

A Short Guide To the History of Smallthorne and Ford Green



(19) Old Burslem.
George Moss (Builder)
George Beardmore - Ford
Architect/Designer
Mayor of Burslem 1883

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Introduction

The following history notes are a summary of the series of talks presented by Mr Sid Bailey to members of the Education Section of the Stoke North Live-at-Home Scheme, meeting at the Norton Miners' Welfare Institute (Cricket Club), January to March 2001. This is not meant to be a full, comprehensive history, but gives a guide to the development of this area from the earliest times into the growth of the Smallthorne village during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

We are indebted to various members for their interest and contributions during the course, but particularly to Mr John Irons who has compiled the information to make this publication an interesting, educational document for all who wish to increase their knowledge of this area.

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Smallthorne History Notes. Prehistory and New Stone Age.

History of Smallthorne

General Information

- Economically, Smallthorne developed from the 18th Century.
- Stoke-on-Trent lies in a hollow on the southwestern foot of the Pennines. It is situated at a point where the agricultural Midlands meet Pennine England.
- Smallthorne, since 1922 a suburb of Stoke-on-Trent, is geographically a part of the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Pre History

Carboniferous Age, The Forming of the Coal Measures

In the prehistory of the **Carboniferous Period**, which lasted about 80 million years, the entire area of modern North Staffordshire, of which both Stoke-on-Trent and Smallthorne are a part, was part of a vast tropical swamp. This swamp consisted of huge trees and now extinct plants. As this vegetation decomposed it sank into the swamp and carbonised, eventually becoming coal. The swamp silted up, and eventually seas flooded in and coal seams were formed with ridges appearing on the surface.

- Life consisted of large, now extinct, insects.
- Other mineral deposits such as marl, clay etc were formed.
- This process took place over millions of years.
- The area was also once covered by seawater. Proof of this has been obtained from deposits of fossilised fish and shells found locally in the ground.
- Many other mineral deposits developed close to the surface: Etruria Marl, New Red Sandstone, Red Gravel.
- **Desert conditions** also prevailed in prehistory.
- The shape of the lands changed due to volcanic and geological activity. Ridges were formed due to the crumbling of the Earth's crust

Late Carboniferous Period.

Ice Age conditions later prevailed depositing boulders and large rocks.

Example: See large boulder by the Clock Tower in Tunstall Park.

When the ice melted **glacial lakes** were formed, the overflows from which formed wide valleys. The River Trent did not cause the valley between Norton and Brown Edge; it was formed by a glacial overflow. **This also applies to the valley between Smallthorne and Norton – it was formed by a glacial overflow, Banky Brook did not create it.**

- In prehistory the area was not peopled.

The New Stone Age

The Coming of People

Human beings first ventured into the area ten thousand years ago. People settled in the **New Stone Age** on the edge of the area. The areas of better land were the first to be colonised. Other, poorer, land was peopled later.

Smallthorne History Notes. Prehistory and New Stone Age.

North Staffordshire is an area of ridges and valleys: they were marshy and forested. Wild animals abounded; rivers were prone to flood. Man first settled on higher ground: on the ridges. Norton was built on a ridge. Tracks and routes followed the ridges: e.g. routes along High Lane and Norton via Bemersley Road, Ridgeway, Norton Lane and Knypersley Road. Settlements were scattered and linked by winding pathways that crossed valleys and streams at shallow points, i.e. fords.

Note the names Hanford, Brindley Ford and Ford Green.

Question. Where did Ford Green obtain its name from, the ford in the valley or the Ford Family?

The monks from **Hulton Abbey** used the route between Milton and Bemersley following the Norton Ridge. (Medieval Period)

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Smallthorne History Notes. Roman & Medieval Periods

History of Smallthorne

Roman Times

- The Romans made no impact upon Smallthorne.
- The Romans made little difference to people living within the area.
- Poor, backward individuals peopled the area.
- The Newford Valley was thickly forested and marshy, except on the ridges.
- A Roman road running from Derby passed through Longton, Stoke, and Wolstanton and continued on to Chester.
- There was a Roman camp at Chesterton.
- There are signs of Roman iron workings at Bucknall by the River Trent.
- Pottery was made at Trent Vale.

Medieval Period

Anglo-Saxon Times

- Early Middle Ages, following Roman evacuation.
- Scattered Settlements.
- Saxon settlements located on ridges (Gritstone Rides) or built by natural springs, e.g. Endon.
- The Saxons generally left the area alone; they were not really interested in it.

Administration and Social Order

The Saxons divided the County of Staffordshire into five Hundreds, with each hundred supplying 100 Hides. Each hide supported a large family unit. Another economic unit was a vill: a small extended family settlement. Vills were under the control of a Reeve.

- Staffordshire formed part of the Kingdom of Mercia
- Other Kingdoms included Northumberland, Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex and Wessex.
- Capital of Wessex was Winchester

Terminology.

Hundred: a division of an English county

Hide: a measure of land varying in magnitude from about 60 to 120 acres, and relating to a family or household.

Villein: a peasant personally bound to his lord, to whom he paid dues and services, sometimes commuted to rents in return for his land.

Reeve: 1. The local representative of the King in a shire until the early 11th Century. Note, Sheriff means Shire Reeve. 2. A manorial steward who supervised the daily affairs of the manor, often a villein elected by his fellows.

Danelaw or Danelagh

In 866 a confederacy of Northmen (Vikings) conquered the Kingdom of Mercia which then included North Staffordshire. By the **Treaty of Chippenham**, negotiated between **Alfred the Great** and the Danish Leader, **Guthrum**, in 878, England was divided into two parts: Southern England to the west of the Thames was English, the remainder was Danish.

- Alfred the Great ruled the English part, Wessex.
- Guthrum ruled the Danish part.
- North Staffordshire was under Danish Rule.

Smallthorne History Notes. Roman & Medieval Periods

- Its people were subject to Danish Law and custom.
- The Danes converted to Christianity.
- Some places in North Staffordshire have names of Danish origin; e.g. Normacot was a small Danish settlement.
- **King Canute** held lands at Knutton, married Emma of Normandy, the widow of **King Aethelred**. Canute ruled as an English King although Denmark and Norway were also a part of his realm.
- **Danegeld:** a tax first levied in the late 9th Century in Anglo-Saxon England to provide protection money or to finance forces to oppose Viking invaders.
- Relatives of Leofric, Earl of Mercia, who was married to Lady Godiva, held lands. Parts of Chell and Bradeley probably formed part of Lady Godiva's estate.
- There is a reference to a monk residing at Burton who left land and property to his nephew at North Tom (Norton).
- Nearest settlement to Smallthorne was Norton in the Moors.

Norman Conquest 1066

- Reference to a noble family from Norton moving to Maer and adopting the name, de-Mare. Members of this family split and some returned to Norton calling themselves Mayer – Note family connections with this name.
- **Hereward the Wake** may have visited the Smallthorne area due to a family connection with Lady Godiva.

The Domesday Book states that the area was economically poor, backward and underdeveloped. The Normans considered the area to be unattractive and not worth developing.

The Domesday Book was the result of a general survey of England made in 1085. It reported the value, state of cultivation and ownership of the land together with a classification of the population. "It was a record of the lands of England as well as of the men who owned them, and of the payments due to the King from each of these men" (Gardiner 1905)

Romans, Saxons and Normans generally neglected the area.

First Signs of Economic Development

Economic development in the area was possibly started by the **Cistercian Monks from Hulton Abbey**. **Hulton Abbey** was not rich, but its monks were expert farmers. They tamed the wilderness, cleared the forests, tilled the lands and raised sheep. The Abbey owned and farmed land at Hanley, Cobridge and Norton. They also mined for coal at Norton, Ridgeway, and Bemersley and along the Norton Ridge using the **bell pit system**. The area was littered with bell pits in the 13th Century – the beginning of industrial development.

However, the area was still poorly populated. It required more people to come in and to work the land. The Smallthorne area was underdeveloped both agriculturally and industrially.

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Smallthorne History Notes. Ford Green Hall & The Ford Family.

Origins of the Ford Family

The Ford Family's ancestors came from an area in the Staffordshire Moorlands, most, of which now forms the **Tittesworth Reservoir**. The land on which the Tittesworth Reservoir is located once formed a part of the **Tittesworth Family Estate**. This area of the Staffordshire Moorlands was not thickly forested. Many people were living in the Tittesworth area.

A yeoman, name of Henry, move from the Tittesworth area along the ridge to a place named **Ford**, which is located in the **Parish of Grindon**. Henry took the name of de-Ford with the Ford name becoming hereditary after Henry.

Some members of the Ford Family came to live in Norton in the Moors. The Ford Family has documents dating their family's residence in Norton to 1307, but there are references to the Ford's being at Norton in the 1290s. The Ford Family were essentially moorland farmers who prospered at Norton and this decided them to stay in the area.

- Coal mining was evident at Norton in the late 13th Century.

Ford Green Hall

In 1412, land at Smallthorne, said to be located by the Trent (i.e. Banky Brook) was granted to the Ford Family. The family held 36 acres at Smallthorne plus another 19 acres at Downfield Side (the site of the present Buller's Factory at Milton). A house already existed at Ford Green. This house is described as being a Toft: a holding consisting of a homestead and the attached arable land. The Ford's are also credited with owing two other houses at Ford Green.

The Building of Ford Green Hall

In 1580, **William Ford** began to build Ford Green Hall, on the site of the existing property. The Master Builder on the project was **Ralph Sutton** who also worked on the construction of **Little Morton Hall** in Cheshire. William Ford and Ralph Sutton would have drawn the plans of the house and formed a contract for the project

Construction and Construction Materials

A half-timbered house was constructed for economic reasons: Ford owned timber resources (trees) located in the valley, whereas stone would have needed transporting from the ridges. Stone was the usual building material for most moorland buildings. The structure of Ford Green Hall consists of an oak timber frame, filled with **wattle and daub**, covered with plaster and painted. The plaster would originally have been painted in brown or creamy colours and the timber frame would have received brown paint. The practice of painting the timber frame black and the plaster work white dates from a later age – possibly from Victorian times.

- Wattle and daub to form a wall consists of interwoven twigs plastered with a mixture of clay, lime and water and also sometimes contained dung and chopped straw.
- The chimney-stacks are built of brick.
- Brick would have been an expensive building material in the 15th and 16th centuries.
- In 1730 part of the house was rebuilt using brick.
- The Hall had several outbuildings:
 - Stables, with accommodation for humans over the top,
 - Barns,
 - A dovecote, which was considered to be a status symbol in Elizabethan and Stuart times; the existing dovecote dates from the 18th Century

Note: Ford Green Farm was built in brick by the Ford Family in 1640.

Smallthorne History Notes. Ford Green Hall & The Ford Family.

Life at Ford Green Hall

Provision of Food

The Ford Family attempted to be self-sufficient. Gardens were popular in Elizabethan times. Vegetables were grown. An orchard provided fruit such as apples, plums, pears and cherries. Bread was baked. Cheese, ale and beef were produced. Some of the farm produce was sold locally and at market.

Preparation of Food

There was no separate kitchen at Ford Green Hall. Food was cooked on an open fire in the main hall. Pots and pans were purchased at market or from peddlers. There was a buttery in the east wing

Dinning

The Fords were a reasonably prosperous family. They would have used pewter plates for eating and pewter goblets for drinking purposes. Pewter also had a high selling value.

Domestic Life

Life was hard and far from comfortable, even in large houses. Much strenuous, physical work was involved, even in domestic environments. Fires required constant attention, water had to be carried from wells and there was also a need to constantly keep water hot using an open fire. People got burned or scalded. All laundry had to be hand washed; pre-heated irons were used to press or smooth clothes and fabrics. Homes were often smoky and dark. There was much soot and grime. Light was given out by the burning of candles, oil lamps, wooden tapers or rush lights. Much tallow was available. Beds consisted of wooden frames with straw mattresses. Keeping dry was a problem; people were constantly getting wet.

Commercial Activity.

As a farm, Ford Green Hall appears to have been profitable. Domestic industry, such as making cloth, flax, hemp and woollen yarn also supplemented income. The Ford Family appears to have been making money from land and property development and renting. The Family too had interests in coal mining from the 1590s and through until the 17th Century. This began the process of leading the area from an agricultural period into an industrial age.

- Economic and domestic activity was very **labour intensive**.

Social Status.

In the 16th Century, the Ford Family was referred to as yeomen. By the early 17th Century they were being called gentlemen. The Ford Family acquired a coat of arms in the 17th Century.

- Valuation of the property in the 16th/17th Centuries: £4,000 (£2.5 million in contemporary prices).

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Smallthorne History Notes. Political Events, 14th to Early 19th Centuries

Political Events and their Effects on the Ford Family and Smallthorne from the 14th Century to the Early 19th Century

Events from the coming of the Ford Family in the 14th Century to their departure in 1804.
A summary of an English rural family, living in a political backwater, effected by national events.

- Other branches of the Ford Family were scattered around the area
- The church at Norton was dedicated to St. Nicholas. It had a spire, which made it a local landmark.

14th Century

The Division of the Manor of Norton

In 1326 Sir William De-la-Mere held the Manor of Norton in the Moors. Sir William's daughter, Agnes, married Sir Robert Dutton from Cheshire. Agnes and Robert were not rich. Agnes's brother was in line to inherit the family estate from Sir William, so in order that she should inherit her family's fortune she and her husband plotted to kill her brother. During an attack upon her father's home Agnes's brother was slain and Sir William injured. Agnes was disinherited. Upon Sir Williams's death the Manor of Norton was split between the **Audley and Stafford families**.

- The Audley family became the overlords of the Ford Family
- The 4th Baron Audley was commander of the company of English Bowmen at the **Battle of Poictiers in September 1356**.
- Cecile de Ridgeware was charged with the murder of her husband.
- In 1371 Randel de-Ford was appointed Incumbent of Sandbach
- The area was generally peaceful.

15th Century

War of the Roses

The outbreak of the **War of the Roses** in 1455 led the Fords into a succession of events that dragged them into the Tudor Age. In 1459 the defeat of the Lancastrian forces at Bloore Heath and the death of Baron James Audley would have shattered the Fords, who are thought to have favoured the Lancastrian Cause. James's son, John, became 6th Baron Audley. John supported the **Yorkists**. He was appointed Lord High Treasurer of England; he died in 1491.

Reign of Henry VII - 1485 to 1509.

Cornish Rising

The 7th Baron Audley, James, was a soldier. He saw active service against the French. In 1497, he joined a revolt of Cornish men protesting against the imposition of heavy taxation by the King, **Henry VII**, who needed to raise revenue to finance his war with Scotland. James joined the revolt in Somerset and led it to **Blackheath** in Kent where the King's forces totally defeated the Cornish rebels. James, together with the Cornish leaders of the revolt, were captured and beheaded at Tower Hill on 28 June 1497. His title and lands, including the Manor of Norton, were confiscated

Tudor Period

The Tudor Period saw a reduction in the woodland in the Norton area. The Newfold Valley became open meadowland, which was wooded on either side.

Henry VIII and the Dissolution of the Monasteries

In 1536-7 **Henry VIII** in his conflict with the authority of the **Popes and the Roman Catholic Church** resolved to attack the **monasteries**, which were faithful allies of the **Papacy**. His dissolution of the monasteries included the institution of **Hulton Abbey**. The local area had benefited to a great extent from the activities of the monks at Hulton Abbey. They had both farmed and taught farming methods, repaired local roads and bridges and cared for the sick and infirm. However, monks had long been an unpopular class in England with many monasteries regarded as immorally useless. They were also enormously wealthy. The local people, therefore, welcomed the

Smallthorne History Notes. Political Events, 14th to Early 19th Centuries

dissolution of Hulton Abbey. Monastery lands were sold off to wealthy families.

In 1547, William Ford was appointed a **King's Commissioner for Church Goods**, and his duties included the disposal of the assets of Hulton Abbey.

Death of Margaret Ford

In 1554, a Coroner's inquest at Norton on 13th February enquired into the death of Margaret Ford. Margaret, described as a 'spinster wife' of Thomas Ford of Norton Woodhouse, was assaulted and murdered by her husband and a female servant known as Joan Burns. Joan Burns was pardoned and there is no record of a murder charge being brought against Thomas Ford?

17th Century

Civil War – Siege of Biddulph Old Hall

In 1644, the **Royalists occupied Nantwich**. **Parliamentary** forces moved into the area causing it to be over-run with their roving bands of soldiers and militia. **The Biddulph and Bereton Families fortified Biddulph Old Hall**. The house was both defended and attacked by different members of the Brereton Family, with **Sir William Brereton** commanding some of the Parliamentary forces and Lord Brereton defending the Hall. A large gun, known as "**Roaring Meg**" was transported from Stafford, through Smallthorne and along the Norton Ridgeway to Biddulph where it was used in the siege of Biddulph Old Hall. Roaring Meg inflicted great damage upon the hall forcing the garrison of 300 men to surrender.

The Ford Family, although sympathetic to the King and the Royalist cause, retreated into Ford Green Hall and tried to live quietly. The **Sneyd Family** from **Keele Hall** took refuge in Ford Green Hall while Parliamentary forces were in the area. Ford Green Hall would have been visited and possibly searched by the Roundheads. Ralph Sneyd was away fighting for the King.

- The Civil War was a period of great stress
- Following the Civil War, the valley became peaceful again.

Woollen Cloth Burials

In an attempt to revive the declining wool trade, the Government, by an Act of Parliament, made it compulsory for all dead persons to be buried wrapped in woollen cloth. The penalty for non-compliance was a fine. The only person to be fined in the Parish of Norton was a Mr Henry Ford of Whitfield, who was buried in Norton Church Yard in 1678. An informant gave information on this matter to the Incumbent of the Parish. The informant would have been paid 50 shillings. Later laws made it a requirement for a certificate to be supplied and that the burials be entered into the parish registers. Coffins were rarely used at this time.

18th Century

Norton Church 1737 – 1740

In 1737, the old Church of St. Nicholas at Norton was demolished and by 1740 a new church, dedicated to St. Bartholomew, had been constructed.

Marriage of Hugh Ford to Jane Mills

In 1740, Mr Hugh Ford, who before his marriage had led a rakish life, married Jane Mills. Miss Mills originally resisted Mr Ford's advances, and became very angry on one occasion during their courtship when he suggested that a condition of their marriage would require her to renounce her parents. However, Mr Ford subsequently claimed that he was simply trying to test her loyalty. The couple eventually married in the new church at Norton. They had nine children, four of whom died from tuberculosis (TB).

The Rebellion of Forty-Five (1745)

Scottish clansmen, Highlanders, in the army of **Bonnie Prince Charlie**, also called **The Young Pretender**, advanced into England in 1745, eventually reaching Derby. Some highland soldiers were stationed at Leek and the Scots menaced the Norton area. The Ford Family once again retreated into Ford Green Hall and lived quietly until the Highlanders retreated.

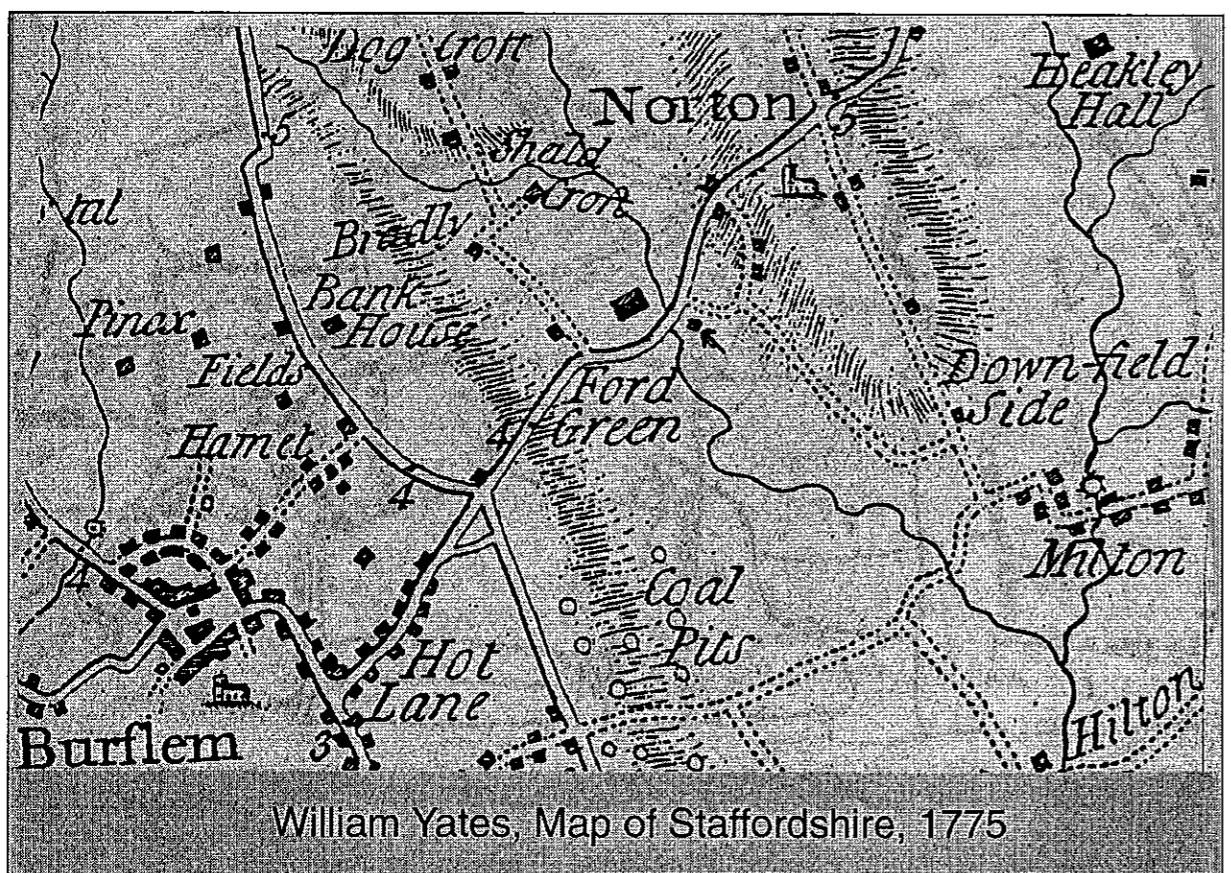
Smallthorne History Notes. Political Events, 14th to Early 19th Centuries

Other Notable Families related to the Fords by Marriage

Branches of the Ford Family became related through marriage to the following notable families and their distinguished members: -

<u>Family</u>	<u>Distinguished Members.</u>
Wedgwood (Pottery Manufacturers)	Josiah Wedgwood, Master Potter
Darwin	Charles Darwin, Naturalist
Vaughn-Williams	Mrs Gaskell, Novelist
Johnson Family	Ralph Vaughn-Williams, Composer
Fox	Dr Samuel Johnson, Lexicographer
Barclays (Bankers)	George Fox, Founder Member of the Quakers*

- Some members of the Ford Family became Quakers.
- In the late 18th Century, the Ford Family's fortunes began to wane. The male line had died out by 1830.



Smallthorne History Notes. Agriculture to Industry.

History of Smallthorne

The Transition from Agriculture to Industry – Late 18th to mid 19th Centuries.

The Decline of the Ford Family

William Ford, son of **Hugh Ford and Jane Mills**, was educated at Manchester Grammar School, qualified as a surgeon and went to live in Nottingham, where he married Mary..... Returning to live at Ford Green Hall, William and his wife resided in the brick wing. William and Mary had three daughters, however, their only son died in infancy. William Ford died in 1782, leaving no male descendants. His three daughters continued to live at Ford Green Hall with their grandmother, Mrs Jane Ford (nee Mills). Mrs Ford died in 1788 aged 70. The property eventually passed to Mr Hugh Ford of Leek, but when he died in 1797, the male line came to its end.

In 1803, Ford Green Hall and its lands were sold off, thus terminating about 500 years of the Ford Family's association with Ford Green and Smallthorne. John Sparrow, a lawyer from Newcastle-under-Lyme, purchased part of the estate with another part going to **Rev John Blunt**, the husband of the eldest of the late William Ford's daughters.

The Fords had survived the first Black Death, but it was another black death that probably drove them away from Ford Green: this was the development of the coal mining industry in the Newford Valley.

The Development of Coal Mining in the Valley

During the 18th Century, the Smallthorne area began to change from being a rural farming district into an industrial area producing coal. It became the most heavily mined area in the locality and by 1777 there were 80 drift mines, or footrills, in full production between Smallthorne and Chell, plus 14 Gin Pits.

- These mines employed men, women and children from Norton, Sneyd Green, Hot Lane and Burslem.
- The footrill type mines consisted of a passageway that followed the coal vein.
- The gin pits were vertical shafts, up and down which both workers and coal were transported using a primitive mechanism called a 'gin'. This consisted of large inter-locking cogwheels lowering and lifting a receptacle and powered by horses.

Working Conditions

Working in these coal mines was a very unhealthy and dangerous occupation. Men, women and children were forced to work an average of 12 hours per day. The mines were hot and airless. Ventilation was a major problem. The mines were subject to pockets of inflammable gasses causing the risk of suffocation and explosions due to the practice of burning candles to produce light. Children entered the mines at a very early age, some as young as four years. It was common for children of six years old to be employed as 'trappers': this involved sitting in the dark and opening and closing ventilation doors when tubs loaded with coal passed through. At ten years of age they were forced to work pulling tubs, loaded with coal, along narrow, stony and uneven passageways. Children were frequently beaten for not fulfilling their quota of work or for having accidents. They worked in darkness.

Miners worked in dirty conditions. Sometimes they had to labour standing in dirty cold water, often waist deep. The atmosphere was hot and thick with coal dust. **Safety in the coal mines was not a major concern of the employers.** Miners risked losing their limbs and their lives from the ever present dangers of explosions, suffocation, flooding and from being buried alive should the roof cave in. Accidents were frequent; many miners became seriously ill due to their unhealthy working environment.

Should a miner become injured or too ill to work he received no sick pay, compensation or retirement pension; they suffered complete loss of income.

Smallthorne History Notes. Agriculture to Industry.

Butty or Buttie System

During the early decades of the 19th Century many miners in North Staffordshire worked under the '**Butty System**'. A **Butty** was a subcontractor who employed gangs of miners. The miners were controlled underground by a supervisor known as a '**doggy**'. Butties agreed to subcontract to mine owners on a fixed price contract. They kept miner's wages very low and worked them hard.

Bradeley Pits

The pits at Bradeley were notorious for being gassy, very wet and subject to flooding. Miners ran the constant risk of being killed in an explosion , dying from suffocation or drowning. These mines were known as '**blood tubs**'.

Vermin in the mines

Rats found their way into coal mines in large numbers and presented a danger to the miners because they could cause accidents or carry disease. Cats were taken underground in an attempt to control the rats.

Pit Ponies

Ponies were used in the mines to pull tubs of coal and to aid other transport requirements. There are stories connected with the use of ponies underground. One involved a pit lad swimming in rising water to rescue a pony from a flooding mine and on another occasion a pony saved the lives of miners by refusing to proceed down a passageway prior to the roof falling in just 100 years in front off them.

Miner's lives and recreations

Miners were very poorly paid. Housed in over crowded, insanitary hovels, a miner's life was grim. There was much drunkenness amongst miners and many enjoyed blood sports such as cock fighting and bull baiting. Although illegal, bare knuckle fighting was a popular sport with arranged prize-fights, in which contestants received large amounts of money, taking place locally. Miners were generally ignorant and illiterate; uneducated, few could read or write. Miner's families suffered hardships. Miners had many children, few of whom lived beyond the age of five years.

Environmental Changes

The Smallthorne area changed from being a rural farming area into an industrial district. The effects of coal mining began to scar the landscape. Pt mounds, or spoil heaps began to rise alongside the colliery workings. Coal mining polluted Banky Brook. Miner's hovels, unplanned and jerry-built, littered the valley. By 1830 agriculture was being replaced by the coal industry. The lanes were full of carts and pack -horses transporting coal.

Demand for Coal

The Developing pottery industry in North Staffordshire fuelled the demand for coal and other minerals. Generally, North Staffordshire was industrialising as Britain began to grow very rich and powerful due to the Industrial Revolution.

Surface Conditions at Coal Mines

Working conditions were not much better above ground than below. Surface workers also had dangerous and strenuous occupations. They too worked long hours, outside in all weather conditions and faced dangers from the industrial operations at the surface. Women and girls were employed loading coal for transportation by canal or horse drawn wagons. Horses were also treated badly, being overworked and beaten. Horses were hired from local farmers.

Smallthorne History Notes. Robert Heath, 19th Century.

Robert Heath & Industrial Development in the 19th Century.

Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries.

- Dramatic changes were occurring due to the industrial exploitation of coal mining.
- Ford Green was still isolated; it reminded cut-off from Burslem. It was crossed by a turnpike road that ran from Burslem to Leek via Hot Lane with a tollgate at the summit of Smallthorne Hill. There was no Moorland Road, just a pathway or packhorse way; Moorland Road was not built until 1820. Another pathway led to the Hamil following the course of the present High Lane.

Robert Heath

Robert Heath was born at **Sneyd House**, which stood near to the top of the present Moorland Road. He was the son of Robert and Jane Heath (nee Plant).

Robert Heath was to make far more changes to the area in a very short time than the Ford's made in about 500 years.

Education

Robert was educated at a boarding school, run by a Dr Magnus at **Etruria Hall**. The fees were between 18 and 20 Guineas per year.

Early Career

Robert joined his father, who was the Manager of **Thomas Kingsley's Clough Hall Iron Works at Kidsgrove**. Here he began an association with **Mr Mee**, a mining engineer.

Business Activities

A major activity of Robert Heath was to take over ailing concerns and to try and make them profitable, especially coal pits and iron works.

- Robert Heath developed irons works at Silverdale and the forge at Knutton
- He leased mineral rights from **John Bateman of Biddulph Grange** at Knypersley plus other lands in the area.
- In 1860 he built an **iron works at Black Bull**, which originally had two furnaces, and made wrought iron. In 1871 four more blast furnaces and puddling furnaces were added.
- Robert Heath also studied mining difficulties and became an expert on coal mining. He also examined industrial relations.
- Robert Heath acquired extensive business interests.

Business and Industrial Activity at Ford Green

- Iron making was already taking place in the Norton Area. Local clay deposits were found to be suitable due to their ability to withstand the extensive heat required for iron making.
- There was a forge at Ford Green in 1804, using locally mined coal.
- In 1809, the **Foxley Branch Arm of the Cauldon Canal** was built to serve the iron works at Ford Green.
- Robert Heath took over the **Adderley and Dean** coal workings at Ford Green and set up furnaces.
- Robert Heath had both iron works and coal pits at Ford Green.
- The **Norton Colliery** developed as other mines in the Smallthorne area were getting into financial difficulties and closing down. Both the Intake and Pinfold pits were closing as Norton Colliery developed.

Smallthorne History Notes. Robert Heath, 19th Century.

- At its peak, between Black Bull and Ford Green there was an industrial development of blast furnaces, puddling furnaces, rolling mills, smelting mills and coal pits in continuous production.
- Iron from Ford Green was used to make chains, build bridges and railways.
- Pig iron and steel plate were manufactured.
- 2600 men were employed in the Ford Green Valley at the peak of industrial activity in the late 19th/ early 20th Centuries.

Note: Cort's Puddling Process of removing impurities from iron. (Read)

Railways

- In 1860 the **North Staffordshire Railway Company** opened the **Biddulph Valley Railway Line** which ran through Ford Green, Whitfield, Knypersley and on to Biddulph.
- Originally used for mineral traffic only, passenger traffic was introduced in 1864.
- Ford Green Station was built to serve Ford Green and Smallthorne.
- The railway served Robert Heath's Iron Works.
- Heath had his own engines and trains to transport his products.
- An extensive local railway network developed linking Cornhill, Intake and Pinfold Collieries, the wharves at Nettlebank and Holden Lane with the iron works and colliery undertakings in the Valley.
- A rope hauled railway that ran directly in a straight or linear fashion from the Ford Green workings originally served the wharf at Nettlebank. A locomotive line was later developed to the wharf
- Ironstone was loaded at Holden Lane Wharf and transported to Ford Green.
- The railway brought benefits to all local industry.

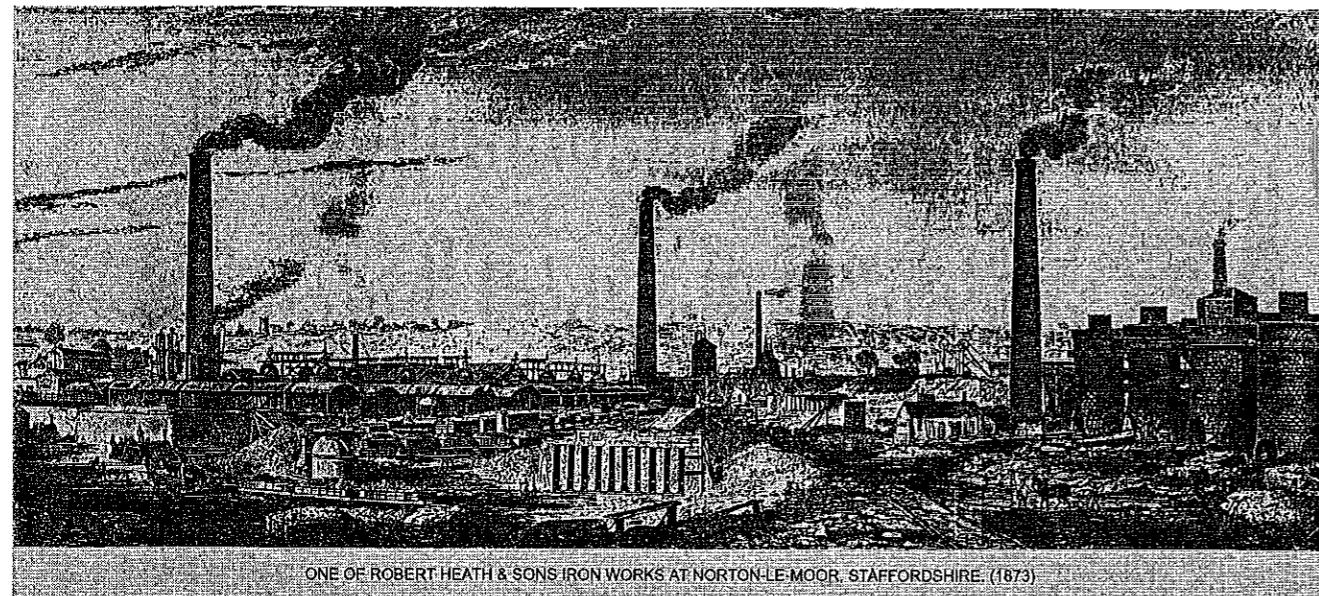
Reading. The account of the opening of the Biddulph Valley Line in the Staffordshire Advertiser.

Industrial Relations

- Robert Heath put an end of Monday absenteeism amongst his workers by purchasing the **Blue Pig Public House at Ridgeway**, where many of them spent the day drinking, closing it down and then demolishing the building.
- However, his workers held Robert Heath in high esteem. He allowed them a holiday and invited them to take part when he held an extravagant public 21st Birthday celebration for his son, William.

Personal Tragedy.

- Robert Heath's son, William, died of Typhoid Fever following his 21st birthday.



Smallthorne History Notes. Coal, Iron & Steel 1820 to 1945

History of Smallthorne

Coal, Iron and Steel Development 1820 to 1945

Iron works existed at Ford Green before Robert Heath began to manufacture iron in the valley. During the Chartist riots in North Staffordshire in 1842, rioters from Macclesfield and Congleton passed through Smallthorne on their way to Burslem, which was at the centre of the riots locally. Mention is made of Chartist rioters attacking Mr Cope's Iron Foundry at Norton Green.

- Iron works at Ford Green produced iron which was used in the Menai Bridge construction during the 1820's.
- The iron works changed the whole valley at Ford Green.

Notes of E. Steel (written in 1980)

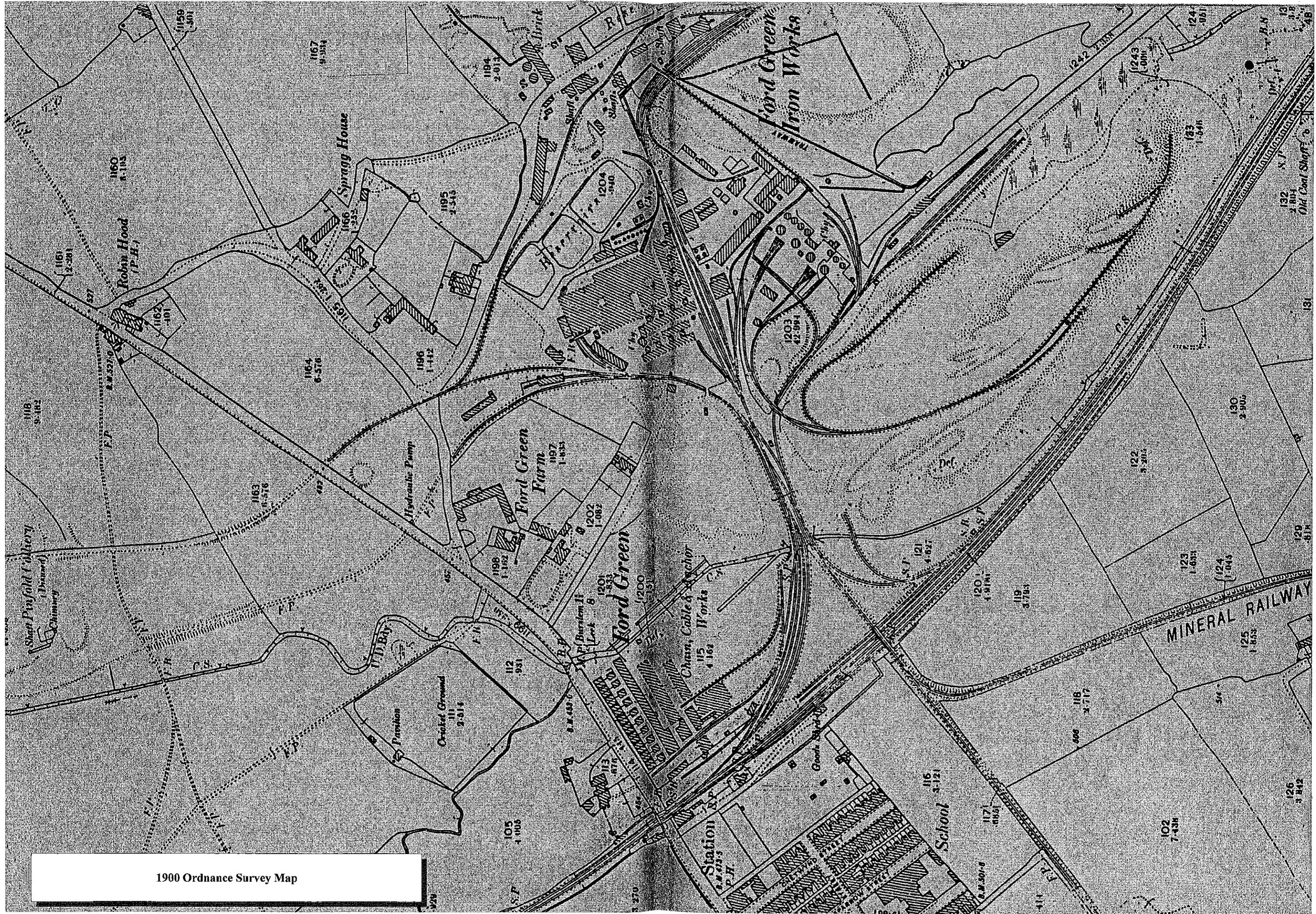
- Describe North Staffordshire as one great workshop.
- There was full employment in North Staffordshire
- Much of the area suffered pollution from the bottle ovens of the Pottery Industry and from the various iron workings.
- The local collieries provided coal to power local industry.
- Operatives worked shifts in the iron works at Ford Green.
- Working conditions were dangerous and unhealthy: heat, noise, fire and dust.
- Blast furnaces were sited near to the canal at Ford Green.
- Pig iron was manufactured.
- Steam hammer operations were used to flatten iron.
- Rolling mill and puddling furnace operations.
- All shapes and sizes of iron were being produced: round, rail, flat, angle and girders.
- Plate mill, located near to Bellerton, produced plate or sheets of iron.

Other Developments

- Housing started to be developed at Smallthorne near to the iron works.
- Continuous development of both iron works and Norton Colliery.
- The older collieries were run down – the railway from the Pinfold mine was dismantled.
- Taylor's chain works established 1891 to 1899.

Account of the working conditions of chain makers at Cradley Heath, Staffordshire as given in Pearson's Magazine by Robert Sherratt "The White Slaves of Britain" (1896)

- Unhealthy and dangerous working conditions.
- Red-hot iron flying around.
- Great heat from the furnaces, workers constantly sweating and frequently exhausted.
- Lung disease common among workers
- Men and women employed.
- Low pay – piece work, women expected to make 1 cwt of chain for between 3/- and 4/- per week. (/- = shillings)
- Hunger common, poor diet.



Smallthorne History Notes. Coal, Iron & Steel 1820 to 1945

Ford Green Chain Works

- Operated by Samuel Taylor and Sons.
- Chain Row: terraced houses built by Taylors opposite to Ford Green Hall for their workers.
- Many chain workers left South Staffordshire to come and live in North Staffordshire in the hope of finding better working conditions.
- Chain products were sent to other types of industry, e.g. shipbuilding.

Ford Green became polluted by iron works, colliery working and railways.

Life was generally hard; accidents at work were common.

Coal was a vital commodity during the two world wars.

Mining Accidents

- There were many accidents in local pits: careless mining practices and mechanical failures were major causes.

Chatterley Whitfield, 7 February 1881

- Explosion caused by fire being lit in underground smithy.
- Substantial damage done on the surface due to flames shooting up a pit shaft.
- No fire-fighting equipment available except for fire buckets.
- 20 men killed some while trying to rescue pit ponies; 4 out of 10 ponies were saved.

Norton Colliery Saturday 24 February 1912

An explosion occurred at 3.30 p.m. in a shaft due to the build up gas. Three men were carrying out maintenance work in the shaft at the time; one was killed. All of the miners had been evacuated from the pit when the gas was first noticed saving over 500 lives. Firemen sent in to deal with the gas were unable to locate it.

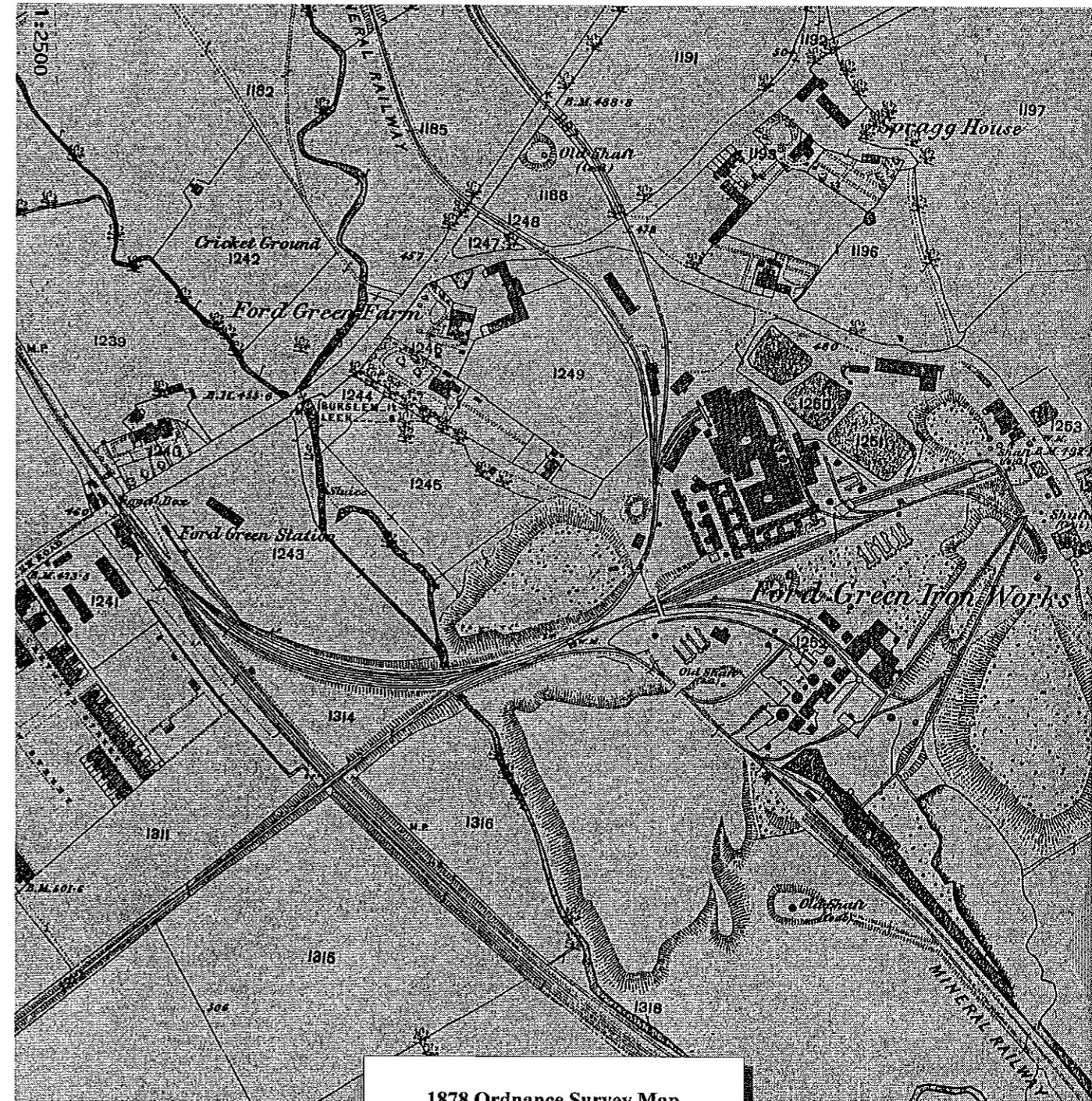
Norton Colliery, October 1915

56 men were killed or injured when an underground steel rope operated railway crashed due to the rope braking. An inquest, held at the Railway Hotel, Smallthorne, under Mr Hugh Adams, Coroner, found that the cause of the accident was an internal corrosion of the rope, which could not have been detected by a simple external, visual examination. The corrosion could have been caused by the dampness in the pit?

Sneyd Colliery, 1 January 1942

An explosion on New Years Day, caused a number of men to be killed or injured.

N.B. Many miners were superstitious and believed that working on New Years Day would result in bad luck.



1878 Ordnance Survey Map

Reading.

"Potters in Pits"

Smallthorne History Notes. 19th Century Social & Economic Developments.

History of Smallthorne Social & Economic Development – 19th Century

Religion

- John Ward, “A History of the Borough of Stoke-on-Trent”, describes the life of coal miners in 1846 as being “mean”, i.e. miners had a mean life style. Miners were poorly housed, became drunk often and participated in blood sports. Even in the 18th Century miners were known to have poached rabbits and other game resulting violent confrontations with game-keepers.
- Miners were often thought of as being unruly and not inclined to be religious.
- The established church, The Church of England, was identified with the Middle Classes and Masters: ‘The Tory Party at Prayer’.
- Attitude of the Clergy: ‘A lack of churches left the poor to find their own way to Heaven’.

Methodism

- Methodism, as preached by John Wesley (Wesleyan Methodism) appealed more to working class people than the formal proceedings of the Church of England. John Wesley encountered opposition.
- Hugh Bourne, from Bemersley, became a local Methodist preacher. He organised open air preaching services (Camps), particularly at Mow Cop.
- William Clowes of Tunstall joined Hugh Bourne.
- Large numbers of people attended their services. These large gatherings caused the Methodist Council to become very concerned about civil disobedience. In the early decades of the 19th Century the authorities feared a working class uprising; the events of the **French Revolution** were fresh in people’s memories.
- Bourne and Clowes were expelled from the Methodist Church, so they formed the **Primitive Methodist Church**, which developed a reputation for temperance.
- Many miner’s lives were changed by the Primitive Methodists. Many miners began to lead sober lives and started to attend church instead of finding their pleasures in heavy drinking and blood sports.
- Mining communities converted to Methodism.
- In 1827 a Sunday School was opened in Leek Road, Smallthorne.
- In 1837 the first Salem Chapel was built for the Methodist New Connexion.
- In 1857 A Primitive Methodist Chapel was constructed: it was rebuilt in the early 20th Century
- In 1867 a Wesleyan Chapel was built.
- In 1874 Salem Chapel was rebuilt on the existing site at the junction of Lord Street with Leek Road: originally it had been planned to build the chapel on vacant land in South Lord Street.

After John Wesley’s death the followers fragmented and during the 19th Century set up various associations of the Methodist Church. In the 19th Century the Primitive Methodist Church, the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Methodist New Connexion build their own chapels in the village. The first Sunday School was formed in the 1820s in a small cottage opposite to where the Parish Church is now located. The founder, Thomas Walker, was instrumental in founding the New Methodist Connexion Church at Salem, Smallthorne in 1838. The buildings for the Primitive Chapel and the Wesleyan Chapel were constructed in 1857 and 1867 respectively. The members of these organisations played a major part in the establishment of education in Smallthorne in the 19th Century. In 1874 the Education Board appointed Mr Richard Nation as headteacher of the Boys’ School at the new Smallthorne Board School. Mr Nation, a member at Salem Chapel, served as headmaster for 44 years until 1920. The new school premises were opened in 1876. The work of the chapels in the area was a major influence in education with the Sunday school movement and the growth of choral singing in the area proving to be a major influence in the social development of Smallthorne.

Smallthorne History Notes. 19th Century Social & Economic Developments.

Church of England

- The Anglican Church was concerned about both the Non-Conformist churches and the Chartist Movement’s activities, especially in the 1840s.
- The Anglican Church encouraged the support for the establishment of new Church of England buildings in the area.
- A new Anglican Church (a Chapel of Ease) was built in Smallthorne on land donated by **Charles Bowyer Adderley**, a land and coal mine owner.
Note: Charles Adderley claimed to be a descendent of Oliver Cromwell through his mother’s family.
- Construction work commenced on Smallthorne Church in 1849.
- Smallthorne Church was consecrated on 2 August 1850.
- C B Adderley paid for the building of the Churchyard wall and endowed the Minister with £80.00 per annum.
- The Church School was built in 1854.
- Adderley was created a baronet and donated land for the construction of the vicarage.
- In 1868, Adderley donated land for the enlargement of the school.

Roman Catholic Church

- In 1871, a Roman Catholic School was opened in Lord Street. The cost was £300, which was paid for by St Peter’s Catholic Church at Cobridge.
- The building was also used as a Catholic Church.

Housing

- Deans Row was built about the 1820s or 1830s. The first of Smallthorne’s terraced type houses, it was demolished in 1984.
- Deans Row was built by C B Adderley and named after his Agent, **Mr J H Dean**.
- Deans Row was originally a row of 2 up and 2 down houses with a communal yard at the rear where there were 8 privies.
- Miners initially tenanted Deans Row.
- In 1878, the field at the rear of Deans Row was divided into a number of allotments.
- In 1861, miners still made up the greater number of Deans Row tenants; by 1871, 14 of the occupants were ironworkers.
- More housing began to be constructed as Smallthorne developed socially and economically.
- Note Census figures for 1841, 1851, 1861 & 1871 etc.

Economic Development

- Besides the iron works and other enterprises operated by **Robert Heath** there also developed a chain works, which was also located at Ford Green, and operated by **Samuel Taylor & Sons of Brierley Hill**.
- People from Cheshire, Derbyshire and South Staffordshire began to move into Smallthorne in search of work during the second part of the 19th Century.
- The main property fronts on Leek Road (now Ford Green Road) were developed as shops.
- Other shops opened in the side streets.
- There was a general increase in the population.
- Industry and business was affected by economic slumps.

Smallthorne History Notes. 19th Century Social & Economic Developments.

Law and Order

- Keat's Directory 1867 lists 1 police constable as being stationed at Smallthorne. The same publication of 1873 lists 2 officers as being stationed in the village: 1 police sergeant and 1 police constable.
- The police station was located at the lower end of Deans Row. A police officer also resided in the house next door.
- The maintenance of Law and Order appears to have been a problem in Smallthorne due to heavy drinking amongst the colliers and ironworkers.

Cemetery

- As the Churchyard became inadequate to deal with local burials, a new cemetery was laid out in 1874 by a local Burial Board.

Education

- There was a large school in operation at Norton; in 1854 it had 190 pupils.
- Pupil-teachers taught in local schools. Schools were inspected and the results of these inspections determined pupil-teacher salaries.
- Pupils had to pay 'school pence', either daily or weekly. This resulted in some children attending on a part time basis.

Smallthorne Board School

- Smallthorne Board School Premises were constructed in 1876 on a site between Victoria Street (now Regina Street) and Sparrow Street
- Separate schools for the teaching of boys and girls were in existence on the same premises.
- It is important to remember that boys and girls were taught separately. This is an indicator of social attitudes prevailing during the 19th Century. Children remained segregated until the 1930s when mixed classes became acceptable as a form of educational development.
- Mr Richard Nation served as headmaster of the Boys' School for 44 years from 1876 until 1920.
- Miss Morrell was one of the first headteachers of the Girls' School.

Local Benefactors

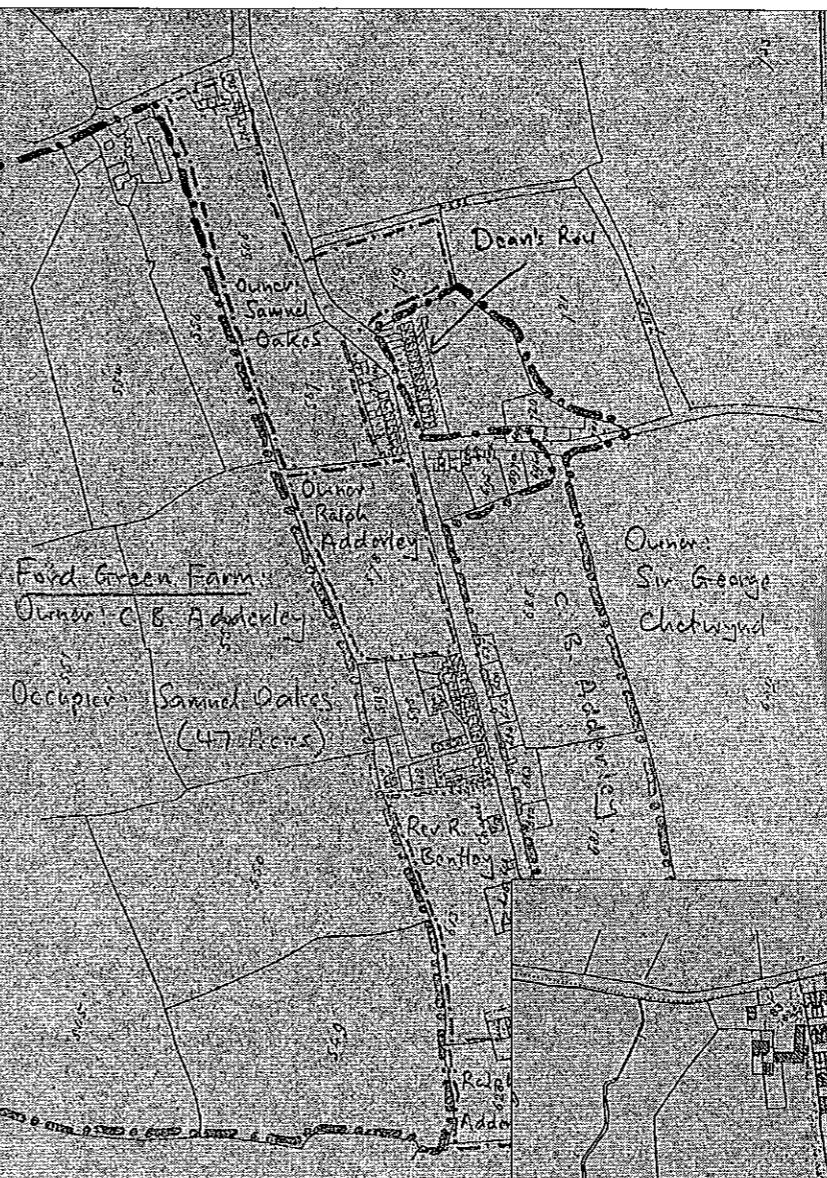
- Masters and landowners acted as local benefactors to the community.
- C B Adderley donated land and money for the development of Smallthorne Church.
- The Heath Family established a Bible class in a disused mining building at Ridgeway in 1880.
- The Heath's also established a cricket ground on land adjacent to Ford Green Hall. Robert Heath Junior captained the local team the Heath XI. This ground eventually developed into Norton Cricket Club.

Transport

- In 1899, an electric tram service connecting Smallthorne with Burslem was established. The adult fare was 1d each way.

READING.

Tomkinson, Thomas (1863) Village Changes. Poem.



Tithe Map for the Parish of
Norton-le-Moors, 1843



1900 Ordnance Survey Map,
scale 1:2500 (reduced)

Smallthorne History Notes. Aspects 19th & 20th Centuries

History of Smallthorne

Aspects of Recent History, 19th & 20th Centuries

Norton Cricket Club

- The Cricket Club was originally located on land near to Ford Green Hall, it moved to Smallthorne in 1910.
- It played matches locally as a member of the North Staffs League.
- It enjoyed much success during the 1950s and 1960s.
- Professional players were engaged in order to higher the standard of local cricket following World War Two.
- Norton Cricket Club signed a number of professional players during this period; most notably **Sir Garfield Sobers**.
- The 1950s & 1960s were a ‘golden age’ in North Staffs Cricket.

C B Adderley, 1st Lord Norton (1814-1905)

- Inherited lands at Norton and in Warwickshire (near to Birmingham).
- Entered Parliament in 1841 as Conservative MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- Under Secretary for the Colonies 1876.
- President of the Board of Trade 1878.
- Wrote the constitution of New Zealand.
- Elevated to the Peerage taking the title ‘Lord Norton’
- Donated land and money for the construction of St Saviour’s Church, Smallthorne and its associated buildings. He also donated land for other church construction in the old Civil Parish of Norton.
- He had many interests including Shipping: he was responsible for the introduction of regulations which determined their **load-lines**
- Adderley Street in Cape Town, South Africa is named after him.
- See reference in **The Harmsworth Encyclopaedia, Vol. VI**, page 4403.

Bemersley Book Room

- Founded in 1812.
- The location of The Book Room was a matter of some dispute. Some members of the **Primitive Methodist Church** wanted it to be located in Hull; others wanted it to be sited in Tunstall. Eventually, it was established at Bemersley.
- **Hugh Bourne**, originally from Bemersley, and a founder member of the Primitive Methodist Church, also wrote publications on Religious, Domestic and Agricultural matters.
- Hugh Bourne issued the **Primitive Methodist Magazine**, of which he was editor.
- Hugh Bourne worked with his brother, **James Bourne**, who was Director of Publications.
- The publishing headquarters was eventually moved from Bemersley to London.
- James Bourne, who had other business interests, was declared bankrupt in 1843.

Alehouses and Public Houses

- Alehouses and inns played an important part in refreshing travellers during the 18th and 19th Centuries.
- The **Beer Shop Act 1830** allowed anyone to brew and serve beer on the payment of a £2.00 licence fee.
- The Parish of Norton supported many beer houses.
- In 1873, 15 beer houses, public houses and inns were registered in Smallthorne, together with 1 at Ford Green.

Smallthorne History Notes. Aspects 19th & 20th Centuries

- There was much hard drinking amongst miners and ironworkers with the men of Smallthorne gaining a notorious reputation.
- Some ironworkers could earn very high wages, which resulted in riotous living.
- It became necessary to double the number of police officers stationed at Smallthorne because of the drunkenness in the village.

Place and Street Names

- With the influx of Black Country chain workers into Smallthorne, some streets were renamed after places in South Staffordshire, e.g. Kinver Street, Brierley Street, Coseley Street.
- Acreswood, named after an ‘acker’ or a prominent oak or ash tree located there.
- The name ‘Smallthorne’ is of uncertain origin.

Notable Local People

Frank Mountford, Stoke City Football Club Player, educated at Smallthorne School.

Alan Martin, Stoke City Football Club Player, educated at Smallthorne School.

Albert Leake, Port Vale Football Club Player, educated at Smallthorne School.

Charles Scrimshaw, Stoke City Football Club Player, landlord of the King’s Head Public House.

Albert Edward Davis MP, Politician, educated at Smallthorne School.

Anthea Turner, Television Presenter, originated from Norton.

Ann Dawson, Opera Singer, originated from Bradeley.

Arthur Berry, Artist and Writer originated from Smallthorne.

Norton Church as a Wedding Venue

In times past, Norton Church appears to have been a very popular wedding venue. In one year, 241 wedding ceremonies were held at Norton Church. Norton, which in the 18th and 19th Centuries was out in the countryside, provided a days outing for a wedding, with many people from outside the area choosing to marry there. Newly married working-class couples did not take a honeymoon in the 19th Century.

Bradeley

- The road between Smallthorne and Bradeley was unmade and was continuously muddy.
- Bradeley Methodist Church was founded in the early 1870s.
- The first meeting of the Methodist Church was in a storeroom above a bakehouse.
- A chapel was built on land at the corners of Cross Street and South Street.
- Bradeley Male Voice Choir eventually moved to Burslem. And became the Burslem Orpheus Choir.
- Bradeley Post Office also doubled as a working mens’ club.

Local Government

- Originally administered as a part of the **Civil Parish of Norton in the Moors, Smallthorne Urban District Council** was formed in the 1890s
- The Council was a second tier authority under **Leek Rural District Council**.
- Smallthorne Urban District Council was administered from the Broad Offices in Leek Road (now Ford Green Road) adjacent to Smallthorne Cemetery. Council meetings were also held in this building. The building is still in existence.
- Smallthorne was incorporated into the **County Borough of Stoke-on-Trent** in 1922 against the wishes of many local people. There was much opposition.
- Many Smallthorne people have served on Stoke-on-Trent City Council; some have served as Lord Mayors of Stoke-on-Trent. They include - Alderman J H Dale, Alderman Holdcroft, Alderman Horace Barks, Alderman James Evans and Councillor Barbara Dunn. Other local councillors have included Joe Woolridge, Kevin Dunn and Alderman Wilfrid Eardley.

Smallthorne History Notes. Aspects 19th & 20th Centuries

- Leader of the Council was sometimes referred to as the “Mayor of Smallthorne”
- William Henry Ruston was a Leader of Smallthorne District Council.

Smallthorne Brass Band

Smallthorne Brass Band practised in a hut located in Bradeley Lane (now Chell Heath Road) on the edge of Camp Fields. It played at local dances.

Smallthorne Open Air Swimming Pool

- It was built by Burslem Recreation Ltd, a firm owned by the Directors of Sneyd Colliery
- The construction was carried out entirely by Sneyd Colliery employees
- When it opened in 1938, it was the largest swimming pool in the Midlands.
- The owners wanted the pool to compete with the Trentham Gardens Swimming Pool.
- It sloped from 3'6" at its shallow end to 8' at its middle down to 9'6" at its deepest end.
- It held 642,000 gallons of water.
- It could accommodate 1,200 swimmers.
- The temperature of the water was kept at 74 degrees Fahrenheit.
- The pool was lined with white tiles and was served by 44 under water flood lights
- The pool had a suntrap in the form of a 12-foot high vita glass screen.
- There were two childrens' paddling pools.
- The pool had a café
- There was seating for 5,000 people.
- There was parking for 44 cars.
- The baths closed on the outbreak of World War II in 1939.
- The baths were camouflaged by floating pit props on the pool and were eventually covered to stop them from becoming a target for German bombers.
- The pool was used as an emergency reservoir by the Fire Brigade who also garaged fire appliances in the main part of the foyer.
- Outside, the shop remained open during the 1940s
- The Baths became cracked due to extensive coal mining operations during the War.
- A geological fault contributed to their structural damage and they deteriorated beyond repair.
- The spaces underneath the terraces were used as lock-up garages following the pool closure.
- Heaton's Transport used the premises as a garage.
- Squatters occupied prefabricated huts that were located in pool grounds.
- Local children played in the pool area following its abandonment and the premises were subsequently vandalised.
- The swimming pool premises were demolished in the early 1960s.

Reading:

Berry, Arthur (1984) *A Three and Sevenpence Halfpenny Man*, pages 43 & 44. Kermase Editions.

Palace Cinema

- Constructed in 1914.
- Known locally as “The Scratch”.
- Only opened in the evenings.
- Advertised poorly.
- Popular seat prices in the 1950s: 9d downstairs, 1s 2d upstairs
- New owners changed the cinema’s name to the “Queens” in the late 1950s but the venue continued to be called by its nickname “The Scratch”.
- It began to open on a Sunday evening.
- It also started to show “X” Rated films; the first “X” film to be screened was the “Revenge of Frankenstein”

Smallthorne History Notes. Aspects 19th & 20th Centuries

- It also began to advertise its programmes in the local newspaper, the Evening Sentinel.
- There was a billiard hall at the rear of the cinema.
- The premises became a Bingo Hall in the early 1960s

Reading:

Berry, Arthur (1984) *A Three and Sevenpence Halfpenny Man*, pages 25 &26. Kermase Editions.

Lycetts Blinds

- Lycetts Blinds occupied the premises at the rear of the cinema.
- Access to these premises is from a rear alley accessed from Mars Street.
- Lycetts Blinds eventually located their business in Burslem.

Potteries Cinema Transport Ltd

- Owned by the Dean family
- Occupied premises at the rear of upper Mars Street; the premises were accessed from Jupiter Street.
- Delivered and collected films to and from cinemas.

Police Stations

- The first police station in Smallthorne was located at the lower end of Deans Row in Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road). It contained cells and a residential section for a constable or sergeant.
- A police constable also occupied the house next door.
- The Police Station was relocated to council house premises on High Lane during the 1940s with a sergeant and two constables being stationed there.
- Nurse Mitchell, the local midwife, lived next door to the police station on High Lane.

Royal Visit

- In 1922, the Prince of Wales passed through Smallthorne on his way to open the hospital at Biddulph Grange.

Smallthorne Junior School

- Located between Regina Street and Sparrow Street.
- The school hall was known as “The Play Hall”
- The school used the Wesleyan Church Rooms in Regina Street as a dining hall for school lunches. The food was cooked centrally and transported to Smallthorne. ‘Dinner ladies’ served the lunches from large cans. Children ate their lunches seated on forms at trestle type tables.
- School hours in the 1950s were from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. during the mornings, and from 2.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. in the afternoons. 12.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. was the lunch break.
- Empire day was celebrated at the school during the 1940s.
- The school used Norton Cricket Club grounds as a venue for its annual sports days.
- During the 1950s teaching staff included Mr Edward Tomkinson (Head Teacher), Mr Frank Bird, Mrs Talbot, Mrs Goodwin and Miss Beech.
- The School premises were extended during the mid 1950s when a new teaching block was constructed.
- Most working class children left school at 13 at the beginning of the 20th Century. The Education Act 1918 (Fisher Act) raised the school-leaving age to 14. Under the Education Act 1944 (Butler Act) school-leaving age was raised to 15. In 1973 it was again raised to 16.

Smallthorne History Notes. Aspects 19th & 20th Centuries

Ford Green Railway Station

- Originally served the Smallthorne Area as part of the Biddulph Valley Line.
- The station closed to passenger traffic in 1928.
- Excursion trains still used the station until the 1960s.
- There was a footbridge over the railway lines for pedestrian use when the level crossing gates were closed. Local children played on the bridge.
- The signal box was situated on the Norton side of the line while the main station buildings and the stationmaster's house was on the Smallthorne side.

Miners Hostel

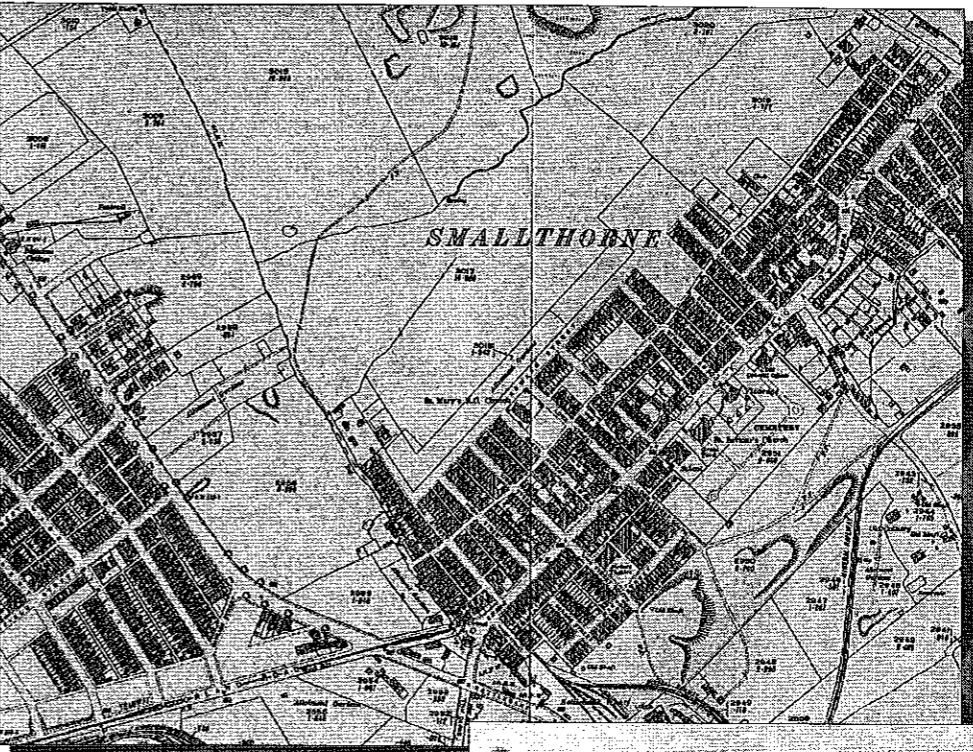
- Located on Chell Heath Road (Bradeley Lane).
- It was constructed during World War Two to accommodate 'Bevan Boys' working in the local coal mines.
- It later housed Italian, Polish and other European refugee mine workers.
- The premises are now demolished; housing occupies the site.

Robert Heath Iron Works

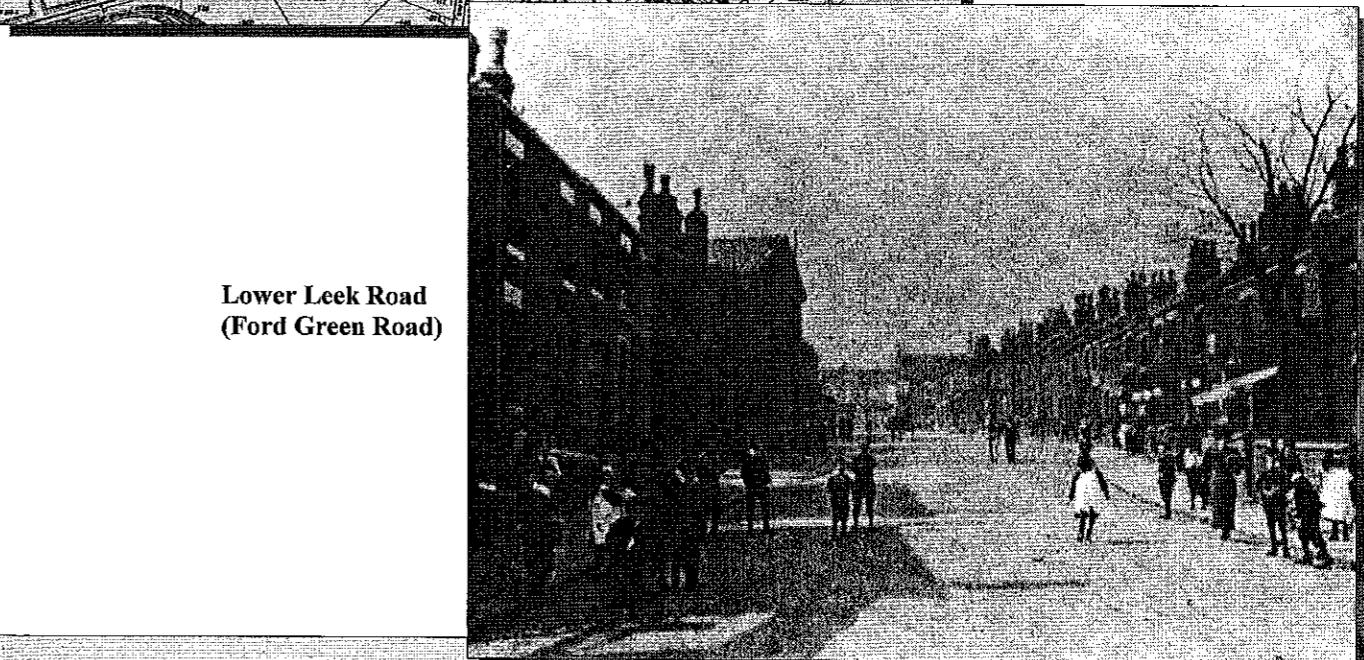
The firm that operated the Robert Heath Iron Works at Ford Green found itself in financial difficulties when it merged with the Low Moor Company from Yorkshire. It issued shares to its workers; these shares proved to be of no value. The firm went into liquidation. The iron works closed in 1928

Local Road Transport

The PMT operated buses fuelled by gas on its services between Hanley and Chell during World War Two. The vehicles were fitted with a large balloon type container which was filled with gas at the Etruria Gas Works at 5.20 p.m. each afternoon.



1922 Ordnance Survey Map



Lower Leek Road
(Ford Green Road)



Ford Green Station

Smallthorne History Notes. Appendix 1

Staffordshire Sentinel, The Potteries, Newcastle and District Directory 1907

ENTRIES FOR SMALLTHORNE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: Smallthorne Urban District Council
Constituted Local Board 1854

POPULATION: 11,584

AREA: 2,878 acres

Askey, Arthur, fishmonger, Leek Road;

Bean, H.W., clothier, outfitter, pawnbroker and boot factor,
107 Leek Road;

Boote, W.H., teacher of pianoforte, professor of music, 95
Leek Road;

Brown, Elijah, greengrocer, 125 Leek Road;

Burslem Industrial Co-operative Society, grocers and general
dealers, 25-27 Leek Road;

*Capper, Walter, Rising Sun Hotel. Wines and spirits of best
quality and finest ales on draught;

Cartlidge, A., dealer in pianos, organs, cycles etc., 96 Leek
Road;

Cartlidge, Mrs.J., draper and ladies' and children's
outfitter, 97 Leek Road;

*Cooper, Mathew, Holly Bush Inn (B.H.) 135-7 Leek Road;

*Cooper, William, beer house, Leek Road;

Dale, William, wholesale and retail fruit and potato merchant,
poultry and game dealer, 139 Leek Road;

Fairbrother, Rev.F.R., minister, Leek Road;

Graham, Rev. Leslie, BA LL.B., Leek Road;

*Hill, Louie, (B.H.) Chell Heath;

Smallthorne History Notes. Appendix 1

Hodgkinson, Leonard, boot and shoe maker and repairer, Leek
Road;

Hodgkinson, Samuel, sen., boot and shoe dealer,
49 Leek Road;

Holdcroft, Charles, 25 Wedgwood Street;

Holland, Enoch, 89 Unwin Street;

Irons, Thomas, boot, shoe and clog manufacturer,
105 Leek Road;

Lawton, W., boot and shoe dealer, 79 Leek Road;

*Marshall, Wm., Royal Oak (B.H.) 23 Leek Road;

Meaden, F.F., drug stores, Leek Road;

Meaden, F.F., sub-postmaster, post office, Leek Road;

Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Leek Road;

Moorcroft, Jos., fried fish dealer, 19 Leek Road;

Pedley, - ., baker and confectioner, Leek Road,

*Pinner, E., King's Head (B.H.), 101 Leek Road;

Robinson, Levi, newsagent and stationer, 145 Leek Road;

Rushton, William, wholesale and retail grocer,
113 Leek Road;

Sabott, Wm., fish and chip shop, 63 Leek Road;

*Tomkinson, Enoch, Foresters' Arms (F.L.) Leek Road;

*Tomkinson, Harry, 131 Leek Road, (B.H.)

*Tomkinson, Louisa, Gardener's Arms, (B.H.), Leek Road;

*Turner, George, White Hart (B.H.), Leek Road;

*Wase, Ann, (B.H.), 25 Leek Road;

*Wood, Robert, New Inn (B.H.), 133 Leek Road;

Woodvine, Robert, 7 Primitive Street, (last entry)

* Licensed Premises

B.H. Beer House

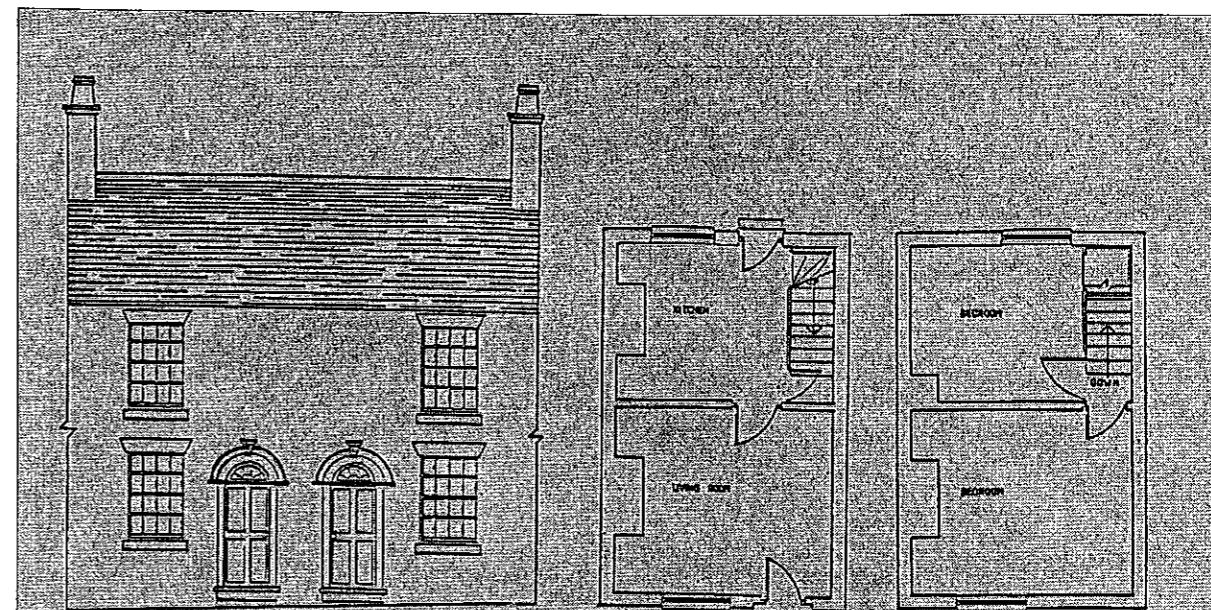
F.L. Fully Licensed

Smallthorne History Notes. Appendix 2

Public Houses, Clubs & Beer Houses, Early 20th Century

Name	Location
Victory Workings Mens' Club	Hanley Road/Nettlebank
The Greyhound	Jolley Street (formerly High Street)
Forester's Arms	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
The Royal Oak	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
White Hart (now The Barrel)	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
The Albion	Croft Court/Camp Road
The Victoria	Croft Court
King's Head (Scrimy's)	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
Gardener's Arms	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
Rising Sun	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
New Inn	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
British Legion Club	Ashman Street (formerly Market Street)/Camp Road
The Queen's	Ashman Street (formerly Market Street)
The Holly Bush	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
Pioneer Working Mens' Club	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
The Swan	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)
The Railway Hotel (now The Ford)	Ford Green Road (formerly Leek Road)

Smallthorne History Notes. Appendix 3



Elevation and Plan of No. 126 Ford Green Road

