

The crystal canal

A self guided walk along the Stourbridge Canal



Explore a canal that used to be a busy industrial hub
Discover why the area became world-famous for glassmaking
Find out about the people who worked in the canalside industries
See how the industrial heritage has been preserved

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*the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks*







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Discover glass and iron making along the Stourbridge Canal

During the Industrial Revolution the 'Black Country' was a hub of heavy industry and manufacturing. Central to this was the canal network.

Barges carried coal, sand and limestone to factories and foundries that manufactured everything from heavy bridges to delicate jewellery.

Discover why Stourbridge became world-famous for making iron and glass. Find out about the people who worked in these industries.



Crystal Mile sculpture
Mike Jackson © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

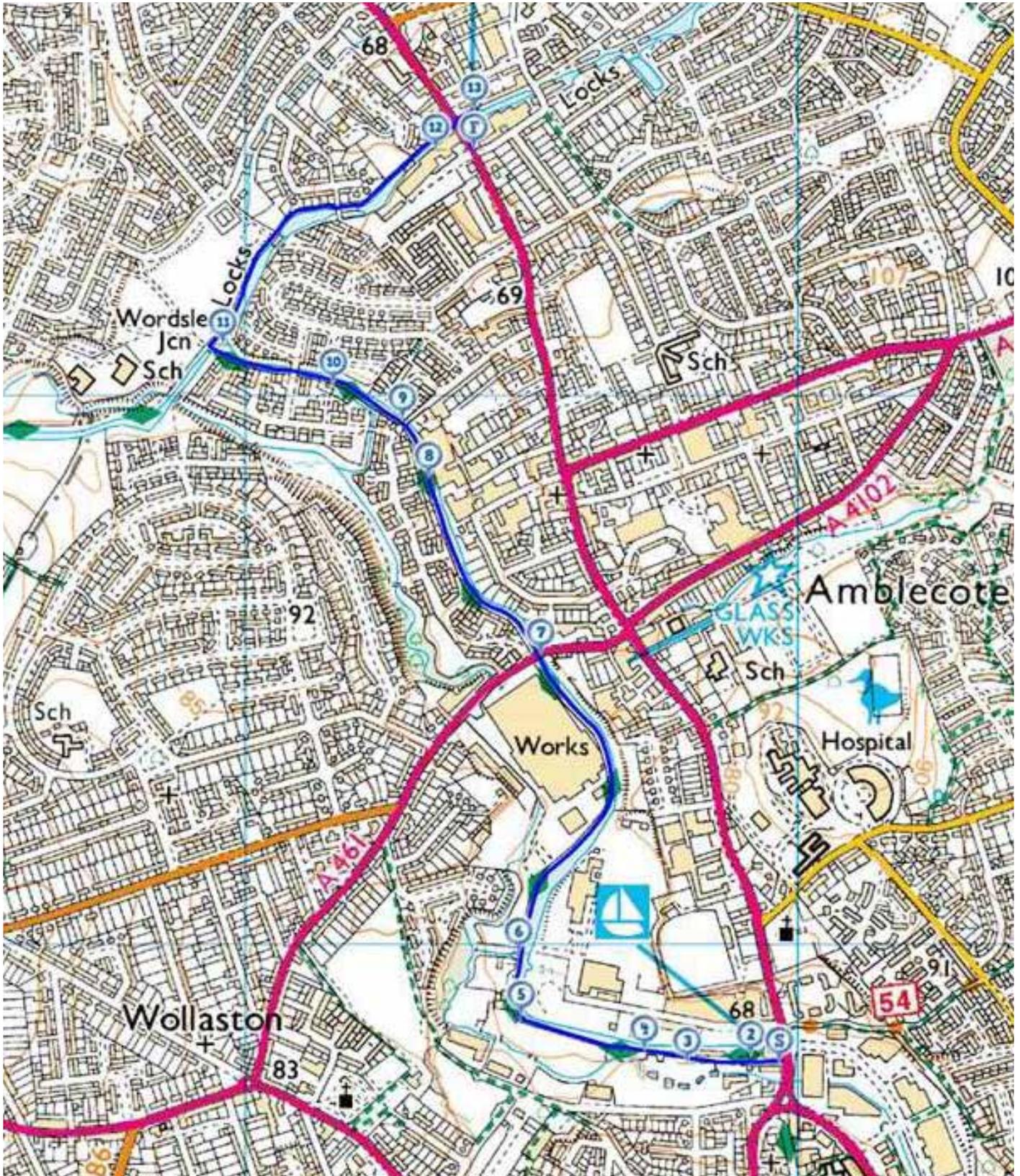


The White House Cone museum of glass
under construction, April 2016
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Explore the canal and find evidence in locks, bridges and buildings that tells the story of this area. Visit Britain's most complete working 'glass cone' and see how the glass-making industry continues today.

This walk along the Town Arm of the Stourbridge Canal was created by writer and broadcaster Graham Fisher MBE, who specialises in inland waterways with an interest in glass – particularly Stourbridge glass. The route was inspired by his book on this subject, 'Jewels on the Cut'.

Route overview

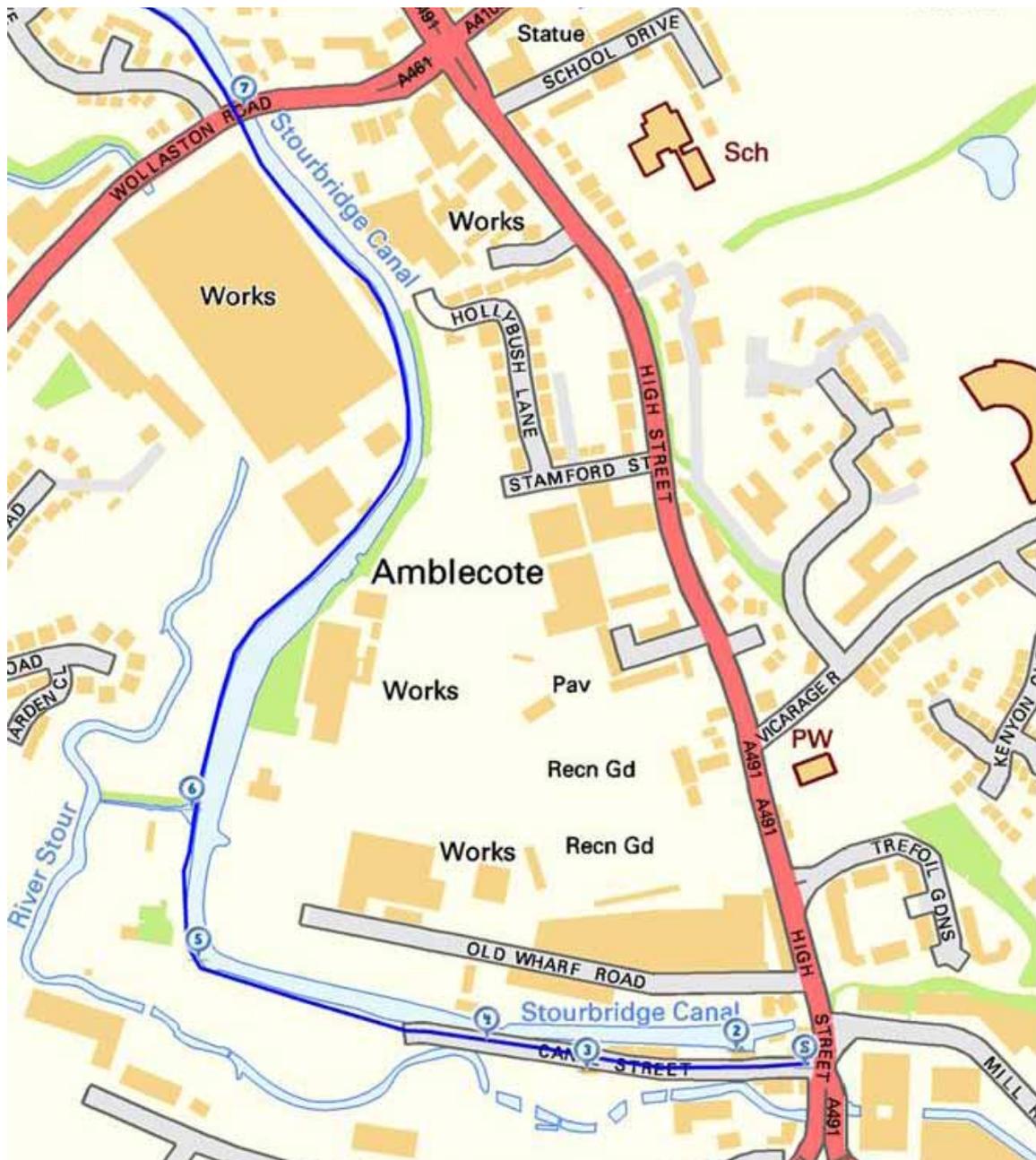


Practical information

Location	Stourbridge, West Midlands
Getting there	<p>Train - The nearest station is Stourbridge Town. A frequent shuttle service runs from Stourbridge Junction. Stourbridge Junction has direct services to Birmingham Snow Hill, Kidderminster, Warwick, Leamington Spa, Worcester and London Marylebone.</p> <p>Bus - Served by local and regional routes to Bridgnorth, Kidderminster, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.</p> <p>Most bus routes run from Stourbridge Interchange, next to Stourbridge Town railway station. Buses run frequently from the end of the walk back to the Interchange.</p> <p>Car - Access via the A491 (close to Junction 4 of the M5) and the A449 from Wolverhampton. Parking is limited at the walk route, with a few spaces at Canal Street and the Red House Glass Cone.</p> <p>Bicycle - Stourbridge is on National Cycle Route 54 (Stourport to Derby)</p>
Start point	Canal Street, Stourbridge DY8 4LU
Finish point	Red House Glass Cone, Wordsley, DY8 4AZ
Distance	1 ½ miles
Directions from railway & bus station to start	<p>From the Interchange, take the underpass signed Town Centre. On leaving the underpass, turn right into the High Street and continue for about 300 metres to a pedestrianised section by Market Street.</p> <p>Continue into Lower High Street for another 300 metres to an underpass. Turn left after the first underpass and right after the second. Canal Street is ahead on the left.</p>

Level	Gentle – An easy walk along the canal towpath
Conditions	The towpath was restored by the Canal & River Trust in 2015. It is in excellent condition but it is advisable to wear stout footwear. The towpath is used by boaters, anglers and cyclists as well as walkers.
Suitable for	<p>Families - Keep children away from the canal edge especially at locks</p> <p>Wheelchairs / Pushchairs - Radar Key Scheme gates on the towpath, a couple of the bridges may be steep for pushing wheelchairs / pushchairs. There is a stepped path towards the Red House Glass Cone.</p> <p>Dogs - Must be kept on a lead</p>
Refreshments	<p>Café at Ruskin Glass Centre (Stop 7)</p> <p>Hot and cold refreshments are available at the Red House Glass Cone Coffee House (Stop 14)</p>
Toilets	<p>Ruskin Glass Centre (Stop 7)</p> <p>Red House Glass Cone when the museum is open (Stop 14)</p>
Places to visit	<p>The Red House Glass Cone features a museum, exhibitions, craft studio and glassblowing demonstrations at weekends. Open Monday to Sunday 10am – 4pm. Free entry. Tel: 01384 812 750</p> <p>Ruskin Glass Centre is home to a wide range of glass crafts. Open Monday to Saturday 10am – 4pm. Free entry. Tel: 01384 399 419</p> <p>The Tudor Crystal shop at the New Dial is open weekdays 10am - 5pm, Saturdays 9.30am - 4.30pm. Tel: 01384 392525</p>

First half of the route

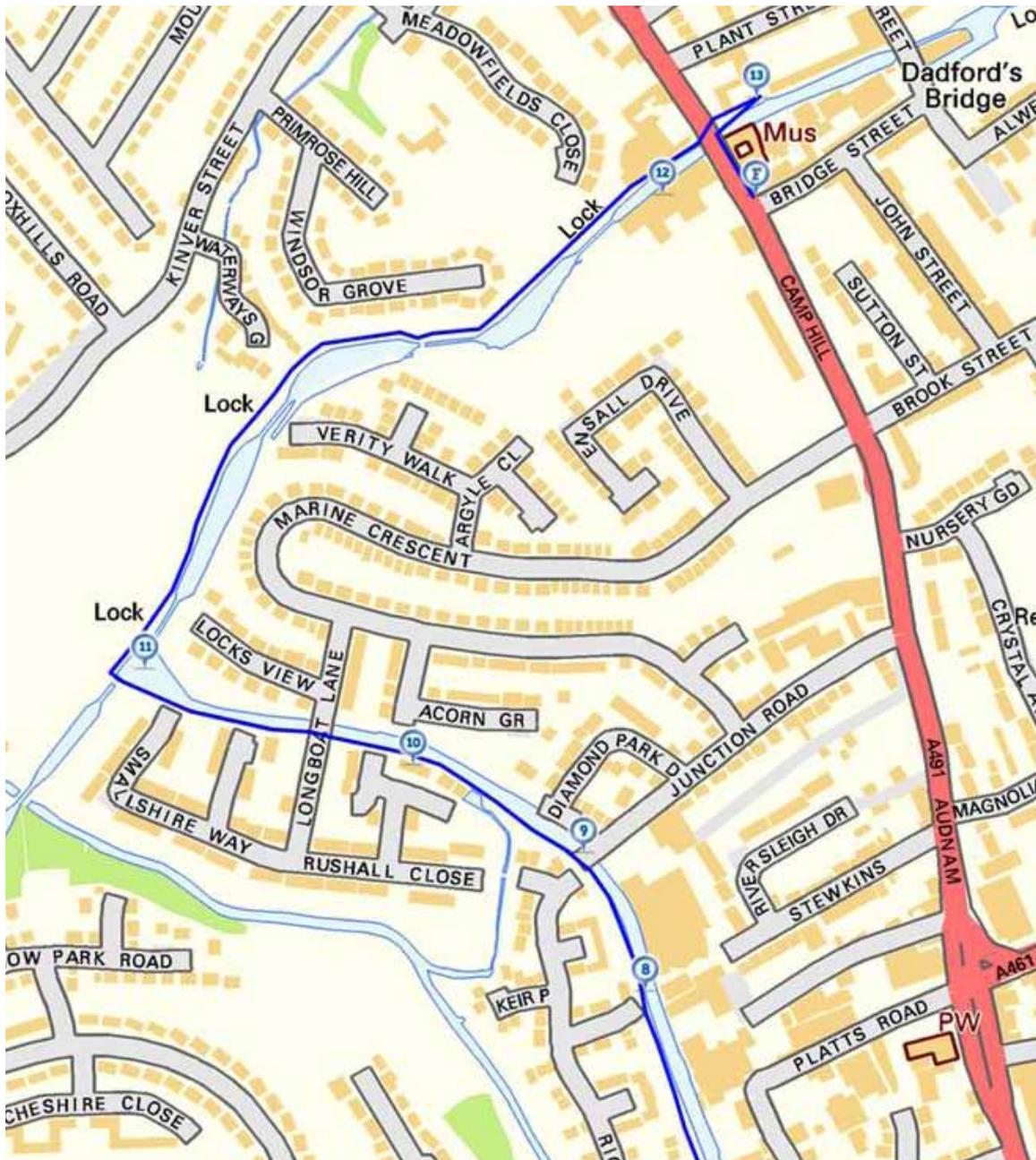


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Stopping points

1. Junction of High Street and Canal Street
2. The Bonded Warehouse, Canal Street
3. Site of the James Dovey glassworks, Canal Street
4. Neville Garratt Bridge, Canal Street
5. Bridge to John Bradley ironworks and the New Foundry
6. Former Stourbridge Canal Company dry dock
7. Coalbournbrook Road Bridge

Second half of the route



Stopping points

8. Opposite the New Dial Glassworks
9. Chubb's Bridge
10. Junction Cottages, Longboat Lane Bridge
11. Wordsley Junction
12. Former Stuart & Sons works, Lock 13
13. Opposite Red House Glass Cone
14. Red House Glass Cone

Directions

These directions are for use with the audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to the Stourbridge Canal

Junction of Canal Street and High Street

Directions 1

Walk about 20 metres along Canal Street and stop by the Bonded Warehouse on the right hand side of the road. Listen to Track 2.

2. Tea, tobacco and tax

The Bonded Warehouse, Canal Street

Directions 2

Continue along Canal Street for 100 metres until you reach a solitary derelict white house on your left. Listen to Track 3.

3. The French connection

Site of the James Dovey glassworks, Canal Street

Directions 3

Continue along the towpath for 100 metres until you reach Neville Garratt Bridge. Listen to Track 4.

4. Lime and iron

Neville Garratt Bridge, Canal Street

Directions 4

Continue along the towpath for 200 metres. Just before the canal turns to the right is a bridge. Stop on the bridge and Listen to Track 5.

5. A steaming lion

Bridge to John Bradley ironworks and the New Foundry

Directions 5

Continue along the towpath for 100 metres. Stop where the towpath crosses a brick bridge. Listen to Track 6.

6. Wasting water

Stourbridge Canal Company dry dock

Directions 6

Continue along the towpath for about 500 metres. Stop just before a road bridge crosses the canal. Listen to Track 7.

7. Fresh air and fun

Coalbournbrook Road Bridge

Directions 7

Continue along the towpath for about 500 metres. Stop opposite a factory with a circular building. Listen to Track 8.

8. Cones and chairs

Opposite New Dial Glassworks

Directions 8

Continue along the towpath for about 100 metres and stop at Chubb's Bridge. Listen to Track 9.

9. Sand and lead

Chubb's Bridge

Directions 9

Continue along the towpath for about 150 metres. Stop by a row of cottages on the left just before a modern bridge. Listen to Track 10.

10. Long or narrow?

Junction Cottages before Longboat Lane Bridge

Directions 10

Continue along the towpath for about 200 metres. At the junction with the Main Line of the Stourbridge Canal, stop on the Wordsley Junction bridge. Listen to Track 11.

11. Town tolls

Wordsley Junction

Directions 11

From the bridge turn right onto the towpath of the Main Line of the Stourbridge Canal. Continue up the flight of locks. Stop when you reach Lock 13. Listen to Track 12.

12. Decline, fall and renaissance

Former Stuart & Sons works, Lock 13

Directions 12

Continue along the towpath. Go under Glasshouse Bridge and stop just afterwards opposite the glass cone. Listen to Track 13.

13. Heart of glass

Opposite Red House Glass Cone

Directions 13

Retrace your steps and go back under Glasshouse Bridge. Walk up the ramp to the top of the bridge. Turn right onto the A491 High Street (crossing the canal). Continue for about 50 metres and stop outside the Red House Glass Cone. Listen to Track 14.

14. The crystal canal

Red House Glass Cone

Directions 14

We hope you have enjoyed the walk. If you have time, do explore the Red House Glass Cone and the White House Cone museum of glass. To return to the start of the walk you could retrace your steps along the canal or follow the A491 towards Stourbridge for about one mile.

Alternatively local buses (routes 256, 257, 267) run from the bus stop 50 metres along the A491 road from the Red House Glass Cone (away from the canal). Buses stop opposite the end of Canal Street where the walk started and continue to the Stourbridge Interchange bus station.

Further information

Black Country Living Museum

www.bclm.co.uk

The Bonded Warehouse

www.thebondedwarehousestourbridge.co.uk

British Glass Foundation

www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk

Canal & River Trust

<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/canals-and-rivers/stourbridge-canal>

Gorgeous Glass

<http://gorgeousglass.org.uk>

Red House Glass Cone

www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/red-house-glass-cone

Ruskin Glass Centre

<http://ruskinglasscentre.co.uk>

The Stourbridge website

www.stourbridge.com

Tudor Crystal

www.tudorcrystal.com

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

- **Graham Fisher MBE** for inspiring the walk, revising the text for the 2016 edition and providing the audio commentary
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- **Grace's Guide** for kind permission to reproduce archive images
- **Black Country Museums, Chris Allen** and **Julian Osley** for additional images reproduced under Creative Commons Licenses

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