

18. SLITTING MILL ALONG RISING BROOK

RISING BROOK

The stream that runs along this area is Rising Brook. It flows from the nearby town of Hednesford, through Slitting Mill, through the site of what was Hagley Park Estate, and on to Rugeley town centre. At Brook Mouth it joins the River Trent.

According to local historian Alec Neal, during the 19th century mounds of broken burnt stones were unearthed near Slitting Mill, which is evidence that prehistoric people lived or cooked in the vicinity. It is thought that the fresh, running water that Rising Brook provided may have been one of the main reasons why settlements developed around Rugeley and the surrounding areas.

Rising Brook was also crucial to the development of local industries such as iron production. By turning a water wheel that powered a pair of bellows, it played a vital role in the operation of the blast furnaces that were built in the area during the 16th century.

In his book 'Looking Back on Rugeley' (1993), Alec Neal highlights what a busy life the brook had, particularly near this stretch. He describes how in the space of little more than a mile Rising Brook fed two iron forges, a slitting mill, two corn mills and a colour mill.



This photograph of Rising Brook was taken half way between Hednesford and Slitting Mill. From Slitting Mill the brook continues to Rugeley and on to the River Trent.



The cottage that was occupied by Mary Sant and her husband William, shortly before it was demolished.
Courtesy of Staffordshire Arts & Museum Service

Sant's mill and cottage

Where the pumping station now stands was a rolling and slitting mill, the remains of which can be found nearby. Next to the mill stood a cottage. These buildings became known locally as Sant's mill and cottage, named after Mary Sant and her blacksmith husband William who lived in the cottage. Their home belonged to the water company that owned the pumping station.

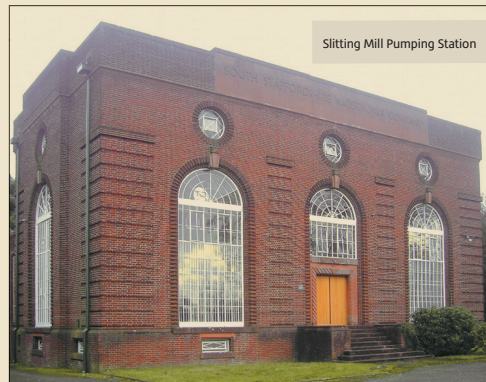
Mary and William were allowed to stay there until 1931, when the cottage was demolished. Coins from the 17th and 18th century were found in the walls of the mill.

Mary Sant was well known for making tea for the people who paddled in and picnicked around the brook during summer. This part of the brook, which runs between nearby Horns Pool and Burnthill Lane in Rugeley, was known as Sant's brook.

The pumping station

The iron gates you can see on the other side of the brook belong to Slitting Mill Pumping Station. Built in 1932, the station is owned by South Staffordshire Waterworks. It was one of the first of its kind to have electric pumps instead of steam engines.

Since 1968 it has been controlled by a modern automation system but still contains the original deep-well pumps, switchgear and motors. Every day the pumping station gives a continuous output of a quarter of a million gallons of water.



Slitting Mill Pumping Station

CANNOCK CHASE HERITAGE TRAIL

Cannock Chase Heritage Trail is a 10-mile route linking the towns of Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley. It passes through, or close to sites of historic or environmental interest, with interpretation boards along the way that tell the story of each location. Intended to support a healthy lifestyle, the trail is a facility for walkers and cyclists, offering walks and off-road cycle routes. The trail was initially funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and several project partners in 2008.

The trail passes close to wildlife sites of international importance. Cycle wheels, horse hooves, and feet, can severely damage these sites, and out of control dogs disturb wildlife. Please help us to protect wildlife by remaining on designated routes and by keeping dogs under close control.

Remember to follow the Cannock Chase Code.



Scan the QR code to download a map of the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail



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Scan the QR codes on each interpretation board to bring to life elements of the Trail. Content has been created by local schoolchildren alongside professional artists and The Birmingham Repertory Theatre.



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Collect all the QR codes for each themed trail to complete the challenge and gain points and rewards for your efforts.