

## Norah the Severn Trow

by Pauline Annis

In 1939, the most distinctive of all of Stourport's pub signs was made for the Severn Trow. A model of the Severn Trow, "norah" (built in 1868) was carved from a single block of wood by Robert Pancheri, of the Bromsgrove Guild of Craftsmen. It had brass sails painted silver, and stood proudly on carved waves, above one of the doors of the pub." (*Stourport Pubs* by John Cook).



*Pictured outside the former  
Burlish Middle School ( July 2006 )*

In 1983 the Severn Trow pub closed but its distinctive emblem survives. Its creator, Robert Pancheri, was a leading member of the Bromsgrove Guild of craftsmen. His father, Celestino Pancheri, a skilled wood carver from the South Tyrol, had left

his native homeland to avoid conscription into the Austro-Hungarian army. In 1911 he married an Englishwoman, Florence, and settled in Bromsgrove, where Robert was born.

Severn trows were shallow draft sailing vessels with an open hold that traded on the River Severn and Estuary. They had a flat bottom so they could lie aground at low tide when loading or unloading cargo. Norah, who weighed 55 tons, was built in Bridgwater in 1868 and broken up in 1932.

Trows played a very important role in carrying goods on the Severn between Bewdley, Stourport, Gloucester and Bristol. They played a crucial role in helping to develop Stourport as an inland port. Goods from overseas and South West England would travel from Bristol to Stourport where they would be loaded on to smaller canal boats and then transported to the Midlands and the north of England on the canal system. Likewise, goods coming in the opposite direction would be transhipped at Stourport on to trows to

## Norah the Severn Trow continued



take them down the River Severn. Baldwin's foundry in Stourport was famous for its hinges which were produced for a world market travelling by trow to Bristol for export.

One of Stourport's most well known trow owners was Aaron York who has given his name to York Street. When his trow, "Hero", sank near Lydney in 1785 it was carrying £40,000 of "Birmingham and Manchester goods" (iron and textiles). The value of such a cargo today would exceed £1million.

It is therefore appropriate that one of Stourport's better-known pubs should have carried a model of a trow because Stourport owes much of its early prosperity to the Severn trows.

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## Poppies at the Tower

*by Pauline Carroll*

In November I went to London to see the poppies at the Tower. What a wonderful experience. Crowds and crowds of people there of all nationalities but mainly English. I have never been in such a crowd before but it was all very orderly with no pushing or shoving. Rows and rows of us lined up to see the poppies but as each row was in front they would stay there for 5 or 10 minutes at the most then gently move back so the second row could move forward. Yes it looked like it did on television, however, the atmosphere was incredible, a very reverent experience and it is one I will remember for the rest of my life. It certainly brings it home to you just how many people gave their lives for this country.

*"I am so glad I went"*

[Read](#) more about the poppies



## Stourport Civic Award 2015



Entries are now being invited for the Stourport Civic Award, with all work completed and entries to be received by March 6<sup>th</sup> 2015. The Biennial Award is offered to encourage and recognise schemes which contribute to the quality and environment of Stourport-on-Severn.

A sympathetic conversion or restoration, a well-designed new building, a shop front, appropriate landscaping or other improvement works can all be nominated, as well as small projects within the town's boundaries. Please suggest possible entrants to the Award Coordinator, or recommend owners to enter.

Previous winners have included: the Anglo building, Gilgal; the new Stourport Primary school; the Windlass Café; Stourport Wesley Methodist Church; the rebuilding of Engine Lane bridge and the creation of Moorhall Marsh Nature Reserve.

The projects will be judged by a panel of assessors, with the successful entry receiving a commemorative plaque. The award ceremony will once again take place at Stourport Civic Society's AGM and an exhibition featuring the entries will be on display in the town's library.

Nominations can be made by builders, owners or members of the general public who would like a scheme to be recognised.

Entry forms and further information can be obtained from :

Award Coordinator, David More

Tel 01299 878718

Email [davidmore@btinternet.com](mailto:davidmore@btinternet.com)

or at Stourport Library



*The new Stourport Primary, a 2012 Stourport Civic Award winner*



## The Legend of Saint George

*Researched and written by Margaret Dallow*

Little is known about St George, who replaced Edward The Confessor as England's patron saint. He had first appeared in English folklore during the reign of Richard I. Legend states he was on one of the King's crusades to the Holy Land, yet he died on the 23rd April during the 4th century. The date of his death became a celebration.

His first appearance in ancient folklore began after the shrine of Bacchus, where dressed in his armour, he destroyed the idol of the Gods, whereby banishing pagan Gods and their heroes. Later came the legend of St George and the dragon, having first appeared in Asia Minor, where began the sacrifice of a daily supply of two sheep to the dragon. Later he demanded humans, finally asking the king for his daughter, dressed in white as a sacrificial virgin. Bravely she faced her fate, when the Christian George stepped forward and fought the dragon. Although he stabbed him with his sword, he did not kill him, but called upon the Princess to use the girdle from her gown and place it around his neck and led him to the market place, where he was greeted with cheers. However the people were confused when George vowed he would only kill the dragon if everyone embraced the new Christian religion, to which they agreed and the dragon was killed. George was then proclaimed a Saint.

In Britain it was claimed St George slew the dragon in Oxfordshire, where on Dragon Hill, near Uffington, south of Farringdon, there was a grass-less chalk patch, reputed to be the site of the killing and where blood was spilt. Nearby the famous White Horse of Uffington carving appears in the chalk, reputed to represent the dragon, the carvers not knowing what a dragon looked like.

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### Stourport Library is moving

**Stourport Library is moving to its newly refurbished location in the Civic Centre at the end of February and is increasing its opening to six days a week.**

The library 's last day of opening in its current location will be Saturday, 21 February. The books and furniture will then be moved to the new location ready for re-opening on Monday, 2 March at 9am. Customers are being informed that all items borrowed and due

## Stourport Library is moving

*continued*



back during the week of closure will automatically be given a week 's extension. Customers are also being encouraged to visit their nearby libraries in Kidderminster and Bewdley and to use the free e-books and e-magazines service available via [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries)

The facilities and services offered in the new library will not change with free internet access, children 's activities, adult learning courses and other regular activities continuing to be offered. The library will however be increasing its opening from five to six days a week, now opening on Wednesdays from 9am to 5.30pm, a day the library has previously been closed. The library will be sharing the building with The Civic, the Town Council, Police, Coroners and Registration.

The new library also comes with new opportunities for volunteering with roles including meeting and greeting library customers, shelving and helping keeping the library tidy, and other regular library activities. More information can be found out by calling into the library.

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## Severn Trent Pipeline ( Birmingham Resilience Project )

*by Annette More*

For over 100 years Birmingham's water supplies have come from the Elan Valley in Wales, via the famous aqueduct, constructed in Victorian times. Whilst this is an impressive feat of engineering, it is now getting to the time it needs some essential maintenance works, and it will need to be closed down completely for several weeks each year. A second supply pipeline is therefore needed with water being abstracted from the Severn near Lickhill, and then routed near to Stourport and Hartlebury, eventually reaching Frankley Reservoir. A series of public meetings have been held locally for residents to find out more about the project and raise any concerns. Most of the pipeline will be in trenches, with small stretches being tunnelled.

Two routes in the Wilden area are being considered, but the route tunnelling through the sandstone escarpment near to the Village Hall, Church and School has been particularly controversial. A meeting was held in Wilden Church on 23rd January, chaired by Mark Garnier MP, where Severn Trent gave an informative overview of the project, explained the technical implications, and answered concerns from local residents and businesses. There was a strong feeling against the route close to the historic heart of the village although the alternative route to the north would not be without issues, as it would skirt the corner of the SSSI at Wilden Marshes nature reserve.

Full details of this project, including how the routing for the pipeline impacts on the rest of Stourport can be seen on Severn Trent's website [www.stwater.co.uk/brp](http://www.stwater.co.uk/brp) and local information can be found on [facebook](#) page *Save Wilden Village*.

## Jessie Pennington meets Stanley Baldwin



*Researched and written by Margaret Dallow*

Jessie Pennington, the former West Bromwich Albion and international footballer retired during 1937 to Worcestershire where he and his wife Nellie acquired the small holding known as 'The Knapp', in the parish of Shrawley.

Living in the adjacent parish of Astley was the former Prime Minister, Stanley Earl Baldwin and his wife Lucy who resided at Astley Hall. Stanley had acquired the Astley Hall estate prior to being Prime Minister, first as a tenant, then as owner when the Jacobian house was known as The Hill. Here he followed his love of the countryside by keeping an assortment of farm animals. He enjoyed being the country squire far more than being Prime Minister. He loved Astley Hall and the beautiful Worcestershire countryside, and in its full meaning he was a true Englishman.

Jessie and Stanley shared an interest in pig breeding and made an agreement that one would provide the sow, and the other the pig. The piglets were to be shared. Once mated the sow was placed in a small shed in the corner of a field on the Astley Estate. As time approached for the sow to give birth, Stanley's farm hand expressed his concern at handling the event, having little knowledge of pigs, and asked if he could employ an experienced local pig-man to act as midwife, to which Stanley readily agreed.

Early in the morning of the expected arrival of the piglets, Stanley walked across the fields to see the litter. However on entering the shed, he was confronted by a sight that horrified him. There lay the pig-man snoring in a drunken stupor, while around lay the dead piglets, having been crushed to death by the sow having rolled over and crushed them. Stanley was furious with the farm hand for employing such an irresponsible fellow. Stanley called upon Jesse and compensation was agreed.

No further attempts at breeding between their respective pigs was repeated, probably due to Jessie and Nellie moving to Titton Forge in the hamlet of Titton. The two men remained friends, with Stanley being a regular visitor at the forge.

*Please note :-*

*The original article was written in 2002, which came about during a telephone conversation between the author and the historian, Diane Mannering, granddaughter of Jessie and Nellie, who had previously given permission to write the article 'Jessie Pennington, hero and legendary footballer'. The above article has been rewritten for the society.*