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Stourbridge Fair

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Stourbridge Fair



Do you know where this wall mural can be found?

It shows musicians performing at the Stourbridge Fair!

Music played an important role at Stourbridge Fair, and there were special booths where fairgoers could stand and listen to many different kinds of music.

Entertainment at Stourbridge Fair



What kinds of different entertainment can you see in this mural of people enjoying Stourbridge Fair?

People did not just go to Stourbridge Fair to trade goods (although that was an important part of the Fair when it was founded) – they wanted to enjoy themselves. There were stalls selling lots of food and drink, and booths containing many different kinds of entertainment.

Stourbridge Fair in the Middle Ages

Factoid!

The Fair was a very smelly place and lots of dung and straw were left behind after the event. Local farmers were really pleased to have this on their land, as it helped their crops to grow...but it wasn't good for ladies wearing long dresses like the one in this picture!



STOURBRIDGE FAIR, IN THE MIDDLE AGES (page 119)

This picture shows fairgoers and stalls in the Middle Ages.

Can you spot some of the ways in which merchants decorated their stalls to attract the fairgoers' attention?

Stourbridge Fair Activities



This photograph shows a recreation of some of the activities from Stourbridge Fair.

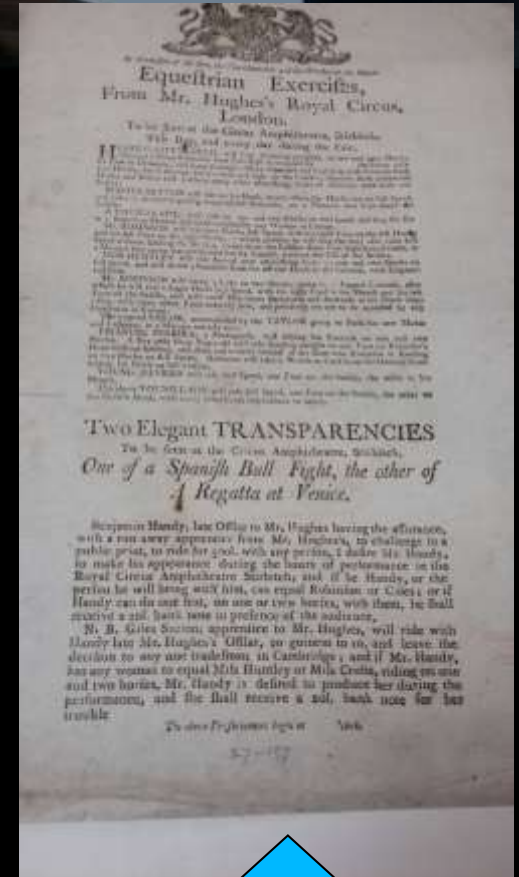
Can you see the group of people dancing and the people playing instruments?

Do you recognise the building in this photograph?

Performers at the Fair!

Factoid!

The performance of plays within 5 miles of Cambridge was forbidden until the end of the eighteenth century, because theatres were thought to encourage bad behaviour from the students! The only time this rule was lifted was during the Fair, and the fairgoers were treated to plays performed by actors from Norwich and London..



Adverts describing the wide variety of performances at Stourbridge Fair!

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New Musical Entertainment at the Fair!



The Microcosm (1735)

The booths at Stourbridge Fair contained many new and exciting entertainments.

In 1735, a man called Henry Bridges brought along his latest invention, called the Microcosm.

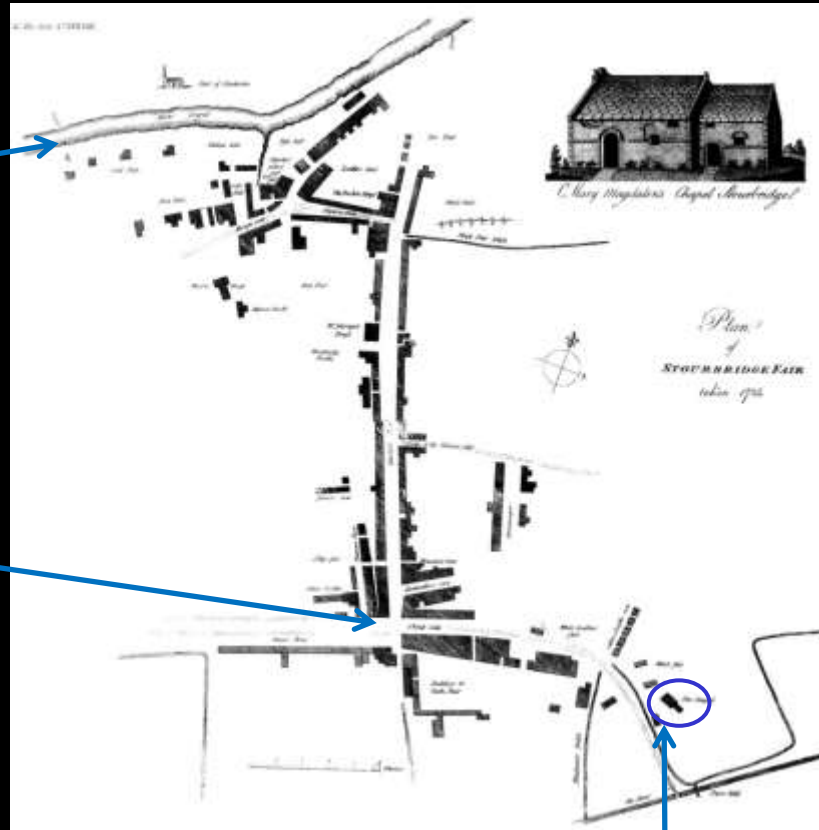
It was a clockwork machine that played music while large paintings of landscapes moved across the front.

This combination of music and pictures was brand new at the time, and so the Microcosm attracted lots of curious fairgoers.

Where Did Stourbridge Fair Take Place?

Here is the
River Cam

This area of the
Fair near to
Newmarket
Road contained
most of the
entertainment
booths



This is a map of
Stourbridge Fair.
It stretched all the
way from the
River Cam to
Newmarket Road
near the Leper
Chapel. That's a
distance of
almost half a
mile!

Here is
the Leper
Chapel

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How Did Stourbridge Fair Start?

In 1211 King John decided that the lepers who lived in the Leper hospital grounds could hold a fair and keep the profits for themselves.

And so Stourbridge Fair was born!

Once a year, at the beginning of September the hospital land became the meeting place for local traders to sell their wares.

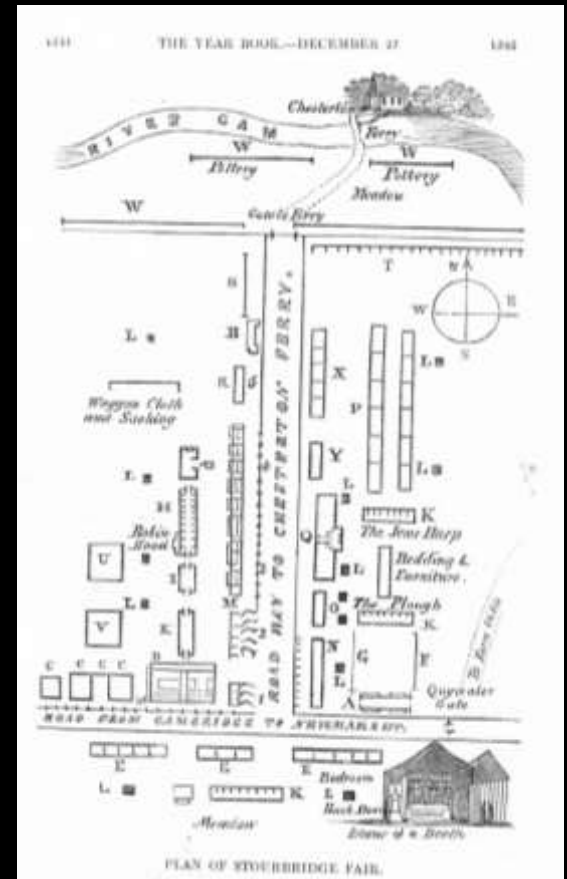


Stourbridge Fair to the Rescue!

The lepers wouldn't go to the fair, but could charge an entry fee and make money by selling goods and renting out spaces for stalls.

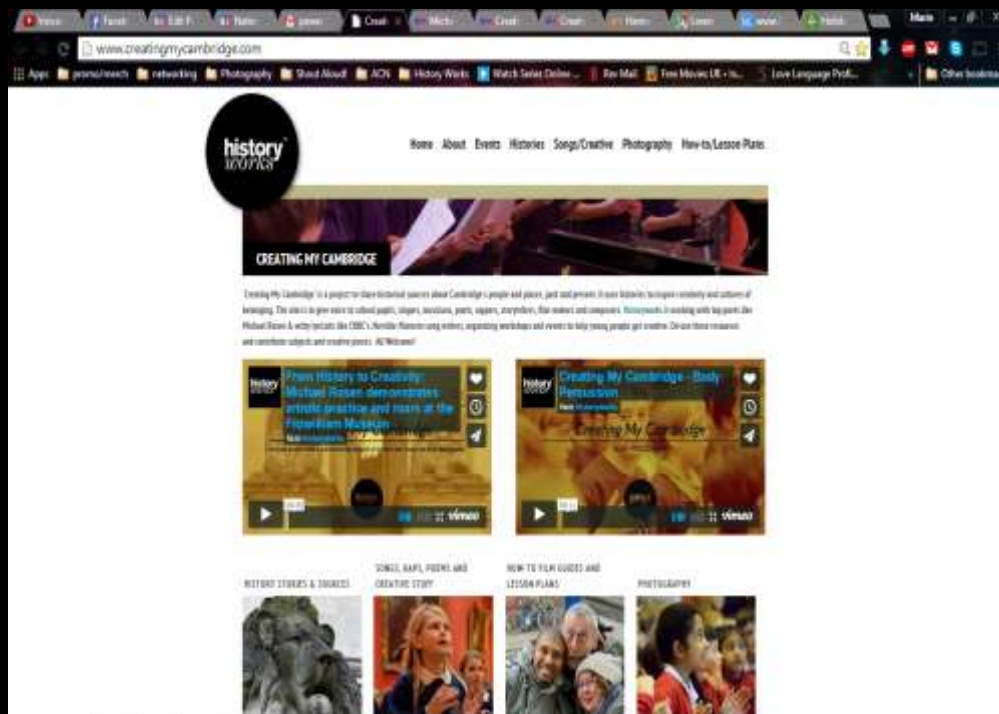
People sold all sorts of things, from pungent cheese and oysters to silks and spices from exotic lands.

When you next walk down Newmarket Road see if you can spot street names such as OYSTER ROW, GARLIC ROW AND MERCER'S ROW that are named after Stourbridge Fair!



Web Resources available at:

[http://www.creatingmycambridge.com/
history-stories/stourbridge-fair/](http://www.creatingmycambridge.com/history-stories/stourbridge-fair/)



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