

Droitwich Spa – Heritage Town Trail

This walk will cover approximately 1.5 miles and will give you a brief introduction to the Town Centre of Droitwich Spa.

The trail begins outside St Richards House in Victoria Square. The building is now home to Droitwich Spa Heritage and Information Centre which houses the Salt Museum and Droitwich Calling permanent exhibitions. St Richards House is the frontage of the old St Andrews Brine Baths, which closed in 1974.



Cross the Road and walk down St Andrews Road.

On the right you will see a red brick building. The redbrick building is now home to flats. This is the site of the Worcestershire Hotel, the original building by John Corbett opened in 1891 and represented the height of Victorian luxury for visitors staying to take the 'cure' at the brine baths. Some features of the Worcestershire Hotel have been incorporated into the new building, notably the original bell tower.



Walk to the Worcester Road Junction and turn left. The Lido Park is on the opposite side of the road.

This park was originally designed for the pleasure of visitors to the town and of visitors to the town and

entrance cost one old penny. The park is home to The Lido Pool, which measures 40 metres long by 20 metres wide. Brine is added to the pool water to make it the same density as sea water. The lido is open during the summer season.

Continue along the Worcester Road to the corner of the High Street. Turn into the High Street.

Note the angle of the buildings along the High Street. They lean at very peculiar angles owing to subsidence. The cause of this is the extraction of brine from beneath them.



Continue down the High Street to Tower Hill between shop numbers eight and ten on your left.

Half way up, you can view the remains of the Tower Hill pumping station which displays some original brine pumping equipment. Several brine pumping stations once operated in the town supplying brine to the Saltworks and brine baths.

Retrace your steps and continue down the High Street until you reach Gurneys Lane on the right.

On your right are the remains of one of the last remaining pumping stations in Droitwich Spa.

Continue through Gurneys Lane passed Waitrose, cross over the road at the safe refuge crossing point (see map) to Vines Park.



Here you will see the Droitwich Canal. The Droitwich Barge Canal was built between Droitwich and the River Severn, designed by James Brindley and opened on 18th March 1771. In 1852 a canal between Droitwich Spa and Hanbury Wharf came into operation. Boats first used this in 1854 to bring coal to Droitwich Spa and carry salt out. These boats were known as Tows or Wich barges and four of them are known to have operated from Droitwich Basin until World War I. Trade declined over the years as during the 1920s little use was being made of them. The canal was finally abandoned in 1939 and was re-opened after much work in 2011.



Continue straight ahead to just before the bridge and stand where you have a clear view of St Augustine church on Dodderhill.

Above you is Dodderhill where a Roman fort was once situated.

This church was the parish church of Dodderhill, Elmbridge and Wychbold. The name Dodderhill probably derives from the plant, Lesser Dodder, found on some Worcestershire hills in the past. The church today consists of a large 14th century chancel with north and south transepts. The nave was destroyed in the 17th century. Roundhead soldiers were billeted in St Augustine's church, a high point from which to send cannon balls into Royalist Droitwich. In 1646 Charles soldiers stormed the church and set fire to it. The discolouration of the stonework was caused by years of sooty smoke rising from the salt making factories at the foot of Dodderhill. Long ago, salt workers houses were situated all along the banks of the canal; many still remain today.



Turn right and continue along the path for a short distance, keeping the River Salwarpe on your left.

If you look across the river, you will see a plaque marking the only remaining surface spring for the brine today.

Retrace your steps and from the bridge take the path directly opposite, walking past the Volunteer Barge on your left.



At the end of this path is the Upwich Brine Pit located directly next to the canal. This originates from medieval times as a source of the brine and was rebuilt in 1264 as integral to the salt making industry.

Turn right and then cross the canal at the next bridge you come to. Cross the Main Road at the safe refuge crossing point (see map) and continue across the car park until you enter Friar Street.



From here turn right and continue to the end of Friar Street.

At the far end of Friar Street on the left is Priory House, an Elizabethan house with a Queen Anne Chimney which has been beautifully restored. The building is brown and buff rather than black and white; some experts believe that oak timbers are best preserved by natural weathering. Legend has it that Priory House is haunted by a revengeful ghost.



Retrace your steps towards Norbury House and the High Street.



has a frog coming out of his mouth. The inn gained its first licence in 1712, in the reign of Queen Anne.

Continue to the High Street and the junction with St Andrews Street.

On the Corner of St Andrew's Street you will see St Andrews Church. The outside looks squat; this is because subsidence made the tower dangerous and it had to be dismantled in 1928. The bells are stored neatly inside the church. The main part of the church dates from 1290 but there are some earlier fragments including the various carvings on the capitals of the arches, which support the tower. The chapel in the north-east corner is dedicated to St Richard and it is thought that pilgrims formerly viewed relics connected with him through a hole in the chapel.



Opposite the church is the town hall built in 1825. The ground floor



(the large black and white building on your left). The site of this building is reputed to be the birthplace of St Richard de Wyche. The old Manor House of Wyche, along with most of the town, was destroyed in the great fire of Droitwich in around 1290. It was rebuilt in the early 16th century and was known as St Andrews House. In 1879 it was bought by John Corbett and, after extensive remodelling, opened as a luxurious hotel in 1887.

Cross over the road to Victoria Square.

Opposite St Richards House is the town's Library. This was formally the site of Salters Hall, built by John Corbett as a recreational facility for the townsfolk. In 1933 the current building was built as the 'Salters Hall cinema'. The use of this building was changed into a library in the early 1960s, however inside the building remnants of its previous life as a cinema can still be seen, including the gallery and proscenium arch.

You have now reached the end of the walk.

If you are still feeling energetic a trip to the Sacred Heart Church to see the mosaics is a must.

To get here continue to walk up St Andrews Street past the Heritage Centre onto St Andrews Road go underneath the underpass and continue up the Worcester Road for approximately 0.8 miles the Sacred Heart Church will be on your right.



would have originally been open and used for a weekly market, which would have spilled out into the square. It is thought that the square was the mediaeval centre of the town.

Walk along St Andrews Street back towards Victoria Square.

At the top of St Andrews Street stands the site of the Former Raven Hotel



Useful Telephone Numbers

Information and Advice

Droitwich Spa Heritage and Information Centre	01905 774312
Droitwich Spa Town Council	01905 774258
Droitwich Community Contact Centre	01386 565000
Droitwich Library	01905 822722
Wychavon District Council	01386 565000
Worcestershire Hub	01905 765765
Travel	
Bus timetables	0871 2002233
National Rail Enquiries	08457 484950
Car Breakdown	01905 775532
Vines Taxis	01905 774830 / 776100

Health

Corbett Medical Practice	01905 795566
Salters Medical Practice	01905 773535
Spa Medical Practice	01905 772389
Worcester Royal Hospital	01905 763333
Emergency Dentist	01905 724633
Boots Pharmacy	01905 773219
Corbett Pharmacy	01905 795618
Droitwich Pharmacy	01905 771036

Police

Police Non- Emergency	101
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Waterways

Canals and Rivers Trust (Emergency Number)	0800 4799947
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Environment

Agency (Emergency Number)	0800 807060
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Sport & Leisure

Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre	01905 771212
Droitwich Spa Lido	01905 799342
Sixways Stadium (buy tickets)	01905 454183

Golf Clubs

Gaudet Luce Golf & Leisure	01905 796375
Droitwich Golf & Country Club	01905 774344
Ombersley Golf Club	01905 620747

Vets

MacArthur, Barstow and Gibbs Veterinary Surgery	01905 773262
Townsend Veterinary Surgery	01905 772002



Droitwich Spa Town Council

**Visit
DROITWICH SPA**

**Heritage Trail
& Town Map**



Welcome to the historic town of Droitwich Spa...

Surrounded by the beautiful Worcestershire countryside, it is a town of great charm offering its visitors plenty to see and enjoy.

The town has been the site of a settled community for over 2000 years. It owes its existence to the natural brine springs which emanate from subterranean beds of pure rock salt 200ft below the ground. Dissolved by underground springs, artesian pressure forces the salt to the surface as brine. Its density and buoyancy are only rivalled by the Dead Sea.

The town has a good range of leisure activities available.

- Guided Walks
- Open Air Lido
- Two Beautiful Green Flag Parks.
- Leisure Centre & Gym
- Pubs & Restaurants
- Cafés
- Events
- Activities
- and much more...

go to www.VisitDroitwichSpa.com

Canal

The recently restored Droitwich canal network is a haven for walkers, cyclists and nature lovers. There are enough shops to keep retail therapists happy along with numerous markets that regularly take place in the town. Several well established festivals take place throughout the year which remains popular with the local community and visitors alike.

Location

Droitwich Spa is an ideal centre from which to explore the Heart of England. To the north of Droitwich Spa lies the City of Birmingham, home of the National Exhibition Centre and to the south stands the City of Worcester, dominated by its Cathedral. To the east of Droitwich Spa is Shakespeare's Country and Stratford-Upon-Avon. To the west are the Black and White villages of Herefordshire and the principality of Wales.

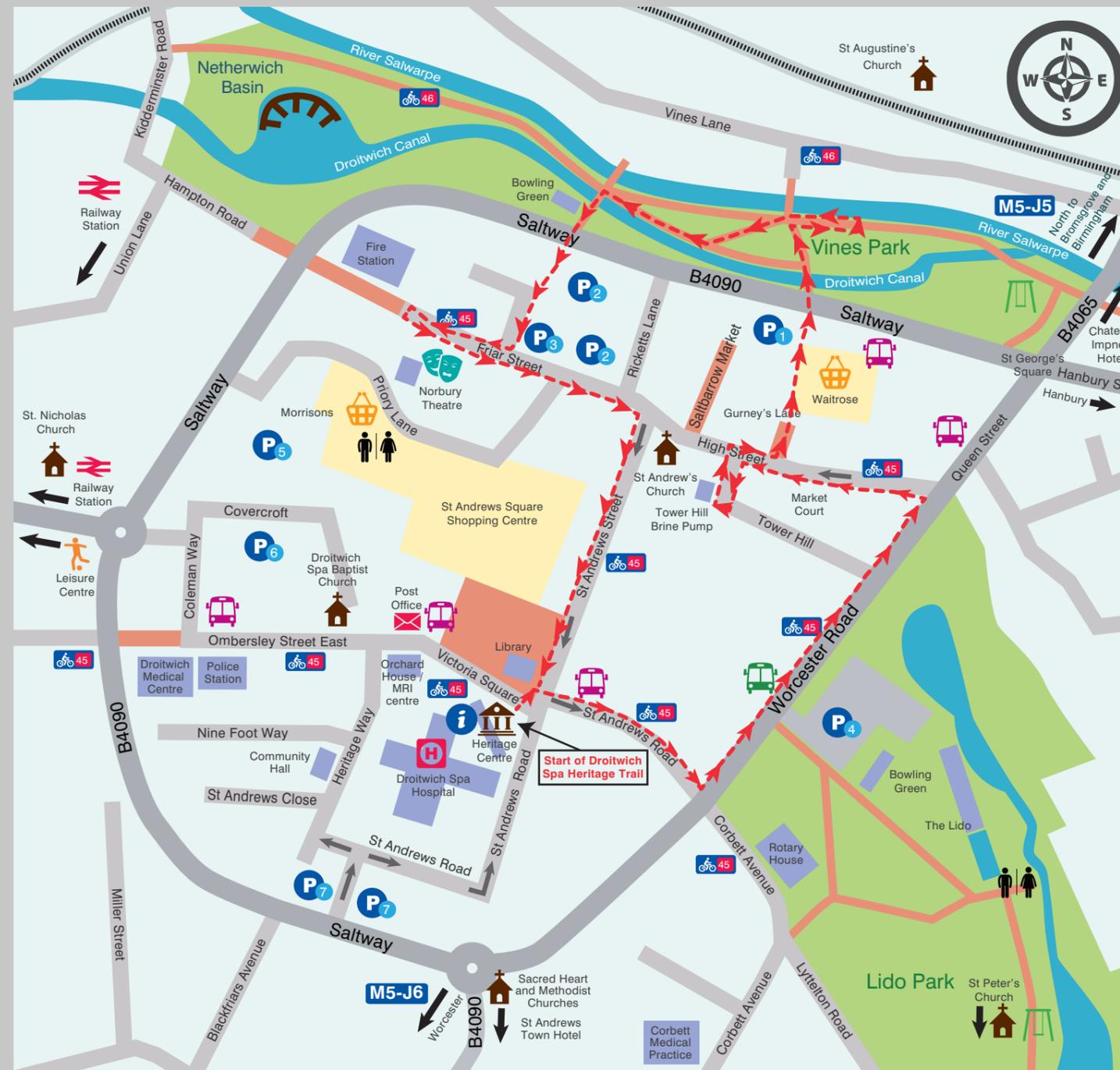
Transport & Parking

Public Transport links are well provided in Droitwich with regular direct bus services to all surrounding areas. The town is served by direct bus and rail connections to Worcester and Birmingham including all interim stops in between. All public transport information is available from the Tourist Information Centre near to Victoria Square. Car Parking in the town centre is provided through signed pay and display car parks and some limited time "on street" spaces.

Droitwich Spa Town Centre

Key

			P Parking
Information	Toilets	1	High Street WR9 8EW (short stay)
		2	Ricketts Lane WR9 8EW (short stay)
Railway Station	Post Office	3	Friar Street WR9 8EQ (long stay)
		4	Lido Park WR9 8AA (long stay)
Theatre	Play area	5	Covercroft WR9 8HE (short stay)
		6	Covercroft (Day Centre) WR9 8QU (short stay)
Leisure centre	Supermarkets	7	St Andrews (Saltway) WR9 8EQ (long stay)
			National cycle route
Coach drop off points	Bus stops		Public building
			Pedestrian area
Museum	Church		Shopping area
			Water
Private Hospital (No A&E)	Rail		Grass
			Droitwich Spa Heritage Trail



The Salt King

John Corbett was born in 1817 at Brierley Hill and worked in his father's canal business to gain capital; with it, in his late twenties, he purchased six acres of land comprising a derelict brine works outside Stoke Prior near Bromsgrove. In 1854, he began building his salt works, which became the largest, most modern and most successful in Europe, earning him the title of 'Salt King'.

In 1856 John married Anna O'Meara in Paris. He commissioned a French architect to design the Chateau Impney and building started in 1875. The Chateau was completed at an estimated cost of seven million pounds in today's figures.

Corbett, a great philanthropist, helped change a grim industrial town into a fashionable spa in the late 19th century. Salters Hall, St Andrew's Brine Baths, and the Worcestershire Hotel were all built around Victoria Square and the Raven Hotel was converted from the old St Andrew's Manor House.

The GWR railway station, (of the old Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway), was rebuilt and visitors flocked to the town to use the spa facilities. At the time of Corbett's death, in 1901, it was estimated that he owned or part-owned nearly half the town.

He was generous elsewhere in the UK. Family holidays were taken at Towyn on the west coast of Wales. The town's promenade was rebuilt by Corbett and a plaque can be seen at the northern end to commemorate this fact. In nearby Stourbridge he offered his Georgian mansion, The Hill, Amblecote, for conversion into a hospital. The offer was accepted and the hospital was opened in 1893.

Making a play upon his name (the French word for a raven is corbeau) John Corbett adopted the raven as part of his family crest. Many buildings, built or sponsored by John Corbett, in and around Droitwich Spa can be seen showing a raven, usually within the framework of gable ends.



Droitwich Spa Heritage & Information Centre

The Droitwich Spa Heritage and Information Centre opened in 1980 and is housed on the former Brine Baths site. The present black and white building, known as St. Richards House, dates from the 1930s and consists of a very friendly and welcoming Tourist Information centre, a fascinating local history exhibition and a small but comprehensive range of brass rubbing plates. The centre is host to several small temporary exhibitions throughout the year

Droitwich Spa Salt Museum

Visit the Droitwich Spa Heritage Centre Salt Museum and discover the history of Droitwich Spa from pre historic times to present day. This unique permanent exhibition is devoted to the fascinating story of the only salt water spa in Britain.

Droitwich Calling

Come and experience a truly fascinating exhibition which brings alive the history of radio. See excellent 'hands on' displays which will delight both casual observers and radio enthusiast alike. Find out how a transmitting station made Droitwich famous and why Droitwich Spa was chosen and how it operated. An era of broadcasting can be yours to discover at the Heritage Centre!

For more information visit our website

www.droitwichheritagecentre.org.uk

