



## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS IN CHESTERFIELD 2022

### HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPERTIES INVOLVED

In this publication we give some historical information about the properties that are open in Chesterfield as part of 2022's Heritage Open Days.

We also have a handy guide available to the opening arrangements of all these properties. This is available from the Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre or to download from the Civic Society's website - [www.chesterfieldcivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-open-days](http://www.chesterfieldcivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-open-days).

### About Heritage Open Days

Established in 1994, Heritage Open Days is England's contribution to a Europe-wide movement aimed at encouraging more people to visit buildings and other places of historic interest, especially those not normally open to the public.

Co-ordinated nationally by the National Trust, the scheme depends on volunteers in every community who come together to promote the event every year.

In Chesterfield the Civic Society has taken the lead in coordinating Heritage Open Days and this year has succeeded in arranging for about a dozen buildings to be open at some point between September 9 and 18. Some of these are well known, others less so. All the events are free to attend.

### Elder Yard Meeting House

The oldest surviving nonconformist place of worship in Chesterfield, Elder Yard chapel dates from 1694 and was originally the only meeting place for Protestant Dissenters in the town apart from the Quakers. In the eighteenth century the building was shared by Congregationalists and Independents, who later built their own chapels, and since the early nineteenth century Elder Yard has been the home of a Unitarian congregation. The congregation once had a Sunday school on Saltergate, which survives and is now occupied by shops and a children's nursery.

The present layout of the chapel grounds dates from the 1930s, when Elder Way was built on the site of a narrow alley running from Saltergate to Knifesmitgate. A new entrance to the chapel was made, giving a better view from the road. Despite these and other changes, the chapel remains a quiet backwater in the midst of a busy town, and the building, both inside and out, reflects the understated dignity and solidity of early nonconformity.

### **Rose Hill United Reformed Church**

An Independent congregation built a meeting house in one of the yards behind Low Pavement in about 1778. Numbers grew and in 1822 the congregation acquired a plot of land on Soresby Street, then recently been laid out between the Market Place and Saltergate, where a chapel was opened in 1823. It later joined the Congregational Union and in 1972 became part of the United Reformed Church.

Externally, the stone-built chapel, with its simple, clean lines, has changed little in two centuries, apart from the addition of schoolrooms at the back and a meeting hall alongside. The building of Rose Hill in the 1930s made it possible to create a much-improved main entrance.

Inside, the chapel has been carefully modernised to suit the needs of modern worship, retaining the outstandingly good acoustics which it has enjoyed since it was built.

### **Ragged School, Markham Road**

Founded in 1878 by members of Soresby Street Congregational Church, the Ragged School took over premises first built as a lace factory, one of many such workshops erected in the yards behind Low Pavement, now been largely swept away.

Ragged schools were Sunday schools opened in poor districts, such as the slums in this part of Chesterfield. No fees were charged and the school relied on the generosity of wealthy townspeople, especially members of the various nonconformist chapels.

The school acquired a new frontage when Markham Road was built in 1911 and soon afterwards another room was added to the original building. The school survived the vicissitudes of the twentieth century, including the rise of State education and the decline of religious observance, and continues today as a non-denominational Evangelical chapel, the last survivor of many missions to the poor of Victorian Chesterfield.

### **St Thomas's Church, New Brampton St Thomas's**

was the first modern Anglican church to be built in Chesterfield to serve the expanding suburbs. Consecrated in 1831, it predates Holy Trinity, Newbold Road, by a few years. St Thomas's is a typical 'Commissioners' Church', one of many built throughout the country with the aid of government grants to fill gaps in the Church's coverage of new industrial areas like Chatsworth Road.

Locally, the Jebb family of Walton Lodge and the 6th Duke of Devonshire (as lord of the manor) were leading promoters of the new church. St Thomas's is a tall, narrow, rather plain building, to which a chancel was added in 1888. Inside, the nave ceiling has colourful stencilling of 1902 and a reredos of 1919. In recent years St Thomas's has perhaps become best known for its very successful church centre, opened in 2011.

### **Holy Trinity, Newbold Road**

The second suburban church to be built in Chesterfield, Holy Trinity was consecrated in 1838 and served the middle-class suburb that was then growing up along Newbold Road, Sheffield Road and

new roads laid out between them, of which Abercrombie Street was the first. The site was given by the 6th Duke of Devonshire.

The church stands in a large burial ground with a Rectory alongside. Holy Trinity was traditionally the standard bearer of Low Church Evangelicalism in Chesterfield, in contrast to the High Church, Anglo-Catholic ethos of the Parish Church, both have in recent decades more closer to middle of the road Anglicanism.

The church is notable as the burial place of George Stephenson, the railway engineer, who died at Tapton House in 1848. As well as a monument over his grave, there is a memorial window given by his son Robert.

### **St John the Evangelist, Newbold**

St John's was opened in 1857, mainly to serve the growing working-class population of Whittington Moor (the western half of which in fact lay in Newbold), but was built in the wealthier rural part of the parish. The church, together with an adjoining rectory and a National (i.e. Church of England) school alongside, both dating from the 1860s, form an attractive group. The school moved to new premises in the 1960s, when the older building became a youth club.

The church itself was extended in 1957 with the addition of wide aisles on either side of the nave, as attendance grew following the building of large housing estates in Newbold after the Second World War. A new parish hall was added on the north side of the church in 1989.

### **SS Augustine's, Birdholme**

Dedicated, uniquely in the Church of England, to both St Augustine of Hippo and St Augustine of Canterbury, the church on Derby Road is the successor of a mission founded in 1863 to serve the poor working-class district of Birdholme. The housing there grew up as coalmining, iron-smelting and engineering developed on the south side of Chesterfield.

The need for a new church became more urgent with the building of the St Augustine's housing estate in the early 1920s. The first phase was consecrated in 1929 after years of fund-raising by the Parish Church and local residents. The church was extended to its present size in 1952.

By far the most striking modern church in Chesterfield, both externally and internally, SS Augustine's has for almost a century struggled in increasingly difficult circumstances to maintain a Christian presence in this part of the town.

### **Spital Cemetery**

Opened in 1857 as a joint venture by Chesterfield Corporation and the township of Tapton (which lacked a church with a burial ground), Spital cemetery is a good example of an early Victorian 'park' cemetery, laid out on an attractive sloping site with winding walks and plenty of trees.

A lodge stands at the entrance from Hady Hill, from which the main drive leads to a pair of mortuary chapels, one for the Church of England and the other for the free churches, which have recently been converted into a private residence.

The cemetery contains a rich variety of Victorian and later monuments, including many belonging to leading Chesterfield business and professional families. There are also 42 gravestones erected and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, commemorating those who died in both World Wars.

### **Revolution House, Old Whittington**

Maintained since soon after the Second World War as a small museum by the Borough Council, the Revolution House is traditionally identified as the alehouse named the Cock & Pynot ('pynot' is a local dialect name for a magpie) at which the 4th Earl of Devonshire met some of his fellow conspirators in 1688 to plan what became known as the Glorious Revolution.

This was the plot which removed James II from the throne and replaced him with the Dutch ruler, William of Orange, and his wife Mary, the daughter of Charles II. The event was commemorated with great enthusiasm in 1788, when this modest alehouse was lighted on by local antiquaries as a monument to the Glorious Revolution.

It remains an attractive feature in the centre of Old Whittington and gives a good idea of the sort of houses that once stood there.

During Heritage Open Days there is a display at the Revolution House on Joseph Paxton, the 6th Duke of Devonshire's landscape gardener.

### **Chesterfield Museum Stores**

Chesterfield Museum is currently closed while a major refurbishment takes place. During this period staff are offering to show visitors round the museum stores in Hasland.

All museums have material which cannot be exhibited as part of their permanent display, which is often of great interest, and an opportunity to see some of it is well worth taking. In particular Chesterfield Museum has a nationally important collection of the distinctive brown earthenware made at Brampton, Whittington and elsewhere locally between the late seventeenth century and the late twentieth, including moulds and other ancillary items.

Some of this material will be on view during visits arranged in conjunction with Heritage Open Days.

### **Chesterfield Football Club**

The present Chesterfield Football Club traces its origins from a club founded in 1866 and for most of the time since then occupied what became known as the Recreation Ground near the western end of Saltergate.

In 2010 the club moved to a very fine new stadium at Stonegravel, to the north of the town centre, which remains one of the best equipped grounds in lower-league professional football.

Visits during Heritage Open Days will provide an opportunity for a behind-the-scenes tour of parts of the stadium not usually seen by spectators on match days. These visits must be pre-booked.

## **Tapton Lock Visitor Centre**

The Chesterfield Canal, linking the town to the Trent at West Stockwith via a 46-mile route through the Rother valley coalfield and rural north Nottinghamshire, was completed in 1777. Until largely superseded by the railways in the 1840s, it provided a cheap means of moving heavy goods to and from the town. The Rother valley section had become largely disused by 1907, when the collapse of Norwood tunnel severed it from the Nottinghamshire portion, and by the 1950s was in danger of disappearing.

Pressure from voluntary groups led the county council to acquire this part of the canal, which is being progressively reopened and will eventually be connected to the eastern half of the route.

During Heritage Open Days the visitor centre at Tapton Lock, which is modern, replacing an older lock-keeper's cottage, will be the venue for an arts workshop as well as a chance to try canoeing on the canal or join a trip on one of the Chesterfield Canal Trust's boats.

Published by Chesterfield & District Civic Society, 1 September 2022.

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