

## The Kidderminster Carpet Industry and the Wider World

**Image:** Kidderminster Church, Worcestershire. Engraved by Sands from a drawing by J P Neale for the Beauties of England and Wales. This print shows commercial activity on the banks of the River Stour. A factory or warehouse is visible to the right of the church. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century. R W Boodle, *Worcestershire Scrap Book, vol. II* (1903)

**Image from:** Local Studies and History, Birmingham Central Library

The entrepreneurs of Kidderminster were always aware of the greater world outside, as John Broom showed when he “borrowed” ideas from Belgium for his development of the carpet loom. Throughout the hand-loom era, the carpet manufacturers always had their eye on their competitors in Scotland, Axminster and Wilton.

Although raw materials, especially wool, came from the surrounding areas, such was the demand for carpets by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that it was necessary to import raw materials from further away. Spinners and yarn agents visited the carpet manufacturers, usually on Mondays, from as far as Yorkshire. Transportation of raw materials was eased by Kidderminster’s position on the River Stour and its proximity to Bewdley, a major inland port on the River Severn which provided an outlet to the wider world. Goods were transported by water and then pack-horse.