



# **Cheadle Civic Society Newsletter**



**Autumn 2023**



Cheadle Civic Society was formed in 1964 with the following aims:

To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Cheadle, Cheshire. To stimulate public interest in, and care for, the beauty and improvement of features of general public amenity, or historic interest. To pursue these ends by means of public meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, other forms of instruction, and publicity and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.

## Your Committee 2021/22

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**Membership Co-ordinator:** Damien Lynch 428-5994

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## On the Cover:

A young girl walks along Schools Hill 1900.

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## Society Views:

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# Society News

‘Volunteering in the Community since 1964’

## Society News:

The Chairman and Committee hope this newsletter finds you well, as we bid farewell to the summer months and transition into winter. As you read through the newsletter, you will discover that the Society has been extremely busy championing various causes, and campaigning vigorously on behalf of the community during the summer. Our topics range from place names to the plight of the Cheadle Conservation Area. As active as we are, we always welcome offers of help. If you feel inclined to become a more active member of the Society, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us at the following email address:

**[editor@cheadlecivicsociety.uk](mailto:editor@cheadlecivicsociety.uk)**

## Cheadle Green:

As summers go, one could say the weather has been rather changeable, with some days seemingly containing elements of all four seasons. That said, the work carried out on the green has been steady. The Makers Market is drawing to the end of another successful year, with their final market of 2023 taking place in December. We look forward to welcoming them back in 2024.



**Above & Right:** Autumn on the Green.



## Society AGM:

In May, the Society hosted its Annual General Meeting, and it was lovely to welcome once again so many of our members. The evening began with the Chairman's report and was followed by a fantastic presentation by local historian, poet, and writer, David Edwards Hulme. This was a very personal story of his childhood in wartime Manchester, and his eventual discovery that he was the son of an American G.I. More details about David's work can be found on his website:

**[www.metreman.co.uk](http://www.metreman.co.uk)**



**Above:** Guest speaker David Edwards Hulme at this years AGM.

## Your View:

The Editor would like to invite your feedback on the newsletter.

Your view on the current content and layout.

We would also welcome any suggestions for future editions.

Please send you suggestions to:

**[editor@cheadlecivicsociety.org](mailto:editor@cheadlecivicsociety.org)**



# Society News

## 'Volunteering in the Community since 1964'

### What's in a name?

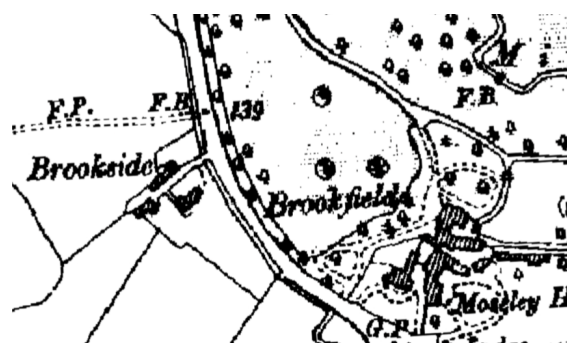
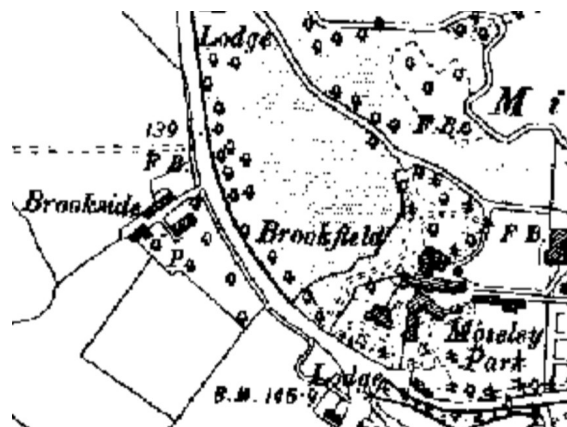
Well, when it comes to an area of Cheadle parkland, it means a lot... ?

The keen observation of a Society member led to the discovery of an issue concerning the spelling of Brookfield, a matter that had gone unnoticed for decades. Council signage and official documentation consistently referred to the area as "Brookfields," whereas the local community has always known it as "Brookfield." The Society embarked on a campaign to rectify this seemingly small but significant error.

Upon investigating the historical records, it became evident that the correct name of the area was indeed "Brookfield." The 1898 Ordnance Survey map, hand-drawn and bearing the name "Brookfield" in the top right corner, provided a strong piece of evidence. Subsequently, the 1911 map, which was also hand-drawn, continued to identify the location as "Brookfield." However, this map had been updated, and an unintended alteration occurred when a cartographer added a tree symbol immediately after the letter 'D'. This modification inadvertently caused the confusion, as subsequent printed editions of the map misinterpreted the tree symbol as the letter 'S,' leading to the official change from "Brookfield" to "Brookfields."

The Society's commitment to historical accuracy didn't stop there. Further proof affirming the correct spelling was discovered within the Society's archives. A photograph of an original invitation to the official ceremony, which took place in 1946. This commemorated the transfer of property deeds from the Shiers family to the local council, the Cheadle and Gatley Urban District Council, and solidified the name as "Brookfield."

In conclusion, the careful scrutiny of historical maps and archived documents by the Society has successfully corrected this spelling discrepancy, affirming that the correct name of the area indeed "Brookfield."

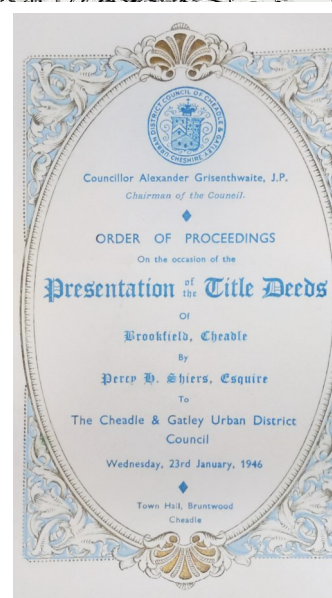


**Top:** Ordnance Survey map 1898.

**2nd:** Ordnance Survey map 1911.

**3rd:** Ordnance Survey Map 1968.

**Right:** The official invitation to the official ceremony in 1946.





# Society News

## 'Volunteering in the Community since 1964'

### A New "Happy to Chat" Bench:

In September, the Society experienced a moment of delight as a new public seating arrangement was finally established along Wilmslow Road.

This innovative bench, bearing the title of a "Happy to Chat" bench, is easily distinguishable by a modest plaque affixed to its surface. The primary purpose is to foster spontaneous conversations among those who choose to occupy its inviting space. Such benches, like this one, are gaining popularity throughout the nation, designed to tackle the pervasive issue of loneliness while promoting community engagement.

This particular bench is the result of a collaborative effort between the Society and Stockport Council. A portion of the funding for this project was generously provided by the Shiers Trust, making it possible to bring this communal asset to fruition.



### A Fresh Start for Cheadle Village Partnership:

Cheadle Village Partnership has been an integral part of the community since its establishment in 2000. This organisation has served as an invaluable bridge, uniting various community sectors, and offering a platform for community groups, businesses, and individuals to have their voices heard. Originally, it was a joint effort between an elected committee and the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC), with the council overseeing administrative matters.

In 2013, SMBC made the decision to step back from direct involvement in the partnership. However, they remained supportive whenever possible. Earlier this year, in January, a significant change occurred when the then Chair of the Partnership, Reverend Rob Munro, moved on to new opportunities.

Simultaneously, both the Secretary and Treasurer decided to step down from their roles. This left Andrew Frazer, the incumbent Chair, in a somewhat solitary position at the helm. Despite making appeals to the community for volunteers to step up as committee members,

no expressions of interest were received. This prompted a critical question: How could the Partnership carry on without a formal committee?

The solution came in the form of discussions with the Committee of Cheadle Civic Society. Andrew Frazer, the Chair of the Partnership and Vice-Chair of Cheadle Civic Society, initiated conversations with Society Chairman Phillip Gould-Bourn about the possibility of the Partnership becoming a part of the Society's committee. Andrew believed that the Partnership's forum meetings played a pivotal role in facilitating communication across various community sectors and should, therefore, be continued.

This development marks a positive outcome for both the Partnership and the Society, positioning the Society in a more central role within the community.

# Society News

‘Volunteering in the Community since 1964’

## Massie St Carparks

This year, the preservation and upkeep of the green spaces around the Massie St carparks have been a top priority for the Society. Our initial action took place in May, when we reached out to our local councillor, Ian Hunter, to address the poor maintenance being provided by the Council. During our meeting with Councillor Hunter, he displayed a great deal of understanding, and promptly facilitated a meeting with the Council's Local Neighbourhood Officer.

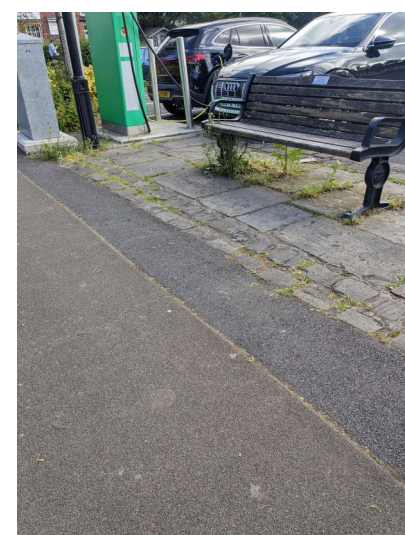
This meeting included a comprehensive walkthrough of the area, during which the Society identified the poorly maintained sections, and underscored the crucial need for maintaining them to high standards. We stressed the fact that, in many cases, the carparks serve as the first impression for visitors, and the current condition did not leave a positive impact.

After the meeting, we received an update from the Neighbourhood Officer, revealing that the Massie St carparks are part of a borough-wide maintenance schedule. However, it was disheartening to learn that the area was scheduled for maintenance only once a year, specifically during the month of November. The Society strongly believes that this schedule is inadequate for an area of this size and importance.

Also, contained within the email was the suggestion that community groups take a more active role in maintaining the area. The Society, while supportive of volunteer efforts, expressed its concern. We pointed out that proper funding and support from the Council are essential for maintaining the area.

In light of these developments, we remain committed to advocating for increased and more regular maintenance of the Massie St carparks' greenspaces, as we believe that it is essential to make a positive and lasting first impression on visitors to our community.

Discussions are ongoing between the Society and the Council, and we are optimistic that a mutually agreeable resolution can be reached, as we transition into the spring of the coming year.



**Above top:** Overgrown pedestrian walk ways.

**Above middle:** excessive weed growth around street furniture.

**Above:** General areas of unkempt land.



# Society News

## 'Volunteering in the Community since 1964'

### Preserving Our Heritage: A Conversation on Conservation...

In the distant year of 1974, almost half a century ago, the Cheadle Village Conservation area came into existence. This significant development unfolded following the dissolution of the Cheadle and Gatley Urban District Council, an institution that had dutifully served the local community for six decades. In its place, the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council emerged as a heralded new governing body.

As the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council ushered in a new era, it took decisive steps to safeguard the rich heritage of its various regions. This initiative encompassed the creation of conservation areas across Stockport's boroughs, among which the Cheadle Village Conservation Area found its place. This endeavour aimed to assure communities that their collective and individual legacies were being preserved, along with their unique identities."

Nevertheless, the Society, along with several vigilant members of the community, has taken note of a concerning trend in the conservation of our area. It appears that the preservation standards have witnessed a decline, manifesting in the neglect of empty buildings, which have fallen into a state of disrepair. Additionally, new businesses have emerged along High Street, altering shop frontages, even Incorporating illuminated signage. In certain instances, the Society possesses evidence that these alterations are occurring without the necessary council consent or planning permission.

Since establishment in 1964, Cheadle Civic Society has been resolute in its commitment to maintaining and upholding standards within the community. Presently, the Society strongly contends that we must confront the prevailing trend directly. Many of the developments we are witnessing in our village are clearly incongruent with the character of the area, and this current situation is rapidly becoming unbearable. It is worth noting that the council's approach to such matters tends to be more reactive than proactive.



**Above top:** Much concern has been raised by members of the public over the condition of the Burgons building.

**Above:** An example of what is not in keeping within the conservation area, but nonetheless has been allowed to happen.



# Society News

## 'Volunteering in the Community since 1964'

The Society, in collaboration with local councillor Tom Morrisson, reached out to the council and organised a village walk with the council's Conservation Officer. While the walk did not necessarily yield immediate positive action, it did provide the Society with a clearer understanding of the council's capabilities and limitations in the realm of conservation enforcement.

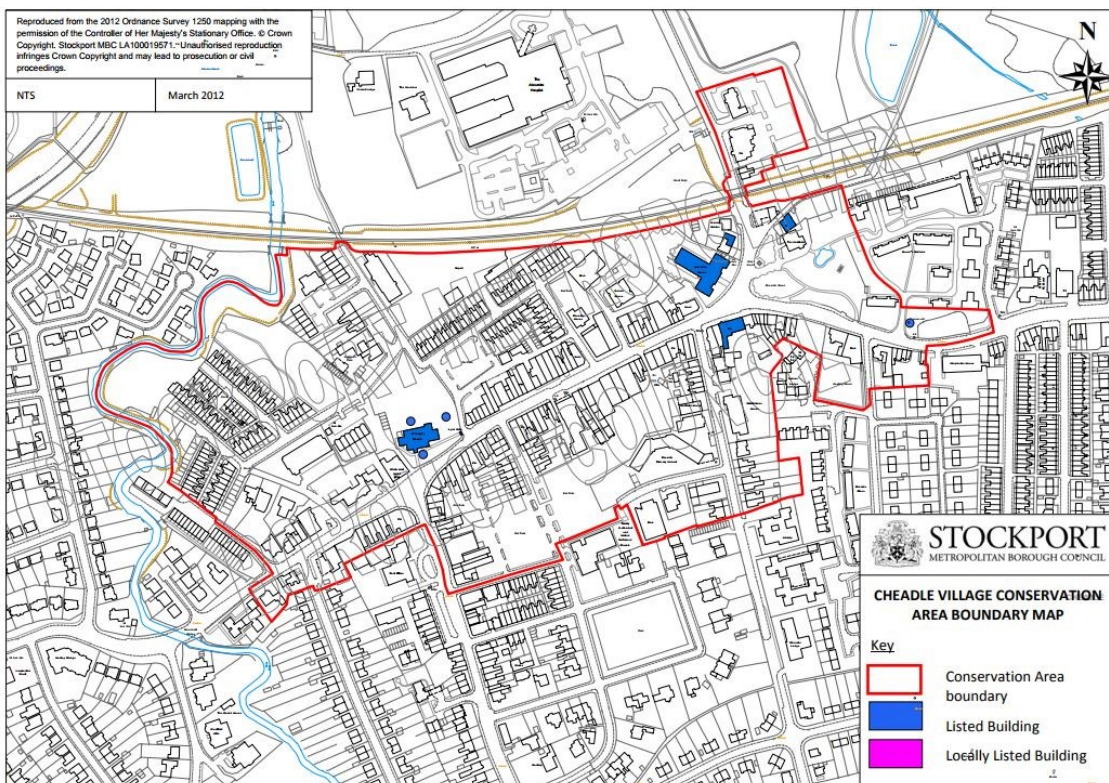
Undoubtedly, this is a complex issue with no easy fix. However, the Society is resolute in its commitment to actively monitor and advocate for the importance of adhering to best practices in conservation. This endeavour is driven by the shared goal of safeguarding our community heritage for the benefit of future generations.

Nonetheless, amidst these challenges, there are rays of hope. Some new businesses clearly grasp the essence of showing sensitivity to building restoration and village conservation. One noteworthy mention goes to Esse's Coffee shop and café, located at the corner of Chapel Street and Wilmslow Road. It stands as a shining example of what Cheadle village should aspire to be in terms of preservation and aesthetics.



**Above:** Esse's, a good example of restoration sympathetic to the conservation area.

The Society strongly believes that to raise awareness about the conservation area among the public, an initiative is needed. This campaign would start off with the installation of signage within the village, clearly marking it as a conservation area. We are delighted to announce that, an application has been submitted by the Society to the Ward Flexibility fund for these signs, and should this application be successful it will further the cause of conservation in our community.



**Left:** Cheadle Village Conservation Area map, produced by SMBC.

The extensive area covered under the conservation order is outlined in red.

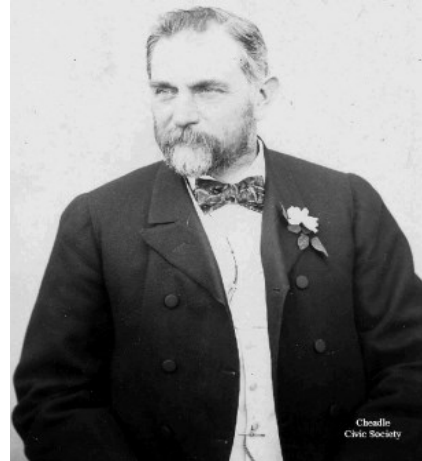


# Society News

‘Volunteering in the Community since 1964’

## JONATHAN ALCOCK & SONS

In October, the Society was pleased to participate in celebrating the 160th anniversary of Jonathan Alcock & Sons, a venerable establishment, deeply rooted in Cheadle's history. The firm's journey commenced in 1863 when Jonathan Alcock, born in 1846, embarked on his career as a carpenter and undertaker. By 1887, the business had expanded significantly, leading to the establishment of larger workshops on Wood Street. Jonathan not only flourished as an entrepreneur but also dedicated 18 years to serving the community as a sidesman at Cheadle Parish Church.



**Above: Founder Jonathan Alcock**



**Above: Jonathan Alcock & Sons**

Today, the legacy of Jonathan Alcock & Sons continues to thrive under the guidance of the fifth generation of the family. The anniversary event garnered widespread support from the community and local businesses, featuring an official appearance by the current Mayor of Stockport. The occasion also showcased plans for the adjacent Taylor builders yard, owned by Jonathan Alcock.

The Society was honoured to contribute to the celebration by creating a historical display, and engaging with visitors to share insights into the general history of Cheadle.

In addition to commemorating the rich heritage, the event had a charitable aspect, raising funds for Mentell, a Charity dedicated to promoting and supporting mental health issues experienced by men.



**Above Left:** Guests peruse the history table.  
**Above right and above:** A grand raffle took place, raising funds for the charity Mentell.



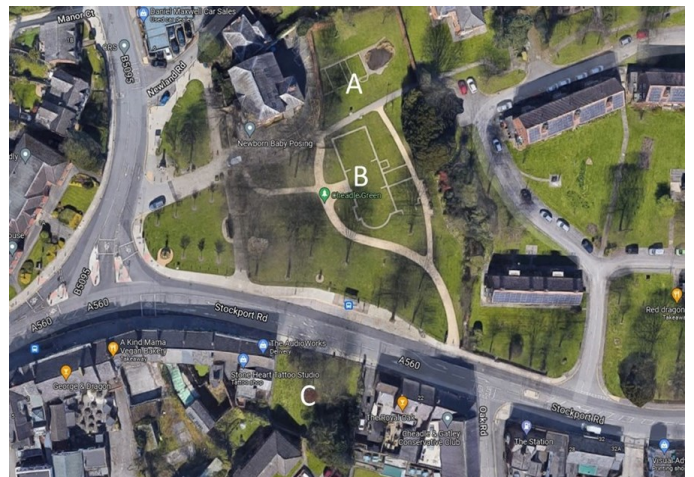
## Archaeological Investigations at The Beeches site, Stockport Road, Cheadle By Norman Redhead, November 2023.

### Introduction

In April 2022 the South Manchester Archaeological Research Team (SMART) were granted permission by the landowner Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council to undertake an exploratory excavation at the site of 'The Beeches'. Now a grassed-over area facing The Green, on the opposite side of Stockport Road, 'The Beeches' was once a substantial property dating back to at least the early 19th century when it was a surgeon's residence. According to historic mapping it was demolished between 1960 and 1984 after its final use as a surgery. The site's archaeological interest relates to establishing whether or not there are any below ground remains of the building, its character, form and date of origin. An additional research interest was to assess the potential for medieval archaeology, given that remains of a medieval building were discovered at The Green in 2014 (Redhead & Miller 2014, p 12-14). The excavation took the form of an evaluation through the use of carefully targeted test pits and a trench.



**Above:** Google Street View image showing the site prior to evaluation, looking south.



**Above:** Google aerial view showing: A = the site of a medieval building at the Green, B = the site of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Cheadle Hall on the Green, C = site of 'The Beeches.'

### Historical Background

Historical mapping shows the form of 'The Beeches' from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The first detailed mapping is the 1846 Cheadle Bulkeley Tithe Map.



**Above:** View of the rear of the site during excavation of the test pits with TP6 in the foreground. On the right of the photo finds are being shown to members of the public who were encouraged to visit and view the investigations.





**Above:** Extract from the Cheadle Bulkley Tithe map (compiled 1844-6) with blue arrow showing the location of 'The Beeches'.

A rectangular building is shown set back from Stockport Road. The eastern half of the house is deeper than the west which is stepped back. The tithe map shows a lane running south from Stockport Road, passing by the west side of the building. This lane gave access to a barn, outbuildings and yard, with two fields beyond, one for pasture and the other described as 'Old Meadow' – all owned by Thomas Vaudrey. There was also a large garden to the rear of the house. Most of this area has now been built over with modern housing.

Stockport Library Archives provided the following information:

'There are no detailed maps or plans of the area prior to the Tithe maps, so this provides the first detailed plan of the building. The Tithe map is from 1840 but the apportionment is for the 1846 map, so the numbering is different. The apportionment lists the owner/ occupier as Thomas Vaudrey and the property as a dwelling house and Surgery. In the 1841 census Thomas is listed as a Surgeon and is aged 45 and living there with his 2 daughters. There appears to be another household between his home and the Royal Oak next door, that of the Gibson family, so the property appears to have been divided in two. The 1851 census gives the same information, he also calls himself a General Practitioner.

The 1848 Cheshire Trade Directory section for Surgeons lists Thomas Vaudrey at Beech Cottage, Cheadle. In 1834 it lists him under 'Professional Persons' as Surgeon, but also lists a Solomon Vaudrey, with no address given other than Cheadle. The 1828-29 Directory lists them together as Thomas & Solomon Vaudrey, Surgeons, indicating they shared the same surgery. It is likely that they were brothers rather than father and son. Thomas was married to a Mary Royle in 1817 but no address is

given. Solomon Vaudrey is listed on land tax entries back to 1812, so it looks like the building was a surgery for at least 40 years. However, the Vaudreys seem to be from Mottram-in-Longdendale according to their baptisms so it may not be a family property. The library hold no archives for the Vaudrey family.

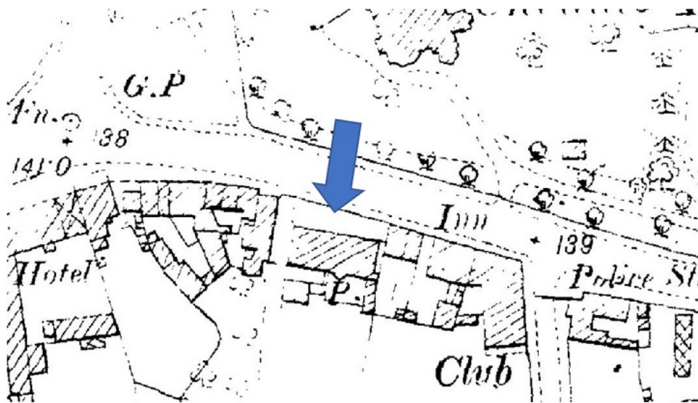
An interesting historical aspect is a reference in Fletcher Moss to Dr Vaudrey being a customer of the known body snatcher called Downes, who had even pre-sold him his own body.'

The archaeological potential relates to the character and origin of the former 'Beeches' property which dates back to at least the first half of the 19th century. Given the presence of a high-status medieval building within The Green site on the opposite side of the main road, there is also potential to shed further light on medieval settlement in this part of Cheadle. Was the building at The Green an isolated outlier, was it part of a separate hamlet clustered around the historic road junction, or was this the continuation of a straggling linear settlement spreading out from the historic church at the other end of the High Street?

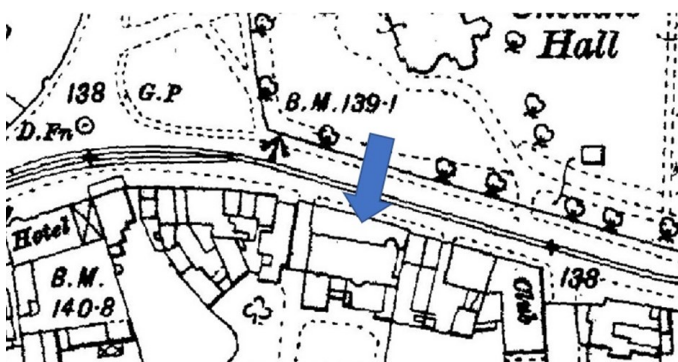
The following sequence of Ordnance Survey maps show how the plan form of the house changes through time. By 1872 there is a bay window on the rear wall of the house and a collection of small structures are added to the rear, with their maximum extent apparent on the 1909 map. The 1872 and 1897 maps indicate the location of a pump at the rear. The 1909 map also shows a bay window projecting on the front of the property towards the north-east corner. By 1960 the rear structures have been cleared away and a new bay window further to the west is shown on



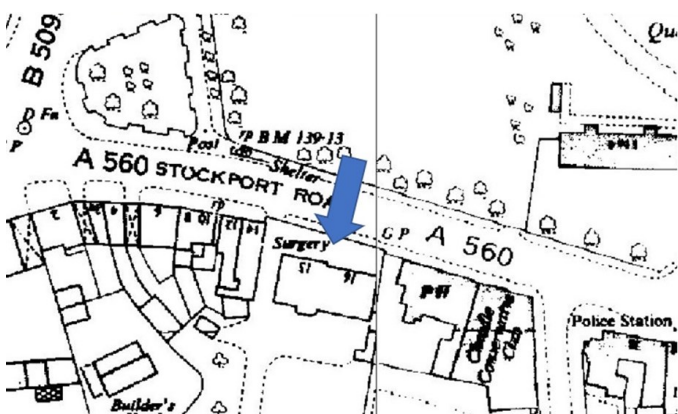
**Above:** OS 25" 1872 map



Above: OS 25" 1897 map



Above: OS 25" 1909 map



Above: OS 25" 1960 map



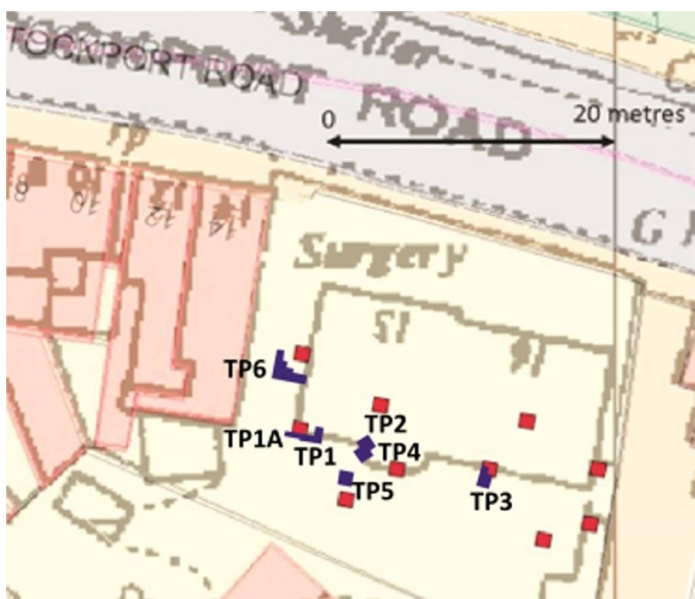
**Above:** The rear of the property is shown on an oblique aerial photo from 1927 and indicates a grand house set back from the other houses along Stockport Road.

## Methodology

The evaluation comprised a series of test pits excavated through turf and topsoil to reveal the top of archaeological remains relating to the former 'Beeches' house. This work was undertaken over two days on the 9th and 10th April 2022. Test pits were initially excavated as 1 metre squares, then extended if necessary to maximise archaeological information. The excavation took place in April when spring flowers were in bloom. Test pit locations were adjusted on site to protect the flowers and bulbs, and to minimise disturbance to tree roots. The variance between the original locations and the actual can be seen in the plan below.



**Above:** Excavation commencing on one of the test pits which has been located to avoid the flowers. **Below:** is the test pit location plan (proposed in red, actual in blue), marked against the 1960 map overlay.



The 1960 Ordnance Survey map is overlaid onto the modern map to show the position of the former Surgery building ('The Beeches') in relation to the modern landscape. The original proposed test pits are shown as red squares, with the actual excavated test pits shown in dark blue.



Seven test pits were excavated. Test Pits 2 and 4 were linked together to expose more of the wall foundations, Test Pit 1 was dug to only a half metre width but then extended to the west at Test Pit 1A to follow a wall foundation, Test Pit 3 was extended a little to the north to capture a wall line, and Test Pit 6 was extended in stages to incorporate the west wall of the building and an adjacent flagstone surface.

## **Results**

### **Test Pit 1**

Underneath 14-18 cm of topsoil was a 17 cm deep layer of demolition rubble which sealed a brick wall foundation. The wall aligned with the east to west brick wall foundations seen in trench 1A. The wall was substantial and clearly the southern external wall of the former building, as indicated on the 1846 tithe map. The test pit was extended at the north-east corner to reveal a deposit butting against the wall which contained much broken glass, possibly small medicine bottles and ointment pots, comprising a loose sandy silt matrix. Excavation revealed that this came off onto a medium/yellow/grey sandy clay deposit containing water worn cobbles. From this deposit came a sherd of Midland Purple ware which dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century. This find suggests that there is potential for late medieval activity in the area.



**Above:** Test pit 1 viewed from the east looking towards the west, after extension – the late medieval pottery came from the deposit to the right of the wall and might indicate earlier activity pre-dating the early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick foundation.

### **Test Pit 1A**

This was designed to continue Test Pit 1 to the west to chase the brick wall foundation which was successfully located. As with Test Pit 1 there was a demolition deposit of crushed brick with sand and mortar mixed with silty sand.

**Right:** Test Pit 1A: looking West. Showing continuation of the wall from Test Pit 1.



### **Test Pit 2**

Demolition rubble came down on to two possible brick walls at right angles to each at about 25 cm depth. The more substantial wall exposed in the corner of the test pit was a continuation of the south wall of the building seen in TP 1 and TP 1A. A thinner wall, two bricks wide, ran at right angles to it and may represent an irregular foundation of the western wall of the eastern half of the 'L' shaped building shown on the map of 1846. Alternatively, it could have been an internal wall between the two parts of the 'L' shaped plan. Although none of the maps show the structures as two separate buildings it is likely that at some stage they were. The 1851 census records indicate two separate households.

**Below:** Test Pit 2: looking south-west.



### **Test Pit 3**

Excavation was difficult due to extensive roots, but the test pit was able to expose a brick wall in the form of a curving line of single bricks, which probably represents a former bay window as indicated on late 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping. The bricks were hand-made and set within a soft white mortar. This indicates a date from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century if not earlier.



**Below:** Test Pit 3: looking south.



#### **Test Pit 4**

This was an extension of Test pit 2 which further revealed the building's southern wall foundation. As found elsewhere the remains were encountered at a shallow depth starting from around 12 cm. A substantial brick wall foundation ran at 90 degrees away from the building's southern wall. It had frogged bricks and a hard dark grey mortar showing it was of late 19th or early 20th century date and therefore a later addition to the original building. In contrast, the earlier east to west aligned wall had a light sandy mortar. A broken drain was found on the south side of the test pit and removed. The loose fill under the drain was excavated to a depth of 10 cm but not bottomed. Across the test pit, on either side of the wall, was a layer of compact light/yellow/white mortar and plaster with sand and small fragments of slate brick and some small pieces of burnt wood. This is likely to be a destruction deposit. The 19th century wall could relate to the southern extension building shown on the 1909 OS map.



**Above:** Test Pit 4: looking south-west after removal of broken drain.

#### **Test Pit 5**

This test pit was designed to investigate the former garden area to the south of the building. The topsoil was shallow (13 cm deep) and much disturbed by roots. Finds included burnt stone, mortar fragments, nails, glass and pottery sherds, together with brick fragments. Under the topsoil was a demolition deposit of patchy compact white mortar in a medium/yellow/brown silty sand matrix. This was cleaned but not fully excavated but it appeared to be 5cm to 3cm thick overlying a buried soil at around 25 cm beneath the turf level.



**Above:** Test Pit 5: looking south, showing the spread of whitish mortar.

#### **Test Pit 6**

This was the largest of the excavated test pits as it was extended in various directions to expose the top of the archaeology. The topsoil was 13 cm deep and sealed a thin layer of demolition material. Under this were patches of 20<sup>th</sup> century tarmac. At around 20 cm depth was found a north to south aligned row of long stones 0.16m wide, probably representing a kerb for the driveway or lane that ran to the west side of the building. Beyond this to the east was a large broken stone slab (0.69m by 0.94m) which was perhaps part of a yard. To the east of this was what appeared to be a north south aligned wall 0.63m in width. Along the southern edge of the trench a band of compact brick rubble appeared to be demolition rubble or the top of a buried wall foundation.



**Above:** Test Pit 6: looking north-east



(Test Pit 6: image previous page) -The north to south aligned wall foundation is the western wall of the building complex seen in the map of 1846. To the west of this feature stone slabs, kerbing and tarmac are remains of surfaces external to the building.



**Above:** Test Pit 6: looking west.

### **Conclusions from the test pitting exercise**

The 2022 test pitting focused on locating the building site and assessing the level of its survival. The test pits established the alignments of the southern and western wall foundations of the building complex as set out on the map of 1846. The remains occur at a depth of between 20 to 30cm and have generally survived well. The wall footings are sealed under a thin layer of demolition rubble (in places up to 12cm thick) below a layer of topsoil. There was no evidence for a cellar and it would seem that the building was erected on an earlier, possibly late medieval, soil. It is likely that this soil survives within the footprint of the building as seen in the 2014 excavations on the opposite side of Cheadle Green.

The limited nature of the test pits meant that it was not possible to fully identify the different phases of building construction or their dates, though an early 19<sup>th</sup> century date for some elements is suggested as a soft cream/white lime mortar and handmade bricks were noted. Having established that the building foundations survive, further excavation would reveal the lay-out of the building and help date the phases of construction.

The finds were mainly 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century in date. The one sherd of Midland Purple, of 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century date, was the earliest pottery type identified and may suggest late medieval activity on the site; however, the test pits did not go deep enough to confirm this. In Test Pit 1 a small ointment jar and

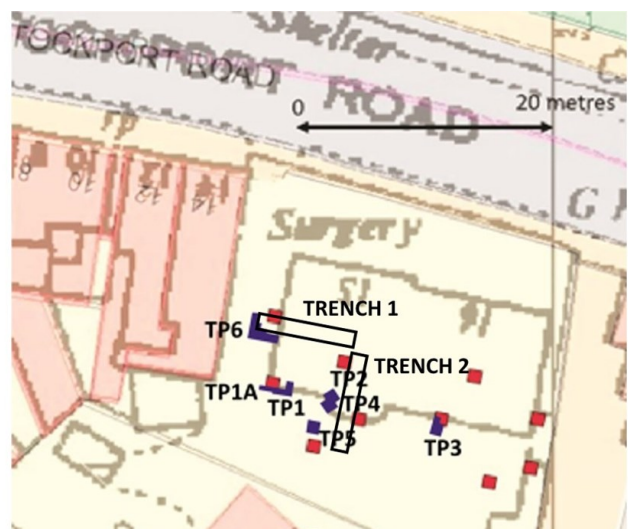


**Above:** Base of small ointment jar from Test Pit 1.

### **The 2023 excavation**

Encouraged by the 2022 test pitting results, SMART volunteers set out to excavate two trenches across the south-western part of the former building. The trenches were to be 6 metres long by 1.5 metres wide with the first trench running at right angles across the west wall into the heart of the building, whilst the second was to run from outside the south wall northwards to explore the interior of the building. The first trench was dug from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July. Sadly, the poor summer weather meant that it was not possible to excavate the second trench and this will hopefully take place in 2024.

**Below:** Plan showing location of proposed trenches, with the 1960s OS map plan of The Beeches as an underlay.





**Above:** Volunteers excavating Trench 1 in July

The trench started from outside the building's west wall, near to Test Pit 6. Here a deposit of large cobbles in a sandy silt matrix was uncovered. There was a line of partly revealed broken slabs along the south edge of the trench. The brick wall foundation for the west wall of the building was also exposed, with remnants of cream lime mortar indicating a first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or late 18<sup>th</sup> century date. Along the south side of the trench ran a single brick lime-mortared wall demarcating the edge of a crudely made floor comprising flat laid hand-made bricks. The northern side of the trench had mixed clay deposits with an area of dark grey soil representing a possible former tree pit (bole). The surface of the clay had demolition material embedded in it in the form of brick fragments, stones, mortar and burnt wood. Several small sondages were dug to examine the depth and nature of the yellow clay deposit. These showed that it was natural clay.

The Trench 1 investigations have reinforced the test pit results demonstrating that the foundations are in good condition. The trench showed that this internal part of the building had no cellar. Interestingly, the southern half of the trench had a crude floor which appears to post-date the external west wall of the building as it overlies the visible foundation. The thin line of bricks that defines the edge of the floor is only once course deep and set on the natural yellow clay. It has a white mortar which is different to that used to bond the west wall. Could the rough brick floor have been laid following the demolition of The Beeches utilising bricks from the former house – perhaps for hard standing for a garage or temporary structure? It is worth noting that the thin wall is located roughly where the north wall of the narrow rectangular building is shown on the tithe and 1872 maps. Yet it is surely too flimsy to be a foundation for a residential building. Towards the east end of the trench, the wall steps up as does the floor which has a slightly different composition. It is possible that the floor hides the original north wall of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century rectangular building. This is a bit of a puzzle so this area would be worth further investigation next year.

On the north side of Trench 1 there was no floor and natural clay occurred at a shallow depth. Any floor covering in this part of the trench has been disturbed; perhaps it was made of flagstones that have been removed as part of the demolition process.

SMART's investigations at The Beeches site are still in their early stages. A lot has been learnt already about the character of the archaeology, the nature of the original Beeches building and its development over time. But there is still much to do, in terms of examining the interior of the main house towards the east and the former garden areas outside the building footprint where we can further explore the potential for medieval archaeology. Future updates will be posted in this newsletter and there will be opportunities to visit the excavations in progress.



**Above:** The trench after cleaning, looking west (left image) and east (right image).



**Left:** The west end of the trench showing the west wall foundation, with the external cobbles to the right. The brick floor appears to overlie the west wall.





Some of the SMART volunteers stand beside the completed Trench 1 dig prior to careful backfilling

SMART run a series of autumn and winter lectures at Cheadle Library Community Room at 7.00 pm on the last Thursday of each month and they welcome new members who would also have an opportunity to help on their digs. Membership is £18 for family and £12 for single membership. Enquiries to the President Andy Coutts at [andy.coutts@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:andy.coutts@hotmail.co.uk) .

### **Acknowledgements**

SMART is grateful to Daryll Falconer, Neighbour Officer at Stockport MBC, for facilitating excavation on the Council's land and to Jenny Dean, Assistant Librarian, Stockport Library for help with historical research. Andy Coutts and Carolanne King led the excavations on behalf of SMART.

### **Source**

Redhead N & Miller I, 2014, '*An Ancient and Historic Place: the Archaeology of Cheadle*', Greater Manchester's Revealed Vol. 12. Published on behalf of Cheadle Civic Society.



**Above:** A rare image of The Beeches circa 1920.

# **‘Across The Line’**

## **An Evening of Poetry...**

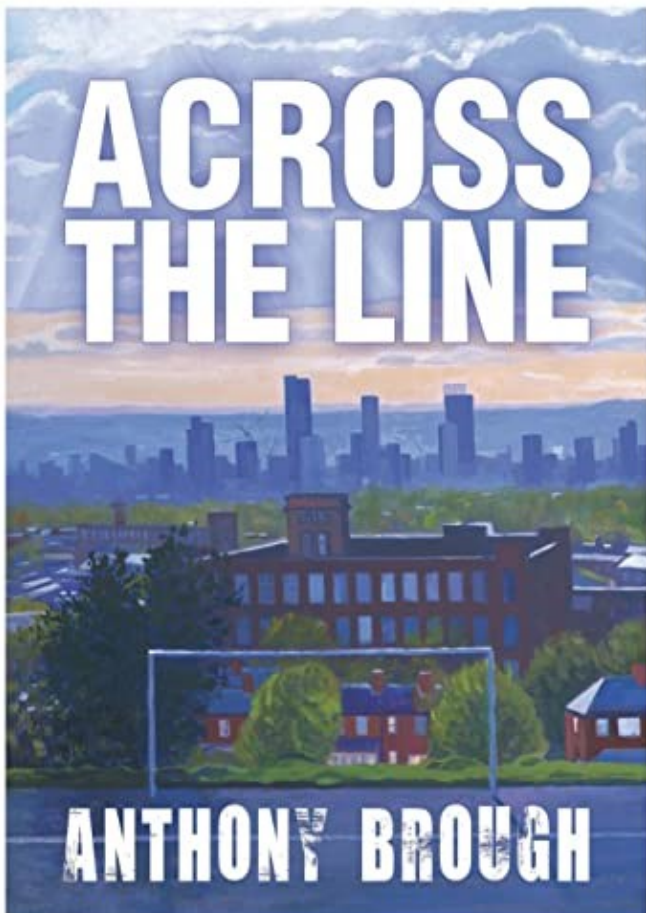
In September, the Society was delighted to assist in promoting an evening of poetry at Cheadle Village Primary School. We extended a warm welcome to Manchester poet, Anthony Brough, as he returned to Cheadle, where his extraordinary life journey began. Anthony, a former student of Cheadle Village Primary School and Broadway Comprehensive School, delivered on his promise to share heartfelt recollections from his formative years through poetry.

These finely-crafted poems tell the story of a 55-year journey, that was forged in the heart of a 1970s council estate. Anthony's debut poetry collection takes us on an unflinching voyage through time and place. Over five decades and across three continents, his verses vividly depict his transformation from a scruffy working-class youth into an inspiring educator and astute social commentator.

"Across the Line" is deeply rooted in the working-class traditions of both Manchester and Liverpool. It offers glimpses into the everyday life of growing up on a typical estate, set against the backdrop of the natural world and a post-industrial landscape. These poems trace the trajectory of a life, and are infused with Northern lyricism and wit. They guide readers through the wonders of nature, the warmth of budding friendships, and occasionally, the harsh impact of unvarnished truths.

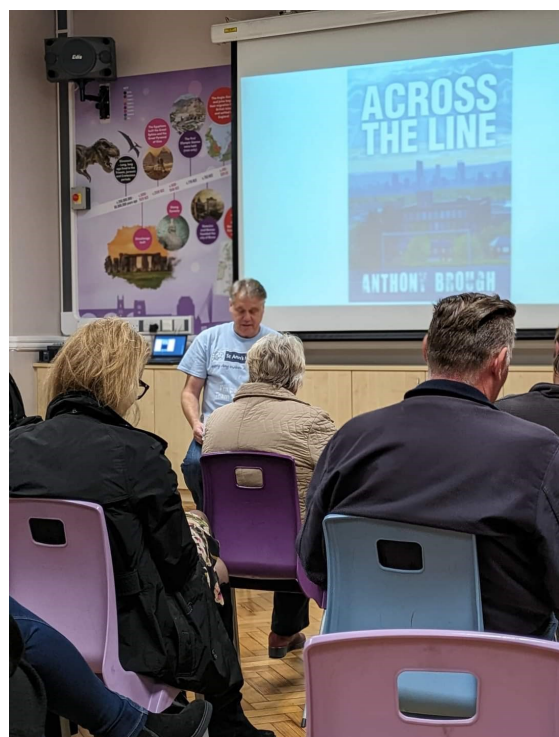
Within the pages of "Across the Line", lies a heartfelt call to challenge the limitations that confine us, and instead embrace the myriad adventures life has to offer. The evening received strong support from an appreciative audience, and all proceeds from ticket sales were generously donated to St. Ann's Hospice, a charity that holds a special place in Anthony's heart.

**‘Across The Line ‘ by Anthony Brough is available to buy on [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)**



**Left: The Cover of Across The Line By Anthony Brough.**

**Below: Anthony recites one of his Poems.**







## Cheadle Remembers...



***“They shall grow not old, as  
we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning  
We will remember them.”  
(Laurence Binyon)***



# Civic Society Corporate Donors

The Civic Society is an entirely voluntary organisation which has no public funding and relies on the generous support of local individuals and companies to undertake its important work.

While all donations are greatly appreciated, we are particularly grateful to the companies listed below for the very generous support they have provided in funds and kind over the past 12 months.



## YOUR CIVIC SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!!!

**Join The Cheadle Civic Society Today and Help Make A Real Difference to This Wonderful Village!!**

If you are not yet a member of the Cheadle Civic Society and would like to join, please send a cheque for £10 with your name and address to: Honorary Treasurer, Phillip Gould-Bourn, 19 Mornington Road, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1NJ or you can join online at: [www.cheadlecivicsociety.uk](http://www.cheadlecivicsociety.uk)

Benefits of membership include your own copy of the Society's newsletter mailed to you and free admission to the Society's AGM and any other event.

Your contribution will also help the Society maintain its efforts to make Cheadle a Better and Safer Place.