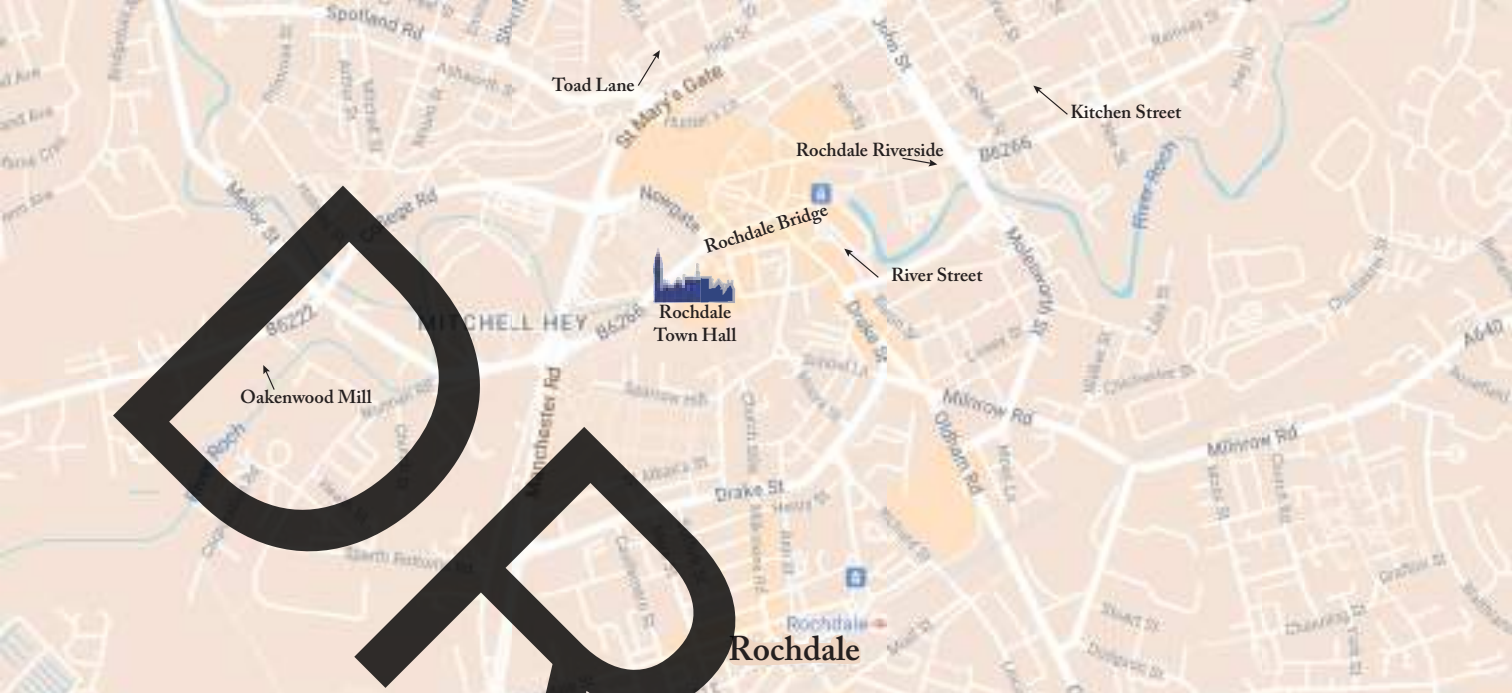


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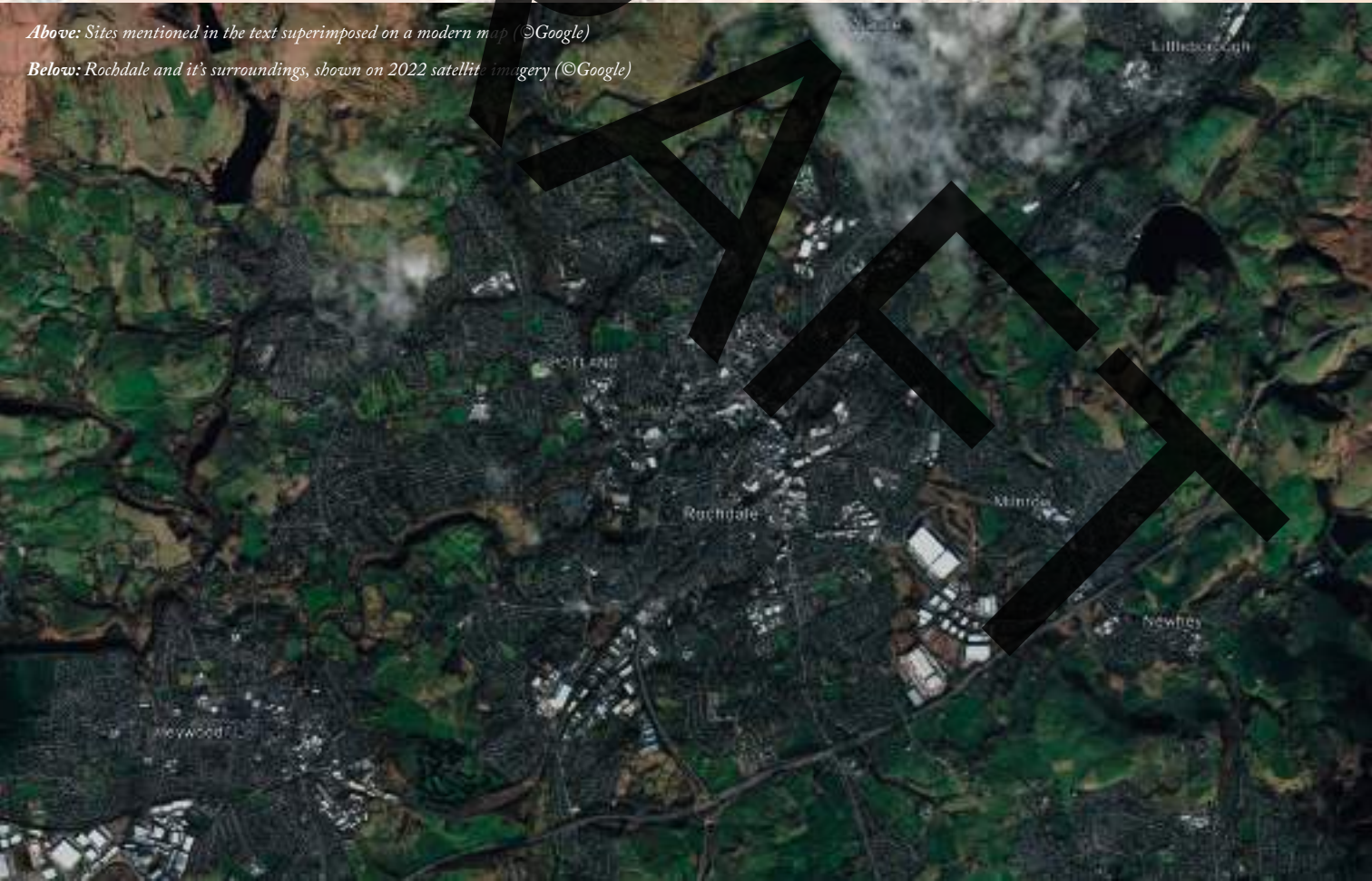
DRAFT

ROCHDALE:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY



Above: Sites mentioned in the text superimposed on a modern map (©Google)

Below: Rochdale and it's surroundings, shown on 2022 satellite imagery (©Google)



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IAN MILLER
LEAD ARCHAEOLOGIST

GREATER MANCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY SERVICE



GMAAS
Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

INTRODUCTION

On a cold winter's morning in January 2018, a 36-tonne machine under the direction of Graham Mottershead of Salford Archaeology – a highly experienced archaeologist working for Salford Archaeology, a commercial archaeological practice associated with Salford University – began digging into the surface of a desolate car park in the centre of Rochdale. The trench that Graham was opening was intended to establish what remained of buildings constructed when Rochdale was a thriving industrial town. The trench was not only the beginning of one of the most extensive archaeological investigations in Rochdale to date but also part of an exciting scheme to regenerate Rochdale's town centre.

The excavations were undertaken ahead of a major redevelopment: Rochdale Riverside. This project intended to contribute towards the renewal of Rochdale's town centre by delivering a new retail, leisure and commercial complex. At the Rochdale Riverside construction site, the new buildings would require deep foundation trenches which would potentially damage or remove any archaeological remains that were present beneath the ground. Before the redevelopment, the site contained a range of mostly dilapidated, mid-20th century buildings including a bus station, a multi-storey carpark, council offices, health-care facilities and a car dealership. The harsh, urban environment was dominated by a busy and noisy road gyratory system, with pedestrians channelled along awkward aerial walkways.



Above: An archaeologist from Salford Archaeology prepares an evaluation trench at Rochdale Riverside Phase 2 in June 2020

Below: Clay tobacco pipe stem inscribed 'FOOT BALL PIPE', c. 1900, from Rochdale Riverside site

Opposite: The remains of the Congregational Church on the corner of Milton Street and Smith Street, exposed in February 2018, looking southwest





However, by the late 2000s, a delivery plan was set in motion by the Rochdale Development Agency to rejuvenate the town centre. The first step of this regeneration began with the construction of a new public transport interchange, completed in 2013. Some key objectives of the town centre renewal programme were to improve Rochdale's natural environment and increase the quality of the borough's heritage assets. Therefore, in 2015 and 2016, parts of the coverings that had sealed the River Roch for almost one hundred years were removed, giving the river's ecosystems a chance to recover and revealing interesting, historic bridges that had been lost to view.

As part of the planning process, before construction could begin on any of the redevelopment schemes, the sites were assessed to determine the potential for the survival of any archaeological remains. If remains were thought to exist then a programme of archaeological excavation was undertaken, funded by the developer. The core of this booklet is formed by the developer-funded archaeological excavations that took place as part of these redevelopments, alongside several others located in different areas of the town. While it is by no means intended to be a comprehensive history of Rochdale, this booklet presents aspects of Rochdale's history through the lens of the archaeological investigations that have been carried out in the Borough over the last one hundred years or so. This booklet illustrates the value of conducting archaeological research since it frequently reveals details about a place's past that historical documentary sources do not record.

A good example is the understanding of Rochdale's prehistoric past, which is derived entirely from archaeological investigation. Much of our knowledge of Rochdale's first inhabitants comes from artefacts collected by the area's first archaeologists (although they would have called themselves antiquarians or geologists), who found flint tools on the nearby upland moors during the second half of the 19th century. In recent years, fieldwork undertaken by the Littleborough Archaeological Society and Newcastle University has continued this research confirming Mesolithic occupation in the area. Artefacts associated with the later prehistoric period have also been discovered in the borough of Rochdale.



Above: A Bronze Age axe hammerhead from Low-House Fold, Milnrow

Below: The nave of St Chad's Church, c. 1970

Opposite: An example of a Georgian building at 17 Yorkshire Street photographed c. 1900. Until recently this building was used as a Lloyds Bank

This booklet explains that our knowledge of Roman occupation in Rochdale is patchy as it is based solely on artefacts discovered by chance, often during building work carried out in the 19th century. No structural remains – apart from the hotly debated possible Roman Road over Blackstone Edge – have been found which might point to a Roman settlement in Rochdale. However, it can't be ruled out that traces of Roman occupation have been obscured or destroyed by building work during the industrial era.

No trace of archaeological evidence has been found pertaining to the period between the end of the Roman occupation and the Norman invasion either, apart from a tentatively dated wall in the graveyard of St Chad's Church. Again, this situation probably reflects destruction by industrial-period development and a lack of archaeological investigation rather than an absence of pre-Norman inhabitation.





The Domesday book records land holdings both before and after William's conquest of the region in 1070 proving that the area was occupied by then. This booklet explains the archaeological evidence from this period discovered at St Chad's Church and Rochdale Castle. The latter was surveyed in the early 19th century and subjected to archaeological excavation using modern techniques in the 1980s and early 21st century. However, knowledge of medieval Rochdale is still largely conjectural and none of the investigations located in the centre of the town has revealed any medieval remains or artefacts.

Surprisingly, as will be explained, despite a significant amount of archaeological work undertaken in Rochdale, very little evidence associated with the post-medieval period has been uncovered. This is again probably because of later 18th and 19th-century development, which had disturbed or obscured earlier remains. In several instances, post-medieval occupation is represented by horticultural activity, for example at Rochdale Town Hall and Rochdale Riverside. In both these examples industrial-era buildings had been constructed on the extensive grounds of large, post-medieval halls. Fortunately, because Rochdale has some surviving late post-medieval buildings and because documentary material is abundant, we have a good understanding of the flavour of the town in this period.

By the last decade of the 18th century, Rochdale contained many buildings and structures characteristic of an industrialised town. Archaeological investigations undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North at sites such as Oakenrod Mill and River Street, and Salford Archaeology's excavations at Kitchen Street, have revealed the remains of industrial premises. These structures were used either as textile mills or were where subsidiary industries operated, such as machine engineering or leather tanning.



Left: Houses on the east side of Acker Street, photographed in 1970 (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)

Opposite: Volunteers and professional archaeologists from Salford Archaeology excavating and recording the remains uncovered at Rochdale Town Hall Square, summer 2021, looking north towards St Chad's Church

Other aspects of industrial life have been registered in Rochdale's archaeological record such as the living conditions of working-class residents. Excavations conducted by Salford Archaeology at the Rochdale Riverside development provided fascinating insights into the intimate details of workers' houses. Compared to the low-quality, overcrowded housing that was built contemporaneously in similar inner-city parts of Manchester and Salford, it appears that in central Rochdale, at least in the examples excavated, the housing stock was relatively high quality.

This booklet also draws on the numerous standing building surveys that have been conducted across Rochdale, often ahead of the demolition of historic structures. Possibly the most notable of these surveys was that undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North on the coverings spanning the River Roch in central Rochdale. The economic, cultural and religious practices of Rochdale's inhabitants are reflected in its buildings and this booklet discusses investigations of several non-conformist chapels and commercial structures.

After the First World War Rochdale's economy began to contract and by the mid-20th century, many buildings stood derelict. Attempts were made to rejuvenate the town with low-quality housing clearance and redevelopments in the town centre whilst residential estates were built on the town's periphery to replace cleared housing and address the rising population. Unfortunately, very little archaeological work was undertaken and it is conceivable that important archaeological sites were destroyed because consideration of archaeological remains had not yet been included in the planning process. Fortunately, as this booklet demonstrates, the current planning policy, which has been in place in a similar form since the early 1990s, has led to many archaeological investigations, which have produced fascinating findings shedding light on Rochdale's richly textured heritage.



PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN ROCHDALE

The earliest artefacts indicating human occupation in the Rochdale area are worked flint blades deriving from the late upper Palaeolithic, found on the moors northeast of the town. Very little is known about this period due to a paucity of archaeological evidence. More artefacts pertaining to the succeeding Mesolithic period have been discovered shedding light on communities that lived in the area at the start of the Holocene, around 9,500 years ago. As the climate warmed, the post-glacial landscape of North-West England, which had initially been covered by open birch scrub, began to be colonised by closed, mixed deciduous woodland, particularly on higher, dryer land. The discovery of distinctive flint tools and features suggesting temporary occupation on the uplands to the north and east of Rochdale indicates that hunter-gatherers had inhabited the landscape around 9,500 years ago. It is likely that communities followed and hunted herds of deer as they migrated from lowland areas to upland pastures in the summer. The flint used to make tools by these nomadic groups appears to derive from the east Yorkshire region. While this could indicate the extent of the territory inhabited by these groups, this material may have ended up in the South Pennines as a result of trade.



Top: Late Upper Palaeolithic flint blades, from near Rochdale (© J. Brooks)



Bottom: Early Mesolithic scrapers found at Windy Hill, near Milnrow (© J. Brooks)

The means by which early prehistoric artefacts have been discovered around Rochdale has a fascinating history in itself with worked flints first identified and collected by local amateur geologists in the 1870s. It seems 'flinting' rapidly became a popular Sunday afternoon activity. In all weathers, enthusiasts searched for stone tools on the moors, which, due to the pollution, were less extensively vegetated than today making worked flints easier to spot. Individuals of particular note include Dr Henry Colley March, who, between 1879 and 1895 was first able to confirm that the layers of peat covered the Mesolithic flint tools, giving a clue to their great antiquity.



Top: Bronze Age jet beads from Piethorne Brook (© J. Brooks)

Bottom: Neolithic polished stone axe from Newhey (© J. Brooks)

Later, in the 1920s and 1930s, Francis Buckley – who had first encountered prehistoric flint tools while excavating military defensive trenches on the western front during WW1 – identified that the assemblages of flint tools could be categorised into two idiosyncratic morphologies which he attributed to different Mesolithic communities. More recent investigations at sites where flints were found in the 19th century, and others, continue to produce flint tool assemblages and evidence of hearths, improving our understanding of the activities undertaken by Mesolithic communities in upland areas near Rochdale.

Analysis of pollen from sediment core samples collected in the southern Pennines suggests that around 6,000 years ago, hunter-gatherers were modifying the environment, creating open woodland clearings by deliberately burning woodland. Woodland clearings were favourable to grazing herbivorous animals such as deer and aurochs (wild cattle). The clearings supported higher biomass of plant species favoured by herbivorous species increasing their overall productivity. Additionally, once encouraged into the artificially engineered open spaces, game herds could be readily hunted. Burning would also have increased the range of plant species available for gathering by people.

Around 5,200 years ago, communities practicing rudimentary agriculture, involving the domestication of animals and the cultivation of cereals moved into the area. They brought with them new cultural activities such as making polished stone axes, like examples found at Castle Hill, Newhey and Wardle. However, arable cultivation does not appear to have been particularly intensive in the Rochdale area until around 4,300 years ago, when palynological evidence recovered from Rishworth Moor, suggests that intensive woodland clearance and the cultivation of cereals took place.

The transitional era between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age is signalled by novel finds assemblages which include distinctive drinking beakers and metallurgy. It is believed that the usage of beaker vessels and metalworking are examples of cultural and economic practices that spread from continental Europe. An earthen funerary cairn from this period at Wind Hill, north of Heywood, was found to contain a flint knife, a pebble hammer and a V-bored jet button.

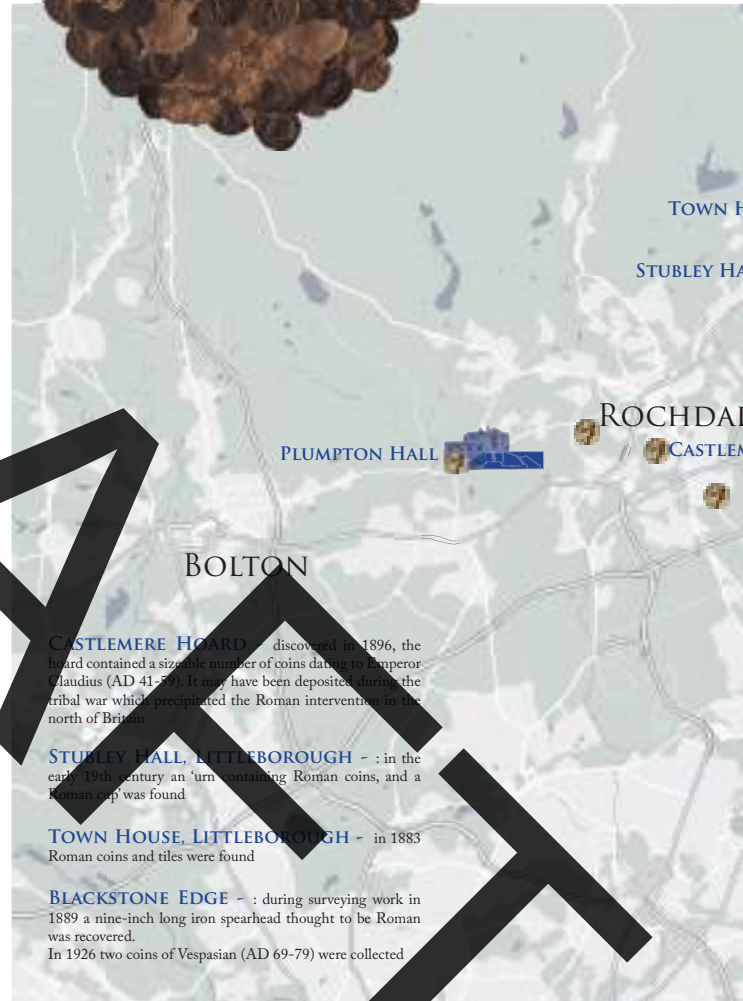
A number of extant burial mounds, such as that at Hades Hill, Wardle, likely indicate the presence of settled farming communities in the region during the Bronze Age and a number of casual finds of metalwork support this. Hades Hill was excavated in 1898 leading to the discovery of a collared urn containing cremated human bone and burnt flint implements, and flint arrow heads. A Bronze Age occupation site was excavated by Littleborough Archaeological Society at Piethorne Brook where worked flints, pottery, a worked shale ring, and two jet beads were found. Although there was possible evidence for leather working, no structures were identified at the site.

New types of cultural artefacts, such as a bronze torc found at Mowroad in Calderbrook pertain to the Iron Age, beginning in the region around 2,600 years ago.



Top: Roman coins. Hoards uncovered at several locations

Centre: Roman finds in the Rochdale area



CASTLEMERE HOARD - discovered in 1896, the hoard contained a sizeable number of coins dating to Emperor Claudius (AD 41-59). It may have been deposited during the tribal war which precipitated the Roman intervention in the north of Britain

STURLEY HALL, LITTLEBOROUGH - : in the early 19th century an 'urn' containing Roman coins, and a Roman cup was found

TOWN HOUSE, LITTLEBOROUGH - in 1883 Roman coins and tiles were found

BLACKSTONE EDGE - : during surveying work in 1889 a nine-inch long iron spearhead thought to be Roman was recovered. In 1926 two coins of Vespasian (AD 69-79) were collected



Top: Bronze torque found at Mowroad, Calderbrook in 1832 (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale)

Bottom: Silver arm found at Tunshill



Although the lowland areas along the River Roch would have been attractive to prehistoric communities, archaeological evidence of Iron Age occupation, such as field systems or hut circles within Rochdale itself is lacking. However, rather than suggesting a lack of occupation, this paucity of evidence can likely be attributed to the destruction of archaeological remains by later, industrial-era development, which was concentrated in the river valley.

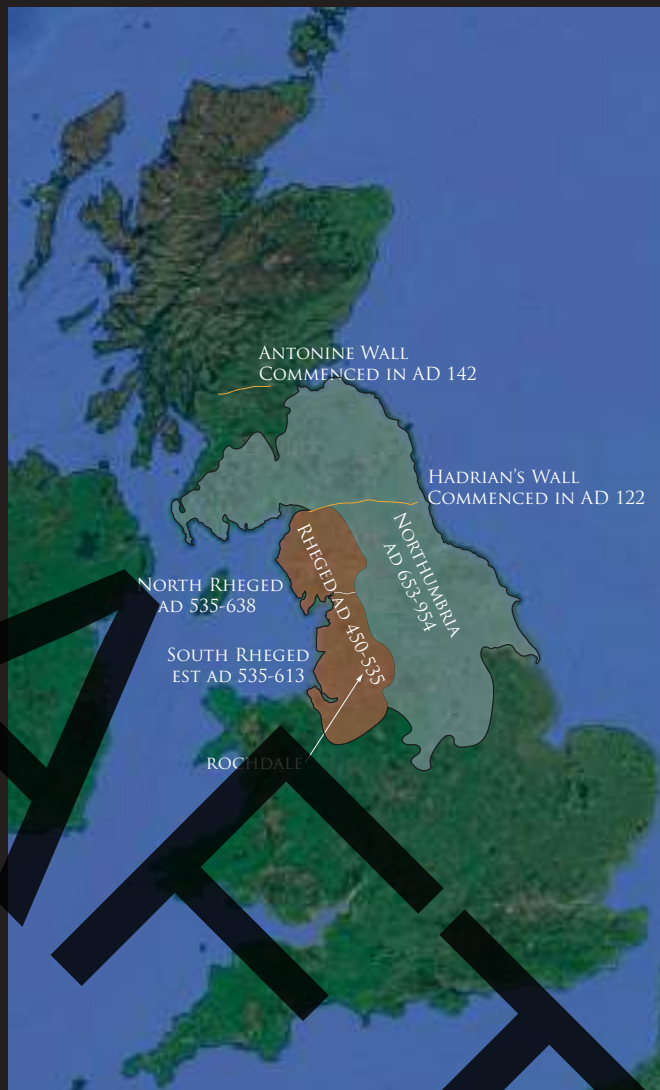
By the late Iron Age, the north and northwest of modern-day England were controlled by the Brigantes, a tribal political entity made up of several sub-tribes. The Roman conquest of southern Britain, in the mid-first century AD, destabilised the political equilibrium within Brigantian society, resulting in a civil war between the different sub-tribes. By AD 70 the Roman general Agricola's intervention in the civil war had led to the Roman occupation of the Brigantes territory, including the area now covered by Rochdale. Roman occupation across Greater Manchester is well-attested and was focused on the Roman fort at *Mamucium*.

Many Roman-era artefacts were found by chance, therefore often a complete account of the artefact's origin or the precise nature of its discovery has not been recorded. Despite the profusion of Roman finds in the Rochdale area, no Roman settlement sites are known. Again, rather than indicating a lack of occupation, the intensity and extent of industrial development in Rochdale has likely removed evidence of Roman settlement.

MEDIEVAL ROCHDALE

In the territory stretching from Hadrian's Wall to the Mersey and Humber, the Roman system of civil and military administration was upheld by the Duke of the Britains (*Dux Britanniarum*) until around AD 500. At this time the region was divided, with the western portion (Lancashire and Cumbria) creating the Celtic Kingdom of *Reged*. Rochdale probably held some significance as it was situated at the convergence of three routes through the Pennines. Archaeological evidence associated with the Kingdom of *Reged* and its subsequent incorporation into Saxon Northumberland is completely lacking. However, it is probably during this period of Northumbrian control that the Hundred of Salford was established, with the parish of Rochdale forming the largest parish within it.

The earliest reference to Rochdale is in the Domesday Book of 1086 which lists 'Recedham', meaning 'homestead with a hall' or 'village of the people of Reged'. The name of the river 'Roch' (formerly spelt 'Roach') was derived from this name for the town. During Edward the Confessor's reign, Rochdale is listed as one of the holdings of Gamel the Thane, one of 21 men holding land in the Manor of Radcliffe granted to them by the King. After the Norman Conquest, Gamel seems to have held on to Rochdale even though the Hundred of Salford, which included the Manor of Radcliffe, was part of the lands given to a Norman called Roger de Pictou.



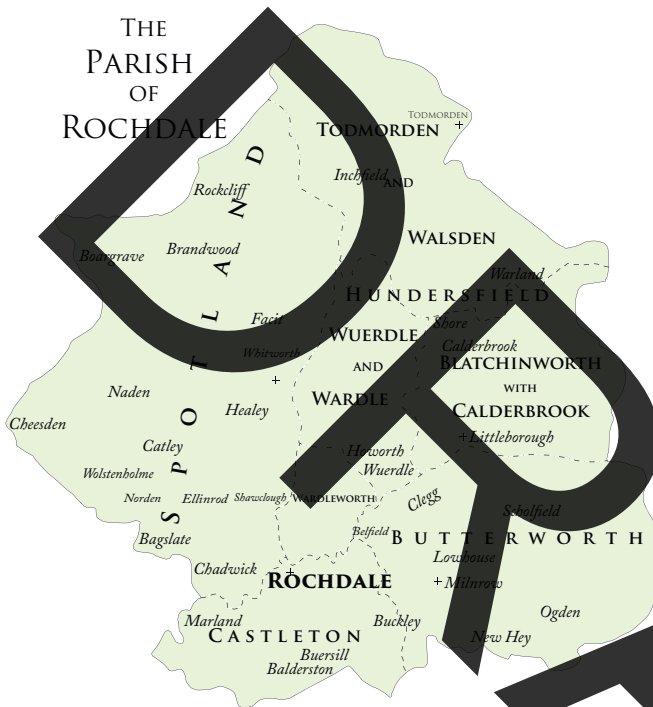
Above: Map showing Kingdom of Rheged and Northumbria. Rheged was established earlier than Northumbria and eventually makes up part of the kingdom

Opposite:

Left: Index map to the Parish of Rochdale

Right: Timeline, featuring coat of arms of some of the families **Top:** The Lacy arms **Middle:** Arms of Henry Grosmont, 1st Duke of Lancaster (© Sodacan) **Bottom:** Byron

THE PARISH OF ROCHDALE



THE LORDS OF ROCHDALE MANOR

1080 - ROCHDALE GIVEN TO GILBERT DE LACY



1272 - ADAM DE BALSHAW PURCHASED THE SERIEANCY OF THE 'FREE COURT OF ROCHDALE'



1311 - EARLS AND DUKES OF LANCASTER



1430-1616 - BYRON FAMILY

Documentary sources suggest that in around 1195, the town was renamed 'Rachedal', meaning 'valley of the river Roch'. The parish of St Chad's, which included Rochdale, covered over 41,000 acres, and extended north to Bacup and Todmorden (now in West Yorkshire), and from the Cheesden Valley in the west, to Saddleworth in the east, with Rochdale being located close to the parish's southern boundary.

As the climate and geography of Rochdale were unfavourable towards widespread arable agricultural production, pastoral farming must have dominated the local economy. However, grain production was not completely absent as was evidenced by several corn mills utilising the abundant fast-flowing streams in the area. Therefore, medieval Rochdale probably comprised dispersed clusters of dwellings spread across agricultural land. It has been suggested that the focus of the medieval town was probably along Packer Street, which lies on the south side of the River Roch, within proximity to St Chad's Church, however, no evidence of this has yet been discovered. During the 13th century, increased internal and external trading led to the expansion of England's economy and the concurrent granting of royal charters to hold markets and fairs. Although an unchartered market was likely held in Rochdale from the early 12th century, in 1241, Edmund de Lacy was granted a royal charter to hold a weekly market on Wednesdays, along with an annual fair during the feast of St Simon and St Jude on 28th October each year. It has been suggested that the original marketplace was located in Church Stile, near the parish church, although no evidence of this has yet been discovered.

The increasing demand for wool in the 14th century appears to have caused a shift from cattle- to sheep-rearing in the Rochdale area and by the 15th century, Rochdale had become a well-established market centre, supplied by satellite hamlets where the wool was processed. The movement of wool between small producers on the periphery and the market in Rochdale was undertaken on packhorse routes such as that found over Blackstone Edge which is marked with the Aiggin stone.

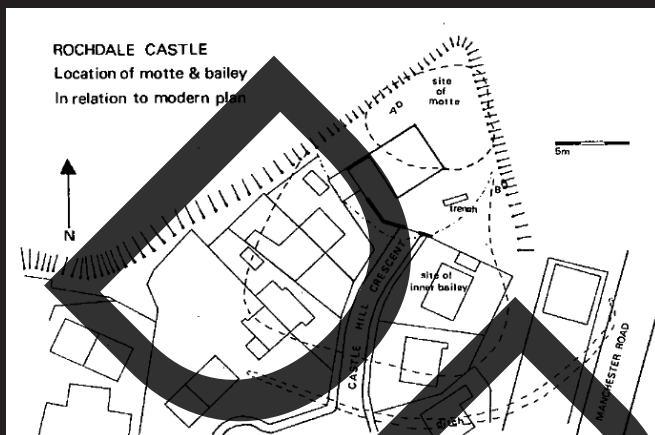
Evidence for small-scale medieval iron extraction and working can be found in documents from the 13th century. These industries would have been located near woodlands, which were exploited for fuel, and iron would have been made into finished products by local blacksmiths.



Photo of Aiggin stone (©J. Brooks)

Another structure pertaining to Norman settlement in the area was a motte and bailey castle, thought to have stood at the northern end of Castle Hill, half a mile to the southwest of St Chad's. The castle was surveyed and planned in 1823 during the construction of the Manchester to Rochdale turnpike road. In 1889, a reproduction of this plan was published in the book *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster* written by local historian and twice Mayor of Rochdale, Henry Fishwick (1835 – 1914).

On the plan, it can be seen that the mound, or motte, which gave its name to the township of Castleton, was flat-topped and stood at the apex of the triangular Castle Hill. The bailey was located to the south of the mound and was an irregular square shape. The motte and bailey were then surrounded by an earth rampart and ditch, with a second ditch added to the south and southeast. A timber wall was likely constructed on top of the earthen rampart. The castle features in 12th-century charters but is not mentioned again until the 17th century, suggesting it was abandoned in the early 13th century. Its earthworks were levelled when Castle Hill House was constructed in the 1820s. In 1983, during the construction of new housing at Castle Hill, Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit excavated several trenches on the presumed edge of the outer bailey. Unfortunately, no remains relating to the castle were discovered. However, a sherd of medieval pottery was found during refurbishment works at Castle Hill House in 2001.



Top: Rochdale Castle superimposed on modern mapping (GMAU, 2001) **Middle:** The Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit excavation at Castle Hill House in 1983 (courtesy of GMAU) **Bottom:** A detailed plan of Rochdale Castle reproduced in Henry Fishwick's 1889 *History of Rochdale*

Although the parish church of Rochdale was not mentioned in the Domesday book, it is thought that a church may have stood on the hill overlooking Rochdale since the late 7th century, a conclusion drawn circumstantially from the church's dedication to St Chad – the Bishop of Mercia – in 673. In 1903, during repairs to the northwest part of the churchyard's wall, Dr Wilson, the vicar, identified a partially buried wall formed from slates of Whitworth stone, which were interpreted as pre-Norman in date.

If there was an earlier parish church, it was likely rebuilt after the Norman Conquest. Fragments of masonry dating to the Norman period were discovered during building works in the church in 1816, including a zigzag moulding thought to be part of a door arch and a rounded stone thought to be a font. Additionally, a tear-shaped bottle believed to be Roman, was discovered in the church's Trinity Chapel, suggesting the site may have had a ritual function stretching back to the beginning of the first millennium.

The earliest documentary evidence of a church at Rochdale dates to around 1170 when Adam de Spotland granted land to the Church of St Chad. A half-pillar of 13th-century date represents the oldest visible masonry in the church. The founding of a parish church in Rochdale at this time suggests that the population in the parish was growing, a situation supported by agricultural labour intensification, greater food production, and consequently increased tax revenues, which were invested into institutions such as the church.



Above: An illustration showing the nave of St Chad's Church before the renovations of 1853. The 15th-century perpendicular arches of the nave arcade can be seen to the left (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale)

Below: St Chad's before the tower was raised in 1873 (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale)





***Above:** The south porch of St Chad's prior to renovation in 1873 (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale)*

***Below:** A woman stands at the top of the steps, first mentioned in 1660, leading down from the churchyard to the town, late 19th century (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale)*



In the mid-14th century, the black death greatly reduced the population and destabilised the complex economic and social systems that had developed in the preceding centuries. However, the economy did gradually recover and by the 15th century, Rochdale had become a well-established market centre once again, predominantly dealing in woollen production. The increasing wealth generated by the expanding woollen trade was reflected in investment in the fabric of St Chad's Church. For example, the nave arcade was rebuilt with perpendicular arches and a new chapel, known as Trinity Chapel was constructed.

During the 16th century, benefactors gave money to the church which was used to 'reedify' the church, with additions such as a clerestory, a new roof for the nave, and the rebuilding of the south aisle. Alterations made in the 17th century included the paving of the chancel floor and the construction of the west and south galleries. An unusual request for '3 hedgehogs' is recorded in 1643 churchwardens' accounts! The hedgehogs were sought to feed on the insects that lived in the rushes that were laid each year as an insulating carpet on the cold church floor.

Records of a vestry meeting suggest that by 1738 that the church was considered to be in a dilapidated condition and also too small, so a chapel dedicated to St Mary was built. The church was in decay again in 1814 and so the architect, Mr Taylor, was commissioned to rebuild a wall in the Trinity Chapel, reroof the chancel and remove one of the galleries. Some of the internal arches were also restored. More alterations were made in 1854 with the demolition of the north chancel aisle wall and the construction of an organ chamber. More major restoration works were undertaken at St Chad's in the later half of the 19th century, much of it undertaken by the architect William Henry Crossland, who also designed Rochdale Town Hall.

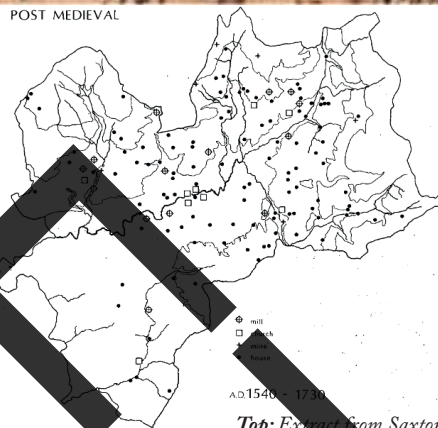
POST-MEDIEVAL ROCHDALE

The concept of the post-medieval period, as differentiated from the preceding medieval period, is a simple way to bracket the complex and wide-ranging political, economic and social changes that resulted in the events of the 16th, 17th and first two-thirds of the 18th century. In the case of Rochdale, the overarching character of the economy, and to an extent its social and political life, was a continuation of the structures established in the late medieval period. As discussed, an increasing demand for wool compelled a shift from cattle rearing to sheep raising in the late medieval period and thus the production of wool was already an important part of the local economy by the 16th century. Wool was processed at a domestic scale in satellite hamlets while Rochdale served as a market centre where goods were traded, and cloth was processed in the water-powered fulling mills positioned on the banks of the Roch. Many of the farms that would be rebuilt in the early 17th century with proceeds from the woollen trade had their origins in the medieval period. Another example of continuity was the persistent presence of many of the influential families from the medieval era, including the Byrons, Asshetons and Savilles, throughout successive centuries.

However, a notable discontinuity from the preceding paradigm and possibly the clearest point at which to conceive the start of the post-medieval period is with the ecclesiastical and political reforms set in motion by Henry VIII in the 1530s. In 1537 the dissolution of Whalley Abbey, a wealthy Cistercian House, resulted in the redistribution of extensive agricultural land in Rochdale Parish – previously held by the church – to loyal supporters of the crown such as at Spotland Manor, which was granted to the Holt dynasty. Religious foundations were taken into the crown's control and in 1547 the right to appoint the vicar, and the revenues generated from ecclesiastical taxes, were granted to the Archbishop of Canterbury.



POST MEDIEVAL



Top: Extract from Saxton's map of 1577, showing the main settlements in the region

Above: Post medieval plan of Rochdale

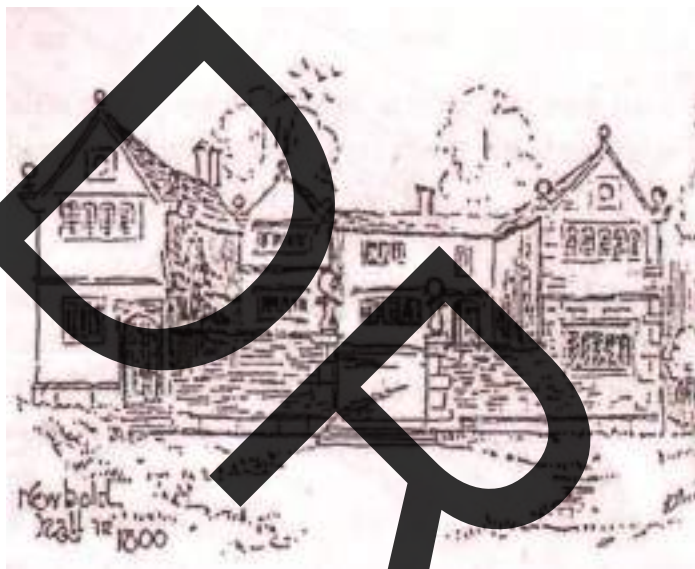
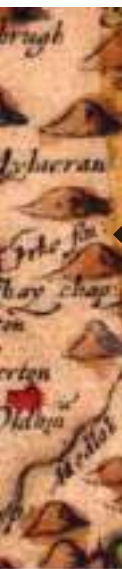
Left: The head of the old market cross which was broken off in the 1770s and is now on display in the town museum



Opposite

Left: An illustration of Newbold Hall, 1800

Right: Rochdale Grammar School



During the 16th century, an upturn in demand for woollen products stimulated by expanding internal and external trade brought wealth to the region which was manifested in Rochdale with the founding of new buildings and institutions. This included the installation, in 1552, of an organ in St Chad's Church (one of only two in Lancashire), and the rebuilding of the church's nave in 1558. A grammar school was constructed in Rochdale in 1565, and in 1566, a deputy Aulnager – an official representative for the inspection and taxation of woollen goods – was commissioned. Another indicator of growing prosperity, underpinned mainly by the growth in the woollen trade, was the building and rebuilding, in the early 17th century of many yeoman tenant farms and the halls of the gentry in the rural hinterland of Rochdale. An example includes Newbold Hall which was excavated by Salford Archaeology in 2010.

Supporting the agricultural economy were two water-powered corn mills in the centre of the town, Rochdale Mill and Town Mill. These mills likely occupied the sites of medieval corn mills. By 1626, there was also a horse-powered malt grinding mill located near the market and a fulling mill is also known to have been located near Town Mill. This was just one of several fulling mills – where woollen cloth was processed – located to the west of Rochdale bridge another being Oakenrod Mill, which was investigated archaeologically by Oxford Archaeology North (see chapter 06). When the monopoly on the dyeing of cloth held by the Merchant Adventurers Company was published in the early 17th century, several dyers came to Rochdale and several bleach houses are known to have stood at Buersil, Butterworth and Spotland.

Thus, by the early 17th century Rochdale had developed into an important regional market town serving the farming community and was also a focus for the burgeoning textile trade. In the sparsely populated upland areas around Rochdale, income created by spinning and weaving wool increasingly supplemented the subsistence agriculture practised on isolated family farms. As the rural economy became more reliant on the production and processing of woollen goods, many farms began to dedicate rooms to textile production. In addition to wool production and subsistence agriculture, some small-scale coal mining had taken place in the area since the medieval period, for example, at Knowle house, near Littleborough where a mine was documented as early as 1580. The negative impact that mining had on the landscape was commented on in 1626 when a female collier, Alice Wolstanholme, is noted disapprovingly as having cut down many trees when 'supplying of her pits' at Wardle. The coal industry was never as important in Rochdale as in other parts of south Lancashire.

A survey of the manor was commissioned by Sir Robert Heath in 1626, which also provides a description of Rochdale during this period. The survey states that the land located between Castle Hill and Molesworth Street, south of the river, was owned by the Church; and the cattle market was held on the old medieval market site near Church Lane. The only buildings located on the church lands in 1626 were seven small houses or farms, six houses in Church Lane, the church, the vicarage and the grammar school. However, further houses were built on these lands as the century progressed, particularly on Church Lane and Packer Street. The church steps between Packer Street and the church were also rebuilt around 1660. The northern banks of the river were far more congested with clusters of houses, shops and inns along with the marketplace. By the early 1640s, the population of the parish is thought to have risen to around 10,000 people. The town was assessed in 1666 for 1,267 hearths under The Hearth Tax. This assessment showed that all of the fourteen men assessed beside one, the vicar, were woollen manufacturers or merchants.



Above: The Wellington Hotel, built in 1750, photographed c. 1870





Below: Extract from a plan of the vicarage, dating to 1764



As can be expected in a region where a degree of entrepreneurship was beginning to flourish, the political and religious sympathies of those in the Rochdale area were comprehensively in favour of the parliamentary cause during the Civil War. Although no military engagements occurred in Rochdale, Sir Ralph Assheton, a local lord of the manor, commanded the siege of Bolton and fought several battles against the King's forces in the following years. Also during the 17th century, a series of vicars of Rochdale took a puritanical standpoint and in 1662, the vicar Robert Bathe refused to conform to the Act of Uniformity and was removed from the post.

During the early 18th century, the continuing expansion of the market for wool compelled tenant farmers to reinvest capital into the construction of two- and three-storey weavers' workshops, where the artisanal production of woollen goods could be intensified. Within the centre of Rochdale itself, merchants erected homes and warehouses, and commercial enterprises such as inns sprung up to service the tradesmen. Such buildings were concentrated along Yorkshire Street and associated side roads on the north side of the River Roch, and along Packer Street and Church Lane to the south of Rochdale Bridge. Examples of extant buildings from this period include the Union Flag Hotel (now Lloyd's Bank), Yate's Wine Lodge and the Wellington Hotel, and their presence in Rochdale represents the ever-growing wealth of the town.

However, a notable restraint to the expansion of the woollen trade was the poor-quality transport infrastructure in the Rochdale area which until the mid-18th century solely consisted of a road network that had not been considerably improved since the departure of the Romans. Throughout the winter and frequently for much of the rest of the year, the majority of these roads were not fit for wheeled transportation. Locally, woollen products were transported to and from the surrounding farmsteads and further afield via a network of packhorse trails which were often paved with flagstones. Although improvements to roads began to be made with the introduction of turnpike trusts in the mid-18th century, it was appreciated that a new form of transportation, namely canals, would need to be brought to Rochdale if the desired increases in manufacturing and trade, and therefore wealth, were to be realised.

INDUSTRIAL ROCHDALE

As discussed in previous chapters Rochdale grew as an important market town throughout much of the 17th and 18th centuries with Rochdale becoming a major woollen centre from the 17th century onwards, exporting wool across Europe. In 1698 a petition was signed by the clothiers of Rochdale that the Rivers Aire and Calder should be made navigable. At this time, much of Rochdale's transport network was reliant on packhorses, but this was often slow and difficult given the terrain surrounding the town. The petition sparked a wave of interest in providing a navigable waterway through Rochdale and the surrounding areas to serve the growing industries.



The canal was authorised by an Act of Parliament on 4 April 1794, which created the Rochdale Canal Company (RCC) and sanctioned the building of a canal across the Pennines from Sowerby Bridge – where it would join the Calder and Hebble Navigation – to Manchester, eventually connecting with the Bridgewater Canal. A canal over the Pennines would link the coalfields and canal networks of the east of northern England with the mills and ports of the west. This was the first canal to be built over the difficult landscape of the Pennines and is the only trans-Pennine canal without a tunnel. Construction of the whole canal would take around 13 years and cost £600,000, but sections were opened as and when they were completed. The Rochdale Branch, which was about half a mile (0.8 km) long, was the first to open in 1798, from a basin at Richard Street to the main canal. In 1845, when the usage of the canal peaked, almost a million tonnes of cargo was transported and this amount consistently remained at around the 800,000-ton until the beginning of the 20th century. Taking in some of this cargo was the important canal basin on the edge of Rochdale itself.

Opposite: Route of the Rochdale Canal

Right: An early 20th-century, northeast-looking view of the eastern arm of the canal basin with the wharf warehouse to the left of the basin arm and Vicars Moss Mill to the right (Courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)



The exact date at which the canal basin was constructed is unclear, although it was certainly open by 1804. The location chosen by the RCC to build its basin was practical and well-considered. Lying to the southeast of Rochdale, the site was as close to the town centre as the topography permitted to construct a canal basin, which consisted of two arms flanking a central wharf.

The opening of the canal and the basin stimulated the immediate area's development and fed into the continuing expansion of Rochdale as an industrial centre. This was because water transportation enabled raw materials and finished products to be imported and exported more efficiently than road transportation, facilitating economic growth. The basins were surrounded by mills, such as the Vicars Moss Mill and Radcliffe Mill, along with the Union Sawmill, warehouse buildings and cranes for loading and unloading cargo. The warehouses accommodated storage for either outgoing or incoming goods such as cotton, wool, coal, stone, timber, and foodstuffs. Commodities and raw materials were shipped between Yorkshire and Lancashire, and to, or from the international ports of Liverpool and Hull.



The Manchester to Leeds Railway, which served Rochdale from 1839, offered the many industries in the town an even more efficient means of transportation for goods to areas throughout the country and abroad. Following the advent of the railway, especially as trains and technology became more proficient, the amount of cargo transported on the canal began to decline although it was not until after the First World War that the canal became economically unviable. Most of the Rochdale canal was closed in 1952 when an act of parliament was obtained to ban public navigation and the last complete journey took place in 1937. By the mid-1960s in many places, the canal was silted up and un-navigable, and the final act sealing the canal's demise was when it was sliced in two to accommodate the M62 in the late 1960s. In the 1970s the basins were filled in and by 1986 the site of the larger western arm of the basin lay beneath the car park of a shopping centre.



Opposite: Plan of Rochdale Canal Basin 1900

Above: The canal wharf warehouse stands derelict c. 1970s (Courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)

INDUSTRIAL ROCHDALE

At the turn of the 19th century, Rochdale's economy was booming. The Rochdale canal afforded more efficient transportation of raw materials and products, and the advent of new spinning technologies, such as Arkwright's water-frame and the spinning mule, introduced in the late 18th century, facilitated the emergence of cotton as a viable financial enterprise. In 1784 the water frame had been adapted to spin wool, although it was not until the introduction of the fully automatic mule run by steam power in the 1820s that mechanised wool spinning became common. The advent of steam-powered factories meant mills no longer needed to be built in locations where water wheels could be driven, although access to water was still a requisite for running steam-powered technologies. Consequently, to take advantage of the region's expanding textile industry, enterprising mill owners established mills along Rochdale's abundant smaller streams and rivers. Whilst the production of cotton goods began to gain a foothold in the local economy the woollen industry remained to be an important component, with a focus in particular on the production of flannel and baize.

With the establishment of new textile mills came the emergence of numerous associated industries. These included warehousing businesses, firms supplying machinery and other more general engineering works. Warehouses in Rochdale were clustered around the canal terminus and railway goods station and were dotted in amongst mills in other parts of the town, for example at Robert Street where a small mid-19th century warehouse had developed from an earlier coach house or on Smith Street where large purpose-built warehouses were situated. Foundries, where tools, parts and machinery were manufactured, could also be found scattered across the town with examples including the Roch Brass and Iron Foundry, built south of the river behind Packer Street, and the Wellington Foundry works, situated in River Street, which was investigated archaeologically by Oxford Archaeology North (see page 39). Other subsidiary industries were also established next to the Roch, the waters of which were considered clean enough to service bleaching, printing and dyeing works. Another trade bolstered by the increasing mechanisation within mills was the tanning industry and Salford Archaeology investigated a 19th-century tannery located on Kitchen Street, to the east of the town centre (see page 47).





Also, around the turn of the 19th century, dedicated housing for industrial workers, in the form of two-storey back-to-back terraces, began to be constructed in Rochdale by property speculators eager to maximise the potential of available building space. Since less material was needed for walls and roofs than in detached, single-story buildings, terraced houses were less expensive to construct. Due to transport infrastructure being limited at this time, workers' housing was usually located close to people's places of work. This was the case in Rochdale where examples of early 19th-century housing – investigated archaeologically by Salford Archaeology on the Rochdale Riverside redevelopment sites (see page 53) – stood close to Butts, Duncan Street and Bowling Green Mills. At first, as there was little legislative control and a premium for space, industrial housing could be overcrowded, poorly lit, and unventilated, although, in the case of Rochdale, dwellings seem to have been of higher quality than those in Salford and Manchester. As local bye-laws were introduced from the mid-19th century onwards housing conditions came to be regulated with stipulations for the provision of outside toilets, the minimum sizes of backyards, ceiling heights and a minimum size of windows.

*Top: Warehousing on Smith Street c. 1920
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)*

*Bottom: Butts Mill, a steam-powered woollen mill on Smith Street in the centre of Rochdale, prior to 1904
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)*

A defining feature of the industrial landscape was the railway. The railway linking Manchester with Leeds was constructed between 1837 and 1841 with a station built at Rochdale in 1839. Like the canals, only more so, railways were instrumental as an enabler for developing industries because they allowed raw materials and goods to be transported more cheaply and more quickly. As railways also afforded the rapid movement of passengers, villages on the outskirts of towns began to be transformed into commuter suburbs; railways also had a profound effect on social activities and they provided a means by which industrial workers could use their leisure time to travel to destinations such as the seaside.

By the mid-19th century, with the rising population and the wealth generated by the booming industries many new civic, social and commercial infrastructures were established in industrialised areas. This included the foundation of many new churches, which tended to be associated with non-conformist denominations which appealed more to the working class than the Church of England and also because Rochdale was traditionally staunchly protestant and generally liberal.



*Above: An example of a works building on the east side of Acker Street photographed in 1970
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)*

*Below: Mid-19th century two up, two down terraced housing with cellars on Portland Street, 1971
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)*





*Engraving of Milton Street Congregational Church, 1864
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)*

The oldest non-conformist chapel in Rochdale was the Unitarian Chapel on Blackwater Street, built in 1690. During the 19th century, non-conformist buildings constructed in Rochdale included a United Presbyterian Church, a Baptist chapel, a Quaker meeting house, a Wesleyan chapel, two Unitarian chapels and other independent chapels. Many of these chapels were demolished in the 20th century and have been understood from archive sources or archaeological excavation.

Recent examples of archaeologically excavated non-conformist chapels included Milton Street Congregational Church (see page 58) and the Church of the Good Shepherd on the corner of Kitchen Street and Ramsey Street (see page 47). Two examples of extant non-conformist buildings that have been subjected to detailed standing building recording surveys include a Baptist Chapel on Harriet Street and a Presbyterian Chapel on Smith Street.

Other social institutions were established to attempt to rectify the overwhelmingly poor social and economic conditions suffered by the industrial working classes – a result of the unregulated capitalism that had developed in corroboration with industrialisation. A salient example is the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, set up in 1844 to counter the poor-quality housing and food provided by factory owners.



A section through a point cloud of Rochdale Town Hall, created from a laser scan of the building



In 1856 Rochdale had developed to such an extent that in 1856 it was granted municipal Borough status. One of the first suggestions made by the newly formed council was to construct a new town hall to replace an earlier one located on the corner of Baillie Street and Acker Street. Designed by Leeds-based architect William Henry Crossland, the new town hall was built in the Gothic Revival style in awe-inspiring proportions. By March 1866 the foundation stone had been laid and in 1871 Rochdale Town Hall was completed and is generally considered to be one of the finest municipal buildings in the country. Construction of the Town Hall and the connected Town Hall Square necessitated the demolition of buildings fronting Packer Street, the Roch Foundry and a 17th-century building called 'The Wood'. As part of renovation works at the Town Hall in 2021, Salford Archaeology conducted a community-led archaeological excavation which revealed evidence pertaining to the construction of the Town Hall and structures which had preceded it (see page 87).



*The tramway centre in foreground, with Butts Mill behind, c. 1905
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)*



Lancashire's cotton mills and their textile workers were almost completely reliant on the labour of three million enslaved cotton pickers in the American Deep South. A testament to this appalling historical fact is that during the 1860s, when cotton shipments were blocked during the American Civil War, Rochdale experienced a 'Golden Age' spurred by rising demand for woollen products. As around a quarter of Rochdale's total textile output was based on the production of woollen goods, the local economy boomed. This was reflected in a 60% increase in Rochdale's population in the 1860s. However, by the 1870s cotton spinning once again became the dominant industry in the borough.

Civic institutions continued to be developed and established throughout the 19th century with new fire and police stations built. Other examples include Smith Street public baths, built in 1868, and schools like those on Baillic Street and Penn Street. Libraries, galleries, hospitals and cemeteries were also established in the second half of the 19th century and Rochdale's transport infrastructure was greatly improved with the installation of a train network. By the late 19th century, the social institutions highlighted above were complemented by an array of commercial premises which had sprung up in the centre of Rochdale and along its main thoroughfares, and which represent physical expressions of industrialised consumption which continues to have an enormous influence on the social structure and economy of Britain.

OAKENROD MILL

Although cotton was introduced to Lancashire as early as the end of the 16th century, as we have seen, the woollen industry remained an important part of Rochdale's economy until the 1870s. The network of packhorse trails converging at Rochdale provided a close link between the town and the West Riding of Yorkshire where the local economy was dominated by sheep farming. As well as having a market where woollen products could be traded, there was an emergence of wool processing facilities in Rochdale. The fast-running watercourses found within the Roch valley afforded abundant opportunities for establishing water-powered mills, which could supply the power needed to efficiently process large quantities of woollen cloth.

The construction of mills had begun in the medieval period and documentary sources suggest that at least four mills were operational by the 15th century. It has been determined that during the 16th and 17th centuries this number had swelled to at least eighteen. A number of these mills, which had originally been designed to grind corn, were converted, in the 17th century, to undertake 'fulling' – the first mechanised and power-driven textile process after weaving.

This process involves pounding the cloth to extract the dirt and grease, then cleaning and degreasing the cloth with potash, dung and urine, or fuller's earth. Two enormous wooden hammers, known as stocks, which were powered by a waterwheel, beat the cloth until it was gathered at the far end of a wooden box called a trough. This process also thickened the weave of the cloth, giving it a felt-like texture.



Water-powered fulling mills were known to be active in Burnley, Colne, Manchester and Salford by 1300, and were commonplace in all woollen-manufacturing areas by the late 18th century. Documents register that in 1784, James Heaward, who also controlled a large number of other mills in the region, occupied a fulling mill at Oakenrod, situated c. 1km southwest of Rochdale.

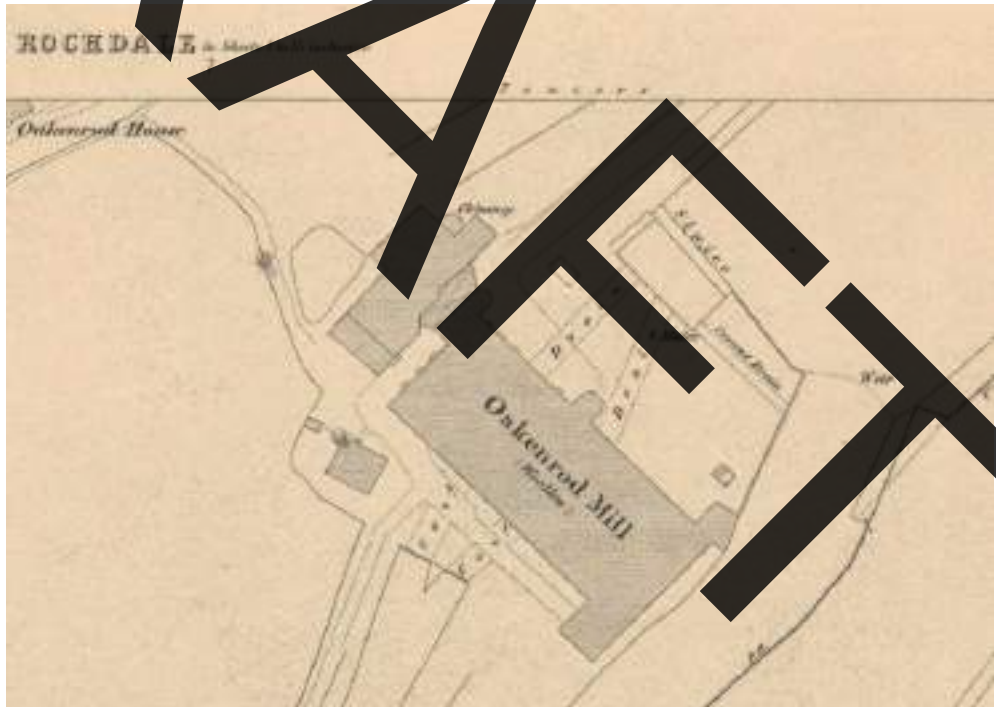
The earliest reference to a mill at Oakenrod was recorded in 1621 when the Manor Survey stated that a fulling mill there was supervised by Sir William Radcliffe of Ordsall, who died in 1567. Fishwick, the 19th-century antiquarian and local historian observed that, before it was demolished to make way for a 19th-century mill, an old fulling mill with a date stone inscribed '1606' had stood at Oakenrod. The fulling mill apparently operated throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Unfortunately, despite archaeological investigations of the site, no physical evidence of the post-medieval fulling mill was found. A likely explanation for this is that during the first half of the 19th century the old mill was demolished and replaced with a new, extensive mill complex, the construction of which destroyed vestiges of the earlier mill.

Opposite

Top: Location of Oxford Archaeology's area of excavation (2006) superimposed on Google satellite imagery from 2000

Bottom: Water-powered fulling stocks at Higher Mill, Helmsshore, used to beat the woollen cloth producing a cleaner, felt-like textured, thicker cloth, 1988 (© Chris Allen)

This page: Extract of the 1851 Ordnance Survey Town Plan of England and Wales, showing Oakenwood Mill



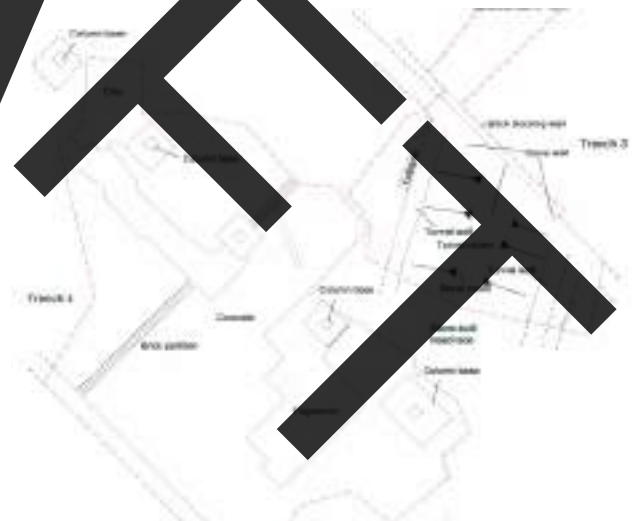
Oakenrod Mill is first depicted cartographically on the Ordnance Survey map of 1851 where it is labelled 'Woollen Mill'. A weir, lodge, sluice, and two 'Drains' are also shown and labelled on this map. The two parallel drains, which extend beneath the mill, formed the head-race and tail-race tunnels to two waterwheels within the basement. To the northeast of the mill, a sizable rectangular structure is depicted which probably served to control the water flow into the head-race tunnels. A covered drain – presumably acting as an overflow mechanism – is shown extending from the eastern side of the structure. The map also shows a building to the northwest of the main mill with a chimney attached along with a small reservoir, which likely indicates the presence of a steam-power plant. The use of two power sources has been observed at other mills, for example at Crimble Mill near Heywood, which had a steam engine added in the 1850s.

In 2006 the site of Oakenrod Mill was investigated archaeologically by Oxford Archaeology North with several small trenches excavated across the mill complex. The earliest structures encountered during the evaluation related to the 19th-century iteration of the mill. A trench situated over the footprint of the mill as depicted in 1851 revealed the remains of a waterwheel pit which would have been located in the north-western part of the mill. The wheel pit was large enough to house a waterwheel measuring 14' (4.27m) in diameter by 17 or 17'6" (5.18m, or 5.33m) in width. Although only one waterwheel pit was uncovered, it is likely that both waterwheels were of similar size and style, functioning as high breastshot wheels.



Above: Location of trenches superimposed on the 1851 OS map (© Oxford Archaeology)

Below: The remains recorded in the trenches situated on the footprint of the second block of Oakenrod Mill (© Oxford Archaeology)





Top: Crown of the southeastern head race tunnel (© Oxford Archaeology)

Bottom: Internal shot of the northwestern head-race tunnel (© Oxford Archaeology)

Two of the head-race tunnels were also located and investigated and proved to be well preserved. When the recorded remains of the tunnels were superimposed onto the 1851 map their location corresponded well suggesting that the map was accurately surveyed. Therefore, it can be assumed that the footprint of the mill shown on the historic map, which measured approximately 54m in length and 20m in width, is an accurate representation. For the period, Oakenrod Mill was relatively large and for comparison, the nearby Spotland Bridge New Mill – constructed in c. 1833 and thought to possess proportions typical of an early 1830s mill – measures only 38m by 18m. It is known that Oakenrod Mill was of fireproof construction, with each brick-arched ceiling supported on three rows of columns and this characteristic combined with its size suggests that Oakenrod Mill was probably constructed later than Spotland Mill. A comparable structure can be found at Crimble Mill, erected in 1829 and was also powered by a pair of wooden waterwheels located within a centrally positioned basement.

The excavation also revealed evidence of additions to the mill complex probably constructed in the 1860s or 1870s including the erection of the large second block. Prior to the excavation, no details of the interior of this part of the mill were known due to an absence of documentary evidence. The remains of a flagstone floor along with a single row of columns used to support the ceiling were exposed. The fact that the columns were supported on sandstone, rather than cement pads, led to the interpretation that they were constructed in the 1860s or 1870s, as by the late 19th century, concrete was more commonly utilised.

It was not clear how power was supplied to the second mill building although it was postulated by the excavators that steam was used as a wing projecting from the northeast corner of the mill building probably served as a boiler house. In the older mill building, by 1890 the Ordnance Survey map indicates that a tank, a sluice, and an open section of the tail-race, marked as 'Mill Stream', were still extant features, and excavation showed that water continued to be supplied to the waterwheels, suggesting that water power continued to be harnessed. Furthermore, the engine house to the northeast of the mill appears to have been demolished by that date.

A possible suggestion for these changes was that water turbines were installed in the mill by 1890 and this is likely as the investigation exposed evidence for the remodelling of the power system in the earlier block of the mill. It is known that the two waterwheels were replaced with a single 75BHP turbine, supplied by Joseph J Armfield & Co, situated in the northeastern part of the wheel pit of the northeastern wheel pit. Additionally, it could be seen that the head-race tunnel to the southeastern waterwheel pit was blocked at this time.

Top: Ordnance Survey map of 1910 showing Oakenrod Mill

Bottom: View of the exposed remains of the earlier mill building. The later turbine pit walls are visible in the top left side of the photograph (© Oxford Archaeology)

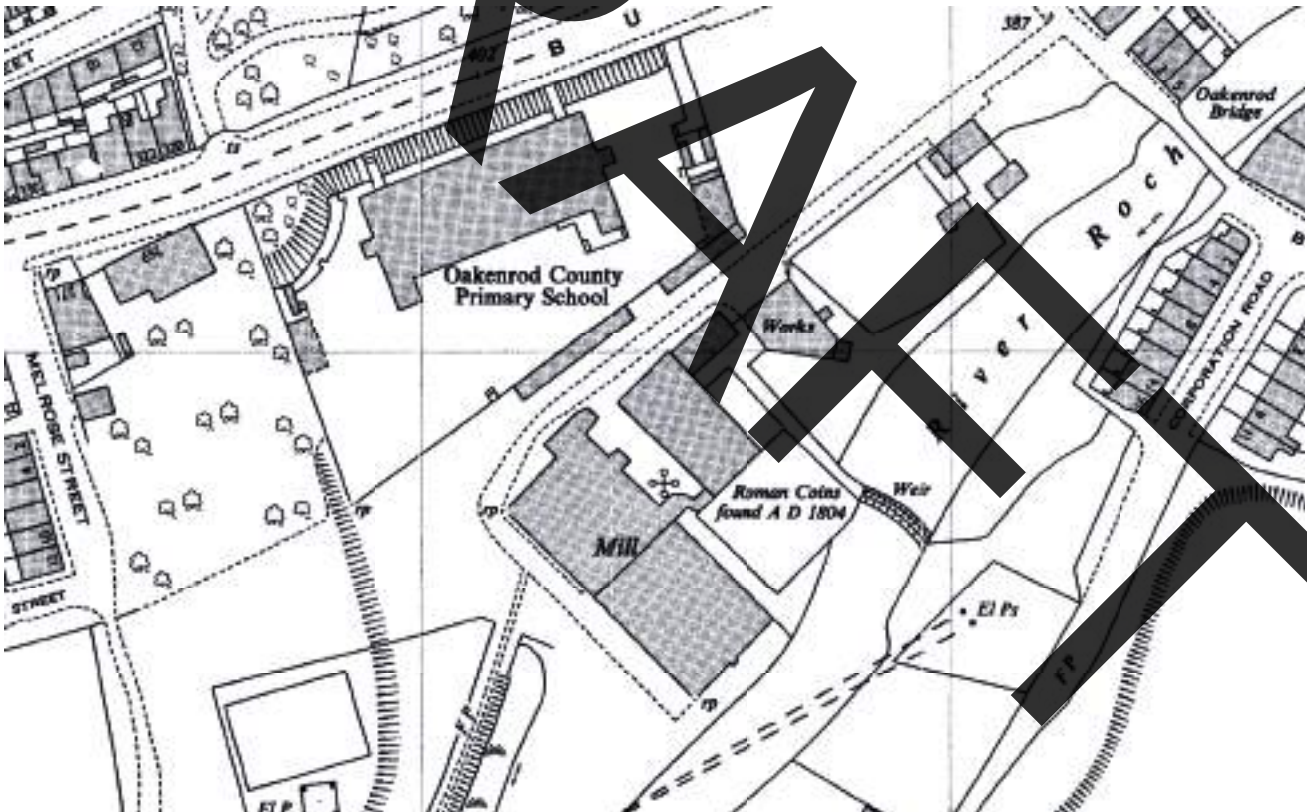
Opposite

Extract from the 1959 Ordnance Survey map



Water turbines became widely used for industrial applications from the mid-19th century, replacing older waterwheels. Turbines were smaller and rotated faster than waterwheels, increasing the power efficiency of many mills. Water turbines could be used to generate electricity, a power source that was quickly replacing the older, outdated power sources by the early 20th century. Furthermore, this change in technology helped mill owners in Rochdale combat the level of pollution caused by burning coal to generate steam. In 1915 the town was identified as having the most polluted atmosphere in Lancashire, and possibly the whole country.

The mill at Oakenrod changed little until it ceased production in the 1920s. Although the southern part of the site seemed to have been rapidly demolished during the 1960s, a survey of the site at that time documents that other parts of the mill complex were still extant, albeit in a ruinous condition. The last standing structure associated with the mill was the building to the north of the sluice which remained in use as an automotive garage until the late 20th century.



ROCHDALE RIVER STREET

By the late 18th century, the burgeoning textile industry was driving the rapid evolution of mechanisation and factories resulting in a growing demand for machinery, steam engines, boilers, gearing and a wide range of other iron goods. Initially, machinery was constructed in situ by tradesmen such as millwrights, mechanics, blacksmiths, and carpenters. But as machinery became more complex, demanding more precisely engineered parts, it became necessary to construct entire machines within integrated engineering works.

One such works was investigated in 2007 by Oxford Archaeology North at River Street, on the south-eastern fringe of the city centre. The site was being redeveloped by the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive for the creation of a new transport interchange. An assessment of historic documents and maps had concluded that there was the potential for the survival of the buried remains of an early 19th-century iron foundry and a steam-powered cotton mill. This inference was confirmed by evaluation trenching which recorded well-preserved 19th-century industrial remains.



Above right: Extract from a map of Rochdale, dated 1824

Right: Site location map



The archaeological investigations revealed vestiges of internal and external surfaces relating to Water Street Mill, built between 1824 and 1831. As some internal partitions were found, the internal layout of the mill could be mapped. Interestingly, elements of the mill's steam-power plant including the boiler house and chimney were discovered.

Additionally, it was found that elements of the engine house also survived within an extant building adjacent to the area of redevelopment. It was notable that no evidence for waterpower was identified, suggesting that the mill had been steam-powered from its inception.



Left: The mill's boiler house and chimney (© Oxford Archaeology)

Right: View of the former engine house and probable warehousing adjacent to Trench 11, which is shown enclosed by fencing (© Oxford Archaeology)

The 1849 Ordnance Survey map indicates that the mill complex included four separate buildings and a weighing machine. In 1853, the owner of the mill, W.E. Chadwick purchased a 30hp steam engine from John Petrie, who, as will be explained, owned an engineering works adjacent to Water Street Mill.

In 1870, Water Street Mill was sold for auction and the sale particulars stated that the mill complex comprised two five-storey mills, one of stone and one brick construction, warehouses, a waste room an engine and boiler house fitted with three boilers and two engines, with gas and water pipes. However, it appears that the mill continued to be operated by members of the Chadwick family as in 1901 the occupants of Water Street Mill are listed as the 'flannel makers' S. Chadwick & Sons.

The mill remained in use and its structure remained largely unchanged throughout the 20th century, although the chimney was demolished around 1930 suggesting a move from steam to electric power. In 1979 it was gutted by fire and remained derelict until 1986 when it was demolished.



*Top: 1849 Ordnance
Survey plan*



*Bottom: Water Street
mill in 1986*



In the western part of the site the remains of a brass foundry, erected between 1831 and 1851, were discovered. The walls of the earliest phase of the foundry were found to have been formed from two-skins wide hand-made bricks suggesting that the foundry had been a single-storey structure, as the walls did not appear to be of sufficient strength to support the loading of additional floors. The original floor of the foundry had been laid with flagstones within which a series of holes had been made, likely to support fixtures such as a block and tackle, used for lifting crucibles out of a furnace pit.

As the brass foundry was too small to incorporate rolling facilities, which were used to make large brass objects, it seems likely that brass components for items produced in the adjacent ironworks, were manufactured in the foundry.

In the second half of the 19th century, remains of walls and flues indicated that the brass foundry had been extended. The foundry continued to function into the early 20th century, and this was reflected by renovations, such as the laying of a concrete floor, the insertion of walls and ad hoc repairs to the structure of the foundry.

Top: Earlier remains of brass foundry
(© Oxford Archaeology)

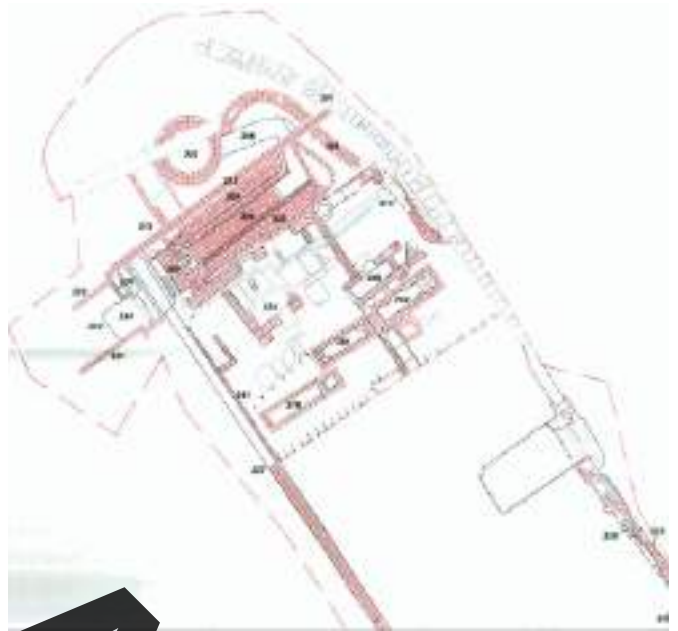
Bottom: The excavated remains of the
extension to the brass foundry
(© Oxford Archaeology)

In the centre of the site, the remains of a building, used initially as an iron foundry were revealed. The original footprint of the iron foundry measured 59m by 7.6m wide as demarcated by the four external walls set on stone foundations. Other physical remains relating to the earliest phase of the foundry, which was constructed around 1820, comprised a vaulted annexe, a boiler bed with flue to a chimney, machine beds, a well, four brick tanks, and exterior paved surfaces. The most common means of melting cast iron in the 19th century was in a cupola furnace and it is likely that this type of vertical, coke-fired furnace may have been utilised within the foundry. No evidence of a furnace was found during the excavation, but as the cupola was normally raised several feet above the ground, it is unlikely to have left any physical remains in the ground.

The base of a circular, brick-built chimney was revealed adjacent to the northern wall of the building. The chimney received a series of at least two flues which were connected to a boiler, which was represented by the well-preserved remains of a brick boiler base suitable in size to support a Cornish-type boiler. Other components of the boiler housing included an ash pit, the flame-end/rake-out area and a subterranean coal storeroom.

*Above right: Plan of early phase of iron foundry
(© Oxford Archaeology)*

*Right: Looking northeast across the boiler housing,
with the annexe in the foreground
(© Oxford Archaeology)*





A cast-iron pipe probably used to supply water to the boiler, crossed an internal space with two large, contiguous stone blocks into which iron fixtures had been set. The blocks likely represented machine beds. Four rectangular, brick-built chambers, set into the floor in the south of the building, may have represented casting pits, although firm evidence was lacking. In the southeastern part of the building, there was evidence of power transmission in the form of several housings for bearing blocks. The Ordnance Survey map of 1893 appears to show a direct connection between the southeastern part of the building and the goit immediately to the east. A wood-lined opening found in the eastern wall may have housed a primary motion shaft from a source of, possibly water-driven, motive power located to the east of the wall, although this could not be confirmed.

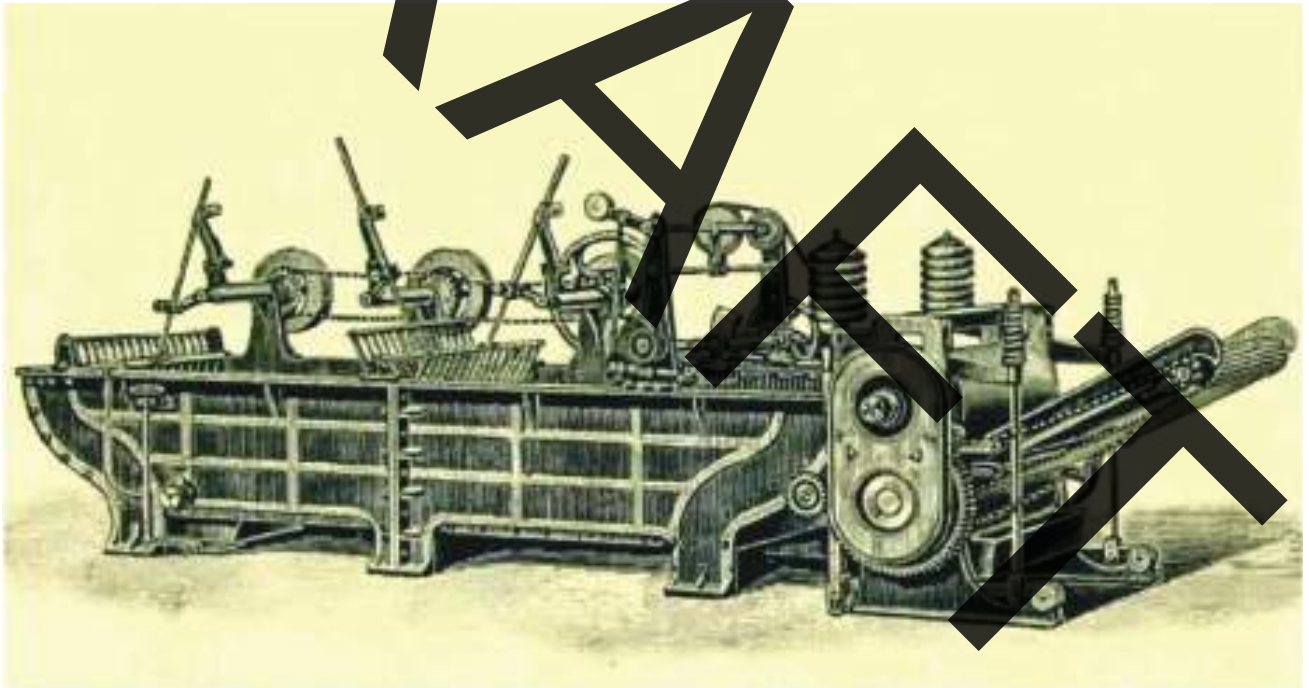


Above left: The 1893 Ordnance Survey map, showing the goit

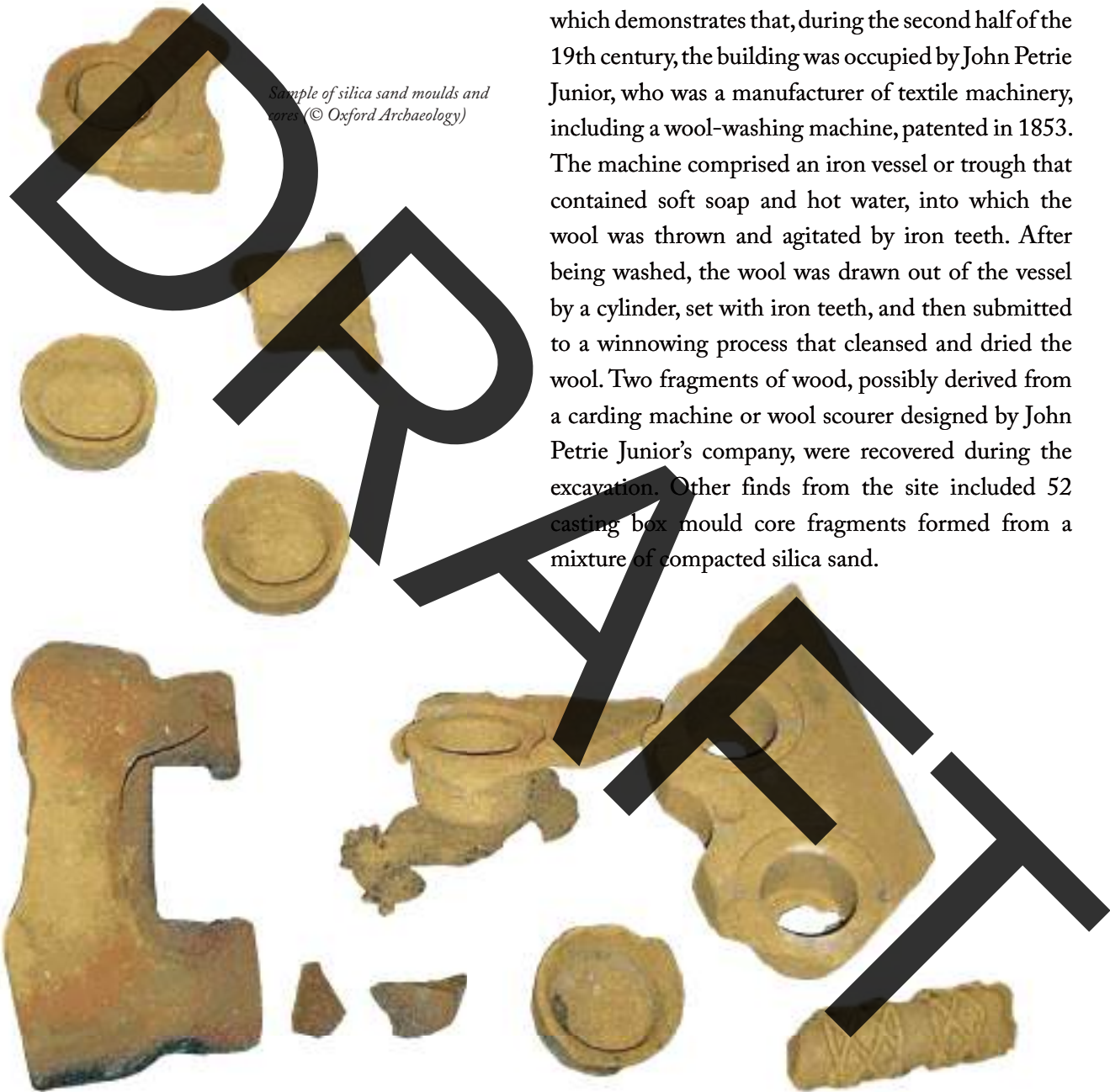
*Above: Possible drive shaft housing in wall
(© Oxford Archaeology)*

*Right: Looking north-east across the boiler housing, with the annexe in the foreground
(© Oxford Archaeology)*

The construction of new walls and the demolition of earlier ones indicated that the foundry building had been significantly remodelled to create a larger floor area alongside the erection of internal partitions and features. The modifications to the building included laying a new flagstone floor which blocked in the bearing boxes, and the boiler in the northern part of the building had also been removed and its housing infilled. This suggests that the building's second phase of use did not require any motive power, and it is possible that the building functioned as a fitting or erecting shop.



Wool scourer of a type that was patented by John Petrie in 1853



Sample of silica sand moulds and cores (© Oxford Archaeology)

This inference is supported by documentary evidence which demonstrates that, during the second half of the 19th century, the building was occupied by John Petrie Junior, who was a manufacturer of textile machinery, including a wool-washing machine, patented in 1853. The machine comprised an iron vessel or trough that contained soft soap and hot water, into which the wool was thrown and agitated by iron teeth. After being washed, the wool was drawn out of the vessel by a cylinder, set with iron teeth, and then submitted to a winnowing process that cleansed and dried the wool. Two fragments of wood, possibly derived from a carding machine or wool scourer designed by John Petrie Junior's company, were recovered during the excavation. Other finds from the site included 52 casting box mould core fragments formed from a mixture of compacted silica sand.

KITCHEN STREET

Industrialisation caused a great increase in the demand for leather goods. Not only was this case because of the extraordinary rise in population in industrial areas but also because leather components were used to connect together important parts of the machinery installed within the mills springing up across industrial towns. Thus, in the late 18th and early 19th century, as industrialisation took hold, the growing market for leather goods supported the founding of many new tanneries in the expanding towns. This was the case in Rochdale and one such tannery, which came to be known as 'Roach Place Tannery', was revealed during archaeological excavations in 2010 and 2011, carried out by the Centre for Applied Archaeology at Kitchen Street, east of the city centre, within the Wardleworth district of Rochdale.

Little is known about the early history of the tannery, the site of which was first cartographically depicted in 1831. No documentary sources from before the mid-19th century mention a tannery on the site and it is not clear who owned the structures depicted on the map of 1831 or what their function was. However, an annotation on the Ordnance Survey map, surveyed between 1844 and 1848, indicates that by then the site was certainly being used as a tannery. Meanwhile, census records from 1841 suggest that the smaller rectangular building in the east of the site was a dwelling known as 'Tan Pits' – which was occupied by Mary Herron, a washerwoman, and her daughter Ellen – suggesting a link with tanning.





Opposite

Top: Kitchen Street site location (2010) superimposed on an extract of satellite imagery from 2005 (© Google)

Bottom: Kitchen Street site location superimposed on an extract from the Ordnance Survey six-inch plan of 1851



The earliest remains encountered during the archaeological works included part of the stone-built external wall of the tannery building. Inside the eastern part of the tannery building, a floor surface had been formed from a series of large flagstones, which were laid on either side of a drainage channel. This part of the tannery was interpreted as an area where fat and hair were scraped from the raw hides. Adjacent to this floor surface the remains of at least five, stone-lined tanks were recorded. The tanks were likely used to soak the de-fleshed hides in a solution of alkaline lime water known as tannic acid, which loosened the hairs and allowed for the hides to be scoured.

A further set of tanks constructed using large sandstone slabs sealed with clay was revealed in the southern part of the tannery building. These tanks may have been used for the tanning process which would ultimately transform the hide into leather. Tanning involved attaching the hides to a frame and immersing them for around three months in a weak solution of water or vegetable matter, known as tanning liquor or ooze. After this, the hides were then moved to pits with a more concentrated solution of tanning liquor and left there for an extended period.

Top: Remains of internal tanks. Looking Northeast. (©Salford Archaeology)

Middle: Internal floor surface with central drainage channel (©Salford Archaeology)

Bottom: Lime pits and rinsing tanks (Source: *A Text-book of Tanning*, by Henry R. Procter 1927)

In the yard area to the east of the main tannery building, a network of stone-built culverts was exposed. The culverts contained deposits of vivid tan-coloured silt which likely constituted residues associated with the tanning process.

Throughout the second half of the 19th century, the tannery continued to develop with extensions added to the buildings within the tannery complex. An open-sided workshop, which appears to have been erected in the open yard to the immediate east of the earlier tannery building, may have functioned as a space where 'currying' took place. Currying was the process in which the leather produced by the tanning process was made supple and involved soaking, scraping and treatment with tallow or 'train' oil. In the first half of the 19th century, the process of currying could not legally be carried out by tanners. However, a change in the law in 1851 allowed Tanners to carry out this process. Trade directory entries and census information confirm that currying was being undertaken at the Roach Place Tannery during the second half of the 19th century.



Above: Kitchen Street site location superimposed on an extract from the Ordnance Survey town plan of 1851



Left: Detail of a cork strip found in area one during excavation (©Salford Archaeology)



Above: Kitchen Street site location superimposed on an extract from the Ordnance Survey town plan of 1891

Right: Possible well cover with timber framing and plaster layer found during excavation (©Salford Archaeology)

To the east of the tannery building was recorded, the western external wall of a row of two dwellings known initially as 'Tan Pits', later renamed 'Tan Yards'. Census records state that in 1851 they were occupied by the families of Richard Rossell, a Manufacturing Manager, and his brother George Rossell, who was a Carter. By 1858 the Tannery and its dwellings were owned by William Cunliffe, and the study area was known as 'Roach Place Tannery'. William Cunliffe and his family lived in 'Tan Yards' and a total of five men were employed within the tannery.

The houses known as 'Tan Yard' also appeared to have been extended during this period, with the addition of a third building shown on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map, which labelled these dwellings as 'Tan Pits Place'. However, no census records could be found for these dwellings after 1861 and it is known that at some point between 1861 and 1871 the tannery owner William Cunliffe and his family vacated 'Tan Pits Place' for a larger property on Roach Place. It is therefore possible that their former dwellings were extended and re-used for industrial purposes.



0 1 m

This interpretation – that Tan Pits Place had been changed to an industrial function – was supported by the archaeological findings which showed that alongside the rebuilt and extended western wall of Tan Pits Place, a boiler room had been constructed. The boiler itself was discovered attached to an iron pipe that led through an aperture in the wall of Tan Pits Place.

During the early 1880s, the Cunliffe Family went into partnership with the Jackson family, and the tannery became known as 'Roach Leather Works'. By 1894 Cunliffe and Jackson had relocated to alternative premises on River Street, but Roach Leather Works was still in use under the name of 'Ramsay Street Tanning and Currier Company'. No further entries for the tannery appear in the trade directories after 1894 and cartographic sources from the late 19th century showed the site to be disused.

This page

***Top:** Close up view of the boiler house with the hexagonal boiler setting exposed. The cast-iron pipe leading into Tan Pits Place is also visible in the top right corner of the photograph (©Salford Archaeology)*

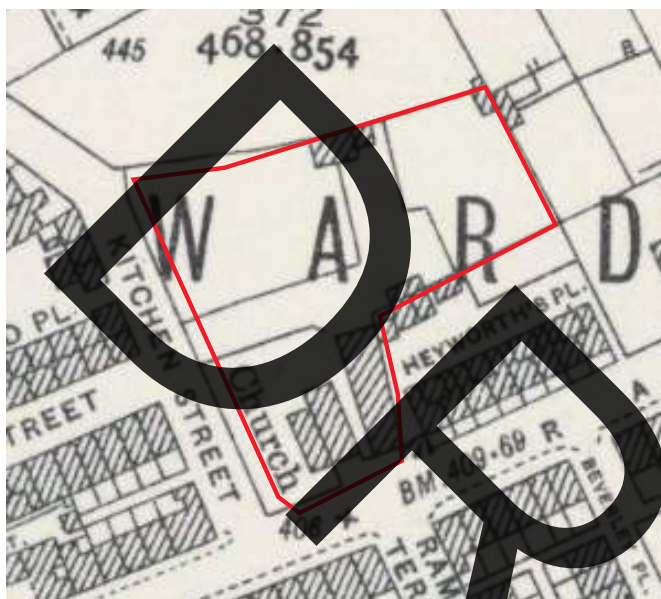
***Bottom:** Cast Iron boiler found close to its original setting within the boiler room (©Salford Archaeology)*

Opposite

***Top:** Kitchen Street site location superimposed on an extract from the Ordnance Survey 25 inch plan of 1930*

***Bottom:** Kitchen Street site location superimposed on an extract from the Ordnance Survey 25 inch plan of 1975*





By 1930 the site had been redeveloped and a church was constructed. A newspaper article from the Rochdale Times in 1912 mentions the 'Church of the Good Shepherd' on Entwistle Street, using land at the end of Ramsay Street for their mission and Sunday school. It can therefore be suggested that the church on the 1930 Ordnance Survey map was a later development of this mission and Sunday school.

By 1975 the church had been demolished and the site contained Wardleworth Day Nursery, its garden, and its car park. Wardleworth Day Nursery was eventually demolished after 2005, and the site remained an unused scrubland until it was redeveloped into 12 dwellings in 2013 by Regenda Housing Group.



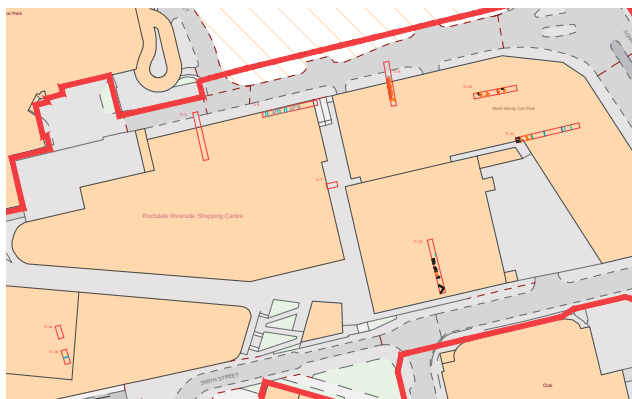
Mission Church of the Good Shepherd, Entwistle Road (Built 1895)
(© David Dixon, 2010)

ROCHDALE RIVERSIDE PHASE I

The Rochdale Riverside redevelopment in Rochdale town centre, focussed around Baillie Street, afforded a fantastic opportunity to investigate a large area in central Rochdale. The redevelopment area encompassed a part of Rochdale which had rapidly developed in the first half of the 19th century. The archaeological fieldwork began in 2018 with the excavation of eight evaluation trenches, the locations of which were recommended by GMAAS. The evaluation trenches were intended to confirm the survival of the remains of workers' housing, and associated structures and features, such as sanitary-related buildings and a congregational church. The excavations would prove to provide a fascinating insight into life in Industrial Rochdale.

However, the results of the archaeological evaluation suggested that much of the site did not merit any further investigation because 20th-century development had removed all archaeological remains in many places. Three areas that had not been badly disturbed were identified towards John Street in the east of the site, warranting the opening up of three larger trenches there.

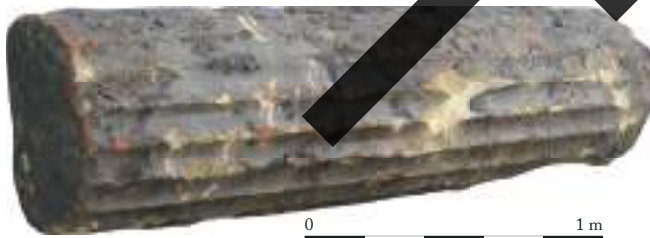
The northernmost trench was situated to the north of Baillie Street and targeted the remains of back-to-back terraced housing shown on the 1851 Ordnance Survey map, fronting Portland Street to the north, and back-to-back and later terraced housing fronting Baillie Street. A block of washhouses and toilets in Hopwood Square also lay within the excavation area.



Top: Locations of archaeological evaluation trenches

Middle: Internal division walls and steps in Trench 10, in the northeast part of the site

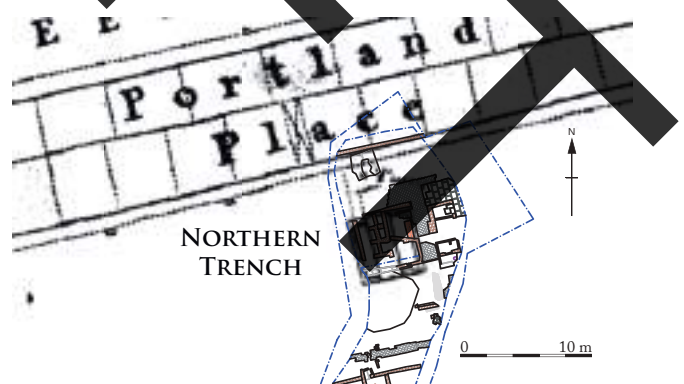
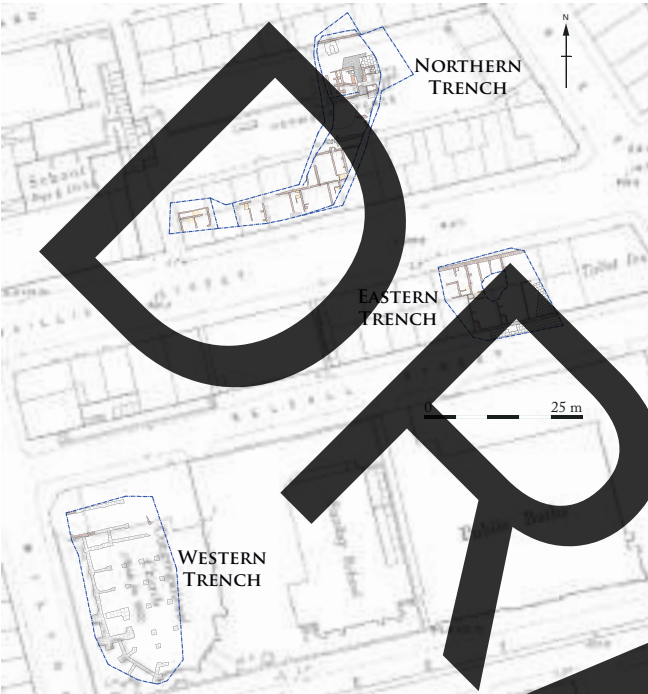
Bottom: Fluted column discovered within demolition rubble in the northern part of the site





The earliest deposit discovered in the northern trench was a layer of ploughsoil containing sherds of 17th- and 18th-century pottery and an 18th-century clay pipe bowl. This ploughsoil was derived from the enclosed fields that occupied the site prior to the construction of workers' houses in the first half of the 19th century. The finds suggested that the fields were being night-soiled and ploughed throughout at least the 17th and 18th centuries. Other features, including a portion of dry stone walling and a circular feature thought to represent a pond, registered the agricultural or horticultural function of the site, prior to urbanisation in the 19th century.

At the northern edge of the trench, a hand-made brick wall was discovered, likely representing the southern front wall of a block of houses labelled on the 1851 OS map as Portland Place. The range of houses comprised two rows of what appear on the historic maps to be blind-backs, arranged like back-to-backs, with slightly larger houses fronting Portland Street with smaller houses to the rear.



Top right: 18th-century mottled-ware sherds from northern trench

Top left: Locations of the excavation areas superimposed on the 1891 Ordnance Survey plan

Bottom left: The southern, front wall of the houses fronting Portland Place, and the remains of a pump well behind.

Bottom right: The remains recorded in the northern part of the northern trench superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1851

To the south of the houses was a cobbled courtyard, containing the remains of a small square building interpreted as washhouses or toilets serving Portland Place. The foundation of the southern wall of the washhouse was partially formed by a reused stone wall. This stone wall had probably been constructed in the 18th century when terraces were formed for the ornamental gardens associated with Town Head House. The walls of the washhouse comprised hand-made brick bonded with lime mortar, typical of the first half of the 19th century.

In the early to mid-19th century, outside privies serving multiple homes were common. However, this privy and washhouse are unusual in that they are depicted on the historical mapping until at least the 1950s and were probably demolished at the same time as the houses, during the 1960s.

Between the toilet block and Portland Place were the remains of a circular, brick-built well that was capped with a large, thick stone slab. This well had once served as a pump depicted on the 1851 mapping. It was evident from the presence of walls utilising hard dark-grey mortar that the privy and washhouse had been enlarged between 1851 and 1892. This may be seen as a response to a series of national acts that were introduced throughout the second half of the 19th century with the intention of improving housing conditions and sanitation.





The Local Government Act of 1858 gave towns the freedom to adopt clauses from the previous, unsuccessful, Towns Improvement Clauses Act of 1847 to enforce improvements to housing, such as the requirement for all houses to be built with drains. Alongside this act was the Form of By-Laws of 1858 which fused elements of the 1855 Metropolitan Building Act with the Improvement Clauses Act into a set of regulations that could be nationally enforced. This act required all houses to have a yard, the size of which was determined by the number of building storeys.

Although this act was initially somewhat successful, increased housing needs due to the rapidly growing population caused these restrictions to be lifted in 1864. In 1868 The Torrens Act (part of the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act) provided for gradual improvement or demolition of sub-standard housing but was largely ineffective. The Public Health act of 1875, and the subsequent River Pollution Prevention Act of 1876, dealt with sanitation in housing, and led to the adoption of water closets and ash closets, from which the 'night soil' could be removed by 'night soil men' to designated disposal sites or to be used in a variety of industries. This system was particularly popular in Birmingham, Manchester and Rochdale, and it may be that the improvement to the privy block followed this act.

Opposite:

Top: Photograph showing the washhouse block (1), the toilet block (2) and later 19th-century extension wall (3), looking northwest

Middle: Photograph of the pump well in Portland Place

Bottom: The southern part of Portland Place courtyard showing the remains of an earlier stone wall (centre)

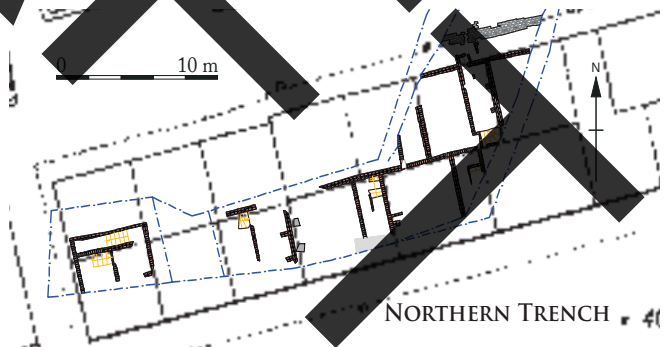
Above:

Top: The washhouse (1) and the toilet block (2) serving the houses along Portland Street and Baillie Street. The stone capping of the well can be seen in the foreground

Bottom: A night soil collecting vehicle, Rochdale c 1870

In 1851 the 20 houses along Portland Street and the six on Baillie Street were served by at least four privies positioned in the yard that would come to be known as Hopwood Place. This would amount to one privy for every six or seven houses. In comparison, in Manchester at the same period the average was one privy per 12 houses. Similarly, in Manchester, there was one pump for every 32 houses, whereas the pump uncovered during the excavation, and marked on the 1851 map, served 26 houses. As this was the case in 1851 it seems that the housing in Rochdale was built to a higher standard of hygiene than that in neighbouring Manchester.

In the southern part of the trench were the remains of a row of back-to-back houses that had been constructed in two phases; the western part of the terrace before 1851, and the eastern after 1851, but before 1892. The western part of the trench exposed the remains of the southern three houses in a terrace consisting of a block of six back-to-back houses. When excavated, cellars were found beneath. Two of the cellars were partially excavated revealing a partition wall running through the middle of each, creating two separate rooms. While each room was inaccessible from one another, an individual staircase led into each cellar room. It appeared that the western cellar room could be accessed from the house immediately above. The eastern cellar room could only be accessed from the house which shared the northern party wall and fronted Hopwood Square.



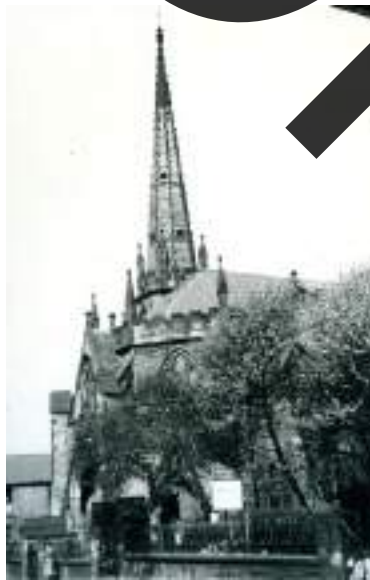
Top: Cellars 14 and 15

Middle: The remains of the cellar within house 9, with the curving staircase, fireplace foundations and coal shoot at the bottom right of the photograph

Bottom: The remains recorded in the southern part of the northern trench superimposed over the 1892 Ordnance Survey Town Plan

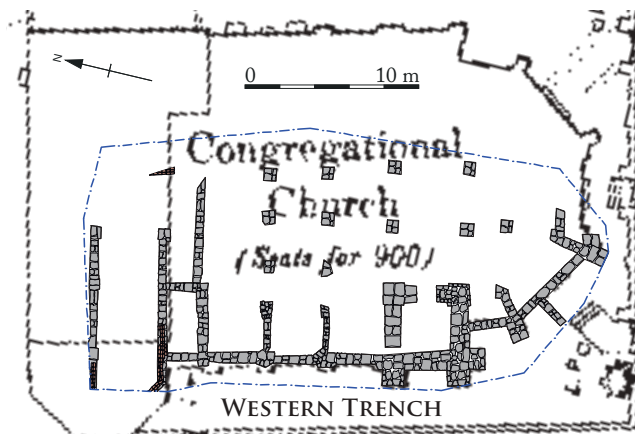


Top: The excavated remains of Milton Street Congregational Church looking south



Middle: Milton Street Congregational Church before demolition in the 1950s (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)

Bottom: The remains recorded in the southern part of the northern trench superimposed over the 1892 Ordnance Survey Town Plan



The eastern part of the terrace was formed by seven houses which historic maps suggested were built after 1851 and were slightly larger than those earlier houses at the western end of the terrace. Each house had its own cellar, probably functioning as a coal store – owing to the stone chutes housed in apertures in the external walls. These cellars extended across less than half the footprint of the house above. Access was provided by a curving stone-constructed staircase. Along one wall was a brick buttress presumably supporting a fireplace situated in the room above. To the north of the terraced houses was a strip of cobbles which probably formed a gutter running between the pavement and the road surface of Hopwood Place onto which the houses backed.

On the southern side of Kelsall Street, a trench was excavated targeting the footprint of Milton Street Congregational Church, a large stone gothic revival building seating a congregation of up to 900. The church was built with monetary support from the successful Rochdale flannel manufacturer Henry Kelsall following secession from Providence Chapel on High Street. The church was demolished in the 1950s.

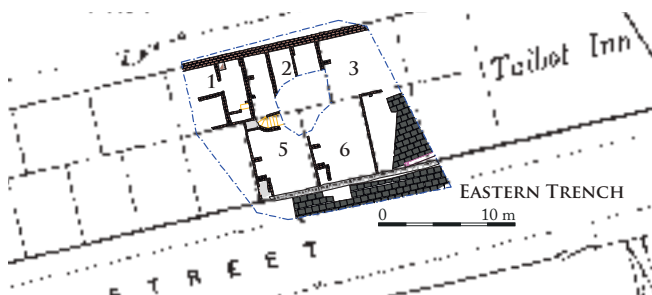
The excavation revealed the western side of the church's foundations which, in places survived to over 1m in height.

Archaeologists discovered housing for a wooden staircase leading down into the church's cellar, which appeared to have had a vaulted ceiling. Beyond the northern wall of the church was an area that appeared to be a later addition, possibly for the installation of a boiler that had been connected to a heating system.

In the central part of the church's footprint were the remains of column bases almost certainly used to support the floor and structure above.

A trench in the eastern part of the site exposed part of a block of back-to-backs with slightly larger houses fronting Baillie Street – the main thoroughfare located to the north – and smaller properties fronting Kelsall Street to the south.

The excavation exposed the pavement of Kelsall Street and the foundations of four houses fronting Kelsall Street (numbered 1, 2 and 3 on the photo) revealing that they were not cellared. Census returns for 1851 suggest that the houses on Kelsall Street were, at that time, occupied by skilled tradesmen associated with the local textile industry, including a machine maker and a foreman in a woollen mill. By the later 19th century the residents' occupations had become more homogenous and perhaps slightly lower status, being exclusively described as skilled mill operatives.



Top: The eastern trench superimposed onto the 1892 OS map

Middle: Photograph of the eastern trench fully excavated, looking east

Bottom: Rooms within the cellar of House 7. Note the remains of a probably 'cold-slab' on the right of the photo



The easternmost house had a stone-flagged floor with a stone channel running into a ceramic drain along the interior of the house's front wall, an arrangement that was suggestive of an exterior space. The historic mapping suggests that between 1893 and 1910 the two easternmost houses along Kelsall Street, including House 1, had been incorporated into the Talbot Inn public house to their immediate east, which was located outside the excavation area. Therefore, it appeared that House 1 had been converted into a yard or storage area connected to the Talbot Inn.



The larger houses (Houses 5, 6 and 7) that fronted Baillie Street were found to have had cellars split into smaller rooms furnished with coal shutes, fireplaces and stone-flagged floors. Interestingly, The visible brick walls in House 5 and 6 showed evidence of springing points for a brick-built barrel-vaulted ceiling, and the cellar in House 7 had multiple rooms, one of which contained a possible 'cold slab' (a stone slab usually located close to the floor and used to keep cheese, milk and butter cool).

Top: The pavement of Kelsall Street (left), front wall of House 1 (middle) and stone drain (right)

Bottom: Staircase, flagged floor, and fireplace foundations in house (6). Springing point for a barrel-vaulted ceiling visible at the left of the scale.

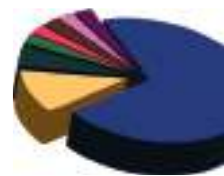
It is notable that most of the houses recorded were either uncellared or only had small storage areas, whereas many houses of a similar date in Manchester or Salford did possess cellars, which, in many cases served as dwellings. This probably reflects a situation where there was less of a premium for space in Rochdale than in Manchester or Salford. Plausibly the housing in this part of Rochdale was of higher quality than in equivalent areas of Manchester. A further factor hinting at the higher quality of housing on Kelsall Street is the retention of the building layout, with few examples of structural alterations.

Another indicator that working-class housing was of a relatively high standard in Rochdale is that large-scale 'slum' regeneration and improvement did not take place. In contrast, in Manchester following a series of public health acts, low-quality housing began to be cleared in the late 19th century. However, it could be that in Rochdale the acts were simply ignored as low-quality housing was certainly present. For example, a building survey conducted in 1994 by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England at 13-16 Richard Street, near the canal basin, recorded a series of small workers' houses probably built during the first two decades of the 19th century. The housing, which consisted of two cellar dwellings, four back-to-backs, and two semi-detached houses, also featured evidence of industrial processes, likely connected with the textile industry, taking place on the well-lit upper floors.

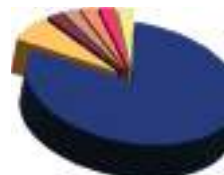
Demographic infographic map showing locations from which people migrated to Rochdale

BAILLIE STREET

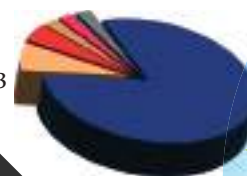
1871
BAILLIE STREET
ROCHDALE: 26
YORKSHIRE: 4
COLNE, LANCASHIRE: 2
BURY: 1
HEYWOOD: 1
LINCOLNSHIRE: 1
LONDON: 1
OLDHAM: 1



1881
BAILLIE STREET
ROCHDALE: 32
YORKSHIRE: 3
BOLTON: 1
BURNLEY: 1
LANCASHIRE: 1
MIDDLETON: 1
STAFFORDSHIRE: 1



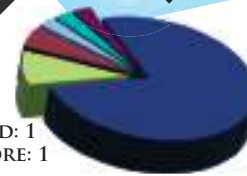
1891
BAILLIE STREET
ROCHDALE: 32
DERBY, DERBYSHIRE: 3
LIVERPOOL: 2
GRIMSBY: 1
HEYWOOD: 1
SHROPSHIRE: 1



1901
BAILLIE STREET
ROCHDALE: 21
NORFOLK: 3
CUMBRIA: 2
SHROPSHIRE: 2
ALDERSHOT, HAMPSHIRE: 1
HEYWOOD: 1
MIDDLETON: 1

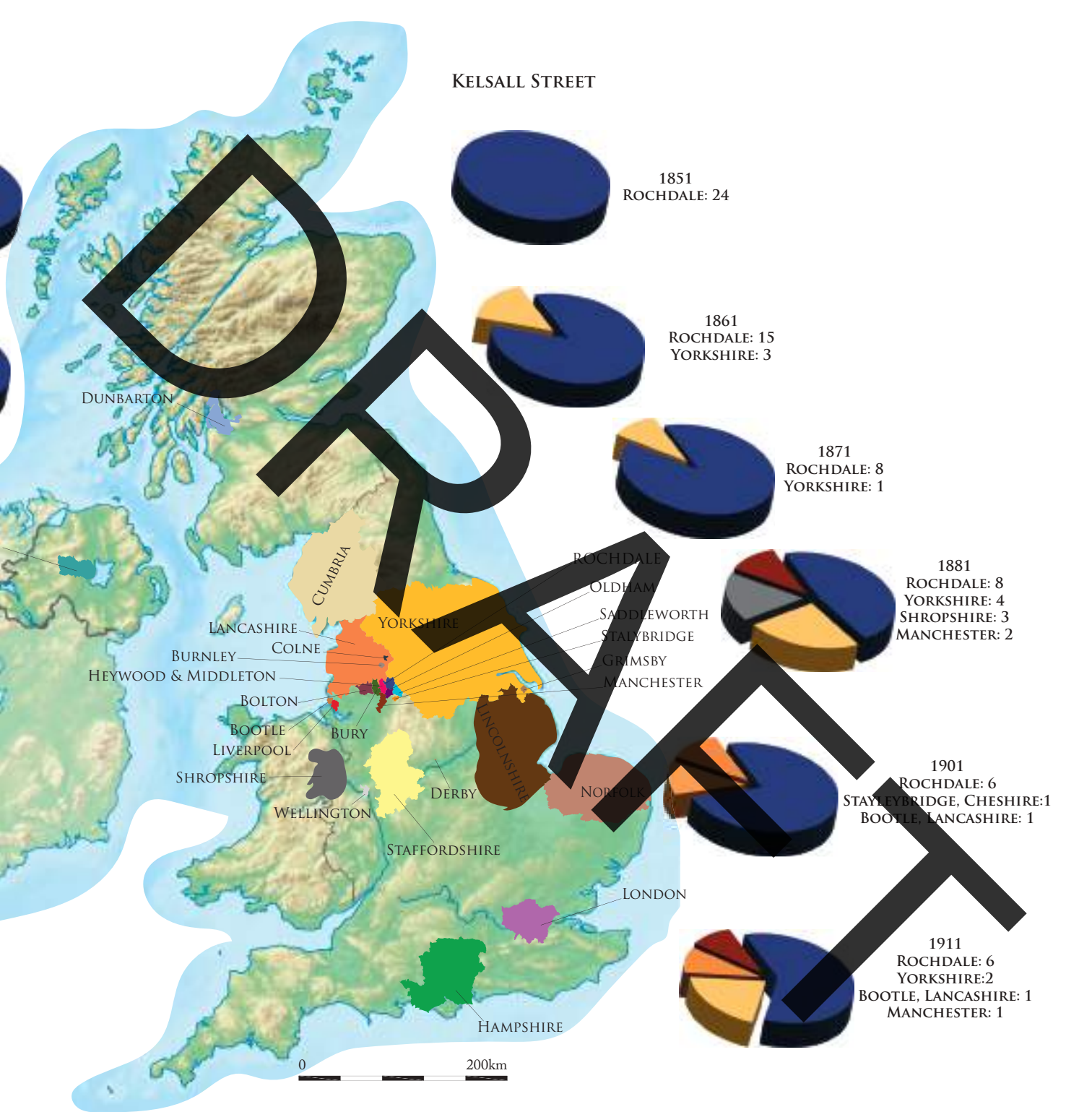


1911
BAILLIE STREET
ROCHDALE: 26
MAYO, IRELAND: 3
BOLTON: 2
DUMBARTON, SCOTLAND: 1
TYRONE PARISH, DUNMORE: 1
OLDHAM: 1



TYRONE PARISH

MAYO



ROCHDALE RIVERSIDE PHASE II

The second phase of the Rochdale Riverside site was centred in the northern part of the overall redevelopment area. This part of the site has subsequently seen the construction of a hotel and residential and commercial buildings. As these structures required deep foundations, their construction would potentially lead to the destruction of surviving archaeology. However, planning legislation is in place to ensure that if there is a possibility that archaeological remains are present on a site, a suitable programme of excavation and recording is undertaken before construction work takes place.

A study of historic maps suggested that the site had remained largely undeveloped until the mid-19th century. However, by 1892 the Ordnance Survey map showed that the entire site was covered with buildings, reflecting the population and house-building boom that Rochdale experienced during the 1860s and 1870s. Therefore, GMAAS recommended that a trial trench evaluation be undertaken. In addition to revealing the well-preserved remains of workers' houses, the fragmentary remains of Nazareth Chapel, which had been built along Conway Street, were also found. To further investigate the remains encountered, three larger open areas were excavated.



Top: Locations of archaeological excavation areas superimposed on Google satellite imagery from 2017

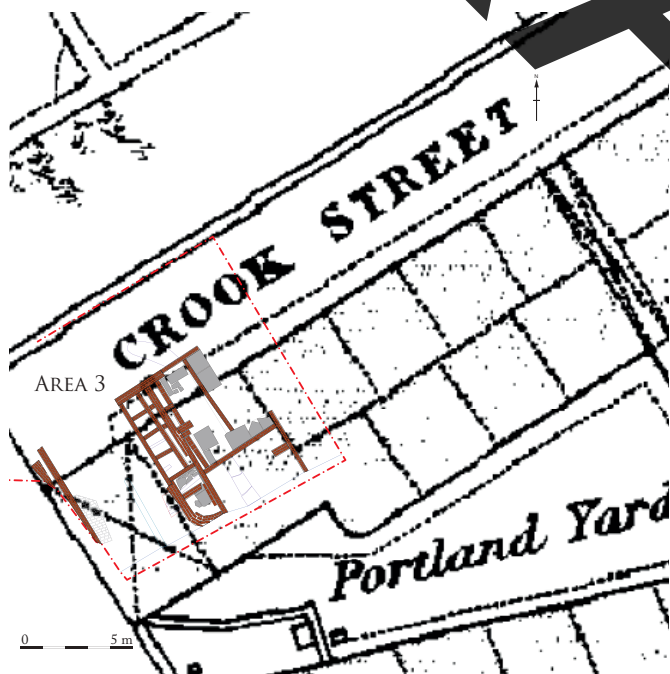
Above: The boundary of the phase 2 redevelopment area superimposed onto Murphy's Map of 1831

Opposite: The boundary of Area 1 superimposed on the Rochdale Town Plan of 1851



The earliest remains recorded on the site were in Area 3 where the remains of properties on Crook Street and Portland Yard, constructed in the early 19th century, were revealed. The excavation area fell over the footprint of an irregularly-shaped building attached to the southwest end of a row of back-to-back houses. Murphy's map indicates that Crook Street had not yet been constructed by 1831, but census returns document residents living in dwellings there in 1841 – the year of the first census. This suggests that the properties must have been built between 1831 and 1841.

The northern and western walls of the irregularly-shaped building were revealed in the trench. Due to the irregular shape of the building and its larger size compared to the neighbouring back-to-backs, the director of the excavation came to the interpretation that the building served a commercial function. Additionally, immediately to the west of the building, was a covered entrance providing access from Crook Street to Portland Yard. The large entrance would have provided adequate access for bulk deliveries to and from the possible commercial property.



The remains of a partition wall dividing two rooms within the building, along with the heavily truncated remains of a flagstone paved floor surface were exposed. The second of these rooms, to the southwest of the partition wall, contained a brick-built fireplace with an upright flagstone used to line the back of the fireplace and a sandstone hearth on the floor.

During the 1850s the large plot of open ground depicted on the 1851 Ordnance Survey map to the west of Crook Street was built over with rows of terraced houses, many of which were back-to-backs. Area 1 was positioned to investigate the eastern end of a row of back-to-back dwellings and sanitary blocks at the corner of Parish Street and Conway Street that had been built on the open ground. It is known that the houses were constructed after 1851 but before 1861 when the census returns initially register the dwellings.

Top: The remains of possible commercial property at Crook Street looking southeast. The exterior wall fronting Crook Street is in the foreground. A partition wall and the partially surviving flagstone floor of the property's cellar are visible to the left of the scale. The small rectangular chambers to the right are later additions

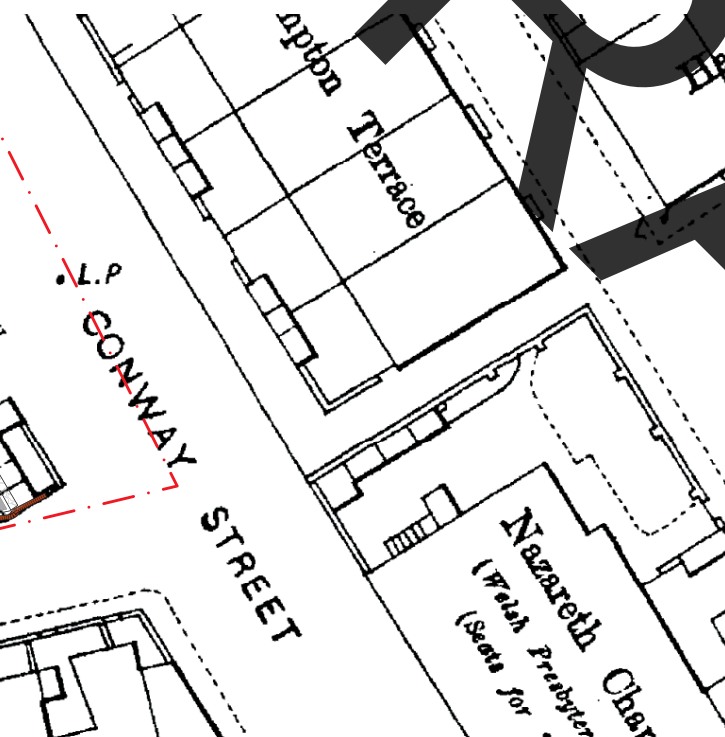
Opposite: Fragmentary remains of two houses on the upper terrace fronting Parish Street, looking northeast.

Centre: Area 1 superimposed on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map





The excavation revealed that the site's natural topography sloped steeply up towards the north and that the block of back-to-backs was built over two steps, or terraces, cut into the hillside. The houses fronting Parish Street were built on the upper terrace, those known as Maude Terrace on the lower step. A substantial stone wall measuring c. 0.50m thick was built against the face of the earth terrace and likely functioned as a retaining wall to prevent the collapse of the step. The flagstone foundations of the houses fronting Parish Street were laid on natural clay and it was clear that no cellars were present beneath these properties.



To the south, backing onto the houses fronting Parish Street, were exposed the remains of two dwellings fronting Maude Terrace. As with Parish Street, the brick walls forming the houses were built on flagstone foundations. However, cellars were present beneath these structures, and their layout was similar to those discovered beneath another row of back-to-backs close by fronting Baillie Street, described in the previous chapter.

At Maude Terrace – as at Baillie Street – the subterranean space occupying the footprint of each house was divided, with a partition wall, into two equally-sized rectangular cellar rooms. Beneath both dwellings, the southwestern cellar room was accessed from within the house immediately above while the northeastern cellar room was accessed via stairs leading from the house behind, which fronted Parish Street. This arrangement likely reflected a response to the steeply-sloping topography of the land on which the houses were built. Considerably less earth would need to be removed to create a cellar beneath the row of houses on the lower part of a slope than beneath the properties lying higher up the slope.

The cellar rooms had flagstone floors and two of them had recesses built into the upper courses of their front external walls. These recesses probably represented the remains of a small window light or coal chute. In many cases, features such as these were not depicted on historic maps exemplifying how useful archaeology investigation is for recording and understanding the details of historic structures not recorded on historic maps.

In the eastern cellar, the partition wall that separated the two cellar rooms showed evidence of alteration, with a small section being knocked through to create a doorway between the two rooms. It is likely, although could not be proven, that the entire cellar became accessible to one property, rather than a space which was split between two. This alteration was probably made in the early 20th century.



Above: A photograph taken in 1970 looking north up Penn Street, showing the southwest end of Maude Terrace: the back-to-back houses in the centre of the photograph (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)

Below: Knocked-through doorway between Room 1 and 2, staircase for Room 1, looking south-east.





Above: 'THE FRIDGE LARDER' in the cellar below No 7 Maude Terrace. It is not clear when the fridge dates from although it was during the 1950s that they started to become affordable in British homes

Left: Hartley's stone ware jar from Maude terrace

Below: Identical fridge in the cellar below No 6



Amongst the artefacts recovered from the backfill of the demolished buildings were stoneware jam jars, which are a common find in later 19th and early 20th-century excavations. The example depicted was recovered from the cellar below No. 6 Maude Terrace. Such jars were very often recycled for storage or even used as paint pots.

The producer of the jam jar, William Hartley started off small, running a grocers shop in Pendle, Lancashire. The story told is that in 1871 a supplier failed to deliver a consignment of jam, so William made his own. Such was the growth of the company that by 1898 W. P. Hartley, then based in Liverpool, took over a pottery in Rutherglen, near Glasgow. Thus, ensuring its own supply of jam jars. Like the example depicted, the maker's mark is impressed on base with the proviso that the jar is "NOT GENUINE UNLESS BEARING W.P. HARTLEY'S LABEL." Colourful paper labels likely accompanied the jar when new. The pottery closed in 1929 and by the early 1930s, Hartley's jam was being sold in glass jars.

An object found during the excavation that connects the homes of those who lived in early to mid-20th century Maude Terrace to most of us today is the fridge, two almost identical examples of which were discovered in the cellars below Nos. 6 and 7. These early fridges consisted of a large white glazed ceramic 'box' with internal ribs which would have supported metal shelves. The maker's mark reveals that 'THE "FRIDGE" LARDER' was 'made only by J. Duckett & Son Ltd, Burnley.' The rather curious construction material, ceramic – rather than enamel, metal and plastic – can probably be explained by the 1913 catalogue published by J. Duckett & Son. The company specialised in sanitary wares such as ceramic water closets, urinals, and basins, some with aspirational names such as the 'Kensington' or the 'Victoria,' while others named in an advert from 1898 were less appealing, such as 'The Clencher'.

Amongst the other artefacts recovered from the backfill of the demolished houses were two almost complete large storage vessels which were reconstructed after the excavation had finished. These large jars, usually described as cream pots for the smaller vessel and bread pots for the larger, were found in the cellar below No. 6 Maude Terrace. The shape of these jars are typical of East Lancashire and West Yorkshire. No potteries of this type are known in Rochdale, although the Grimshaw pottery near Blackburn was still in operation in c. 1846. At Halifax, some 22km to the northeast of Rochdale, there were potteries in existence on the steep eastern side of the town from the 1640s until the 1880s. At Soil Hill, also near Halifax, Isaac Button was still producing large pancheons (ceramic bowls) and stew pots into the early 1960s.





Despite the commercialization and industrialisation of food and drink that can be discerned in the finds from houses in Rochdale, there is evidence of more local, small-scale production of goods continuing in the towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire by so-called 'country potters'. Although factories producing transfer printed table wares had been a feature of the North Midlands and Northern England since the late 18th century, coarse wares, vessels for food preparation and storage or for use in dairies, were still the preserve of the country potter – often family-run businesses with one or two kilns.

Development in Rochdale town centre dating to the 1870s was recorded in Area 2 where the remains of two double-depth terrace dwellings along Argyle Terrace, first depicted cartographically in 1892, were recorded. The census returns, which were compiled every ten years, first recorded residents living in the dwellings in 1881 but not in 1871.



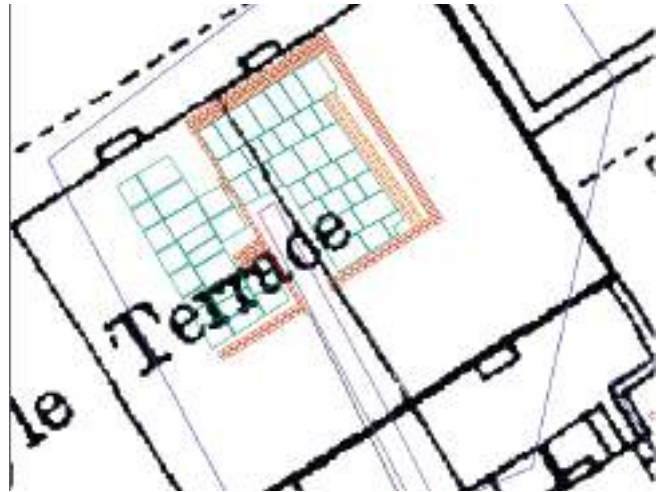
***Centre:** A typical country pottery at Silkstone, near Barnsley, South Yorkshire as depicted by J.C. Nattes in 1806 (Cannon Hall Museum, Barnsley). The roofed structure surrounding the large multi-flued kiln is known as a 'hovel.' Such potteries were in operation throughout the 19th century. 'Black' Burton – so called either because of the colour of the clay, which was very dark in colour or from the amount of smoke produced by the many kilns, is unclear – a village on the Yorkshire-Lancashire border still boasted five working potteries in 1900*

***Left:** Storage jar with internal brown glaze, and a two-handled, brown-glazed storage vessel reconstructed during post excavation*

The remains of the structure exposed in the northeast part of the excavation area corresponded to the end of terrace property known as No. 8 Argyle Terrace. The cellar room had a flagged floor surface that had been truncated in the northeast corner revealing a narrow stone-capped drain with brick-built sides surviving below the floor surface. A single-skin wall formed a partition between the cellar in No. 8 and the cellar in No 6. This wall had presumably been disturbed by a modern service pipe that ran parallel to the wall. The modern service may have also truncated or concealed a staircase that would have permitted access into the cellar.

The partial remains of No. 6 Argyle Terrace consisted of a paved flagged floor and two buttresses protruding from the partition wall which presumably supported a fireplace in the room above.

As the cellars beneath Argyle Terrace were relatively small – they did not occupy the entire footprint of the house – it was suggested by the excavator that they represented cold stores. A similar arrangement was observed at Toad Lane in the Lower Falinge area of Rochdale (see page XX). This type of cellar has also been identified in pre-industrial rural cottages, but rarely in a 19th-century urban context, like in the centre of Rochdale.



Top: Plan of Area 2 superimposed onto the Town Plan of 1892

Middle: Area 2, looking southeast

Bottom: House 2 with fireplace, looking northwest



Archaeological features pertaining to the late 19th century were represented by two sanitary-related structures recorded in Area 3. The fact that the late 19th-century archaeology was represented by sanitary-related structures almost certainly reflects the measures brought in from the mid-19th century – described on page 56 – that sought to improve the living conditions afforded by working-class housing.

In the southern part of the trench, a structure likely representing a block of privies or wash facilities was found built within No. 4 Portland Yard and part of No. 4 Crook Street. The remains of the structure consisted of four small rectangular-shaped chambers with a stone-capped culvert running beneath.

In the centre of the trench were the remains of another sanitary-related structure. This building also contained four small chambers with a drainage system running between them. The presence of drains and the size and shape of the compartments imply that the structures functioned as privies. However, it seems that the addition of the toilet block caused damp-related problems for No. 4 Crook Street where, it was observed, an extra skin of bricks had been added internally probably to mitigate against seepage from the toilet block.

***Top:** A plan of the remains recorded in Area 3 superimposed onto the Town Plan of 1892*

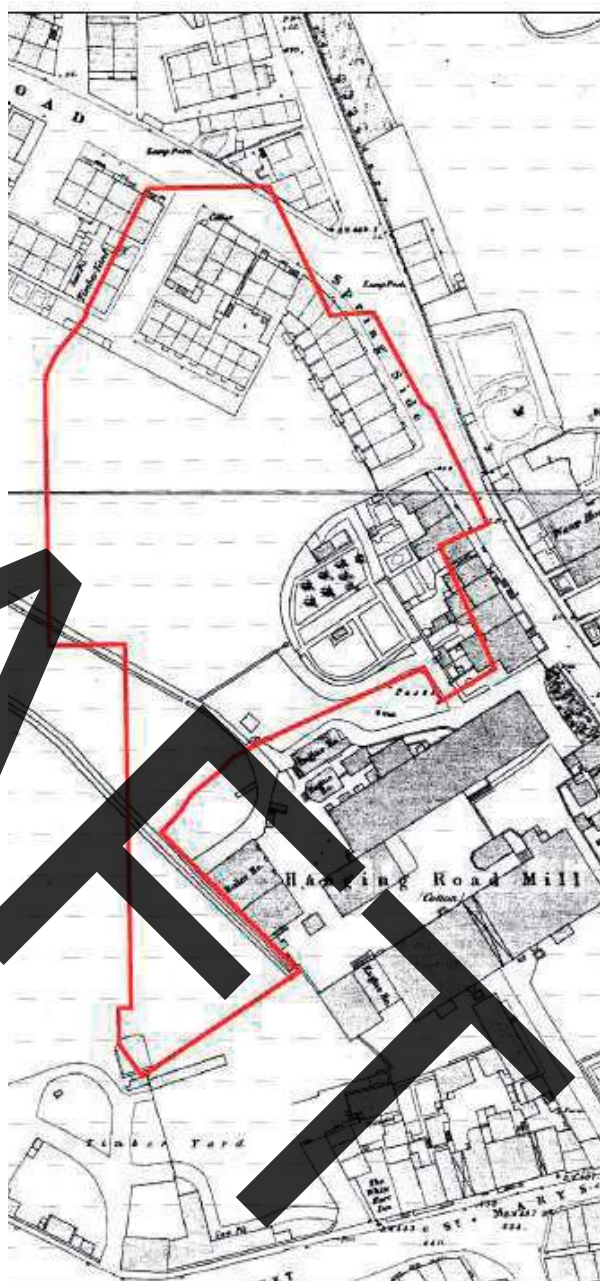
***Bottom:** Stone setts bordered by a wall, and the channel in the centre and toilet block structure to the east, looking north*

TOAD LANE

The area surrounding Toad Lane, to the northwest of Rochdale town centre, could be characterised as a semi-rural part of Rochdale until the late 19th century. While open fields covered much of the area, ribbon development in the form of blocks of back-to-back houses and other terraced dwellings were strung along Toad Lane and Falinge Road.

In 2017 these semi-rural houses were archaeologically investigated by Salford Archaeology as part of redevelopment works to renew social housing that had been built in the 1960s. A single archaeological trench was located off Toad Lane in the Lower Falinge Estate which sought to investigate the remains of the early 19th-century block of four workers' houses identified on the 1851 Ordnance Survey map of the area.

Two north-south orientated external walls were identified across the excavation area. The wall furthest to the east was constructed from mixed courses of handmade bricks and sandstone blocks bonded with two different types of mortar. The second wall which was located in the western part of the trench was constructed with a mixture of handmade bricks and occasional sandstone blocks. These two walls formed the main front and back external wall for the terrace block fronting Toad Lane. A third wall was also discovered orientated north-south and positioned in the middle of the two main external walls. This wall was also constructed out of handmade bricks and sandstone blocks. This central wall, although well-constructed, was interpreted as an internal wall dividing the terrace block into front and back rooms.





Opposite

*Site boundary superimposed on
Ordnance Survey map of 1851*

This page

Above: Overview of the Trench. Main external walls of the terrace house can be seen amongst the demolition rubble.

Below: Excavated cellar and staircase. Black coal dust is visible on the whitewashed walls



The back rooms appeared to belong to three separate properties, each with cellars. These cellars were divided by several small single-course internal walls. The partition walls were orientated east-west abutting the main external walls and were constructed out of handmade bricks. One unusual feature of the houses at Toad Lane, however, was that the cellar dividing walls appeared to have been inserted rather than keyed into the main rear and central walls. This implies that the main structure of the block was constructed as a shell which was then divided into individual houses. This is a slightly unusual building technique which suggests that the houses were possibly built by a small-scale landowner rather than an experienced property speculator.

One key indicator that helped the archaeologists recognise that these were cellars was the presence of several sets of winding stone steps. These steps were constructed out of dressed stone flags with some structural elements constructed out of handmade bricks. Both stone staircases were partly enclosed by a brick structure or stairwell. The positioning of the steps suggested to the archaeologists that these cellars were accessed from inside the house rather than through a separate doorway indicating that the cellars were not used as separate cellar dwellings.

Each of the cellar rooms had flagstone floors with some black staining thought to be coal dust. The cellar walls also showed evidence of being painted or whitewashed with the black staining also identified on the whitewash of the walls. This black staining suggested that the cellars were used to store coal – needed to fuel domestic fires for heating and cooking. A lack of internal features such as light fittings and fireplaces also gave clues that these rooms were for storage and not for living in. The fact that the cellars were at the rear of the houses and accessed from within also indicated that they were not used for anything other than private storage, suggesting that overcrowding was not a problem in the area at this time, in stark contrast to the densely populated districts of the regions burgeoning urban centres of Manchester and Salford.

On the western side of the main central cellar wall in the front rooms of the terraced houses were the remains of three intriguing square brick features. Each of them will have originally belonged to an individual property. They were constructed from a single course of handmade bricks with a lime mortar. Each had a square internal opening filled with a coarse black gritty deposit made up of burnt coal, charcoal, and cinders. It was thought that these features were the remains of fireplaces in the front rooms. The leftover ash and burnt material within them would seem to support this interpretation.



Above: Remains of front room with fireplace. The back deposit is burnt coal and cinders deposit pictured

Below: Close-up of brick fireplace





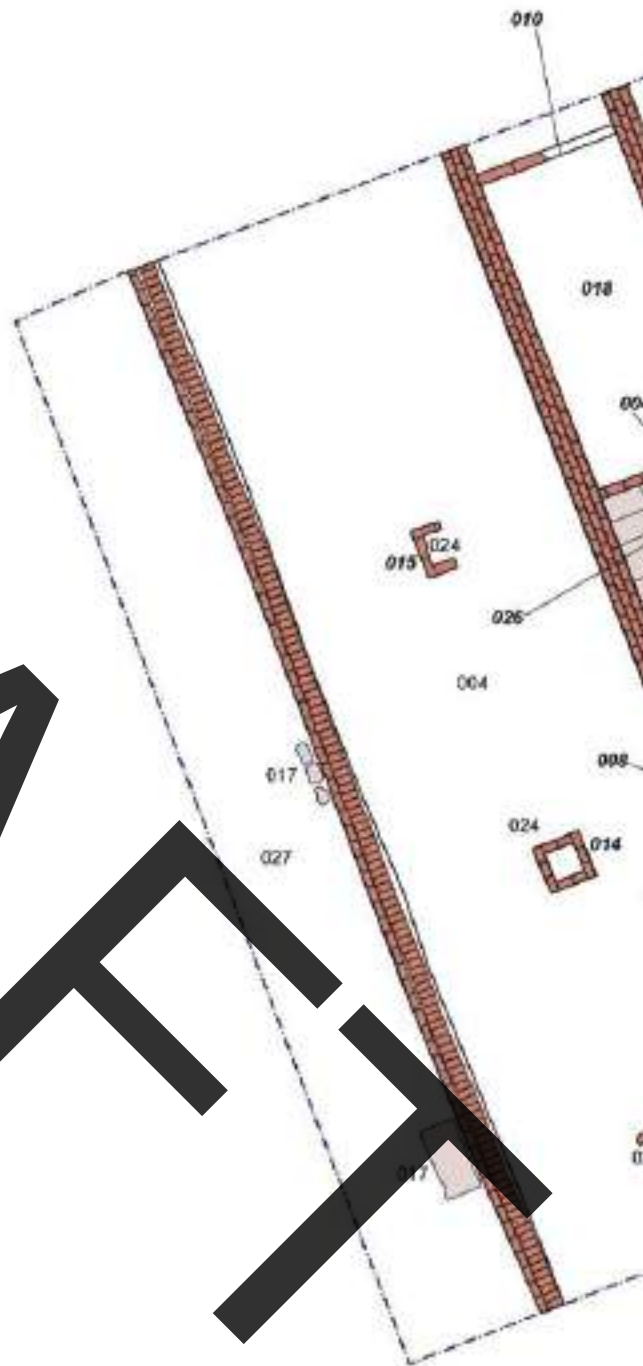
Close-up of cellar steps constructed out of flag stones and brick fireplace

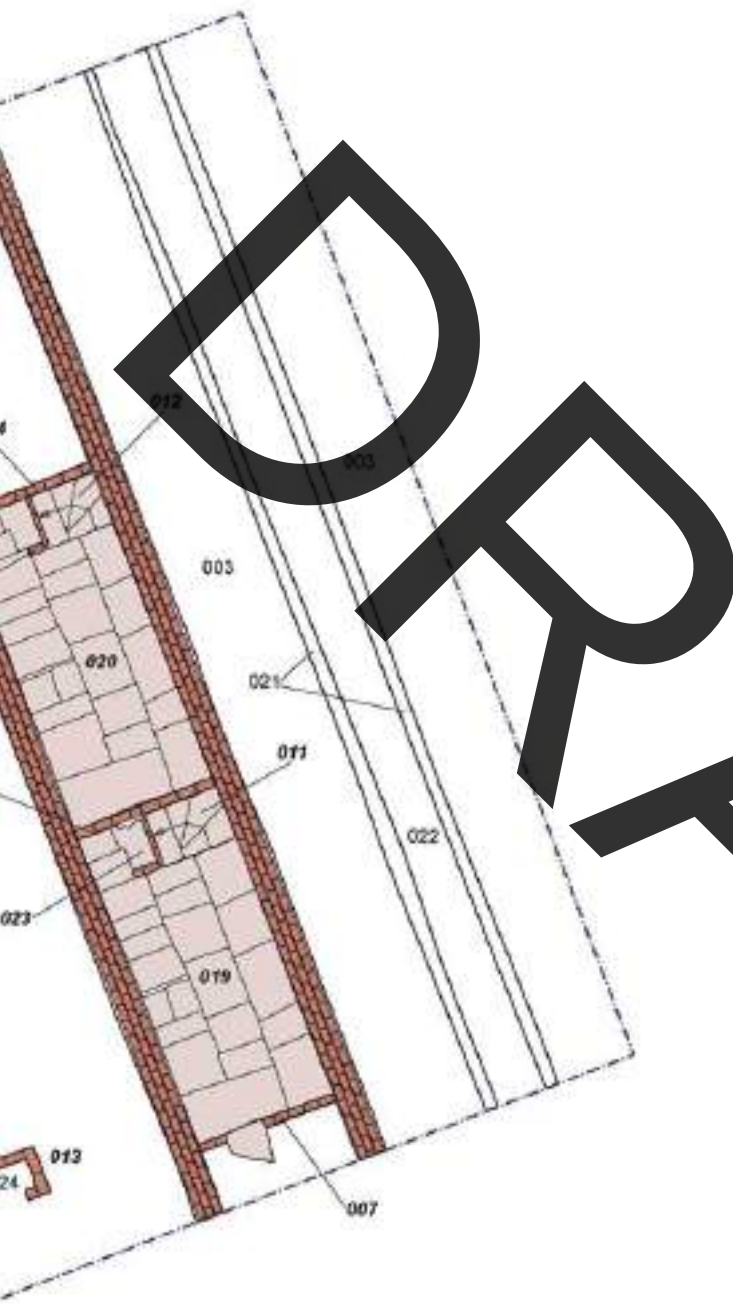
To the west of the external wall fronting Toad Lane, some final architectural features were identified. These included the fragmentary remains of a stone-flagged surface and an area of cobbled stones. These features were thought to be external surfaces around doorways and small paved areas at the front of the house between the front door and the original pavement of Toad Lane.

When the houses were built in the early 19th century, they were located on the north-western fringe of the urbanised town within an area still dominated by agriculture. At this time the main built-up areas included buildings fronting onto the main thoroughfares of Toad Lane and Falinge Road with agricultural land behind. These dwellings represented the further expansion of workers' housing into the agricultural surroundings of Rochdale. The housing on Toad Lane was built on land formerly used as an orchard within the grounds of a large manor house to the north of the site, Quarry Hill. This was recorded as being owned during the early 19th century by Jonathan Fildes Esq, although it is unclear whether the houses were built by him. As the houses do not conform to the style of dwellings more commonly built for industrial workers and were more rural in character, it is possible they were built to house workers employed by the Quarry Hill estate.

It is interesting that the area was still semi-rural when the houses were built and goes some way to explain their size and layout. Although the houses were small, they were marginally better proportioned than the nearby back-to-backs to the south and west, possessing two rooms on each floor as well as the half cellars below. The cellars themselves are of a type more frequently seen in rural settings, with the inclusion of smaller, below-ground chambers often constructed as cold stores. This layout was discovered in a similar row of workers' housing at Trafalgar Street, Burnley, where four houses were constructed with small cellars to the rear. Like Toad Lane, these houses were semi-rural at the time of construction and the cellar rooms were small with low ceilings and shelves set within the walls as part of their function as storage spaces. Each of these cellars contained brick piers to support the floor above, the absence of which at Toad Lane suggests that the floors were of timber construction.

Although the exact construction date for the houses is unknown, the lack of evidence for associated privies, either on-site or in cartographic form, may suggest they were built before regional sanitation improvements in the mid-19th century which saw them provided in many new homes and retrospectively installed in existing houses.





All four houses followed the same symmetrical plan with the cellar access on the northern dividing wall and the fireplace abutting the southern wall of the front room. This arrangement was not uncommon in terraced houses of this date and together with the evidence of the half cellars, points to a fairly typical row of early 19th-century semi-rural workers' cottages. The houses remained in constant use until the 1960s when the Falinge area was cleared to make way for the social housing blocks.

ROCHDALE BRIDGE

For over 100 years, in the centre of Rochdale, part of the River Roch was completely covered over by a series of bridges that had been incrementally built across the river since the 17th century. Initially, in the 19th century, the original bridge was widened to improve the roadway, making it easier for traffic to move across the river, and to repair parts of the bridge that had become dangerous. In 1857, a prominent visitor to Rochdale described the town as having 'a little bridge that spans like a rocking horse an imaginary stream in which there is nothing liquid but mud...the town is in the shape of a tea-cup, with a gutter at the bottom.'

This appears to have been the prevailing opinion of the Roch and by the early 20th century it had been decided that the river should be covered, starting with the section between Yorkshire Street and Wellington Bridge, to build a tramway interchange. By 1924 most of the river in the centre of Rochdale had been enclosed, much of it using new technology and materials such as reinforced concrete.





In 2011 work was begun to once again ‘daylight’ the river by removing parts of the extended bridge which had been added since the 17th century. The scheme to open the river was intended to reduce flood risk in the town centre, attract new wildlife into the area, and provide a view of the historic original bridge. Oxford Archaeology North was commissioned to investigate and record various spans of the 20th-century bridge which were to be removed.

Rochdale Bridge was an important part of Rochdale’s infrastructure, connecting the town’s historic core on the south side of the river with the focus of post-medieval expansion on the northern bank. The bridge was essential for hauliers conveying goods along the trans-Pennine route on which the local woollen economy relied.



It is not known when the first bridge across the Roch was constructed, however, it seems likely that it existed by 1324 when a document of this date refers to ‘John of the Brig’. The river was also crossed via a ford in the vicinity of The Butts, which was referred to in early 17th-century documents. The ford remained in active use until the late 19th century, by which date local journalist and historian William Robertson stated that it ‘was often made so deep by heavy rainfall as to become both inconvenient and dangerous’.

Centre: A view from beneath Rochdale Bridge before removal of 20th century bridge spans (copyright Oxford Archaeology)

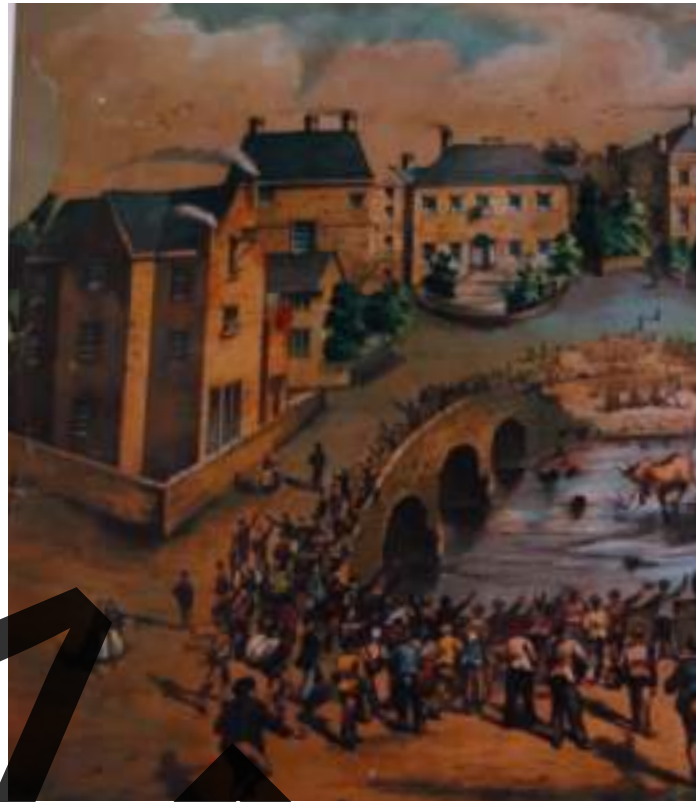
Above: The ford across the River Roch at The Butts, c1810 (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale)

Left: 1840 Glebe Map.

Historic documents state that in 1676, the bridge needed considerable repair work suggesting that by this time the bridge may have been of considerable antiquity. The bulk of the costs for the repair work was expended on transporting large quantities of stone, indicating that the repairs to the bridge were done in masonry.

In around 1821 a new bridge was built to the west of the original Rochdale Bridge to improve the ease of movement of carts and stagecoaches across the river. The new bridge was 13 feet wide and was constructed in a Gothic Revival style with pointed arches.

Soon after the construction of the 1821 bridge, an extension was added to its eastern side. This extension was likely made to allow carriages to pass in either direction on the deck of the bridge, evidencing the growth of commerce and trade in the town during the 19th century, as the textile industry boomed. An extension was also added to the western side of the bridge which housed 3m cutwaters, each with simple, decorative buttresses, and dentillated voussoirs (a wedge-shaped stone, used in building an arch or vault). Finally, by 1864, the gap between the old Rochdale Bridge and the extended 1821 bridge was filled in.





Following the linking together of the old Rochdale Bridge and the 1821 bridge, in the 1860s, the retaining wall on either side of the river channel was rebuilt along with a flat-decked, curved feeder bridge, to the west of the 1821 bridge. Interestingly, the supports facing the cutwaters of the feeder bridge were designed by Sir Horace Jones, the London City Architect in 1884, and are identical to those in Tower Bridge in London.

In 1881, Rochdale was granted an order under an amendment of the 1870 Tramways Act to construct a tramway in the town. The Wellington Bridge was constructed in 1882, for the sole purpose of carrying the tramway over the river and was built on an angled alignment to the river. It was constructed of typical railway engineering materials, with the heavy use of riveted steel beams, brick jack-arches, and sandstone abutments.



Centre: Artist's impression of c. 1820, showing the bull bait, Rochdale Bridge and the ford

Far left: The feeder bridge to the west of the 1821 bridge (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale)

Left: Walk Bridge with Wellington Bridge in background, before river covering c 1900 (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale)

Additions to Rochdale Bridge in the early 20th century essentially led to the culverting of the river beneath the town. New technology and engineering practices utilising reinforced concrete were introduced at the start of the 20th century. All the reinforced concrete beam and slab sections used to construct new parts of the bridge were cast on-site and designed by LG Mouchel and Partners using the Hennebique system.

The first section of the reinforced concrete bridge was built in 1904, filling the gap between the Rochdale and Wellington bridges. It was one of the earliest examples of the use of reinforced concrete in girder bridge construction in Britain, and as such, it is of architectural significance. The Esplanade Bridge was constructed shortly after, to create a 50m wide extension on the western side of Rochdale Bridge forming a road junction with Newgate. The Esplanade Bridge, however, was completely destroyed by bridge renewal works in 1996.



Left: Beneath the 1904 reinforced concrete bridge
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)

Top: Building the reinforced concrete bridge between Rochdale and Wellington bridges, 1904
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)

Bottom: Testing the 1904 reinforced concrete river crossing, c 1904
(courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)



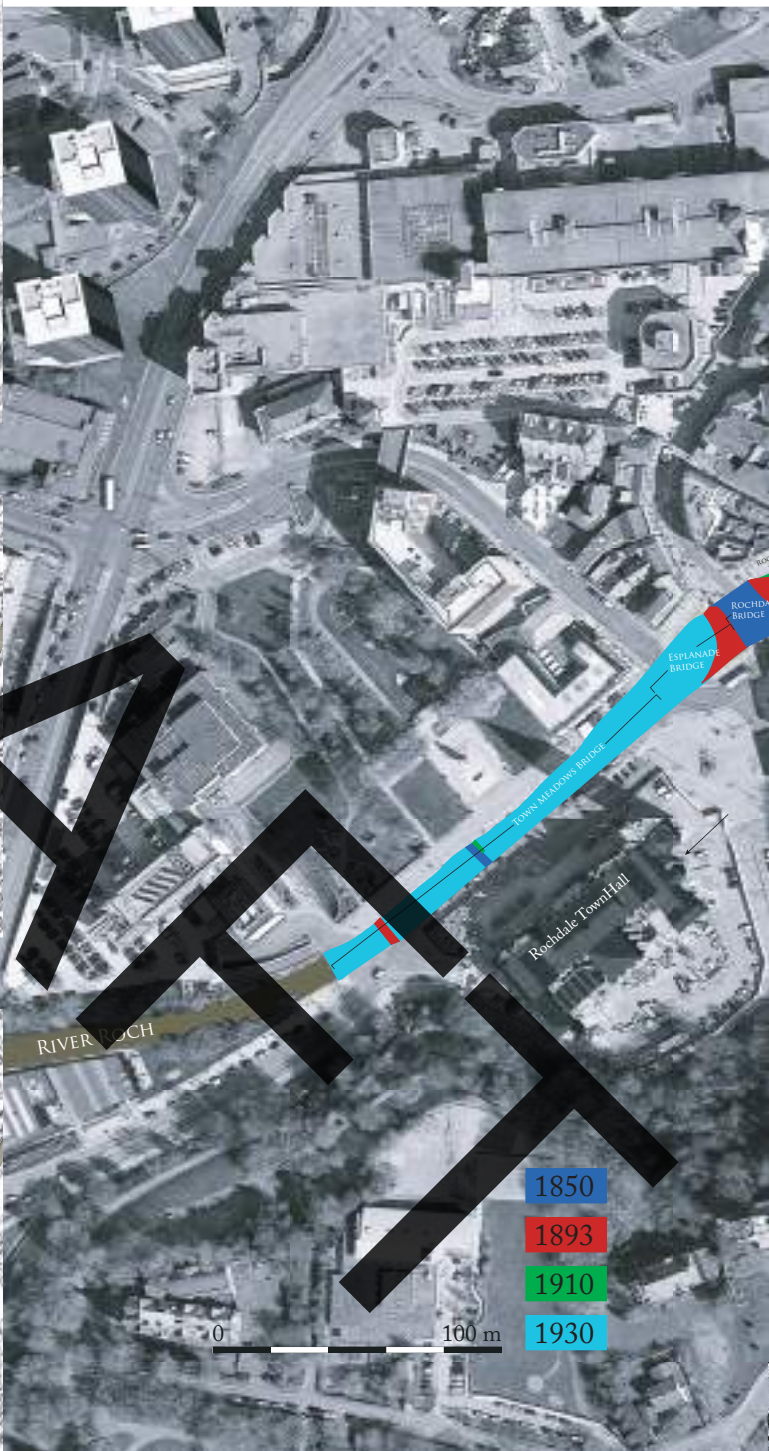
Further extensions of the bridge covering the River Roch were undertaken between 1923 and 1924. Town Meadows Bridge was built in 1923 and was constructed to the west of Esplanade Bridge, whilst Bus Station Bridge was built in 1924, constructed to the east of Wellington Bridge.

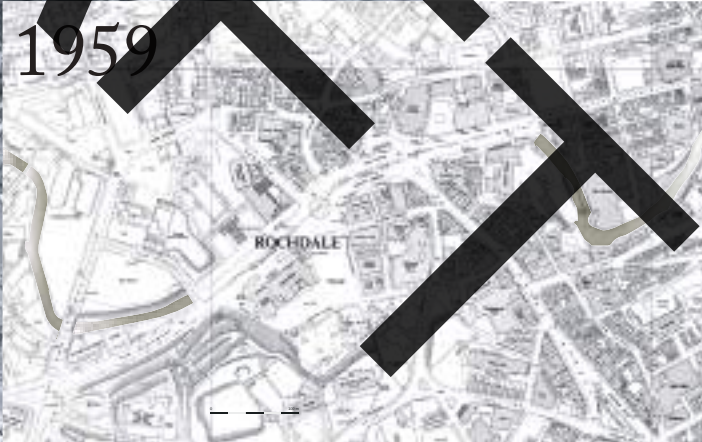
In 1996 the Esplanade Bridge and Rochdale Bridge widening was deemed unsafe. Parts were subsequently demolished and replaced with new RSJ supported bridge sections.



Top: Smith Street covering, 1924 (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)

Bottom: The 1996 rebuilding of Esplanade Bridge, looking towards St Chad's Church (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)





The evolution of Rochdale Bridge superimposed on modern satellite imagery (©Google) and the subsequent concealment of the River Roch illustrated in the historical, Ordnance Survey, mapping of the area

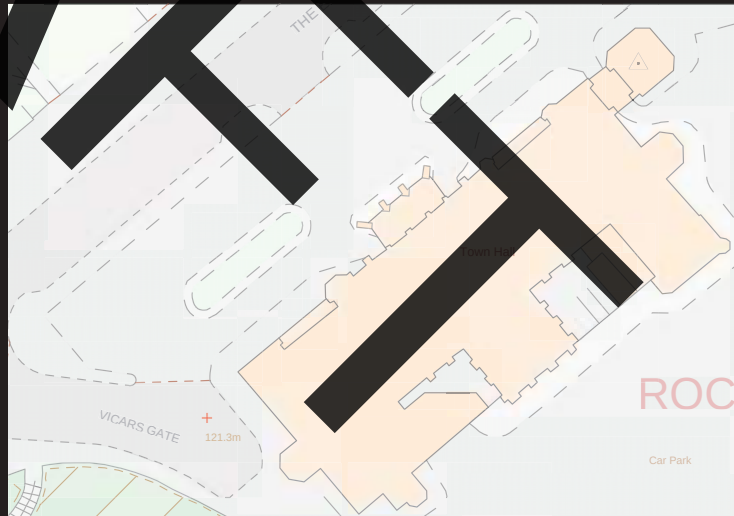
ROCHDALE TOWN HALL SQUARE

In the summer of 2021, with the landscaping and refurbishment works of Rochdale Town Hall Square – part of the renewal works in Rochdale’s town centre – the opportunity arose to archaeologically investigate vestiges of Rochdale’s medieval core. By the 18th century, when Rochdale was a regional centre for the woollen-cloth trade, cartographic sources indicate that Packer Street – located to the east of the Town Hall – was lined with buildings which likely had both domestic and commercial functions. An iron and brass foundry was established in the northern part of the site by the early 19th century and a large villa residence known as ‘The Wood’ with extensive gardens lay to the west. By 1866 most of the buildings lining the western side of Packer Street were cleared during the construction of Town Hall Square, which enclosed Rochdale Town Hall, the audacious Gothic revival edifice housing the civil servants of the newly created Municipal Borough of Rochdale.

In 2020 a series of five test pits revealed the remains of structures and layers of relict soil concentrated in an area to the southeastern part of the site. It was concluded that the site, and especially the area around the southern end of Packer Street, had the potential for further archaeological investigation.



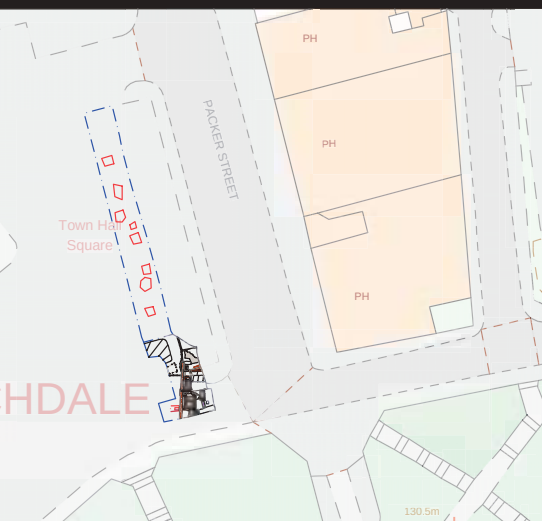
Above: image of the Town Hall by Edward Walker 1875





After careful consideration, it was decided that there was considerable scope for a community-led archaeological investigation on the site where local people could actively explore Rochdale's archaeology. Therefore, in the summer of 2021, excavation and recording of the site were undertaken by community participants, and also school and youth groups who were provided with training, guidance, and support by staff from Salford Archaeology. Volunteer participation also involved a range of activities such as excavation and finds processing, and a school education programme including the excavation of test pits in the northern part of the excavation area. Community participants were encouraged to take part in the archaeological recording of the site.

The archaeological excavation comprised a single open area rectangular trench orientated north-south. The trench measured 50m in length by 8m wide in the southern part of the trench and 4m wide in the northern part. The excavation targeted properties fronting Packer Street which were demolished during the construction of Town Hall Square in the 1860s.



Above:
Photograph of
the southern
end of Packer
Street with
Church
Steps behind
(courtesy of
Touchstones
Rochdale,
Rochdale Arts
& Heritage
Service)

Left: Trench
location on a
modern OS
map

The earliest deposit discovered in the excavation was a layer of sub-soil from which sherds of late 17th-century and mid-18th-century pottery representing agricultural or horticultural land use in the vicinity of the trench prior to the mid-18th century.

A substantial brick wall was discovered across the southern part of the trench. This wall, which appeared to have been constructed in the mid-18th century, was orientated northeast by southwest and constructed of hand-made bricks with a stone foundation. The wall likely formed a property boundary between properties fronting Packer Street to the east and the gardens of The Wood to the west. A layer of silty garden soil was identified on the western side of the wall, likely representing horticultural activity within the grounds of The Wood. On the eastern side of the boundary wall, a long, rectangular brick building with a well-made stone slab floor surface was revealed. This building, which had been built before 1844 when it is depicted on the Tithe map, extended from the back of properties fronting Packer Street and could have been used as a workshop. It is known from documentary evidence that small-scale 'cottage' production was in operation along Packer Street during the 19th century. For example, at 13 Packer Street, Mary Casson the wife of a woollen weaver and her son Samuel supplemented the families' earnings by making ginger beer. The whole family showed an entrepreneurial spirit with Mary's daughter Elizabeth making toffee and another confectionary, whilst the youngest, Alice, was a dressmaker. By 1871, the business – now run by Samuel Casson – had grown and moved to larger premises on Molesworth Street. Here they manufactured mineral water and sold a wide variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.



0 5 cm



By the mid-19th century, the workshop building discussed above had been demolished and replaced by a small toilet block. The toilet block had two individual latrines which had been filled with ash and pottery 'dry waste' material, which was often used to seal latrines when they were put out of use later in the 19th century.

In the southern part of the trench another, larger toilet block was recorded. This toilet block had two entrances, an internal brick-lined pit, and a floor consisting of a stone slab inscribed with the letter 'W' or 'M'. To the east and north of the buildings described above were roughly-made external floor surfaces constructed from an assortment of different reused materials and also a brick drain capped with reused stone roof tiles. The presence of external floor surfaces and toilet blocks suggested that the footprint of the trench lay over the rear yards of properties fronting Packer Street.

At some point during the late 19th century, these structures were demolished, and the area was levelled. The demolition material was then covered with a new yard surface, formed of glazed bricks which had probably been specially chosen for their hard-wearing qualities. When superimposed on the Ordnance Survey Town Plan of 1890 it could be seen that the southern part of the trench, where the glazed-brick surface was recorded, falls within an open area that was accessed from Packer Street by an archway beneath a building fronting Packer Street.



Opposite

Top: Looking east of late 18th/early 19th century boundary wall with later structures behind

Bottom: Ginger beer bottle from the period when Samuel Casson was running the company around 1871. Recovered during the excavation at Rochdale Town Hall, summer 2021

Top: 19th century yard surface looking north-west

Bottom: Inscribed stone slab in floor of out-building

An intriguing spread of stone chippings and roughly worked sandstone blocks were found in the western part of the excavation area. This may have indicated the position where masons chiselled out ashlar blocks before they incorporated them into the walls of the Town Hall. Above this, the entire northern and central parts of the excavation area were sealed with made ground formed from tips of sand, industrial waste such as clinker and ash, and demolition material up to 2 metres thick. This made ground had been used to level off the slope down to the river and create a level bedding on which to construct Town Hall Square. Town Hall Square was presumably established by 1871 when the Town Hall was completed. It could be seen in the section of the trench that the 19th-century layers were covered by thinner layers of made ground and tarmac which represented the resurfacing of Town Hall Square during the 20th century.

Within the bedding layer for the surface of Town Hall Square was a fragment of a clay tobacco pipe, the design of which shows a crocodile in rushes wrapped around the bowl. The original pipe would also have included a reclining female figure with a dagger and hatchet on the stem. This particular pipe has been identified as one of the designs produced by the Manchester pipe maker Thomas Holland. Thomas Holland's pipe manufacturing business flourished from the early 1870s until the early 1880s when he sold the company. Some interesting pottery was also recovered, with two fragments featuring verses from the nursery rhyme Old Mother Hubbard date between c. 1813-34. Other transfer printed wares included "field dots" type with oak leaf border dating approximately between c. 1820-50.



0 5 cm



Above: Clay tobacco pipe with crocodile in rushes decoration

Below: White earthenware plate featuring verses from the nursery rhyme Old Mother Hubbard

Opposite

Volunteers excavate the remains of 19th-century outhouses while a tour is given to members of the public (photograph courtesy of Reece Horton)



0 5 cm

Community participants taking part in the excavation successfully learnt how to clean archaeological surfaces using trowels, remove thicker deposits and record the archaeology with plans, sections and context sheets. In total 474 school pupils and community group participants took part in the excavation and were provided training by Salford Archaeology staff members. The majority of the participants had not taken part in an archaeological excavation before but following their attendance, a vast proportion said that they would like to take part in another dig in the future. What is particularly encouraging is that most of the participants were aged between 0-18 years old and thus the community excavation has played a part in inspiring a new generation of archaeologists.

An outreach programme meant each day a site tour took place which was attended by the public. The tour included an overview of the site's historical background, a tour and explanation of the excavation area, and a presentation of the finds retrieved from the site. In total 658 members of the public attended the public open days and midday tours given by Salford Archaeology employees. Further outreach involved a total of 20 people attending the Arts and Heritage Resource Centre that was set up on-site. Overall, the project was a great success.



POST-INDUSTRIAL BACKGROUND

The late Victorian and Edwardian period was a time of optimism in Britain in part due to another spell of expansion in the textile industry. However, after the First World War, trade began to decline. But still, until 1935, Rochdale was classed as the third largest centre for spinning in Britain, although this was partly because other areas had begun to suffer a greater decline in production. Successful companies, such as Kelsall & Kemp Ltd, which operated from Butts Mill on Smith Street, were able to expand their premises into neighbouring mill buildings such as Duncan Street Mill and Bowling Green Mill, both of which had become disused. The company's products were sold all over Britain as well as being exported under the 'Doctor' trademark. In the 1920s the firm shifted to manufacturing dress cloth with artificial fibres and became a leader in ladies' outer ware. On the periphery of Rochdale, in places such as Spotland and Castleton large, new mills were constructed.

In the town centre commercial ventures thrived and venues catering for new social activities, such as going to the cinema, sprung up sometimes in obsolete civic buildings, like the old Town Hall which became Andrew's Picture House in 1908. As well as mass entertainment, Rochdale's mass public transport infrastructure in the form of the now electrified tram network continued to develop with bridge coverings over the Roch forming a concourse, at the junction of Smith Street, Drake Street and the Esplanade on which the tramway centre was sited.



Top: 'The last steam tram to leave Rochdale, May 8, 1905' (Mike Ashworth Collection)

Middle: A view of the G.L. Ashworth memorial in Broadfield Park from a postcard, c 1914

Bottom: Drake Street, c late 1930s (Mike Ashworth Collection)



After the First World War, a worldwide economic recession in 1920-1921 struck Britain's export-dependant economy particularly hard causing mass unemployment. However, as highlighted above, the textile industry in Rochdale did not go into decline until the 1930s when the Great Depression caused some companies to go out of business.

In the 1930s industrial and civic properties in Rochdale began to become disused either as a result of businesses closing or because a lack of space in the congested town centre restricted the construction of larger buildings. For example, Duncan Street mill was demolished, the fire station on Alfred Street was closed and a new, larger station was constructed on McLure Road on the edge of the town centre. The public baths on Smith Street could not cater to increasing demand, so new baths were erected on Entwisle Road in 1937 to serve the rising population. The 1919 Housing Act required local councils to provide homes in areas of housing shortage and early council estates were built on the outskirts of Rochdale in areas like Kirkholt, Turf Hill, Clover Hall and Boarshaw. These developments represent the housing aspirations of the interwar housing boom, which sought to provide quality living spaces with large gardens, typified by the semi-detached house. The national policy on house building, with an increasing requirement for social housing, continued into the mid- to late 20th century and low-quality 19th-century terraced housing was replaced, for example at Lower Falinge.

Other remnants of Rochdale's boom years had begun to disappear by the mid-20th century. The electric tram system was replaced by motor buses in the 1930s, the canal closed in 1952 and, due to a growing secularisation of society and a confluence of other factors, many of the town's chapels had started to close with some repurposed for alternative uses. A Baptist chapel on Harriet Street had, by the mid-20th century, become a joinery works which ultimately saved the building from demolition. The increasing number of redundant and obsolete buildings in the centre presented opportunities for redevelopment and many ex-industrial and residential properties were demolished to make way for new civic structures such as the bus station, multi-storey carpark, council offices and road widening schemes, which unfortunately obliterated the historic character of central Rochdale. This era of development placed an emphasis on providing for private car usage and in so created a road gyratory system which left pedestrians feeling alienated as they were ushered onto aerial walkways. Later in the 20th century, the Yorkshire Street regeneration necessitated the demolition of all of the shambles and market area ahead of the construction of a shopping centre, south of the town centre and a retail park was constructed where the canal basin and surrounding industrial buildings had stood.





Left: 'The multi-storey car park from Smith Street c 1970s (courtesy of Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service)

Above: Red Lumb Mill in Norden in its current use for residential purposes

Below: Rochdale town centre looking west, 1990s



The shift towards a retail and services-based economy, signalled the start of the post-industrial era in the last third of the 20th century, caused mass unemployment and a rapid exodus of wealth from industrial centres. However, some textile production continued in Rochdale, for example at Alexander Drew Mill, Spotland where textile finishing took place, involving the bleaching, dyeing and printing on cloth. In some cases, former textile mills continued to be used for different industrial functions or commercial purposes while some of the earlier, more rurally positioned mills have been converted for residential use. However, a survey of extant mills in the Rochdale district commissioned by Historic England found that since the 1980s, when 229 standing mills were recorded in a similar survey, only 102 still survived in 2017.

Over the last 20 years, a new wave of redevelopment has swept through Rochdale with the renewal and improvement or replacement of social housing on run-down estates while new houses have been constructed by private developers, often in partnership with the civic authorities. The old council offices and the multi-storey carpark were demolished to build a new transport interchange which integrates a new tram/light railway system with a bus interchange. The Rochdale Riverside development in the town centre has sought to regenerate the town centre by delivering new retail, leisure and commercial premises, and by relieving the area of traffic. Much of Rochdale Town Hall Square had been given over to car parking and through traffic but a currently ongoing regeneration programme will make this important public space once again an accessible promenade. The provision of pedestrian-orientated public realm and improved public transport services, and the restoration of the River Roch's natural habitat aims to act as a catalyst for wider regeneration in Rochdale.

The most recent round of redevelopment has roughly coincided with the introduction, in the early 1990s, of national guidelines presently covered by the National Planning Policy Framework, introduced in 2012. The inclusion of archaeologically related planning conditions within the planning process has, as this booklet demonstrates, led to an enormous increase in the amount of archaeological work that has taken place in Rochdale compared to before the 1990s. It has also meant that most of the archaeological investigations were funded by developers and were undertaken by professional archaeologists. The various investigations which took place under the current planning regime were devised in collaboration with the archaeological curators for Greater Manchester, which at present, is provided by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) at the University of Salford. If any proposed new developments are likely to impact upstanding or buried archaeological remains, the curators at GMAAS can provide planning advice to Rochdale Borough Council on how to proceed.

When it is thought that archaeological remains may be impacted, developer-funded archaeological work is usually undertaken in several stages. Under normal circumstances, an archaeological consultant will carry out a desk-based assessment of the development site. Historic maps, photographs and documents, and the results of any historical or archaeological work in the vicinity of the development are analysed to consider the presence and likely survival of any archaeological remains. As part of this process, the Historic Environment Record – a digital record maintained by GMAAS which contains details of all known archaeological sites in Greater Manchester – will also be consulted.





Professional archaeologists and volunteers take part in a community-led excavation at Rochdale Town Hall

If the desk-based assessment concludes that archaeological remains are likely to be present, an archaeological investigation will usually be recommended. Initially, this will entail an archaeological evaluation where a series of trial trenches will be excavated across the areas suggested by the desk-based assessment to have the potential to contain buried remains. The aim of this trenching is to determine the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains and, if present, to establish their character, date, and state of preservation.

If the evaluation identifies any areas of the site with archaeologically significant remains, which will be unavoidably affected by groundworks, then a further, more extensive phase of archaeological excavation may be recommended. During this phase of excavation, all the archaeological remains are recorded and all artefacts are collected. Following excavation, the records and artefacts are ordered, catalogued, analysed, and interpreted. An illustrated excavation report and a site archive are then produced, which are eventually deposited with a local museum, and if the results are archaeologically significant, they will be ultimately published.

GLOSSARY

HOLOCENE: the current geological epoch which began approximately 11,650 years ago.

HUNTER-GATHERERS: a catch-all term for a great diversity of subsistence practices finely tuned to local environmental conditions practised by communities who were likely nomadic. These groups procured food either by foraging edible wild plants, insects, fungi, honey or anything safe to eat, or by hunting game. Hunter-gatherers contrast with more sedentary agricultural communities, which primarily depend on growing crops and keeping domesticated animals.

PALYNOLOGY: the study of plant pollen, spores and certain microscopic plankton organisms in both living and fossil form.

BRIGANTES: an Iron Age tribal political entity controlling much of what would become Northern England.

DOMESDAY BOOK: a manuscript record of a survey of much of England and parts of Wales completed in 1086 by order of King William I. The king sent agents to survey every shire in England, to list his holdings and dues owed to him.

MOTTE-AND-BAILEY CASTLE: a rapidly built fortification consisting of two structures: a motte, which is a mound – often artificial – topped with a wooden or stone structure; and a bailey, a fortified enclosure situated next to the motte.

PACKHORSE TRAILS: routes used by packhorses to transport goods.

BREASTSHOT WATERWHEEL: a waterwheel where the water enters the wheel approximately at the level of the axis. Breastshot waterwheels were more efficient than overshot wheels and less vulnerable to flood damage.

NON-CONFORMIST: a protestant Christian who did not conform to the governance and usages of the established church, the Church of England (Anglican Church).

CARDING MACHINE: a machine used to disentangle, clean and intermix fibres to produce material suitable for subsequent processing

NIGHT SOIL: human excrement collected at night from buckets, cesspools, and privies and sometimes used as manure

MADE GROUND: a layer of earth or rubble used to build up the ground level

HENNEBIQUE SYSTEM: using steel bars to reinforce concrete slabs

FURTHER READING

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Copies of the detailed technical reports from the excavations by Salford Archaeology have been deposited with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.



Publications in the *Greater Manchester's Past Revealed* series are available from GMAAS within the University of Salford, and digital copies of all the volumes published between 2010 and 2021 can be downloaded at <https://gmaas.salford.ac.uk/publications/>

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It would of course have been impossible to write this booklet and have an understanding of Rochdale's archaeology without the contributions made by the numerous archaeologists who worked on the various excavations and investigations over the years. I am therefore indebted to those employees of Oxford Archaeology North, the University of Manchester Archaeology Unit, Gifford, Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England, ArcHeritage, Archaeological Research Services, Nexus Heritage, L-P Archaeology and Salford Archaeology who contributed to investigations in Rochdale, and to all others who have taken part in archaeological work in Rochdale.

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Clockwise, starting from top left: Rochdale Riverside Phase I; Rochdale, from Rochdale Town Hall roof; Scanning at Rochdale Town Hall; Preparing area for photo, Kitchen Street

For over a hundred years archaeologists have been investigating Rochdale's intriguing history and have sought to better understand the lives of those who lived there in the past. Archaeological work in the Borough has been carried out under different circumstances including amateur research, academic studies and developer-funded investigations. A recent wave of redevelopment in Rochdale has resulted in an upsurge of new archaeological investigations in the town, but, until now, most of this commercially funded research and fieldwork has remained unpublished.

This booklet presents the findings of these varied archaeological investigations offering new insights often not touched upon in historical documents and sources. The fascinating archaeology of Rochdale – representing a huge range of economies and societies from Mesolithic hunter-gatherers to Industrial workers – is detailed and explained, and illustrated with numerous photographs and images.



Front page: Rochdale Town Hall (courtesy of Steven Tamburello)

Back page: An extract from Blaeu Atlas Maior 1662-5, volume 5, Lancastria Palatinatus, showing 'Rochedale'



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