Welcome to Hammersmith

We invite you to read on and find out more about the history of this area.

Until the Butterley Company purchased the land early in the 19th century and built a number of semi-detached and terraced houses, Hammersmith was a small hamlet.

The terraced houses were known as "Poker Row": it was said that the tenants knocked on the walls with a poker to warn neighbours that the rent man was around!



Hammersmith – early 20th Century, with the cinder breaker on Cinder Bank in the background

A geological survey of a large area around Ripley during the years 1817-27 shows pits near Padley Hall at Hammersmith.

A house on the site of Padley Hall was probably the home of the le Luys family in the 14th century. The family name evolved into Lowes, and the road from Ripley to Pentrich that passes through Hammersmith was known as Lowes Hill Lane. This was the main road, but was probably only a poorly maintained path. Everyone from Ripley who went to the Parish Church at Pentrich must have used this path every Sunday.

Padley Hall has Elizabethan origins, but was substantially improved in the 17th century.

In 1679 Robert Fearne of Padley Hall, a Quaker, was sent to prison for not paying a tithe of one shilling and sixpence. Quakers did not recognise the role of priests, which the tithe supported, and so in conscience refused to pay the tithe. On his release he left for Pennsylvania in 1682, becoming one of the first settlers, seeking freedom of worship.



Padley Hall © picturethepast.org.uk

As early as the 13th century coal and ironstone were mined in this area. The site that is now a business park was a wire works into the 20th century. The chimney was demolished brick by brick in 1978.

TJ Castledine has written that the Cinderbank in Hammersmith was always considered to be part of the Butterley Company's foundry. A rail link with the works allowed used foundry sand and scrap castings to be transported to the site for burial, making it a lucrative site for scrap metal! Much of the sand etc. was used as infill for the new A38 in the mid 1970's.

Nearby Pentrich Colliery was employing the men of the village from 1850, though mining could have taken place here in medieval times, as evidence of bell pits was found when the land was being reclaimed in the 1980's. The colliery was to the south of the railway and mainly to the west of Asher Lane.



Pentrich Colliery

The development of railways at Hammersmith led to an unusual "triple" bridge being needed.

A railway line passed over an accommodation track for the Cromford Canal - originally used by towing horses whilst their barges negotiated Butterley Tunnel - and the Butterley Company's branch from Buckland Hollow Junction on the Ambergate-Pye Bridge line. This served the collieries at Lower and Upper Hartshay before continuing to Butterley Ironworks, Brittain Pit and Swanwick Junction.



Double Bridge at Hammersmith © picturethepast.org.uk

The arrangement here was quite unusual as the Butterley Company's line crossed the Cromford Canal whilst another bridge took the Heanor branch over both the canal track and the mineral railway.

In 1976 the top part was demolished and the bottom part filled in to make way for the A38 Ripley by-pass.

Installed by Ripley Town Council. Written by Ian Yates. Thanks to Peter Smith, Linda McCormick and Ripley and District Heritage Trust for their assistance and information and to all those who have given permission for illustrations to be used.
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