

The first recorded historical reference to Madeley dates from 727 when it was purchased by Milburga, Abbess of Wenlock Priory. The Saxon name means 'Madd(d)'a's clearing – Madda being an Anglo-Saxon personal name. By the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 Madeley was valued at 50 shillings – the manor of Birmingham was valued at 20 shillings! In 1269 Madeley achieved town status with the granting of a charter for a weekly market and an annual fair.

Madeley has a number of listed buildings and sites which reflect its prosperity and historical significance. Madeley Court **13** dates mainly from the late 16th – early 17th centuries with traces of 13th century fabric. It was built as a grange of Wenlock Priory. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries it was bought in 1553 by Robert Brooke, sometime Speaker of the House of Commons, and stayed in his family until the 18th century. Robert's grandson, Sir Basil Brooke (1576-1646), was a founding father of the Industrial Revolution. Madeley Court was also tenanted by Abraham Darby I from 1709 until his death.

Upper House **9** in Church Street was built c.1621 by Francis Wolfe. Its barn was used as a hiding place by the future King Charles II during his flight after defeat at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. Also in Church Street is 'The Little Haye' – a two-bay medieval hall which is one of the oldest buildings in Madeley – as well as a number of fine 17th and 18th century buildings including Madeley Hall with its coach house, barn and stables; Hall Cottages; The Old Vicarage and St. Michael's church **7**.

St. Michael's was rebuilt in its present, octagonal, form in 1796 to replace an earlier church on the same site which had become unstable. The 'new' church is one of only two buildings in Telford actually designed by Telford himself. A series of memorials to the Brooke family can be seen on the upper exterior of the church. In the churchyard are several cast-iron tombs including those of the ironmasters William Baldwin (1822) and R.R. Anstice (1853) as well as the cast-iron chest tomb of John Fletcher. Fletcher, who was Swiss-born, was vicar of Madeley in the late 18th century. He was one of the principal theologians of the 18th century Evangelical Revival and was a close friend of John Wesley one of the founders of Methodism as a result of which the

Methodist movement flourished in this area. Fletcher's wife, Mary, a prominent lay preacher, is buried with him. The Fletcher Methodist Chapel in Court Street, built in the classical style, was opened in 1841 to replace an earlier Wesleyan Chapel in Church Street which had become too small for the congregation. The original Wesleyan Chapel became a C.of E. Infants' School in 1853. The old National School, built in 1841, is also in Church Street. The Anstice Memorial Institute **9** was built in 1868. It was designed in Italianate style by John Johnson of London as a memorial to John Anstice, of the Madeley Wood Company.

Between the 17th and 19th centuries much of the High Street and the present Station Road were developed and their timber-framed cottages replaced by the buff-coloured houses, terraces and shops which still remain. A market hall was built in 1870 at the top of the High Street and now serves as the offices of Madeley Parish Council. The upper ends of Park Street and Park Lane contain a number of fine houses which were the homes of the men who operated the local pits under 'charter' from the landowners and part of this area was once known as 'Chartermasters' Row'.

The appearance of modern Madeley was, probably more than any other area of Telford, shaped by the Industrial Revolution. By the late 18th century Madeley was a thriving centre of the coal, iron and clay industries within the Coalbrookdale Coalfield. The spoil heaps of former pits still dominate the landscape with the largest remaining, that of the former Meadow Colliery, **2** visible for miles around. Many were planned with Scots Pines and sweet chestnut as part of a 'job creation scheme' during the depression of the late 1920s and 1930s while their oak and birch cover is the result of natural regeneration.

The earliest mines in the area were simply tunnels driven into the hillside following the seams of coal that outcropped along the sides of the Ironbridge Gorge. By the 18th century deep mines with vertical shafts were being sunk in the parish to follow the coal seams as they dipped away to the north and east, with the first steam pumping engine in 1719 allowing miners to work the deeper, wetter seams. One of these deep mines the Brick Kiln Leasow or 'Lane' Pit **1** was the scene of

Madeley's worst mining disaster in 1864 when the 'Nine Men of Madeley' (the youngest, William Onions was a boy of 12) were killed when the loops of chain on which they were raised and lowered became unhooked from the winding rope as they were ascending the shaft and they were hurled to the bottom of the pit. Their iron-topped communal grave can be seen in St. Michael's churchyard.

By the 18th century the area was crisscrossed by a complex network of tramways connecting the various pits, lime workings and ironworks. A spectacular relic of this system can be seen at Blists Hill, near the All Nations pub, where Baguley's Wind **3**, a 19th century tramway inclined plane connected the Meadow Colliery with Blists Hill Ironworks via the lofty wrought-iron lattice Lee Dingle Bridge. Two similar inclined planes, this time carrying small tub boats, could be found on the Shropshire Canal at Windmill Farm (on the edge of the parish near present-day Brookside) and at Great Hay **5**. These inclines were mainly operated by gravity on a counterbalance system, the weight of a loaded boat being used to raise an empty one in the opposite direction.

In 1832 the Madeley Wood Company moved its ironmaking operation from Bedlam Furnaces near Ironbridge to Blists Hill **4** on the banks of the Shropshire Canal **6**. Using limestone from Lincoln Hill and local coal and iron ore these furnaces continued to produce top quality pig iron until they were closed in 1912. The three furnaces of Madeley's other ironworks, the Madeley Court Works, had been closed in 1902 and are now only remembered in the name of the nearby pub.

The remains of Blists Hill Ironworks now form the centrepiece of a Victorian working museum containing many buildings of historical interest. These include the mid-late 19th century brickworks, canal wharf, the Blists Hill mine (which was worked on alternate weeks for clay and coal) and the world's last working wrought-iron works. The brickworks closed in 1933 and the neighbouring open-cast clay pit (partly infilled) is now the lower part of the museum car park.

Modern-day Madeley is a populous and vibrant part of Telford. The 'model' residential estates of Sutton Hill and Woodside were among the first to be built in the late 1960s. Madeley's past heritage, however, remains as an enduring reminder of heroic times.

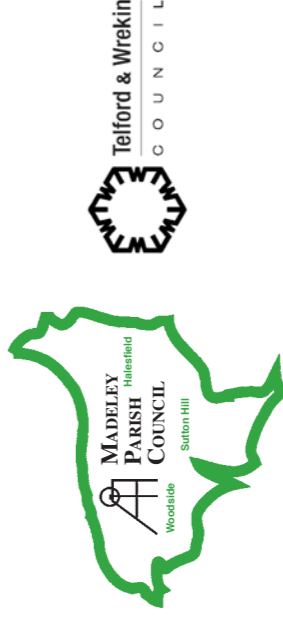
South Telford

Rights Of Way Project

Madeley Parish Council is a partner in STROWP, a project set up to define and improve access for rights of way throughout five parishes in the south of Telford. The other partners are Telford & Wrekin Council and the Parish Councils of Stirchley & Brooksids and The Gorge..

Wherever relevant, waymark discs are used to signify direction – yellow arrows for footpaths, blue arrows for bridleways.

SPONSORED BY:



For further information please contact:

Alec Connah, STROWP Project Officer
c/o Progress House
Stirchley, Telford TF3 1FA

Tel: 01952 525103

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MADELEY AROUND ROUTES



Lee Dingle Bridge

Please remember the following points when you visit public footpaths:

- Please leave gates as you found them
- A number of paths cross private land or are near to houses – keep dogs (and children!) under control and keep noise to a minimum
- Take your litter home with you
- Report any problems, obstructions or suggestions for improvement to STROWP (contact details at bottom of next page), or Madeley Parish Council, Jubilee House, High Street, Madeley (tel. 01952 567280)

More details of places of interest in the Madeley area can be found in "The Madeley Tree Trail", a leaflet produced by Madeley Parish Council's Tree Wardens (copies available from Jubilee House and Madeley Library); and the website of Madeley Local Studies Group:

www.localhistory.madeley.org.uk