

# Street plan for a story

*by* Sandra Davies

And on the ink-stained paper map, within the river loop, a rounded entire leaf, bisecting stalk and central vein the road from south, extending north across an ancient, buttressed, three-arched bridge of hefty Yorkshire stone.

The either side-ways veins are narrow car's-width wynds, paved not with rounded cobbles (like the High Street) but with runny-iced biscuits of shiny blue-grey bricks.

West Street, a bow, which links the High Street 'string' but curves along the river's edge (its northern end becomes 'True Lover's Lane') has huge variety in its several dozen dwellings, no two the same in size or shape or age.

Along the eastern river's edge, where long ago were wharves, the many-storied dark brick warehouses now replaced with blocks of oblong-patterned, balconied, big windowed flats, their river views and 'penthouse' claims raising the price above and beyond the High Street's historical, over-the-shop irregular and sloping flats.

But behind the shops (and the many pubs), at the back of the narrow cottage fronts which line the wynds are secret courtyards, surprising gardens and more light than ever imagined.

Striding across the whole of this looped and Tees-surrounded town a many-legged high arched railway viaduct, built of seven (or seventy, I forget) million red bricks, across which trains are forced to rumble slowly, for fear of falling off.

