

Our new programme starts with a talk on Lucy Baldwin who was a countess, writer, and activist for maternity healthcare during the first part of the 20th century. She was also the wife of Stanley Baldwin. Stourport's long since gone maternity hospital was named after her.

Our programme until next Easter, which follows in this newsletter, is varied and interesting.

A reminder that membership is now payable and remains unchanged from last year at £12 and £20 for joint members, valid until August 2025. [See enclosed form.](#)

Please pay by cheque or have the correct sum in cash.

Finally, if you don't renew your membership, then this will be the last newsletter you receive.



Thursday 12th September 2024

My Encounters with Lucy Baldwin ...

An intriguing tale of her history and my tenuous connections with her...

An illustrated talk by Carole Clements



Elizabeth Mills Centre, Sion Gardens, Stourport

All welcome: £4 Admission members £2.50 including light refreshments

Stourport Civic Society Registered Charity 1092842

Civic Society Campaigns

by Andrew Booton

Stourport is fortunate to have a Civic Society to fight for its planning, development, heritage and civic pride. Those of you who attended our summer gathering a few weeks ago will have heard me say that we need to be more active and to campaign for things that matter.

We have been at the forefront of the establishment of Stourport Heritage Port. We are involved with Stourport Town Council's High Street Task Force initiative. And we'll shortly be launching some campaigns of our own. Watch this space!

Stourport Town Council have launched their [Stourport Survey](#) and details are inside. Please put forward your ideas for the towns improvement yourself or contact us if you are not happy or comfortable completing the official council survey.

[Why not checkout our website](#)



Find us on
Facebook

Email Stourport.Civic.Soc@gmail.com

Autumn & Spring Talks 2024/25



- 12th September 2024** **My Encounters with Lucy Baldwin ...**
An intriguing tale of her history and my tenuous connections with her... *Carol Clements*
- 10th October 2024** **Saving Worcestershire's Heathlands**
Beccy Sommers
- 14th November 2024** **The Secret Lives of Stourport's Garden Birds**
Richard Cory
- 12th December 2024** **On the Weaving—Life in the Kidderminster Carpet Factories**
Dave Laverty
- 9th January 2025** **Social Event**
- 13th February 2025** **Midlands Mystery Tour**
Buildings and sites in Worcestershire and the West Midlands. *Ian Bott*
- 13th March 2025** **Pirates: Fact and Fiction**
Max Keen
- 10th April 2025** **A Monk's Life -the Benedictines at Worcester Cathedral**
Howard Robinson

**7.30 pm Thursdays, at the Elizabeth Mills Centre,
Sion Gardens, Stourport DY13 8BH**

£2.50 members £4 non-members (including light refreshments)

All welcome



Stourport Poor House

by Mike O'Shaunessey

In 1802 the great and the good of Stourport began to make plans to build a Poor House in Lower Mitton as place of refuge for the paupers of the Parish. The design of the building was to be based on a Poor House that already existed in the nearby Parish of Chaddesley Corbett.

With the design finally agreed in 1803 the plans were put out to tender. The contract to build the Poor House was awarded to Mr John Cole who offered to construct the building for £645. The building was to be erected on Farm Bed a parcel of land lying between the present Baldwin Road and the Canal. In the same year purchases were made for iron bedsteads and other materials needed to furnish the premises. The building work was completed in 1804 and a management team was elected together with the appointment of a Master and Matron to oversee the inmates. A description of the building appeared in a series of articles written for the Shuttle by I L Wedley....

" Naturally Georgian in style, its front had no less than 20 windows, was three storeys in height, a large entrance in the centre, the doorway being reached by four stone steps, with three windows on either side, the other 14 being arranged seven to either storey. The chimneys were at either end of the building and a flight of steps led from the rear to the outhouses somewhat similar to those at the front. A huge garden, which inmates were expected to keep in order, stood near the house and piggeries etc were also attached. Beside these an immense orchard, well stocked with fruit trees, ran nearly the length of the present Baldwin Road. In addition to this a prison and a small room known as the Dead Room stood behind the main building, both of which still remain but now form a portion of a dwelling house." (Wedley wrote this article on 5th August 1933)

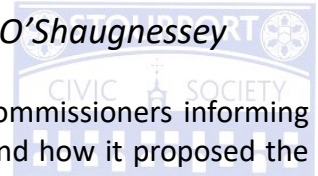
Before 1834 each parish was responsible for the care of its own poor. The poor law act of 1834 was to change all that. Parishes were obliged to form "Unions" and Lower Mitton became part of the Kidderminster Union. On the 11th August 1836 the Worcester Journal reported on a meeting convened by Mr Weale, one of the new Poor Law Commissioners, held at the Red Lion Inn, Kidderminster. Present were the Mayor and Justices of the borough, the Rt Hon the Earl of Mountnorris and church wardens and overseers of the parishes forming the new union. Mr Weale instructed those present on the details concerning the management of the Union and a list of those parishes to be included in the Union was finalised. At a further meeting held in October the officers to form the Board of Guardians were elected. They would manage the Union and be answerable to the Poor Law Commissioners.

On the 9th September 1837 Mr H Saunders, clerk to the Kidderminster Union, wrote to the Poor Law Commissioners seeking permission for Lower Mitton to sell its workhouse, outbuildings and land. In its issue dated 28th September 1837, the following notice appeared in Berrows Worcester Journal:

"To be sold by auction at the Red Lion Inn, Lower Mitton, on Monday 9th October, at 6 O'clock in the afternoon, all those excellent and substantial freehold buildings lately used as a workhouse at Lower Mitton, together with the land thereto adjoining and belonging, containing about two acres. The above premises are distant only about four miles from Kidderminster and within a few yards of an excellent turnpike road leading from Stourport to Worcester." (The Red Lion was renamed The Steps House in 1979 and is now Enigma an Indian restaurant.

Stourport Poor House (continued)

by Mike O'Shaughnessey



Following the sale Mr Saunders writes several letters to the Poor law commissioners informing them on how Lower Mitton has spent the money raised from the sale and how it proposed the use the remaining funds. Some money was used to pay the costs resulting from the sale of the property, some was donated to the Kidderminster Union to offset the cost of the new workhouse, Kidderminster Foreign, recently built in Kidderminster. (After the sale of the Poor House, paupers from Lower Mitton requiring shelter were sent Kidderminster Foreign) The remaining monies, £491-18s-9p would be invested and the interest used to pay their future contributions to the Union.

It is not known who first bought the workhouse and land or when it was finally demolished. An O.S map dated 1883 clearly shows a group of buildings at the far end of Baldwin Road with a large orchard on Farm Bed. In the 1891 census the enumerator records a building on Farm Bed known as the Old Workhouse occupied by four families and seven boarders. A note in the Stourport archives "poor house" folder records... "Mr Isaac Petty of Wilden purchased the Old Workhouse and grounds, retained the cottage attached which still contains (1934) a portion of the old jail in which recalcitrant members were locked up".

Mikron Theatre bring their production "Common Ground" to Stourport

Thursday 29 August 2024 at 7pm in Tontine Gardens



Rambling and our rights of way

"Join Mikron on a 'hill-arious' ramble through the history of land access in England. From ze Norman Conquest to loitering in lockdown, via The Mass Trespass at Kinder Scout. The Pendale and District Ramblers are looking forward to celebrating 'in stile' on their 50th anniversary walk, but the path has been blocked by the landowner. How will they find their way through? Their quest for freedom and fresh air won't be easy, as they navigate bulls, beavers, and wandering sheep. Grab your boots and waterproof for a meander with Mikron on a hike through history."

Bring your rugs and garden chairs for another feast of history, humour, and lots of music and songs from this multi-talented group of actors.

And remember – with Mikron you don't pay to go in, but you do to go out (when donations are asked for!)

Planning Matters

by Phil Trow



Stourport is an historic town, and we are lucky to have 4 conservation areas and a large number of listed buildings as a testament to that heritage. Even though there is statutory protection of those buildings and areas, we still have to be alert to developments which cause harm. The planning application lists are checked every week and, if necessary, representations are made to the planning authorities.

A case in point recently was a proposal for the replacement of unique historic windows on a house in Manor Road. This concerned a grade II listed building and the principal reason for the listing is the unique, Gothic, tracery windows, I quote, "as an example of a vernacular cottage given fashionable architectural expression through its Gothic-arched windows; for its degree of survival, with the original form and layout largely intact."

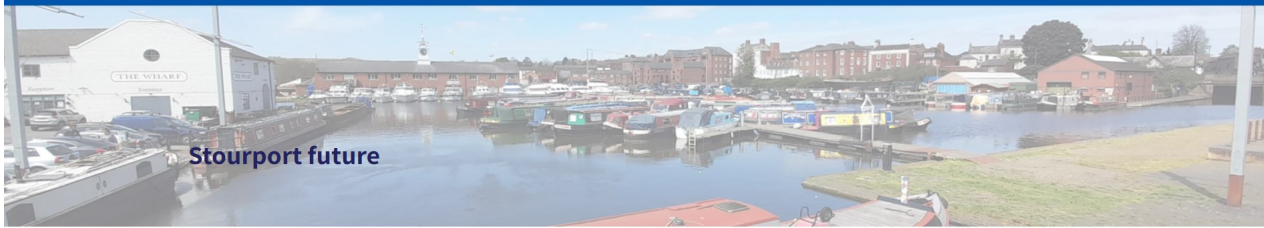
The proposed replacement windows are markedly different in that the number of tracer sections are reduced, and the form and layout is changed resulting in significant harm to this listed building, especially as the windows are the principal reason for the listing.

Unfortunately, the application was approved despite the Civic Society and the Town Council objecting. We are very disappointed with this decision and have told the planners so.

Another application is pending to replace all the original wooden sash windows on a house in Lichfield Street with plastic windows. Obviously, the Civic Society has objected, and we await the outcome.

Many will also have been aware of an unauthorised extraction flue being installed at Blossoms tea rooms in York Street, also a grade II listed building. The Conservation Officer of WFDC was immediately informed and enforcement action is being taken.

In addition to these, there are a number of properties in town which have unauthorised alterations contrary to either their listed status or the requirements of the conservation areas. The Civic Society has informed the council of these and is monitoring what is being done to enforce remedial action.



Stourport future

Stourport-on-Severn residents, business and visitor survey -Summer 2024

We want to understand the current thoughts and future aspirations of Stourport on Severn's residents, business owners, workers and visitors.

Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to have a say in your town's future.

[Give us your views](#)

The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete, is anonymous and covers a variety of aspects of living in, working in and visiting Stourport. There are lots of comment boxes for you to suggest your ideas. Don't hold back, we want to hear all your ideas for our town!

Stourport Survey

by Andrew Booton

We often see complaints on social media that Kidderminster gets all the cash and attention and that Stourport gets nothing. Well, I'm pleased to see that this could soon change.

Stourport Town Council is running a residents', business and visitor survey for the town. It aims to gauge our opinions and gather ideas for short and longer term improvements. Without this evidence base, it is very hard for the councils to develop a vision and then to secure funding. So, I urge you to complete the survey honestly and constructively, and to encourage family and friends to do the same. If we don't know local concerns and ambitions, we can't develop plans or secure funding for improvements.

Cynics will say they've done this before, and nothing has changed. I say that this is a genuine effort led by Stourport Town Council not Wyre Forest District Council. If you don't contribute, you can't very well complain that nothing improves. So please make sure you have your say.

Stourport Civic Society will be contributing fully to help the Council's efforts and bring about real improvement for our beautiful but sometimes neglected town.

The consultation closes 20th September 2024, and the findings will be presented in the autumn. The link is here: <https://www.stourporttowncouncil.gov.uk/stourport-future/>

Stourport Bridge lights

You may have noticed that the lights on Stourport bridge have been changed and there was speculation on social media of their dumbing down or theft. **Here is the reply from Worcestershire County Council.**

"We wanted to respond to your questions regarding the changes in lanterns on Stourport Bridge. Sadly, the original lanterns raised some safety concerns during a routine inspection. To address these concerns the lanterns were replaced with a more modern, heritage style LED light to ensure that the bridge pavement and road remained safely lit.

These current lanterns will be replaced with new ones that will be supplied by the original lantern manufacturer. This work will require a formal planning application and we are in discussion with our colleagues in the District Council regarding this.

We recognise the historical charm and listed status of Stourport Bridge, and our priority is to ensure this is maintained."



Stourport Civic Society Application for Membership 2024/25

£12.00 (Joint £20) valid until August 2025

Cheques payable to Stourport Civic Society

Bank transfer Enquire for details

Please PRINT Mr/Ms/Mrs Mr/Ms/Mrs

Name Name

Address Address

.....

Postcode Postcode

Telephone Telephone

e-mail e-mail

*Signature *Signature

*GDPR By signing this form you consent to Stourport Civic Society retaining these details and sending out Society information to you (by email if supplied).

Please return to:

David More, Membership Secretary
91 Manor Road, Stourport on Severn, Worcs, DY13 9DW

Or Email to Stourport.Civic.Soc@gmail.com Charity No: 1092842

Stourport Civic Award

We plan to invite entries for the Stourport Civic Award in the New Year and planning will start in the autumn.

Please keep your eyes open for suitable projects that enhance the town or environment with a conversion or renovation, or suitable landscaping. Details of the first award are reproduced overleaf. You may have seen the black and cream plaques around the town.

We will also need a volunteer to help co-ordinate the award, please contact a member of the committee if you are interested in being involved.

The first Stourport on Severn Civic Award *by David More*



Almost 30 years ago when Anna Carter was Chair of the Society and Alfie Wood was President, Stourport Civic Society launched the Stourport Civic Award. Below is an article from our newsletter Number 14 and the archive, The winner was the renovation of Engine bridge, over the narrow locks by British Waterways (now Canal and River Trust).

THE LAUNCH OF THE CIVIC SOCIETY AWARD SCHEME took place on Monday 3 October. The plaque, stove enamel in black and cream on cast aluminium, by the Royal Label Factory, Oxon, was on display. Mr Wood, the President, introduced the event; Tony Hyde of Thomas Vale Construction spoke for the sponsors; Anna Carter described the details of the scheme and Mr J Berriman, the District Council's new Head of Development Control, supported the purpose of the Award. As well as representatives of Vales and the Civic Society, those present were the Mayor and Mayoress of Stourport, Councillors R and Mrs M Hutchinson, Mr S Coulter, Head of Local Plans & Tourism WFDC, Mr P Gibbons, County Conservation Architect, Will Scott, City of Worcester Principal Conservation Officer (on the Assessment Panel), and the press. Our thanks to all who supported the launch and especially to Thomas Vale for their hospitality and for all the help they have given. The Committee is grateful for the groundwork done by Charles Hunt which gave the preparations for the scheme a sound start.

The Plaque and/or Commendation Certificate will be awarded biennially for projects which contribute to the quality and environment of Stourport, such as a sympathetic conversion/restoration of an existing building, a well-designed new building, a shopfront, appropriate landscaping or other recent improvement works. Closing date for entries : 31 DECEMBER 1994. TO NOMINATE A PROJECT FOR THE AWARD contact John Harper, the Award Co-ordinator, Tel 824303. Also, if you can help in siting posters please let him know.

The Award Plaque will be displayed in the window of the Staffordshire Building Society for a short period from 24 October.



1995 STOURPORT ON SEVERN CIVIC SOCIETY AWARD

THE AWARD PLAQUE to:

Engine Lane Bridge refurbishment by British Waterways

COMMENDATIONS equally to:

Charnock and Gough Veterinary Surgery, Mitton Gardens

Lorry canopy for Midland Industrial Plastics, Bewdley Road

The Panel appreciated the care and enthusiasm which had been put into all the projects entered for the Award.