John Marks, a local Cooper just before 1850. The single storey part of the building is believed to be the cooperage, but this has also seen service as a gift shop and wool shop. Its central location seems ideal and yet it was not until 7 March 1950 that it was finally granted an Ale House licence.

In 1914 Marion Tyler Willmott had tried to get an Ale House licence; since she brewed her own beer, owned the freehold, and had stabling for 16 horses. She was supported by a petition of 78 residents. However it was refused following the Police Superintendent's statement that the Severn Trow public house was only 82 yards away.