tipton

The tiny ancient hamlet which the Domesday Book recorded as having ‘land for five ploughs’ grew in the industrial revolution to a place ‘palpitating to the beat and throb of a thousand steam engines’ where ‘iron is manipulated and fashioned to the service of man in every conceivable way that human ingenuity can devise’

The abundance of coal, iron ore and limestone in the locality led to the establishment of iron making. This grew rapidly after the construction of the Birmingham canal in 1770 which allowed finished products to be efficiently transported to worldwide markets. Such was the growth of the canal system in Tipton that the town became known as the Venice of the Midlands with over thirteen miles of waterway within the parish.

As well as making top quality iron, Tipton became especially well known for its heavy engineering trades such as the production of large castings, forgings, structural ironwork, steam engines, boilers, chains and anchors.

Technical innovation and achievement were prolific. In 1712 the world’s first successful steam engine was erected at Coneygree, then in 1776 James Watt’s first commercial engine was put to work at Bloomsfield. The first iron steamship in the world was built by the Horseley Ironworks in 1822 and the world’s largest anchor made by H P Parkes in 1866. The 1830s saw Joseph Hall develop the wet puddling method of iron making which revolutionised the industry. In 1937 the world speed record breaking car Thunderbolt was built at Beams Foundry.

Tipton’s contribution to the industrialised world can never be underrated.

VICTORIA PARK

“I have enjoyed this park through the many seasons, the lake is stunning all year round, but it’s the colourful floral displays in the summer that are my real favourite”

ST MARK’S CHURCH

“I especially love this distinct blue brick church in winter in the white snow, it looks really beautiful in the snowy setting”

THE OLD LINE CANAL

“Gives you a real feel and flavour of urban canals”

TIPTON SLASHER STATUE

“An impressive statue commemorating Tipton born bare knuckle boxer William Perry”

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The sites are spread over a large area. Careful planning will be necessary before walking the route.
**St Matthew’s Church**

A factional disagreement at St. Paul’s church in Owen Street in 1875 led to St Matthew’s church being built in the following year in the Early English style at a cost of £8,000 with a seating capacity of 460. Its major benefactors were the local landowner and industrialist, Sir Horace St Paul and the Roberts Brothers who owned the nearby Tipton Green Ironworks. The church was listed in 1987.

**The Old Line Canal**

The original line of the Birmingham Canal reached Tipton in 1770 and linked up with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal beyond Wolverhampton in 1772. It was surveyed by the engineer James Brindley who followed the existing ground contours resulting in quite a long and winding route. Although much of the Old Line in the northern part of Tipton has been lost, this section through the Roberts Brothers who owned the nearby Tipton Green Ironworks. The church was listed in 1987.

**St John’s Church**

Originally dedicated to St Martin, this is Tipton’s ancient parish church dating from the 13th century but rebuilt in 1883. It was abandoned in 1797 when a new St Martin’s church was built in Lower Church Lane but brought back into use with a new nave in 1854 to cater for the rapidly rising population in the Princess End area and rededicated to St John. The tower, with its distinctive sundial, is the oldest building in Tipton.

**Cast Iron Roving Bridges**

Many cast iron tournpits roving bridges (a bridge which takes the keel from the canal) seen on the canal system were made in Tipton at Horsley Ironworks and Toll End Ironworks from the 1820s to the 1860s. Several of these still exist including these examples at Dudley Port Junction on the New Main Line Canal. They were supplied by Toll End Ironworks in 1855 when the Netherton Canal Tunnel branch was built.

**Malthouse Stables**

Built in the mid 19th century this stable block is a rare survival of a once common building type to be found along the canal system when boats relied on horsepower for haulage. Last used for their original purpose in the 1920s, the stables had 14 cobbled stalls for horses on the ground floor with fodder storage above. In the early 1980s the stables were restored and adapted for use as a Community Recreation Centre by Sandwell Council.