

Leisure Services

Stone Town Trail

A PLEASANT ONE HOUR WALK

The Town of Stone was named after the pile of stone raised on the graves of the Princes killed in 665 AD by their father, King Wulfhere of Mercia, because of their conversion to Christianity. The Church, built over these stones in 670 AD, was replaced in 1135 AD by an Augustinian Priory, which survived until its dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII. The building collapsed in 1749 and the present church of St. Michael and St. Wulfad was built in the 1750s.

The position on the communications network with the road from London to Chester, Holyhead and the North of England, the building of the Trent and Mersey Canal in the 18th century and the railway in the 19th century has ensured the development of Stone from medieval times.

Brewing and shoemaking prospered. Shoemakers worked in small shops and factories and by 1974, 1,600 people were engaged in the industry, with considerable trade to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. New machinery was introduced in the 1850s provoking strikes and violent incidents amongst the work force.

Today old industries have declined or disappeared, but new industrial estates have been created and the canal now has an important part to play in the holiday trade. Stone is still a thriving market town with an expanding population of 12,500.



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The Trail begins at St. Michaels and St. Wulfad's Church in Church Street.

CHURCHYARD [01] Prior to dissolution (1536) was part of Augustinian Priory of St. Mary and St. Wulfad, which became the parish church. Collapse of the church in 1749 damaged the tomb of W. M. Compton (died 1603) and wife now situated to the right of the path.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH [02] Gothic revival architecture, 1753 - 1758. Nave retains original box pews. Note brass in memory of Thomas Crompton (died 1619) and memorial to Earl St. Vincent. Examples of windows by Charles Earner Kemp. Porch holds two 13th century priory effigies.

JERVIS MAUSOLEUM [03] (situated at the rear of the church) Admiral John Jervis, Earl St. Vincent of Meaford Hall near Stone died 1823. Famous colleague of Nelson, defeated the Spanish off Cape St. Vincent 1797. Follow the path down to Lichfield Street. Note memorials to Henry Fourdrinier (died 1844) developer of paper making machine and Thomas Bakewell (enlightened treatment of the insane).



02

Early example of Gothic Revival style, built on the grounds of earlier Augustinian Priory. The present church was designed by William Robinson of Greenwich.



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THE MANSION HOUSE [04] At the road, observe the Mansion House on the left with elaborate iron balustrade belonging to Rangeley and Dixon Foundry, manufacturers of many cast iron mileposts. Former leather works at rear. Turn right onto Lichfield Street, the main highway from 18th century to form direct approach to High Street. Mainly 18th and 19th century buildings.

FRANK JORDAN CENTRE [05] Built in 1858 as a National School, now a community centre.

THE PRIORY [06] On the right is a large 19th century house containing the only remaining section of rib-vaulted undercroft of the Medieval Priory. Continue straight on to the pedestrianised High Street, which contained at least 12 staging inns in 1834. At the rear of many of the buildings are the former shoe industry workshops (although no longer visible from the High Street).

CUMBERLAND HOUSE [07] On the left - note the plaque commemorating the visit of Duke of Cumberland (1745), Commander, English Forces who encamped north of town during Jacobite rebellion although no battle took place. Note torch snuffer on right of doorway. Pre-street lighting torches were extinguished on arrival.

Landscape painter Peter de Wint born 1784 in **36 HIGH STREET [08]**. Paintings in National Gallery, London and in Lincoln.

THE CROWN HOTEL [09] Designed by Henry Holland in 1780. Stop for coaches from London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. Acted as a Post Office. Distributing mail to Holyhead, Lancaster and Stockport. Founding place of Trent and Mersey Canal.

MILL STREET [10] Morrison's Supermarket now on the site of Medieval Fishponds. The street passes under the line built by North Staffs Railway Company 1849. (Note-worthy occupant of The Mill, now a restaurant, was Stoney Richard Smith, born 1835, who patented Hovis flour in 1887 at Stowe Mill).

Return to High Street, turn right, on the left is the - **MARKET SQUARE [11]** Charter granted in 1251. Markets still held Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Market Hall, now housing the Library, was built in 1868 on the site of the Old Butter Market by Lady Forester to fulfil the wish of Edward Jervis Jervis, Viscount St. Vincent.



With the neighbouring Library and Crown Hotel the Market Square is the heart of the town centre and the focus of many community events throughout the year.



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50 - 52 HIGH STREET [12] Joules Brewery was here.
Note commemorative plaque.

64 HIGH STREET [13] Original milepost from
Coach Road. The faceplate has been removed.

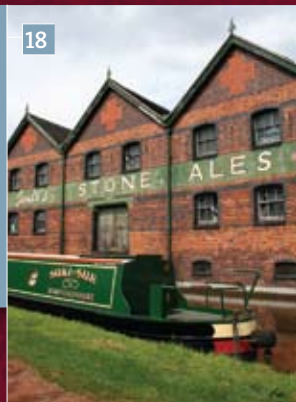
COMMEMORATIVE RAILINGS [14]
These refer to the legend, described overleaf,
of the founding of the town.

GRANVILLE SQUARE [15] Pump Square till 1903.
A magnificent plane tree replaced the pump to
commemorate Coronation of Edward VII.



15

*Originally named Pump Square,
when the pump was removed the
square was renamed after Earl
Granville of Stonepark. Unveiled
in 1921 the War Memorial bears
the names of the Stone men who
lost their lives during the First
and Second World Wars.*



18

*Francis Joule established Joule's
Brewery in Stone in 1780. By the
second half of the nineteenth
century Joule's was exporting ale
to America and Europe, as well as
to other parts of the country.*

*Joule's was taken over by
Bass Charrington in 1970, but
production ceased four years later.*

Take left fork along Station Road to Margaret
Street, turn left. Roman Catholicism was revived in
Stone in 19th Century by Father Dominic and later
Mother Margaret Hallahan, hence Margaret and
Dominic Streets. The stone church of St. Dominic's
was designed by Joseph Hansom (1853). Expansion
provided a still flourishing school and convent.
Turn right along Newcastle Street.

CHAPEL OF ST. ANNE [16] Can be viewed from the
highway, via gate of St. Dominic's convent, designed
by Pugin and blessed by Father Dominic in 1844.
Continue along the road to Canal Bridge; go right
onto towpath and right through Horse Tunnel
under road. At the entrance note rope roller and
rope wear in stonework.

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL [17] Supported by
Josiah Wedgwood and built by James Brindley. By
1771 the canal had reached Stone when boisterous
celebrations caused one of the four locks and a bridge
to collapse. The canal was completed in 1777 and Stone
developed as a bustling canal town. With eventual
decline in trade many buildings disappeared, but
some still existing, are in use by cruising companies.
Continue along towpath.

JOULE'S BREWERY WAREHOUSE [18] (1881).
On the site of the Canal Company warehouse.
Joule's produced Stone Ales for export to Australia
and California and the Warehouse dominated this
part of town.

OLD TRENT HOSPITAL [19] Former workhouse
building (1793) which replaced earlier thatched
building. The bridge is still called Workhouse Bridge.
Leading to Workhouse Lane.



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LATE 18TH CENTURY TRUNK WHARF [20]

Busiest part of the waterfront that repaired an average of 10 boats per month. Still a fully working boat yard and a base for the country's oldest existing family run narrowboat hire company.

STAR INN [21]

The Star Inn pre-dates the canal having existed since 16th century. Fully licensed in 1819, it relied heavily on canal trade, with stabling for 12 horses. A plaque on the wall commemorates the opening of the canal. Continue under road bridge.

On the right, note a cast iron milepost [22] showing Shardlow 47, Preston Brook 45, cast by Rangeley and Dixon foundry dated 1819.

WAREHOUSES [23]

Look across the canal at the fine late 18th century warehouses and Wharfinger's cottage now incorporated into a housing development. The buildings still show signs of the arches where boats entered to unload coal and other commodities.

[24] Make a detour at this point across Westbridge Park to Walton Bridge, now used as a footbridge, where under the arches, the abutments of the old Packhorse Bridge can still be seen.

[25] Retrace your steps up Stafford Street where tanneries existed in the 19th century. Crown Street on the left and Abbey Street on the right marks the route of London to Chester Road.

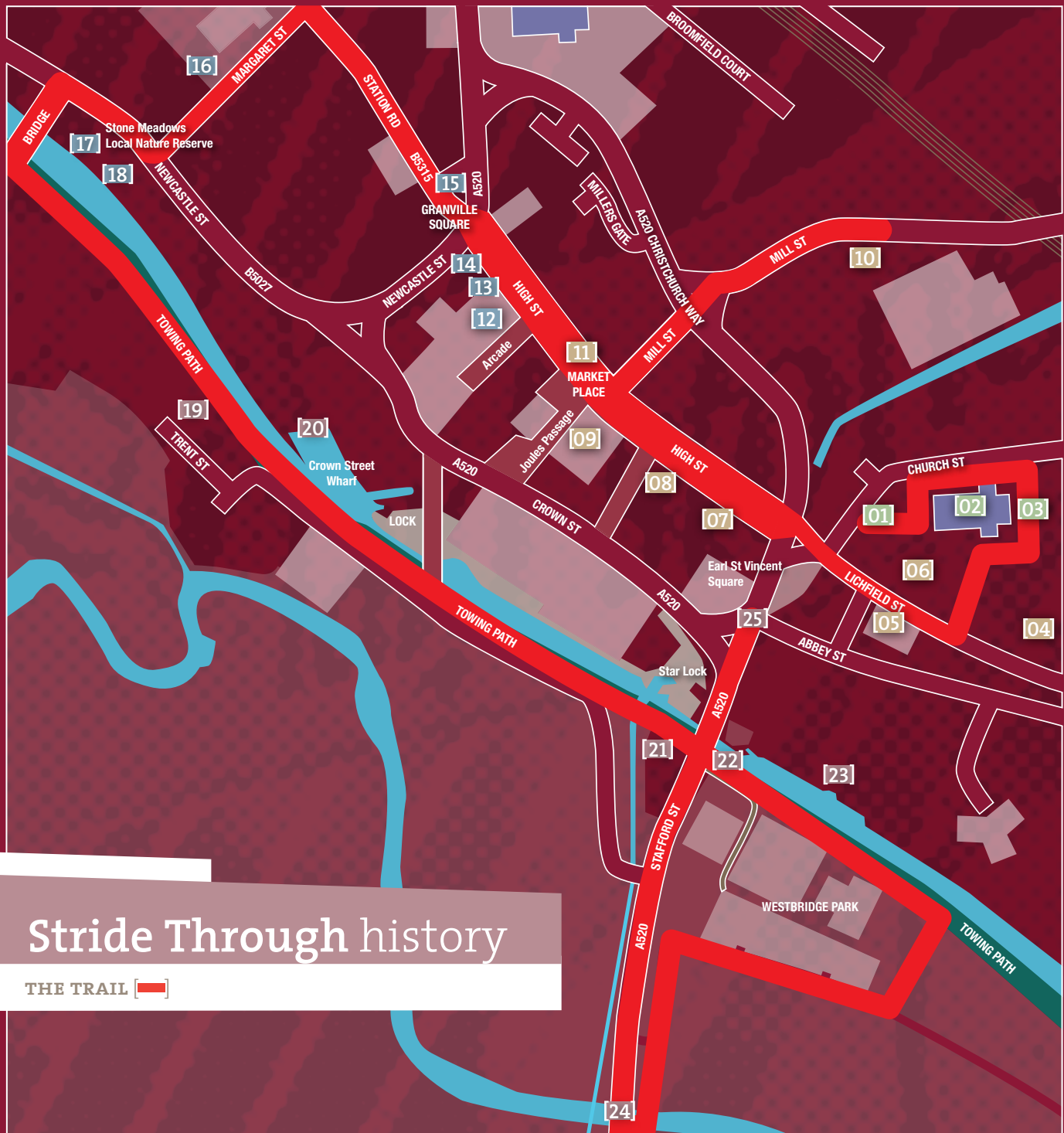
Recent regeneration of the canal network plays an important part in wildlife conservation. Rabbits, foxes, badgers, ducks, moorhens and coots frequent the canalside and birds like the kingfisher and heron now make it their natural habitat. The water vole has been encouraged back by special provision, which enables them to burrow into the canal bank. New arrivals like the great-crested grebes and otters are increasingly evident.

Spectacular views, historic houses and rich industrial heritage, these are just some of the fascinating things you will see whilst walking along the canals. Traffic free routes through contrasting scenery – rural countryside, rich industrial heritage and urban green space, canals are often a bridge between town and country.

Walks information can be obtained from Stafford Tourist Information Centre, Market Street, Stafford, ST16 2LQ.
T ▶ 01785 619 619



Known as the 'Canal Town', Stone has the Trent and Mersey at its heart bringing visitors from far and wide to this busy market town.



Stride Through history

THE TRAIL 