

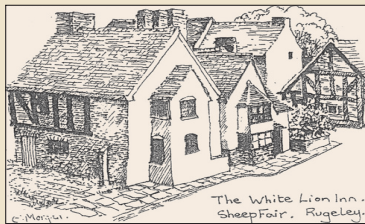
20. SHEEP FAIR

Signposts from the past

This now quiet street was once packed with sheep brought in from the surrounding heathland to be sold on market day. The noise of bleating and shouting, and the smell of dung and sweat have gone now, but the wide street remains.

The name Sheep Fair tells us what happened here – even though sheep have not been sold here for many decades. Nearby street names also give us clues to the past. Lion Street is named after the White Lion, a public house now demolished.

The area was designated a Conservation Area in 2004.



The White Lion coaching inn stood on the corner of Lion Street. Drawing courtesy of Edwina Morgan



This sheep fair of around 1900 at Buith Wells, Powys, gives us an impression of how a sheep fair was organized in a small town. Courtesy Powys County Archives Office

Hagley Hall

Elmore Park was once part of the Hagley Hall estate. In the 14th century, land in Rugeley passed to the de Thomenhorn family, who were granted the office of the Keeper of the Royal Forest of Cannock.

The office became associated with the sub-manor of Hagley. In about 1392 Thomas de Thomenhorn built the original Hagley Hall, which included a chapel, a kitchen, two barns, a brewery, a stable, an ox stall, and a gatehouse and drawbridge.



An east view of the grounds of Hagley Hall, showing the house in the distance. This pen and wash drawing, by J Allport, is dated 4th May 1814. Courtesy of the Trustees of the William Salt Library, Stafford



What remained of the house fell into disrepair and was pulled down in the 1980s.

The hall probably stood on the island in the middle of Elmore Park. In 1636 a new Hagley Hall was built by Sir Richard Weston. The hall changed hands several times, and in the 18th century it was extended and remodelled. In about 1930 the hall was partly demolished. When the Western Springs by-pass was built in 1956, it isolated a small section of the estate. This was later turned into Elmore Park.

It's all Greek to me

Crossley Stone House was built in the 18th century – a time when people greatly admired the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome. You can find evidence of this reflected in details such as decorated pillars and rigid symmetry.



Bow Street before the builders

Before these houses were built, there was a pinfold and a tithe barn here, a reminder of Rugeley's agricultural heritage. The pinfold was a stout round enclosure where stray animals were put. The owners had to pay a fine to get them out. The tithe barn was a store-house in which everyone had to put a tenth of their yearly produce. These takings were given to the church.



Pinfolds were simple enclosures, like this one at Wellow, Nottinghamshire.



Not all tithe barns were as grand as this one at Middle Littleton, near Evesham. Copyright of Elke at www.picturesofengland.com

EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

Around Sheep Fair

There are lots of clues to the past around Sheep Fair. Here you can find reminders of a time when the streets were muddy, and you can look out for the differences between buildings on a street.



Courtesy of Nola Lovatt

Bow Street builders

These terraced houses fall into two styles, which often suggests that stretches of land were bought by different builders. The housing details tell us where one builder might have taken over from another, each offering distinctive attractions to the buyer.

You can find changes of builder in terraces all over Rugeley.

Have you trodden in something?

Look down to see boot-scrapers next to doorways around Sheep Fair. The streets used to be very muddy in wet weather, and since horses were the main form of transport, you had to be careful where you trod!



Giving your public house a face-lift

Like many buildings in Rugeley, part of The Vine public house is timber-framed, but was covered with a cladding of expensive facing-bricks when this became fashionable. You might recall seeing other timber-framed buildings in Rugeley. Their owners may have been people unable to afford the cost of appearing up-to-date.

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.