

PLACES TO VISIT

Guy Sjögren



1 LEAWOOD PUMP-HOUSE AND MIDDLETON TOP ENGINE HOUSE



Derbyshire County Council

The two engine houses of Leawood and Middleton Top lie some two miles apart, and a short distance from Arkwright's Mill at Cromford. Leawood Pump House was built in 1849, its purpose being to pump water from the River Derwent into the adjacent Cromford Canal. This it did until 1944, pumping four tons of water with each piston stroke. The 20 h.p. Middleton Top engine was built in 1829 and formed part of a rail system designed to link the Cromford Canal with the Peak Forest Canal. Along with two smaller engines, its purpose was to haul wagons up the three-and-a-half mile incline from the canal over seven hundred feet below. Both engines are 'in steam' at various times until early October. Go to the website below and enter 'Middleton Top' in the search box.

Middleton Top Countryside Centre, Middleton by Wirksworth, Derbyshire DE4 4LS
Website: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside
Phone: + 44 (0) 1629 823204

2 MILL MEECE PUMPING STATION



Mill Meece Pumping Station Preservation Trust

The Mill Meece Pumping Station is situated on the A519 about two miles north of Eccleshall, its purpose being to pump water to the expanding population of Stoke-on-Trent. Plans for its construction were originally laid as early as 1899. However, problems locating water, coupled with the presence of a major geological fault cutting off water from the chosen location, meant an alternative site had to be found. The pumping station was eventually built in 1914, although a further series of problems (including the outbreak of war) delayed the commissioning process. It was not until 1919 that water was regularly being pumped from Mill Meece into Hanchurch reservoir. A second engine was added in 1928, and both engines are periodically in steam. Check the website below for details.

Mill Meece Pumping Station, Cotes Heath, Nr Eccleshall, Staffordshire ST21 6QU
Website: www.millmeecepumpingstation.co.uk
Phone: + 44 (0) 1785 822138

3 ETRURIA INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



Etruria Industrial Museum

The Etruria Industrial Museum is the home of Jesse Shirley's Bone and Flint Mill, located at the junction of the Trent & Mersey and Caldon canals in Stoke-on-Trent. The mill was built in 1857 and was used to grind animal bone and flint, important elements in the manufacture of bone china and earthenware respectively. When added to clay, animal bone gives the china its translucent quality, while ground flint gives the ware strength, whiteness and prevents shrinkage during firing. Jesse Shirley's mill was unique in that it was driven by a steam engine, the only steam-driven potters' mill in the world. It is important to note that the museum and mill are open to the public only during 'steaming weekends', details of which can be found at the website below.

Etruria Industrial Museum, Lower Bedford Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 7AF
Website: www.etruriamuseum.org.uk
Phone: + 44 (0) 1782 233144

4 THE NATIONAL BREWERY CENTRE



National Brewery Centre

Burton-upon-Trent will forever be associated with the brewing of pale ale. White's 1857 *Directory of Derbyshire* listed no fewer than nineteen breweries in the town – a sizeable number for a population of some 8,000. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Burton hosts the National Brewery Centre. Whilst lovers of beer will undoubtedly find much to attract them at the Centre, so too may lovers of steam engines. Tours of the museum take visitors through each step of the brewing process, during which the part played by steam engines is explained. The Centre's tandem compound Robey steam engine is similar to those that would have pumped clean well water from the springs of St. Modwen to the brewery. This engine can be seen 'in steam' every Sunday from Easter until the end of October.

The National Brewery Centre, Horninglow Street, Burton-upon-Trent DE14 1NG
Website: www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk
Phone: + 44 (0) 1283 532 880

5 COBB'S ENGINE HOUSE



Courtesy of Janet Sullivan

When Elihu Burritt wrote his *Walks in the Black Country* (1868), the landscape he described was very different to the one we see today. Gone are the 'inky vaults and tortuous pathways' of this 'smoky and palpitating region'. Although still largely urban, the Black Country now has many green oases. One such is the Bumble Hole & Warrens Hall Nature Reserve in Dudley. There, close to the Windmill End canal junction, stands Cobb's Engine House. Built around 1831, the building housed a stationary steam engine used to pump water from local mines. The shaft was 525 feet deep, the engine pumping over 1,600,000 litres of water daily into the canal. It stopped work in 1928 and the Newcomen-type engine was moved to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan in 1930.

Bumble Hole & Warrens Hall Nature Reserve, St Peter's Road, Dudley DY2 9HU
Website: www.dudley.gov.uk [Search 'Bumble Hole']
Phone: + 44 (0) 1384 816991

6 THINKTANK, BIRMINGHAM



© Birmingham Museums Trust

Thinktank is Birmingham's science museum, and on the lowest of its four levels is the *Power Up* exhibition. This is one of the most comprehensive

steam engine collections in the world and, through demonstration and interactive exhibits, explains the power of steam and its remarkable history. One of the prized exhibits is the Boulton and Watt Smethwick Engine. Dating from 1779 this engine is the oldest working steam engine in the world. Originally, it was one of two engines used to pump water back up to the 491 foot (150 m) summit level of the Old Main Line canal at Smethwick, not far from the Soho foundry where it was made. There is also an exhibition explaining the story of the Boulton and Watt partnership and how they developed their engines.

Thinktank, Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham B4 7XG
Website: www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank
Phone: + 44 (0) 121 348 8000

7 BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM



Black Country Living Museum

Dartmouth ironmonger Thomas Newcomen specialised in the manufacture of tools for the mining industry, an industry in which flooding was a major problem. Some of Newcomen's biggest customers were the Cornish tin

mines, although his first working engine was erected in the West Midlands where, in 1712, Lord Dudley installed a Newcomen engine to overcome the drainage problems at his Conegyre Colliery. Since 1986, the Black Country Living Museum has operated a full-scale working replica of the 1712 engine: an engine scheduled to be in steam from early April until the end of October (see website below – enter 'Locations' in the search box and follow the link). Be warned! The Newcomen has an unpredictable nature, so give the Museum a call to check on running details before you travel.

Black Country Living Museum, Tipton Road, Dudley DY1 4SQ
Website: www.bclm.co.uk
Phone: + 44 (0) 121 557 9643

8 SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY (SVR)



© Lewis Maddox

Engine No. 44110 – a 'Black 5' – was the last steam locomotive to work a passenger train on British Railways at 'the end of steam' in 1968 and is one of the Severn Valley Railway's stable of working steam locomotives. Formed in 1965, the SVR celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year. While there are a number of steam railways preserved within the West Midlands (see www.steamheritage.co.uk), the sixteen-mile track between Bridgnorth and Kidderminster is one of the longest. The SVR offers a range of different railway-related activities, of which travelling along the line is but one. Details can be found by going to the website below. Click on 'Planning Your Visit' and follow the link to the 'Brochure Bookshelf'. The *Information and Timetable 2015* is particularly useful.

Severn Valley Railway, 1 Comberton Place, Kidderminster DY10 1QR
Website: www.svr.co.uk
Phone: + 44 (0) 1562 757900

9 COLEHAM PUMPING STATION



Shropshire Tourism (UK) Ltd

On 4 January 1901, the *Shropshire Star* reported the formal opening of the Coleham Pumping Station by the Mayoress of Shrewsbury. Using a gold key inscribed with the borough's arms, and its 'teeth' forming the Mayoress's initials, Mrs Hughes opened the door to the new pumping station. Addressing the assembled throng, the Mayor said (to applause) that if the townspeople 'only had their beautiful river cleansed it would be worth half the outlay of the scheme'. The point here was that, until the construction of the pumping station, the town's sewage flowed directly into the Severn. The pumping station, resembling a Victorian chapel in style, houses two beam engines and was in operation until 1970. See the website below for details of open days in 2016.

Coleham Pumping Station, Longden Coleham, Shrewsbury SY3 7DN
Website: www.colehampumpingstation.co.uk
Email: enquiries@colehampumpingstation.co.uk

10 HEREFORD WATERWORKS MUSEUM



The Waterworks Museum - Hereford

The Hereford Waterworks Museum sits on the northern bank of the River Wye, just a kilometre from the city centre, its main purpose being to tell the story of water supply in the county. Dating from 1856, the main building of the museum served originally as the city's water pumping station, the pump-house of which was equipped with a massive steam engine. Standing two storeys high, the triple-expansion steam engine remains the oldest such engine still working in Britain today. The museum is open to the public on Tuesdays, although the 'in steam' days are conveniently scheduled on Sundays. Details of 'in steam' days to be held in 2016 are shown on the 'Events Diary' page of the museum's website below.

Hereford Waterworks Museum, Broomy Hill, Hereford HR4 0LJ
Website: www.waterworksmuseum.org.uk
Phone: + 44 (0) 1432 361 147

