

DUDLEY: PROUD OF THE PAST, POSITIVE FOR THE FUTURE

Georgian Dudley



In 1732 Robert Samuel and Anne Baylies established a Charity School in Tower Street for "teaching instructing and clothing 50 boys .....whose parents would not be able to give them learning". The boys were required to attend divine service at the Old Meeting House. The boys pictured can be found on the 1824 facade of the Charity School.

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**The Old Meeting House**

First built in 1702, this Presbyterian (latterly Unitarian) chapel was destroyed in 1715, having been "set on fire, pulled down and demolished by a rebellious assembly of riotous persons". It was rebuilt in 1717 in stone and extensively altered in 1869. Adjacent to it is the later "Parsons Charity School". Access to the chapel is off Wolverhampton Street, just past the square on the left, but it can also be viewed by going through the square into Horseley Gardens.



**Finch House directly in front of you and Chaddesley House and its neighbour, to your rear, are fine examples of the imposing "Queen Anne" and "Georgian" style residences favoured by Dudley's 18th century traders and industrialists.**

The fortunes of such families as Dixon, Finch, Bradley and Hawkes rose with the expansion of "new" industries such as mining, iron working and glassmaking and they were keen to re-establish themselves away from the increasingly overcrowded and unpleasant medieval town centre. Note how the narrow "town" area of Wolverhampton Street still contrasts with the newer and wider "country" part.



Individual acts of Charity characterise this period, even basic poor relief depended on public subscription. Charity Schools were founded and numerous Non-Conformist Chapels were built. From 1791, Town Commissioners, drawn from Dudley's "great and good", were charged with improving conditions in the town. However, they could not hope to keep pace with the unprecedented problems posed by the Industrial Revolution.



This ornate tablet sited high on Finch House carries the initials of John and Mary Finch who had the house built in 1707. The Finch's typically for this period were principally "ironmongers" (i.e. wholesale iron merchants) with banking interests.

**Above** The small square next to Lloyds Bank was once the site of this imposing Georgian residence, Horseley House. Home to several Mayors of Dudley, it was demolished in 1958.

**Below** Dudley in 1775. The Town's setting is still essentially rural, but expansion has started, with imposing town houses visible along Hall Street and other roads leading from the town centre. Note also the glass cone sited within the built up area.

