



The Cheshire Sandstone Ridge Non-Designated Heritage Assets



July 2023

OVERVIEW

The Cheshire Sandstone Ridge is rich in non-designated heritage assets which contribute significantly to our understanding of the local heritage, character and distinctiveness of the Ridge.

For many years the Trust has maintained databases for several types of significant non-designated heritage assets (which include sites) and which have been the focus of our project work.

Between 2014-17, volunteers in 'The Ridge: Rocks and Springs' project, recorded over 700 records of sandstone quarries, rock graffiti, rock art, wells, springs and pump houses.

These are in addition to, but which complement, better-known scheduled sites.

Our data has been used to inform records in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and in support of our published works* and Website** articles.

This paper provides a selection of these non-designated heritage sites which play a role in community identity. They are summarised and further organised by type and parish, with sources referenced (see below):

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|---|---|
| 1. Caves and Mines | 4. Quarries |
| 1a. Sand Mines | 5. Wells and Water Supplies |
| 1b. Copper Mining | 6. Marl Pits and Ponds |
| 2. Picturesque Terraces, Tracks and Viewpoints | 7. Boundary Stone Markers and Stiles |
| 3. Rock Carvings and Graffiti | 8. Geological Sites |
| | 9. 'Footprints on the Ridge' |

References:

***'The Ridge: Rocks and Springs – a sandstone legacy'** - pub. Sandstone Ridge Trust, 2017

****'Captured Memories Across the Hillforts of Cheshire'** - Joyce, D. & Foxwell, B., pub. Cheshire West and Chester, 2011

***'Sandstone Ridge Atlas'** - pub. Sandstone Ridge Trust, 2018

****Sandstone Ridge Website:** <https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/>

1. CAVES AND MINES

Caves are not formed naturally within the sandstone rock of the Ridge but have been created by human activity for economic purposes such as sand and copper mining and, in a few cases, adapted for habitation or carved as features of picturesque terraces.

The sandstone caves, their function and their architecture, are a characteristic feature of the entire length of the Ridge. Some 30 caves have been identified, examples of which are to be found below.

These caves are rich in legend and feature widely in local history.

The Trust has been conducting a detailed survey of these sites and is currently producing a publication entitled '*Beneath the Ridge*'.

Information can be sourced from the following articles on the Website:

General:

<https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/beneath-ridge.html>

Copper-mining:

<https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/beneath-ridge/theres-copper-in-them-thar-hills-or-not.html>

Sand-mining:

<https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/doc/D495401.pdf>

1a. Sand Mines

Site	Parish	Reference
Upton's Cave	Frodsham	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/med/L492654.jpg
Conker Cave	Helsby	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/med/L493175.jpg
Bear Hole	Helsby	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/med/L441057.jpg
Beresford's Cave	Beeston	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/med/L492611.jpg
Queen's Parlour	Bickerton	https://www.flickr.com/photos/75386818@N07/8501421369

Bloody Bones Cave	Bickerton	https://www.flickr.com/photos/75386818@N07/8501421369
Mad Allan's Hole	Bickerton	https://www.themodernantiquarian.com/img_fullsize/47728.jpg
Shelters near Gallantry Bank	Bickerton	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/med/L379756.jpg

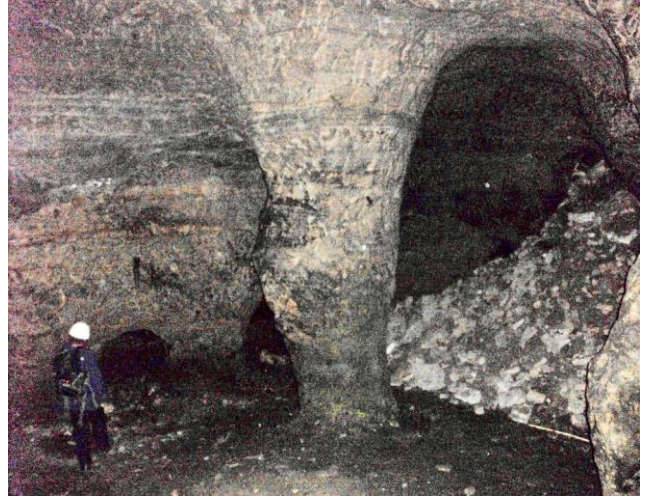
Photographic examples of sand mine caves



Beresford's Cave, Beeston Castle



Upton's Cave, Frodsham



Conker Cave, Helsby



Queen's Parlour, north of Raw Head

1b. Copper Mining

The earliest records of copper mining along the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge date from the 1690s. As well as the engine shaft at Gallantry Bank, a further 5 shafts have been recorded. The Grade II listed engine house chimney, a few mounds of overgrown spoil and the fenced-off depression of the mine shaft, are almost all that remains of the copper mining industry along the Sandstone Ridge.

The only remaining underground evidence of the local copper mining industry, comprises an adit; a horizontal, exploratory shaft, 33m in length. Its preservation is due, in part, to its restricted and isolated entrance.

To step into the adit, unique to the Ridge, is to step back in time to around c1830. The day the miners abandoned tunnelling is very much how we find it now; its state of preservation is currently excellent, still retaining carbon stains left by candles.

This site represents aspects of geology not available (or preserved) at the surface of the Ridge. It supports our knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic history of the local area.

Site	Parish	Reference
Bulkeley Hill Copper Adit	Bulkeley	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/med/L508388.jpg https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/beneath-ridge/theres-copper-in-them-thar-hills-or-not.html https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/p/beneath-ridge/bickerton-coppermine.html



2. PICTURESQUE TERRACES, TRACKS AND VIEWPOINTS

Over many centuries, some landowners on the western escarpment of the Ridge have landscaped their property with terraces and other features to take advantage of the views and vistas and to enhance visitor experience.

Ref: '*The Historic Gardens of England: Cheshire*', Mowl, T. & Mako, M., pub. Redcliffe Press, 2008

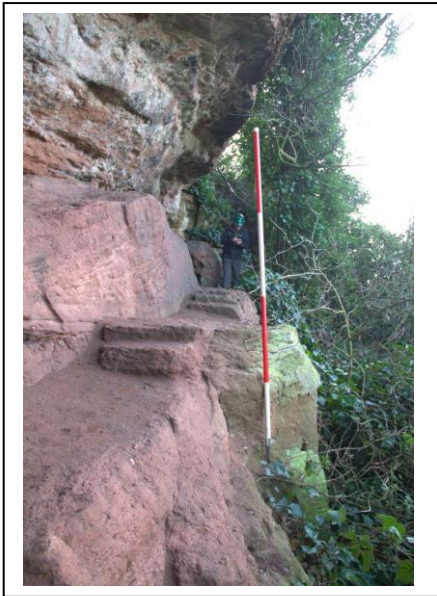
The Trust is currently recording these undesignated sites.

Publication of our findings will be subject to landowners' permissions.

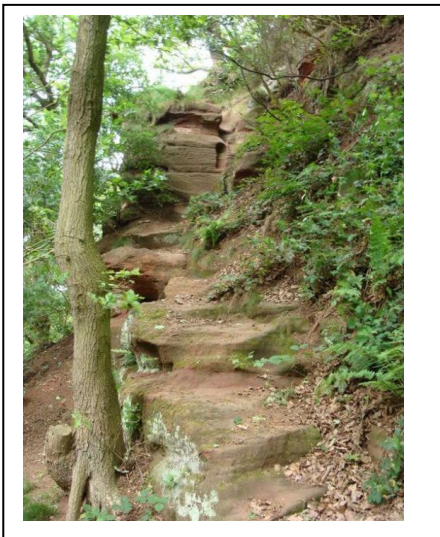
The following Table is an indication of where these sites are known to exist:

Site	Parish	Reference
Jacob's Ladder	Frodsham	See photo overleaf
Carriageway, Hill Road	Helsby	Captured Memories Across the Hillforts of Cheshire, pp2-3
Barnhill Terrace	Broxton	Publication pending, see photo overleaf
Carden Park Terrace	Carden	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/beneath-ridge/beneath-ridge-volunteers-visit-carden-park.html Photos overleaf
Hermit's cave at Carden Park	Carden	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/med/L469268.jpg https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCH1538&resourceID=1004

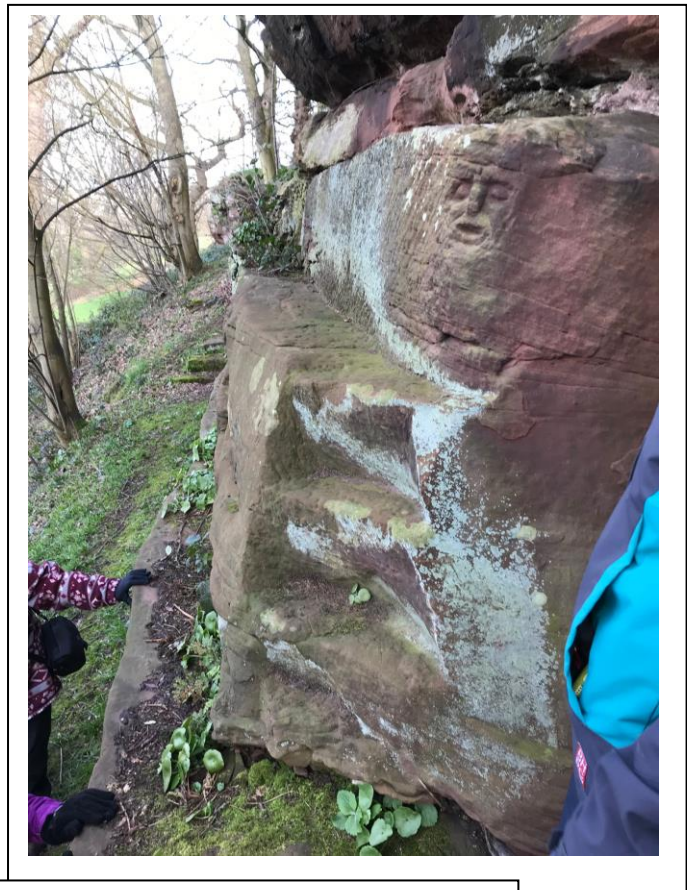
Photographic examples of Picturesque Terraces



Barnhill picturesque walkway and column support



Jacob's Ladder, Frodsham



Carden Park Terrace with face carving and John Harris's cave



3. ROCK CARVINGS AND GRAFFITI

As part of ‘*The Ridge: Rocks and Springs*’ project, the Trust and its volunteers surveyed rock art and panels of graffiti located on the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge. Examples are wide-ranging; dating from the prehistoric period through to modern graffiti and are featured in the Trust’s publication:

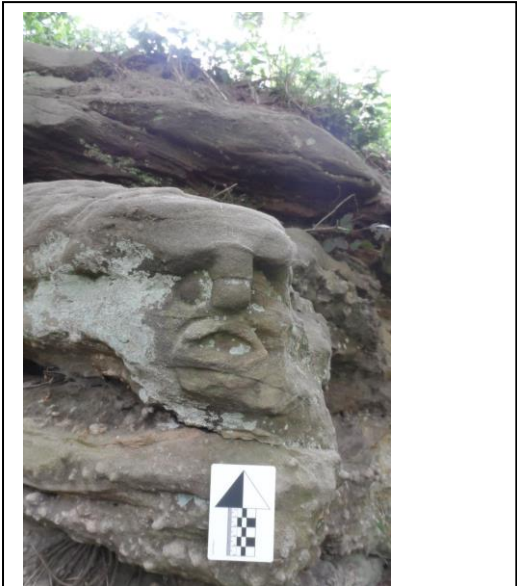
Ref: ‘*The Ridge: Rocks and Springs – a sandstone legacy*’, pub. Sandstone Ridge Trust, 2017, pp75-98

All finds were listed in the following data-base:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/i8x3j8gnc82bvfn/RRS%20All%20Sectors%20All%20Data%20Nov16-21.xlsx?dl=0>

Site	Parish	Reference
c19th quarrymen’s lettering at Frodsham	Frodsham	The Ridge: Rocks and Springs – a sandstone legacy, pp93-94
Spiral carving	Manley	See photo overleaf
Heads in Delamere Forest	Manley	See photo overleaf
Willington aircraft	Willington	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/v1-crash-site.html
Image House	Bunbury	https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCH9592&resourceID=1004
Devil’s face at Beeston	Beeston	The Ridge: Rocks and Springs – a sandstone legacy, p82
Carved head at Beeston	Beeston	See photo overleaf
Elephant and Castle and work of John Watson	Peckforton /Bunbury & Tattenhall	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/john-watson.html
Hand outline, Bulkeley Hill Boot prints, Urchin’s Kitchen	Bulkeley & Delamere	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/handprints-and-footprints.html
Grotesque heads in Queen’s Parlour	Harthill	See photo overleaf

Photographic examples of rock carvings and graffiti



Head on cliff outside Beeston caves



Delamere Spiral



Carved face, Delamere



Mad Allan's Hole, Bickerton



Frodsham Hill graffiti



Beeston Devil, Beeston caves

4. QUARRIES

'The Ridge: Rocks and Springs' project (2014-17) also recorded the location of abandoned quarries; further supporting our understanding of socio-economic activity on the Ridge.

From map records and fieldwork, 107 quarry sites have been identified and recorded in our database. This list is not exhaustive. Since sandstone was the principal building material of the area, it is likely other quarries are yet to be identified.

Local sandstone quarries also supplied the building materials for significant buildings throughout Cheshire e.g. St Boniface Church, Bunbury, was built using sandstone quarried at Peckforton.

The following sample reflects the diversity and history of quarrying activity as it is recorded by the HER or in the following publication:

'The Ridge: Rocks and Springs – a sandstone legacy', pp.7-35, pub. Sandstone Ridge Trust, 2017.

Site	Parish	Reference
Ben's Quarry, Harmers Wood	Helsby	See photo overleaf
Manley Quarries	Manley	See photo overleaf
King's Chair, medieval quarry	Delamere	See photo overleaf

Photographic examples of sandstone quarries



King's Chair, Delamere



Manley Quarry



Ben's Quarry, Harmers Wood

BEN'S QUARRY

Benjamin Morris, stone master and builder from Alvanley opened this quarry in 1831 in agreement with the Earl of Cholmondeley, but abandoned it in 1832 because it was too expensive to separate the white stone from the more abundant red stone.

In 1868 the Earl of Cholmondeley donated stone from this quarry, together with the land, free of charge to the "poor people of Helsby" to build St. Paul's Church, Parsonage and boundary walls.

HARMERS WOOD

The Friends of Harmers Wood Trust (reg. charity)
own and manage the wood for the enjoyment of everyone.



St. Paul's Church

The cottage pictured below, which used to stand opposite the car park, was originally Toothill Beer House and supplied watered down ale to the quarrymen to quench their thirst. It was very dangerous and dirty work.



Toothill Beer House

Supported by The National Lottery* through the Heritage Lottery Fund | Heritage Lottery Fund | Srep | Cheshire West and Chester

www.harmerswood.org

5. WELLS AND WATER SUPPLIES

The Trust's *Ridge: Rocks and Springs Project* recorded the location of hundreds of historical wells from map records and from fieldwork. Before the advent of piped supplies, every home would have used a local water supply and so our list of 385 sites is far from complete.

The following sample of sites reflects the diversity of individual and community supplies at the local level as they have been recorded by the HER or in the publication:

'The Ridge: Rocks and Springs – a sandstone legacy', pub. Sandstone Ridge Trust, 2017, pp35-73

All sites were listed in the following data-base, referenced by RRS row:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/i8x3j8gnc82bvfn/RRS%20All%20Sectors%20All%20Data%20Nov16-21.xlsx?dl=0>

Site	Parish	Reference
Pump at Small House	Cuddington	See photo overleaf
Mylerson's Well	Kelsall	See photo overleaf
Whistlebitch Well	Delamere	www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCH8404&resourceID=1004
Well in Primrosehill Wood	Delamere	See photo overleaf
Dipping Well, Woodhouse	Frodsham	See photo overleaf
Droppingstone Well	Burwardsley	See photo overleaf

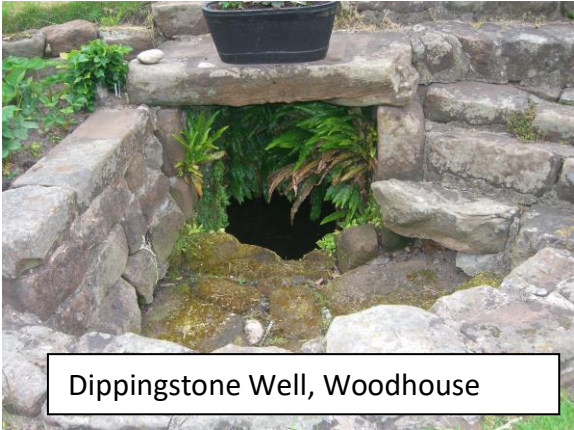
Photographic examples of wells



Droppingstone Well, Raw Head



Mylerson's Well, Kelsall



Dippingstone Well, Woodhouse



Pump at Small House, Cuddington



6. MARL PITS AND PONDS

'Holes in the ground' have been a characteristic feature of the British landscape. They were dug for a variety of reasons; discussed at some length by Rackham, (1986).

The majority of ponds in Cheshire were formed by the digging of marl, a mineral manure widely used during the 18th century to improve soil fertility. Whilst the practice of marling had been undertaken in Britain since Roman times, it died out in the early 19th century, as cheaper and more effective fertilisers became available. Because marl was plentiful in Cheshire, it was often quicker to dig new pits, particularly when inundation by rainfall meant that digging was flooded. In such cases, numerous ponds (previously pits) were often located in close proximity.

Despite a significant decline in the number of ponds (approx. 68%) as a result of agricultural intensification since the 1960s, they still form a characteristic feature of the Cheshire landscape.

Whilst acknowledging this loss, it is now widely accepted that ponds are significant biodiversity hotspots – particularly for amphibians and aquatic invertebrates – and have been identified as *'pearls in the landscape'*.

Whilst pond density on the Ridge is not as great as elsewhere in the county (1 pond per sq.km.), the fringe areas merging towards the Cheshire Plain can provide a density in excess of 5 ponds per sq.km. This pond density is unrivalled elsewhere in England.

Furthermore, extensive views from the Ridge; from Bickerton Hill and Beeston Castle, for example, illustrate how these small wetland features, together with intervening hedgerows and woodlands, represent a highly connected agricultural landscape. (Hull, 2013).

References:

'Ponds: Pearls in the Cheshire Landscape' (Hull, AP) in **'Fifty Years of Cheshire's Wildlife'** – pub. Cheshire Wildlife Trust, (Editor Norman, D.) 2013, pp148-179
'The History of the Countryside' – Rackham O., pub. Phoenix, London, 1986, Chapter 16, pp345-373

Photographic examples of ponds



Typical Cheshire Ponds
(formerly marl pits)



7. BOUNDARY STONE MARKERS AND STILES

The Sandstone Ridge Trust has embarked on a major project; recording boundary stones, marker stones, stile and other boundary features. At this early stage we have recorded a variety of historic features, some of which are from the late medieval period.

Site	Parish	Reference
Late medieval boundary stone	Duckington/Bickerton, 49448 53145	See photo below
Late medieval boundary stone	Duckington/Bickerton, 49785 53219	See photo below
Ladder stile	Peckforton	See photo below

Photographic examples of boundary stone markers and stiles



Ladder stile, Peckforton

8. GEOLOGICAL SITES

Within the Ridge area there are 2 geological SSSIs and around a dozen RIG sites, the records of the latter requiring significant up-dating. Some RIG sites, such as the Urchin's Kitchen sub-glacial melt water channel, is a superb example of its type, while the nye channels on Bickerton Hill, largely unknown to the wider geological community, are possibly the best-preserved examples of their type in lowland Britain (part of RIG site CH029).

<https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/doc/D561993.pdf>

Sandstone Ridge geodiversity: <https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/doc/D715451.pdf>

Photographic examples of geological sites



The Slars, Bickerton Hill.
Small-scale, sub-glacial
melt water channels (Nye
channels)



Urchin's Kitchen, Primrose
Wood, Delamere

9. FOOTPRINTS ON THE RIDGE

Evidence of human settlement and interaction with the environment can be found across the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge. Not only have past generations been responsible for shaping the landscape that we see today but they have left a legacy of heritage assets as well as cultural heritage; bringing a charm and character to the area.

A section of our Website entitled '*Footprints on the Ridge*' reflects upon the legacy of beliefs and traditions which have contributed to the historic and cultural heritage of the landscape.

Their shared experiences form a valuable reference point and contribute to the irreplaceable collective and diverse memory of the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge.

<https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge.html>

Many of the articles have been submitted by volunteers.

The following is a sample of the characters and their legacies:

Name	Activity	Reference
Sarah Hall	Gypsy	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/this-weeks-footprint-on-ridge.html
Sir Philip de Malpas Egerton	Landowner/Fossil Collector	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/news/footprint-on-ridge-sir-philip.html
Aethelflaed	Lady of Mercia	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/this-weeks-footprint-aethelflaed-lady-of.html
Robert Barbour	Landowner/Textile Merchant	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/robert-barbour-1797-1885.html
V1	Flying Bomb	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/v1-crash-site.html
William Lewin	'Post Master'/ Highwayman	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/pictorial-history-of-sandstone-ridge/lowndes-post-master.html
Mary Aldersey	Farmer/Entrepreneur	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/mary-aldersey-1780-1861.html
Edward Hardman	Photographer	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/news/hardman-and-cheshire-sandstone-ridge.html

Isabella Lucy Bird	Victorian explorer, writer, photographer and naturalist	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/p/news/bird-bishop-and-bloody-bones-cave.html
Ranulf de Blondeville	Earl of Chester and builder of Beeston Castle	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/ranulf-de-blondeville-1172-1232.html
John Douglas	Architect	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/john-douglas-1830-1911.html
Billy Tweedale	Sand Merchant	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/billy-tweedale-1827-1901.html
Baroness Tollemache	Nursing Commandant of the Great War	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/wynford-rose-tollemache-1879-1926.html
John Watson	Master Stonemason	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/john-watson.html
JMW Turner	English Romantic Painter	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/joseph-mallord-william-turner-1775-1851.html
Dr John Robinson	Doctor and eccentric	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/dr-john-robinson.html
Wilfred Owen	War Poet and Soldier	https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk/footprints-on-ridge/wilfred-owen-mc-1893-1918.html