

**Snippets of local heritage across Worcestershire**

**Worcester**

In times gone by, the city was well known for the manufacture of gloves, Porcelain Pottery (Royal Worcester), one of the oldest pottery brands in the world, and Worcestershire Sauce.

Sadly the glove factories have long gone and a museum has been established on the former porcelain factory site. The Worcestershire Sauce Factory still manufactures its famous sauce at the Lea & Perrins site in Midland Road and the orange gates at the front of the building which feature the Lea & Perrins brand actually appear on the bottle label itself.

Worcester was a Roman settlement in first century AD although tools and weapons from bronze age suggest an earlier settlement. In the 7th Century the city was known as Weogoran and a new residential development close to St Richard’s Hospice has taken this old, historic name – Weogoran Park.

Worcester cathedral dates back to when a monastery was built on the site in 680AD – the cathedral school still survives today as King’s School.

Edward Elgar, the classical composer, was born in Lower Broadheath on the outskirts of Worcester. You may know some of his work – the Pomp & Circumstance marches, Land of Hope and Glory, Enigma Variations.

**Evesham**

Located in the Vale of Evesham on the banks of the River Avon, the town has been at the heart of market gardening for many years and has been growing asparagus in abundance since medieval times.

Following 40 miles of pretty countryside you can enjoy the delights of the Spring blossom trail from late March to early May beginning with plums and damsons, followed by pears and then apples.

The name of the town derived from the old English name of homme or Eof, a herdsman to the third Bishop of Worcester.

Notable residents include Molly Badham MBE born in 1914, a co-founder of Twycross Zoo and trainer of the chimpanzees who appeared on the Brooke Bond PG Tips TV ads for tea.



**Pershore**

Renowned for its Georgian architectures and façades, many buildings in Pershore are listed and hold important status as an outstanding conservation area.

Pershore Abbey was founded in 689AD by King Oswald and visitors can climb to the top of the pinnacle tower to see views of the Vale of Evesham and Bredon Hill.

The town holds the Pershore Plum festival in August. It is known as the capital of the plum because of the vast numbers of plum orchards in the area. Some of the local varieties include Pershore Purple, Pershore Yellow Egg Plum and Pershore Emblem.

Pershore Old Bridge is a six-arch bridge across river Avon dating from the Medieval period and extensively restored following damage in 1644 during the English Civil War. Today it is used only as a footbridge for pedestrians.

Persons of note include Claude Choules who was the last surviving veteran of both world wars and a supercentenarian (Choules lived until he was 110 years old) and Michael Collie, a TV presenter who currently appears on BBC Midlands Today.

**Malvern**

Across these magnificent hills no less than six Malvern’s appear - Little Malvern, Malvern Link, Malvern Wells. The name was derived from the Celtic term “Moel-bryn” meaning bare or bald hill.

Malvern is renowned for its refreshing spring water and hydrotherapy treatments at spas in the town were frequented by the likes of Queen Victoria and the poet Tennyson.

Millions of bottles of Malvern spring water are sold across the world today and is still bottled from the original source by family business – Holywell Spring Water.

Many famous people came to the town to partake of the spring water, to be educated and indeed, the hills have inspired many poets and novelists over the years.

Charles Hastings, founder of the British Medical Association, spent the latter part of his life living in Barnards Green.

**Droitwich Spa**

According to local history there has been a settlement here for more than 2,000 years and in roman times, Droitwich was known as Salinae.

Droitwich is a spa town which had natural brine baths used for bathing. The baths were known for their natural, therapeutic benefits. Sadly, the baths no longer exist however the town does have an open-air lido with salt water in the swimming pool.

Rich deposits of salt have been mined in the area for thousands of years and were valued by the Romans. Natural Droitwich brine is second to the Dead Sea for its density and buoyancy.

John Corbett, aka The Salt King, built the largest salt works in Europe and commissioned the construction of the Chateau Impney in a unique French style.

Edward Winslow, one of the pilgrim fathers, was born in the town in 1595 and sailed on the Mayflower to Provincetown Harbour in Massachusetts, USA.

**Tenbury Wells**

An ancient market town located on the south bank of the River Teme, where the history records Tenbury Wells may go back as far as the Iron Age.

Originally named Temettebury, Wells was added in the 1840’s when mineral springs and wells were discovered, then becoming Tenbury Wells as we know it today. You can still see the unique Pump Rooms in a Chinese gothic style which housed baths of mineral water.

Tenbury is well known across the country for its winter auctions of Mistletoe and Holly Auctions held on Tuesdays before Christmas, together with growing hops, cider apples and pears fondly called “the Town in the orchard”.

Henry Hill Hickman who was the pioneer of anaesthesia practised as a surgeon at Teme Street in Tenbury.

**Kidderminster**

The earliest written name of Chideminstre can be found in the Domesday Book of 1086 with outlying settlements such as Habberley, Hurcott and Trimpley – areas which some of you may be familiar with.

The Harveys Wine Vaults were medieval vaults used as wine cellars by the world-renowned Bristol Sherry Company. Harveys were used for nearly 150 years until 1967, after which they were removed to build the Swan Centre shopping mall in 1968.

The Severn Valley Railway, running from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth, is a railway line originally completed in 1862. It is a full-size standard gauge railway running predominantly steam engines between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth for approximately 16 miles. Thankfully, in the present day, the well-preserved Severn Valley Railway is a well-known tourist attraction.

One notable resident of Kidderminster was Sir Rowland Hill. The modern postal system was based on his idea and he invented the first adhesive stamp – the Penny Black. For all the avid stamp collectors out there, it is worth noting that in 2017 a mint Penny Black stamp sold for £45,000.

The modern carpet industry was founded in the area by Brinton’s in 1785 and became the main stay of the town. This continued to thrive, supplying carpet across the world, until the 1970’s when the industry went into decline although it still remains today on a much smaller scale.

**Tewkesbury**

The name of the town derives from Theoc a Saxon hermit who lived here in the 7th century, it then became known as Theocsbury and then Tewkesbury in latter day.

Tewkesbury Abbey has the tallest Norman tower in England still in existence today and the Royal Hop Pole Hotel dates from 14th century, being mentioned by Charles Dickens in “The Pickwick Papers”.

In days gone by there was a network of 90 alleyways weaving between the narrow streets and 30 medieval alleys still remain today where you can take a walk and enjoy the historic architecture.

An authentic re-enactment of the Battle of Tewkesbury (War of the Roses in 1471) takes place annually in July at the internationally renowned Tewkesbury Medieval Festival. In July 2021 the 550th anniversary of the battle is to be celebrated.

Tewkesbury is also known for its mustard and is still produced today as a cottage industry using ingredients fit for a King – it is said that Henry VIII was presented with a ball of mustard covered in gold leaf on a visit to the town in 1535. It was also mentioned in Shakespeare’s work, Henry IV quoting “having a wit as thick as Tewkesbury mustard”.

**Bridgnorth**

The name of the town is derived from Brigge, Brug or Bruges named after its position on the river Severn and the earliest reference of a settlement there goes back to 912, founded by Alfred the Great’s daughter Ethelfreda.

The Tower keep castle was founded in 1101, its purpose to defend against hostile attacks from Wales – you can still visit the ruins today and enjoy a gentle stroll through the park gardens.

In 2005, unverified German papers from 1941 were found. They were military plans of Nazi Germany for an invasion of Britain. Some experts believe it may have been Hitler’s intention to make his personal headquarters in Bridgnorth due its central location, good rail links and airfield at RAF Bridgnorth, should the invasion succeed.

The river Severn divides Bridgnorth in half. You have the upper part, High Town, atop a sandstone cliff with steep winding streets and Low Town on the banks of the river. They are connected to each other by a Victorian funicular railway – the steepest and only functional **inland** railway of its kind left in England.