

June 2026 Visit to Stourport upon Severn – History on our doorstep



Twenty-two members of the Pershore Civic Society enjoyed a fascinating and highly informative visit to the historic canal basins at Stourport-on-Severn on Tuesday 9th June 2026.

Blessed with fine weather and excellent company, the group spent the afternoon exploring one of the most remarkable canal heritage locations in the country. The visit was generously hosted by two knowledgeable members of the Stourport-on-Severn Civic Society, Paula Rayner and Phil Trow, who shared their enthusiasm and deep understanding of the town's unique history. They were ably assisted throughout the afternoon by Gill and Shirley from Stourport Forward whose warm welcome and local insight greatly enhanced the experience.

The afternoon began with an introduction to the extraordinary story of Stourport's development. What is now an attractive riverside town was once little more than a tiny settlement until the arrival of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal in the 1770s transformed it into a thriving inland port. The influence of the pioneering canal engineer James Brindley was evident throughout the visit and members gained a greater appreciation of the importance of the canal network in shaping the economic and industrial development of the Midlands.

Particular highlights included visits to the lovingly restored Ticket Office mini museum and the refurbished stables complex. The Ticket Office provided a fascinating glimpse into the operation of the canal system during its commercial heyday, with displays and

artefacts illustrating the movement of goods and people through the bustling basins. Members were especially interested in learning about the role of toll collection and the administration of canal traffic during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The refurbished stables offered another insight into life during the canal era. Before the age of mechanised transport, horses were essential to the operation of the waterways and the careful restoration of the buildings has preserved an important part of the town's heritage. The project demonstrated how historic buildings can be adapted and conserved in a way that respects their original purpose whilst providing new opportunities for education and community use.

Throughout the afternoon, members were struck by the scale and ambition of the historic canal basins themselves. The survival of so much of the original layout and character makes Stourport one of the country's most important canal conservation areas and a shining example of successful heritage-led regeneration.

Pershore Civic Society members expressed their sincere thanks to Paula, Phil, Gill and Shirley for giving so generously of their time and expertise. Their passion for Stourport's history and future was evident throughout and helped to make the visit both enjoyable and memorable.

The visit formed part of Pershore Civic Society's continuing programme of educational outings and talks designed to encourage greater understanding and appreciation of the rich built and historic environment of Worcestershire and beyond.

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