

19. CHURCH STREET CONSERVATION AREA

“ Neat lawns and pleasure grounds ”

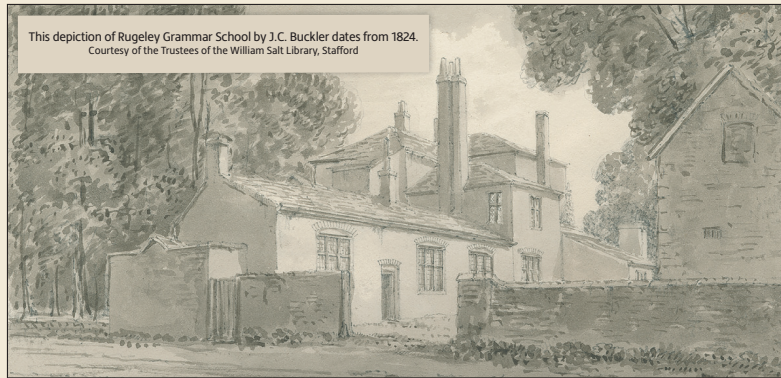
This area was where the wealthy families of Rugeley lived in the 18th and 19th centuries. It still retains an atmosphere of elegance and prosperity.

In 1992 the area around Church Street, near to where you are standing, was made a Conservation Area because of its architectural and historic interest.

A 19th-century account described the houses in this area as being well-built, and some even elegant, being occupied by wealthy families and having neat lawns and pleasure grounds. By the late 1800s much of Church Street looked as we see it today. These houses now represent some of the best examples of domestic architecture in Rugeley.

The gateway to the mediaeval fields

During the Middle Ages, Rugeley had three common fields. Taylors Lane, which branches off the middle of Church Street, once led between one of these (Churchfield) and the town.



This depiction of Rugeley Grammar School by J.C. Buckler dates from 1824. Courtesy of the Trustees of the William Salt Library, Stafford

Rugeley Grammar School

Established in 1567, in the reign of Elizabeth I, Rugeley Grammar School was in Wolseley Road, where the Chancel Primary School now stands. Among the Grammar School's pupils were William Palmer (the Rugeley poisoner) and the eminent geologist, Thomas George Bonney.

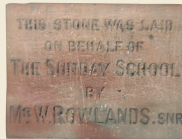
The Bonneys were an influential local family. The Rev. Thomas Bonney, Thomas George's father, was headmaster of Rugeley Grammar School. His brother, Charles, was a celebrated explorer of Australia. Frederic, one of the headmaster's sons, made detailed studies of the lives of Aboriginal people. He took some of the earliest photographs of them, and in recognition of this was made a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute. He retired to Rugeley and ended his days in The Hollies in Church Street.



Something old, something new

The Primitive Methodist Chapel dates from 1870 (with the addition of a vestry in 1888). It cost £200 to build. To the side you can see some foundation stones. They probably show who had contributed to the cost.

Look out for the original features and the modern alterations. What do you think the original windows might have looked like?



EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

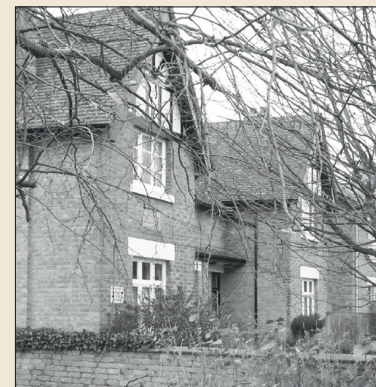
Caring for the needy

Since mediaeval times, homes for the poor and needy, known as almshouses, have been founded by wealthy individuals or charitable groups.

Two of Rugeley's almshouses can still be seen within the Church Street Conservation Area. You can identify them by the plaques set into the walls.



This plaque was preserved in a new building after the original almshouses were knocked down. Sarah Hopkins founded them for four poor women in 1826. The plaque appears to read: 'These almshouses for four poor women and the school [unclear] house were erected and endorsed by Mrs Sarah Hopkins of Stone House A.D. 1826'



The Sneyd Almshouses are at the junction of Church Street and Fortescue Lane. The plaque set into the wall tells us that they were built in memory of Mr and Mrs Sneyd by their daughters. The plaque appears to read: Erected in memory of Mr R. Sneyd of Eaton Lodge and of S. B. Sneyd his wife by their daughters



The Levett House was founded as a convalescent home in 1862. A report of 1888 states that it cost five shillings (25p) a week to look after a patient in the home. Local people donated gifts to the home: the Rev. E. Samson gave turkey and sausages, and some carpet came from Milford Hall.

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



Take on the
Cannock Chase Heritage Trail Challenge
with the **Cannock Chase Can App!**

Cannock Chase Can is an exciting health and wellbeing programme to help you make healthier lifestyle choices. It hosts a variety of wellness challenges which can be undertaken as an individual, group or family. Here's how you can get involved...

Download the App for **FREE** today by visiting **Google Play** and the **App Store** and searching for '**Cannock Chase Can**'.



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.



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



Decorative doorway with pillars and a fanlight above the door

Be a house detective

Most of the houses in these streets are Victorian and a few are Georgian. When you can recognise the common features of each style it becomes much easier to tell which is which.



Patterns in the brickwork



Clues to a Georgian house

No 9 Wolseley Road, on the corner of Church Street, is the oldest building in the Church Street Conservation Area. It was built in the late 18th century.

- Paired chimneys
- Parapet round the top, hiding the slope of the roof
- Smaller windows near the roof
- Window-panes in multiples of three
- Simple bands of stonework to contrast with the brick
- Symmetrical design



Clues to a Victorian house

All of these properties are private and are not accessible to the public.

- Visible slate roofs
- Pillars and bargeboards of carved wood
- Ironwork decoration
- Big gables
- Large-paned sash windows
- Bay windows
- Stained glass in doorways and windows
- Lack of symmetry