

1. HIGH GREEN

In its early days as a settlement, Cannock's water supply came from natural springs, streams and rivers. By the early 18th century, as the town grew, this water had become unhealthy, and in short supply. The town needed clean water for washing, cooking and eating.

Dr. William Byrche, who owned Leacroft Hall and The Green, one of the most prominent houses in Cannock, assembled a group of wealthy residents to help realise his vision of a constant supply of clean water for the town. This led to the formation of the Conduit Trust, who funded the construction of water pipes, or conduits, to carry water three miles from a spring in Stringer's Meadow to the Conduit Head here in High Green. From the Conduit Head the water was distributed to pumps around the town.



After the introduction of the Conduit scheme, the quality of Cannock's water was thought to be second only to that of Malvern, and the area's mortality rate became one of the lowest in the country.

In 1853 the establishment of South Staffordshire Waterworks Company brought a new and better supply. In 1946, after suffering a combination of problems, the Conduit supply was finally brought to an end.



Mill Street, just outside the town centre, was the chosen location of the second Conduit Trust water pump. Pictured left to right are Miss Bradbury, Mrs Bertha Stokes, Nellie Stokes, Bill Halls, Mrs Jackson with a child and Mrs Nixon. Image reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Godwin

The Green

Near the Conduit Head is The Green, also known as The White House or The Council House. It is thought to date from the early 1730s. Until 1735 it was occupied by Sir Robert Fisher, and was the first house in Cannock to have its own water pump.

During the early 1800s The Green became a ladies' boarding school. It changed hands several times until it was purchased by Cannock Urban District Council in 1927. The Council carried out several extensions and improvements, and the property was officially opened as The Council House on Monday 16 January 1928.

In the 1980s The Green was acquired by the County Council as an extension and offices for Cannock Chase Technical College.



High Green in the 1920s. In 1875, Charles Foster Cotterill, who lived at No. 95 High Green, made improvements to the town's water supply by replacing the Conduit's lead and clay piping with cast iron. He was one of the first men in the Midlands to supply water to private dwellings and to cover the cost by introducing water rates. Image courtesy of the Conduit Trust

EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

This plaque on the Conduit Head reads:

Cannock Conduit Trust founded 1736
By Public Subscription for bringing a water supply to the Township of Cannock

This building was erected in the year 1736 as the Conduit Head for the water brought by pipe from Stringer's Meadow Rumer Hill Leacroft. The source of this water being given by Dr. William Byrche of Leacroft Hall. The undertaking was endowed by the Lord of the Manor the Earl of Uxbridge, the Lord Bishop of Worcester, Sir Robert Fisher and others and later became a registered Charity and served the Township of Cannock for over 200 years.



The Conduit Head today



In 2004 a grant was awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to research, renovate and resite the six original pumps provided by the Conduit Trust. Two pumps were found outside the district and relocated in Cannock.



Today the original locations of all six pumps are marked by a plaque, which can be found at the following sites:

- The Conduit Head, High Green
- Nationwide Building Society, Market Place
- Corner of Avon Road and Market Place
- Attached to St Luke's Church boundary wall The Ringway (originally Mill Street)
- Mill Street by Morrison's Supermarket
- Junction of New Penkrige Road and Dartmouth Road



The Conduit Head by J Buckler, 1841. This hexagonal building was the outlet for Cannock's drinking water, flowing from here to pumps situated around the town. By 1864 there were six pumps in Cannock. Courtesy of the Trustees of the William Salt Library, Stafford