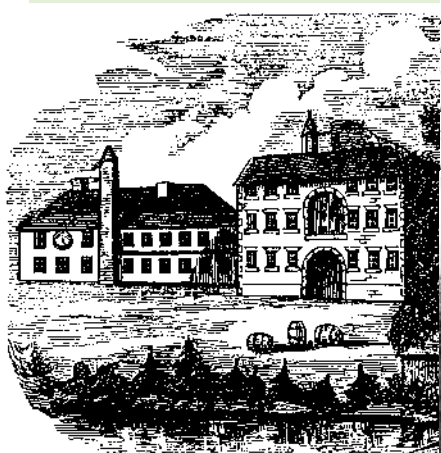


Caughley China Works

In 1772 Thomas Turner of Worcester came to Caughley along with Ambrose Gallimore, a Staffordshire potter, to extend a factory that had been in existence there for about 15 years. Known as the Salopian Porcelain Manufactory the Caughley works made some of the finest examples of C18th English Porcelain, now highly sought after by collectors. Turner used underglaze printing to make tea and dessert sets and other wares. Printing from copperplate engravings enabled designs to be mass produced at low cost by a ceramic transfer process, alongside the expensive hand painted porcelain. At its height it employed around 100 people. In 1798 Turner sold the business to John Rose of Broseley who had set up in competition. By 1821 most of the factory had been taken down and moved to Coalport, however one part remained as a cottage (pictured below) until it was finally demolished for open cast mining in the 1960s.

Caughley is best known for its blue and white patterns of Chinese landscapes, some had gilded edges. Popular patterns were 'two temples' (top right), 'pleasureboats' (right) and 'fishermen' (bottom). You can see examples at Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery and at the China Museum in Coalport (pay to enter though there is free display about the history of china making in the shop at the museum entrance plus information boards.)



All that remained of the large factory by 1960 was a cottage. The round aperture housed the factory clock which is now at Coalport.

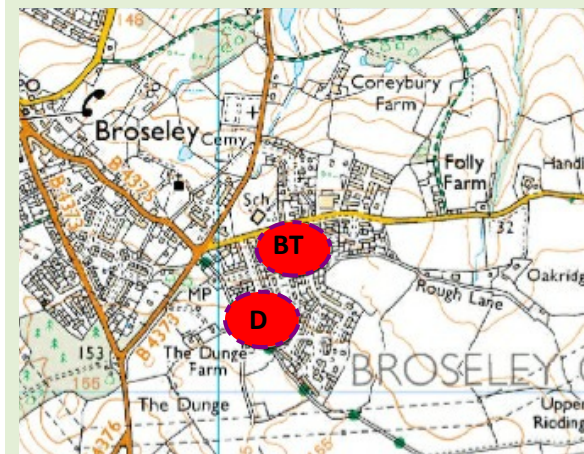


Look for the monument at the site of the Caughley Works in the hedge to the right after you pass Caughley Cottage. It's easy to miss it.



Broseley Tileries

Tile making in Broseley goes back along way, A 'tyle house' (kiln) was mentioned as being on 'priory land' in 1545. High quality local clays were mined alongside coal and iron and by the C19th, and as cities grew there was a huge market for bricks, roof and floor tiles. Said to have been established in 1760, in operation from at least 1828, by 1838 the Broseley Tileries were the largest works in the Broseley and Jackfield area. By 1870 the firm produced tessellated and encaustic floor tiles as well as roof and plain floor tiles. Broseley Tileries were operated by the Onions family until 1877 when they sold them to a new company, Broseley Tileries Co Ltd. Another works close by was the Dunge Brick and Tile Works, it ceased manufacture in 1903. In 1889 the area's leading manufacturers of roof tiles, which for some years had been known by the generic name 'Broseley Tiles', formed the Broseley Brick and Tile Manufacturers' Association to try to stop competitors calling their tiles 'Broseley' as was common with tile works in Staffordshire, restricting the name to products made by the Association's members. They tried to fix minimum prices, curb over-production, and promote tiles in the face of growing competition from Welsh slate and continental producers. The association continued until roof-tile production ended in Broseley in 1940. The works was then operated by Coalmoor Refractories in the 1950, and possibly 1960s, making fire resistant refractory bricks using clay from Caughley. The site of the Dunge and Broseley Tileries is now covered by a modern housing estate, called not surprisingly, 'The Tileries'. It is just possible to make out some remnants of the old industrial site in the uneven ground in the field adjacent to Rough Lane.



The site of the Broseley Tileries (BT) and the Dunge Works (D). The tile works today survive in local place names and it is possible to see examples of their work in museums and in old buildings. You may also spot manufacturer's stamps on the reverse of old floor tiles, roof tiles and bricks.



Broseley Tileries tile c 1870

Old railways and canals along side the Severn

Trains used to run between Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury along the Severn Valley Railway. The Broseley and Ironbridge station is now Darcy's Restaurant. The line was built between 1858 and 1862 from Hartlebury, near Droitwich Spa, to Shrewsbury via Stourport-on-Severn, Bewdley Arley, Highley, Hampton Loade, Bridgnorth, Coalport, Ironbridge and Broseley, Buildwas, Cressage and Berrington. It became part of the Great Western Railway in 1863. Direct trains from Birmingham, the Black Country, Bewdley and Kidderminster ran on linked lines. At Buildwas Junction (now part of the Ironbridge Power Station site) Severn Valley trains also connected with services from Wellington to Much Wenlock and Craven Arms.



Coalport station building & vintage carriage

It was a single-track railway, more important for freight than passengers, especially for coal mined at Alveley and Highley. The line closed as part of the Beeching cuts in 1963 and the track north of Bridgnorth was dismantled. Coal traffic survived south of Alveley until 1969. Passenger service continued between Bewdley with Kidderminster and Hartlebury until 1970 and freight traffic between the British Sugar Corporation's Foley Park factory and Kidderminster until 1982. Today the Severn Valley Railway has been restored between Bridgnorth and Kidderminster and operates as a popular steam railway heritage tourist attraction with passenger services operated by volunteers. New housing estates and the demolition of an old bridge, means it is now impossible to restore the line between Bridgnorth and Ironbridge, however, the disused track is a section of the Mercian Way, part of a national network of long distance cycle routes.



Severn Valley Railway bridge



Silkin Way marker

The Silkin Way, with its distinctive iron 'railway wheel' markers, starts from the north side of the Coalport bridge, you can use it to walk or cycle to Telford Town Park and shopping centre. It follows the route of the disused track bed of the London North Western railway branch line which connected with services to Wolverhampton at Oakengates. It was built in 1860 on the bed of the Shropshire canal which it replaced. It stopped carrying passengers in 1952 and closed as a freight line in 1964.

It is possible to see part of the old Shropshire canal between the China Museum and the Memorial Bridge. It was restored in the 1960s. Just before the bridge on the north side of the river you can see the Hay Inclined Plane which was used to haul tub boats to the canal basin 207 feet/63m above, without the need for canal locks. It operated between 1792 and 1895. It is now part of Blists Hill Museum.

The Severn used to be an important commercial, navigable highway. Traffic peaked in C18th with coal coming down from collieries around Madeley and Broseley. In the C19th china, tiles and bricks were exported using 'Severn trow' barges. River traffic was superseded by the use of railways for freight. There are information boards near the Memorial bridge and at the end of the canal next to the China Museum.

Short restored section of the Shropshire Canal at Coalport



Hay Inclined Plane

