

Many of the other names and places of Talke Pits have ancient origins



Jasmine and South Lodge

Built in the 1820s when the A34 was re-routed, these two gatehouses marked the start of Carriage Drive to Clough Hall. They have since become grade two listed buildings and have been restored with lottery

money, although they have lost the pillars, railings and iron gates shown in this picture. These small two roomed houses were occupied by local miners, in 1851 the south lodge was occupied by John Cumerbatch and his wife Mary, and later by William and Elizabeth Rhodes, while Jasmine Lodge was lived in by William and Mary Wakefield from 1830s to the 1860s, then by Joseph and Elizabeth Dale. While out at work, one of their wives would have acted as gatekeeper for guests going down to the Kinnersley family at Clough Hall.

Before the A34 was built carriage drive stretched roughly along what is now St. Martins road, with two older lodges somewhere in the region of High street and St. Martins. Gilbert Kinnersley of Clough Hall got £200 compensation for them being demolished and then rebuilt in their present position.

Next door there was a roadside café for truck drivers called the Lodge Café. Now this is Harecastle Court and hungry drivers go to the nearby Little Chef and Travelodge.

Crown Bank house

Once threatened with demolition, this old mine manager's house was saved and has since become a listed building in 1999, although it has lost its brick stable block and coaching house. It used to have a big bay window upstairs where manager Albert Henshall could keep a beady eye on those arriving late for work at the mines.



Red Street

One theory is that the name came from the local red clay from which Red Street's famous pottery industry sprang (many artefacts are on display in Newcastle museum) although another more exciting theory is that it was named after a bloody battle between the Anglo-Saxons and Danes (Vikings). There was once an open pit mine in Red Street, but local protest and the fact that most of the coal had already been taken by small independent mines meant that it soon closed, and has since been wooded over by the council. There was an alleged UFO sighting in the 1970s, but Red Street remains most famous for its monument (see picture below and section on 'monument road.')

Jamage Road

- There is a rumour that Jamage bank is named after a Roman Battle where the blood ran down the hill like jam. This is not the case! The road was originally called Gem edge and the Red Street Community was called Gamos, which were then run together to form Jamage.
- Jamage road used to be part of the Great North Road from London to Carlisle and was once very busy. Most of the pubs were clustered together in central Talke and here there was a smithy to serve the travellers. It was built over by houses in 1969.
- Jamage road, leads down to old Arbour Farm and the corner of what was once Prince Street in the 1890s. Although there is no proof that it was once used by Romans on their way from the fort at Chesterton, the geography shows that this was the most sensible place for them to walk between the hills.
- In 1777 most of the land was waste and was owned by John Wedgwood of Bignall End, who may have been the inspiration for the Wedgwood monument.
- There was once a Jamage farm, perhaps it was somewhere around here.

Arbour Street

Windy Arbour farm is still to be found in its original location although the building is not original. According to Parrot in 1733, the scenic walk to one side of the farm used to be the main Tunstall post road, which was two carts wide and so busy that it hollowed out with banks rising on either side and had to be turnpiked. It ran from what is now Tollgate Close up towards Red Street and beyond. At its end is the remains of the railway bridge, owned by Ralph Sneyd in the 1860s, which carried coal from the collieries up to Chatterley Valley. It was also likely to be a Roman road originally, as names that have arbour in tend to have Roman origins.

Most of the houses in Arbour Street were built between 1875 and the 1920s. Number 12 was built by a man for his parents after he had a windfall on the pools. The grey house opposite the farm, called Arbour Cottage, used to be

the old police house, until it was moved to Crown Bank, where it even had its own cell. Oak Tree Lane used to run near here before it was diverted.

High Street

- This was once called St. Martins bank and it still leads up to St. Martins church. This street used to have two Methodist chapels, where the clinic and day nursery now are. The modern clinic was added in 1990. Does anybody know when the village hall was built?
- Many of High Street's traditional shops have been replaced by newer nationally recognised chain stores. The post office has been moved into the Spar. Most of the houses were rebuilt in the 1960s and 1970s although some date back further. The Dyno-rod building at the corner with St. Martin's road used to be the home of the coal trucks who delivered coal door to door in the Talke Pits areas.

St. Martins Road

It was named after the village church and the patron saint of France, Martin O Tours who was a missionary around the same time as St. Patrick. This used to be village common land, where those too poor to live off their farm strips could graze their animals and collect berries. The continuously soggy patch in the field used to be the site of a series of springs. They once wanted to put a cemetery here, but local opposition soon put an end to the proposal.

Harecastle Farm

Harecastle Farm was built in the 1400s although most of the buildings we see today are Jacobean (dating from the time of James I, crowned in 1603). The windows are small and stone-mullioned because only small panes of glass could be made at that time. The metal rosettes help the building stay up after mining subsidence. The red brick building, which has since been joined on, used to be the coaching house, where the farm servants would also sleep. There was also a small pond nearby, where newts could be collected by adventurous boys. It allegedly cost over £1 million pounds to refurbish and turn the farm into a pub in the 1980s.

The field behind the Harecastle used to be called Hogs Back because of its shape and Sunday school outings and sports used to be held here. The trench is not an ancient earthworks but a ditch to keep animals from destroying the small Hardings wood, (known at the time as the Clump). There was also a small colliery on this hill.

Queen's Gardens

This was the site of Spout Hollow, where water from the spring near Springhead school (now covered over) was channelled down to a tap to be used in the centre of the village. This was also where the old miners' cottages of Colclough Street were. This street is older than our present Queen Elizabeth and might have been named after the Queen's street that was once here.

Chester Road

Chester is the Roman word for Town. Nearby Chesterton meant little town. The library on it was built in 1962, but I am not sure when its playground was built. Many of Talke's roads were named after nearby towns and cities, such as **Derby Road** and **York close**. The larger house opposite the library was built by Dr. Durber, who had his own surgery and dispensary in the high street.

Wedgwood and Monument Road

- These refer to Red Street's Wedgwood Monument and both were built as part of a council estate. The monument itself was built in 1850 and I once confidently wrote that commemorates the famous local Potter Josiah Wedgwood. Now I have heard a story that it refers to the squire John Wedgewood of Bignall End.
- The monument was struck by lightning in 1976 and was further damaged by gales and graffiti until all that was left was a stump. After much awareness raising by the people of Red Street, and an initial offer by the coal board which would depend on the council taking charge of the monument's upkeep, an artificial stone cap was added. This was only 36 of the original 72 feet due to the great cost. At one point it was suggested that it could be used as a radio transmitter, but no radio stations showed any interest.
- A beacon or bonfire was lit next to it to celebrate the millennium, but beacons had been here for a long time to mark events such as coronations.

Ashenough Road

Talke was built around a famous Ash tree. It was the tallest in England and could be seen from Delamere forest until it fell in a storm in 1683. There were initially five farms here called Higher Ash, Far Ash, Lower ash, Ash House and Ashenough, and this name has lived on in Ashenough Road.

Rectory View

A rectory is the home of a local Vicar. The parsonage to our St. Martins church was built by Mr. G A Moore possibly around the 1850s- do you know the date?

Crown Bank

- Crown Bank was named after the Crown Inn
- At the top of Crown Bank is Church farm that was built in the 1400's and is probably Talke's oldest building.
- The church and pubs which initially formed the centre of the village have their own section.

Swan Bank

- It is so called because its shape vaguely resembles the neck of a Swan
- There is an old Georgian house behind the market cross. In the 1930s this was the council offices taking births and deaths and in 1960s this was Talke Welfare clinic, but it is now back to being a private residence
- There used to be a public well here, as well as a Wheelwright and a Smithy on the bend. Nowadays, garages and petrol stations are more appropriate, we now have both on the other side of the crossroads.
- The home of the Alpha sheet metal company also has a long history, starting out as a quarry and becoming a fireplace company in between.
- The Working Men's club was opened in April 1964, to replace another one that had been across the road (where the closed off car park is now). Many a happy evening was spent here with bingo and cabaret acts until it was recently demolished in 1999. Building work continues here.
- Swan bank became infamous after a gunpowder explosion here in 1782 (see Talke's explosive past) and its many pubs became something of a tourist attraction.
- Before the underground reservoir tanks were built here there used to be tanks above the ground, with the water pumped in from Audley.
- There was once a swan colliery- perhaps this was based here?

Coalpit Hill

The large area of grass on the right hand side going down the hill used to be a Miners' community. Thomas Street is the only road that remains, but running in the same direction further down the hill was Wesley Street. These were joined in the middle by John Street, to form a letter H. These were probably all named after the founders of the Primitive Methodists Church at the bottom of the hill. Coalpit hill had shops, including a chip shop in John Street.

The Coppice

A coppice literally is a small wood on top of a hill, and maybe this is what the Coppice looked like before the colliery was opened here in the early 1800s. The opening of the pit was at the corner of Lyn Avenue and Walton Way. The estate was built as an ambitious project of the Kidsgrove Urban district in 1979 on top of landscaped slag heaps. The old mining community and their houses were demolished to make way for it.

Coppice Bank

This lane used to be known as 'nibble and clink' because of the sound that the various mine carts made going over the rails and junctions. At the bottom is Rigby's triangle, where legend has it that a pit-pony called Rigby was buried at the bottom of the Coppice. Have you ever heard either of these old terms being used- or are they just myths?

Walton Way

This was the scene of Miners strike around the turn of the century when they picketed and fought for the minimum wage.

Linley Lane

There used to be a riding school down here and a pathway that lead up to Linley Hall. This road soon became a centre for traffic thanks to the building of the Nelson Industrial Estate in the late 1950s, named after Lord Nelson of Stafford.

Tollgate Close

When the main road was turnpiked this was where travellers paid their tolls to have the gate lifted so they could use the road. Later this was where Smith's garage and shop used to be.

Parrot's Drumble

In nearby Finney wood there is Parrot's Drumble. A Drumble is a narrow valley with a stream, which is a very accurate description, although our Drumble is distinctive thanks to its orange colour from underground ochre. There are no exotic birds here; Parrot was named after Richard Parrot who owned the area in the 1700s. It is now a nature reserve with spectacular bluebells in spring, and in the 1990s it even had its own clock on a tree- does anyone know if it is still there?

Bishop's Field

Bishop's field remembers an old horse called 'Bishop' who had been retired from Bunkers Hill Colliery when he went blind but was still much loved by local children. The field has since had houses built on it but when they were being built horse bones were excavated. Do you remember when this horse was alive?

Nearby places

The origin of Butt Lane is just as confusing as Talke's. Its name could mean that the Lane originally lead to archery butts, stretching back to a time when all villages had to be ready to provide archers for their lord in a time of war. It could also have been a ploughing term, with the lane leading to a field divided into strips known locally as Butts. A villager's strips were spread all over the field to make sure that each got a fair share of good or poor land.

Kidsgrove began its life as Kitcrew- but now the grove part refers to a wood or 'grove.' The Clough in Clough Hall means valley.

Knutsford is literally King Cnut's ford, the king who became famous by showing that even he could not turn back the tide.

Peacock's Hay means a place where deer hays or stalls were kept, shelters with hay where deer were kept for winter venison

When a Castle was built at Newcastle in the 13th century, it wasn't called a New-castle just because it was New but to distinguish it from the old Castle already built at Chester. When it later became the borough of Newcastle-Under-Lyme, the Lyme does not refer to the Lyme brook, which was named later, or the Latin words for boundary, but to the Lyme wood. The Lyme forest no longer exists today but its edge is still marked by the line of towns and villages that finish with under-Lyme. Maybe the wood was so named because it had a lot of Lyme trees or maybe it was named after a person?

Stoke literally means a holy place or a shrine. Stoke was initially a ford over the river Trent, and travellers placed offerings at a sacred stone to ensure safe passage. Gradually this religious site grew and changed to become the Stoke we know today.