



The Checkley Trail

**A guide to the historical points of interest
in and around the village of
Checkley in Staffordshire**

**By
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The Checkley Trail

*an insight into some of the history of the village of Checkley,
Staffordshire*

The medieval hamlet of Checkley in Staffordshire grew up in the shallow valley on the north bank of the meandering River Tean and its history goes back to the days of the Anglo Saxons. This booklet hopes to give you an insight into some of the history of the village.

There are Saxon Crosses in the churchyard which date from the 9th century. In 1086, the village was recorded in the Domesday Book when the landholder was said to be Otto, although little further is known about him.



It is possible that the area may have been visited even earlier by the Romans – there is evidence of a Roman road about a mile north of the village. There was certainly a Roman fort at Rocester, about 4 miles north of Uttoxeter which was founded in about AD69 and occupied until about AD400. That fort was on the Roman road from Derby to Newcastle-under-Lyme and onwards to Deva (Chester).

The line of that road can be easily seen from modern day maps which show it running from Rocester, through Hollington and into Tean and then on to Bylthe Bridge.

The Start of The Village

The Story of Checkley, Staffordshire

The village of Checkley grew up near to the road between Cheadle and Uttoxeter (now the A522) and it is centred around St Mary's Church. Most of the village is just to the south of that main road and thus through traffic does not pass through the village itself.

Until 1822 all the traffic between Tean and Uttoxeter would have passed through the village because it was only in that year that a new piece of turnpike road from the top of Church Lane to Deadman's Green was built. This road forms what is now the A522 main road. Prior to that time the route was through the village and then along Old Lane. Initially the village was just a small collection of cottages near to the church. By 1880 there were the cottages on Church Lane and the rectory was next to the church (since converted to flats). By this time the Red Lion public house was built opposite the church.

Close to the River Tean was Rectory Farm. This had originally been the rectory before the replacement was built next to the church. The Hutchinson Memorial School on Uttoxeter Road had recently opened in January 1880 with 49 pupils. The school was named after the Rev. William Hutchinson who was the rector of Checkley from 1839 to 1878. The public house on the main Uttoxeter Road was initially called The Cock Inn and later The New Inn, but in the 1970s it changed its name yet again to The New Broom.

In the 1880s it was decided that it was necessary to extend the churchyard and the lane to the east of the church was closed and another road, New Road, was constructed about 50 metres further east.

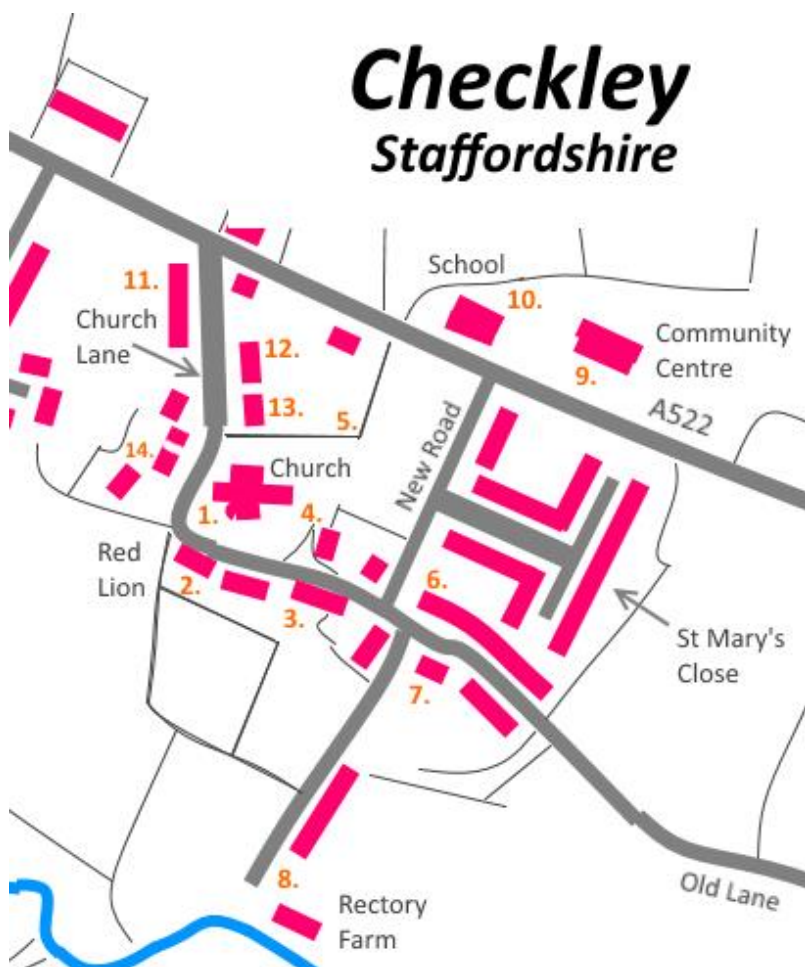
Over the period from the 1920s until the 1960s there were a few other properties constructed in the village. Then in the 1960s there was expansion of the village with the construction of around 30 houses in Cranberry Avenue. Barker & Shenton ran a garage on Uttoxeter Road to the west of the village and later the site was used as a depot when the new A50 was being constructed before it subsequently became the Badgers Hollow development in the 1990s.

During the 1970s there was also the building of further houses on land to the east of the village to form St Mary's Close and additionally along Church Lane to the east of New Road.. Also during the 1990s land at the neighbouring hamlet of Deadman's Green, (half a mile east of the centre of the village) was developed for further housing and formed Green Park. That land had previously been a garage and transport café but with the opening of the new A50 to the south of the village it no longer had passing trade and therefore closed.

Since around the millennium there has been little further development within the village.

In 2011 the estimated population of the village was about 360. The facilities in the village include a first school, a village hall, two pubs and of course the church. There is a bus services to Hanley, Cheadle and Uttoxeter.

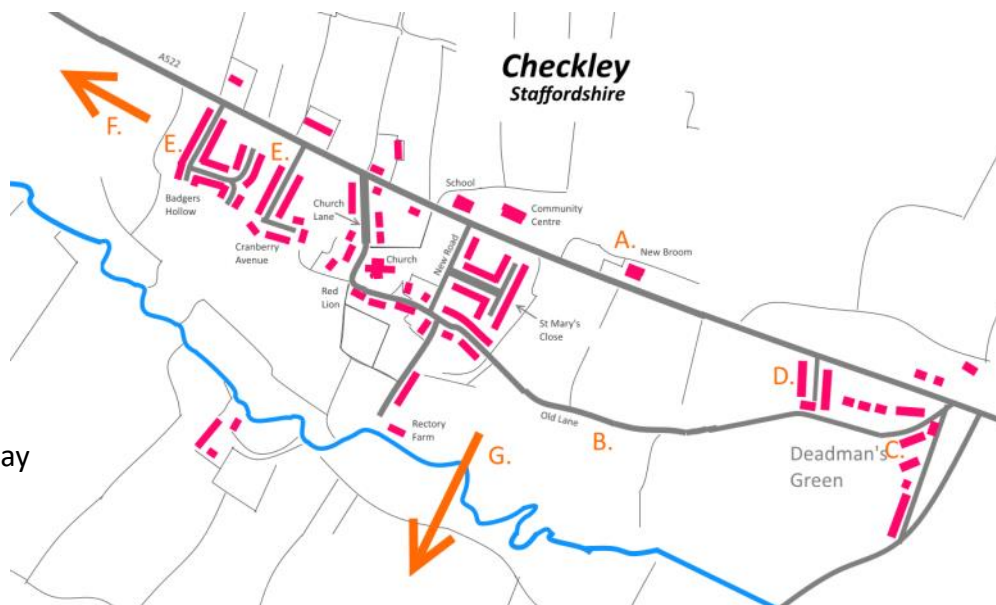
The Village Trail



1. Church of St. Mary and All Saints
2. The Red Lion
3. Manor House School and Manor Farm
4. Glebe Cottage.
5. National School
6. Bank Farm
7. Wisbar House
8. Rectory Farm.
9. The Community Centre
10. The Hutchinson Memorial School
11. Church Lane Cottages
12. The Old Post Office
13. The Old Rectory
14. White Horse Cottage

Beside the places listed above there are other points of interest beyond the centre of the village

- A. The New Inn
- B. Old Lane
- C. Deadmans Green and Ebenezer Chapel
- D. Green Park
- E. Cranberry Avenue and Badgers Hollow
- F. Checkley Cricket Club
- G. The A50 Dual Carriageway



Church of St. Mary and All Saints.

It is likely that there had been a centre of worship here in Saxon times which remained up to the building of the Norman church and there is evidence to suggest that the priests who served it came from Stone Priory.

In 1196, the year the Norman church was consecrated.

The tower of the present building dates from the twelfth century. The interior of the Church also contains Norman pillars on the south side.

The small Norman chancel was replaced in 1320 by the larger one, remarkable for the stained glass of its early fourteenth century east window and the sixteenth century carved stalls. Other features of interest are the thousand year old font, the Foljambe tomb, an effigy of a medieval knight and the seventeenth century roundels in the south window of the chancel.



In the churchyard near the thirteenth century south porch are the remains of Saxon crosses, thought to be preaching crosses (see below). On the wall to the right of the porch is a good example of a "Mass Dial". This was provided in order to tell the time for the purpose of Mass worship.

Also on the south wall of the church you can see several of the buttresses have grooves in them which are believed to have been made by archers sharpening their arrow tips while carrying out archery practice as was required by law back in the 14th century.

To the east of the Church in the extension to the churchyard, stands the monument erected by public subscription to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887.



The Red Lion

The late eighteenth century building facing the south steps of the Church possibly stands on the site of a much older hostelry and farm, which was up-dated for the turnpike traffic. It used to have extra stabling which was also pressed into use at times of church services to accommodate horses and carriages.



Manor House School and Manor Farm

From the mid-seventeenth century until the early 1900s, the two properties facing the Church and Glebe Cottage belonged to the Walters family who were blacksmiths and farriers in Checkley and the surrounding parishes. In 1837, William Walters resided in the property now known as Manor Farm and



Manor House, and part of it had been run as a private boarding school for young ladies by his wife since around 1800. From the mid-1840s to the mid-1860s, the school was kept by Miss Mira Weston and two of her sisters but it then closed.

Glebe Cottage

The house was built in the mid-nineteenth century by the Philips family of Heybridge to replace two old cottages. In the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, one of these, inhabited by Job Bull, was used as a meeting house for dissenters. In 1820, Job mortgaged his house, possibly to defray the costs of building the Chapel at Deadmans Green (see location C), but he was allowed to "enjoy the parlour for his own use for one shilling per annum".

A post office operated from here in the old pig sty at the rear of the house from 1994 to 2000. It was run by Mrs Kitty Milner.



The Ancient Lane, the Endowed School and the National School

The steps into the churchyard to the left of Glebe Cottage are all that is left of an ancient lane. Up until the 1880s there was a road from here which ran to the east of the church to the main Uttoxeter Road (at about the point where the garden of the modern house, The Spinney, abuts the churchyard). It connected the lane from the river to the fields on the north side of the present A522 and also to the road leading northward from Checkley up over the ridge on to Winnothdale and the Hollington road. During the 1880s it was decided that it was necessary to extend the churchyard and this lane was closed and another road, New Road, was constructed about 50 metres further east.



Endowed School

In April 1734 it was agreed to build a school to teach the children of Checkley and to pay the sum of £5 per annum for a schoolmaster. At this time the building, the Endowed School, was at the edge of the churchyard behind the Old Rectory. However the arrangement was short lived and by the early 1800s the building had fallen into disuse and there is no sign of that building today.

The National School

In 1840, a year after the Rector William Hutchinson's arrival in the village, he arranged for the building of a small school behind Glebe Cottage. It was supported entirely by the Rector and used as a Sunday School until 1874 when it became the Checkley National Day School. In 1879 a new, larger school was built on the opposite side of the Uttoxeter Road from the churchyard and the following year compulsory education for 5 to 10 year olds was introduced. This new school was named The Hutchinson Memorial School.

The National Day School ceased to function on the opening of the new school and the building stood empty for many years. It was later demolished and in 1903 the bricks were used to build an extension to the Reading Room at Lower Tean.

Checkley Memorial Garden and War Memorial

To the left of the path as you approach the steps into the churchyard from Church Lane opposite Manor Farm is the Memorial Garden and War Memorial.

In order to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II a Memorial Garden and War Memorial was built in 2005 on Church Lane between the churchyard and Checkley Glebe. This is a tribute to the men of the village who fought for the nation during the 1939-45 conflict. The inscription on the memorial reads:

1945 - 2005

*Celebration of 60 Years
A commemorative tribute to
the men of
Checkley, Fole and Lower
Tean
Who served this nation in
World War II*

*SARGENT WALTER
GRAINGER RAC
Killed in action 2 January 1942
Buried Halfaya Sollum War
Cemetery, Egypt*

*ARTHUR DIX
ROGER TROY
ALBERT NUTT
MARK PHILIPS
GEORGE BROWN
THOMAS BRASH
THOMAS KEEN
ARTHUR PILLANS
CHARLES PHILIPS
ARTHUR PATTINSON
CLARENCE WILLMORE*



Walter Grainger was serving with the 44th Royal Tank Regiment, R.A.C. when he was killed in action on 2 January 1942. He was aged 24. His wife, Ivy Rosina Grainger, and his parents, George and Elizabeth Ann Grainger all lived in Lower Tean, Staffordshire.

He was killed in the fighting occurred between 31 December 1941 and 2 January 1942 during the recapture the town of Bardia in northern Libya from the Axis forces.

The others mentioned on the memorial took part in the War, fighting for the country, and safely returned to the village.

The memorial was designed and carved in Hollington stone by local stone mason George Plant.

Bank Farm and Wisbar House

At the time of the 1837 Rate Book both properties were owned by members of the Walters family. Wisbar House was owned by Thomas Walters, while Bank Farm, was the property of John Walters and remained in the Walters family until the 1880s.

Wisbar House was not named as such at that time. It was not until a retired sea captain, Lewis Barker, moved there in the early 1900s. He named the property by using the second syllable of Lewis and the first of Barker. He was a recluse and fearsome in appearance to the local children, being tall with a beard and often wearing a skull cap. He was actually a very gentle man.

On the back wall of Wisbar house is a large plaque depicting a lady with long dark hair. No-one is quite sure of its origin but there is a theory that it may have a connection with the Georgian coaching era when the main road would have been along Old Lane before the turnpike road from Deadman's Green to the top of Church Lane was built.



Bank Farm House

New Road, at the side of Bank Farm did not come into existence until 1883 when the churchyard was extended.



Wisbar House

Rectory Farm

This house was used as the parsonage or rectory from medieval times until 1843, when it was succeeded by the property that later became the Old Rectory Nursing Home in Church Lane (see location 13). The oldest part of Rectory Farm was of stone and thatch but it was considerably extended between 1710 and 1715 by Rector George Roades with the addition of a brick parlour and rooms over.

When the Archdeacon of Stafford visited the house in 1830 he described it as a 'brick, whitewashed house in miserable condition'. The house remained in the hands of the Church Commissioners until 1913. The Reverend William Hutchinson briefly lived in the house from 1839, following the death of the Reverend Samuel Langley, until 1843, when he and his family moved to the rectory in Church Lane.

With the purchase of a new Rectory, the property and its lands became a farm, the rents paid by the tenants forming part of the Rector's stipend. Charles Prince was the first tenant, followed by Francis Stubbs and Thomas Holdcroft. In the early twentieth century the property was occupied by the Shoebottom family who considerably improved the condition of the land and laid out new gardens around the house.

In 1913, the property was bought from the Church Commissioners by Mr. John Halden and remained in the ownership of the Halden family until 1985 when it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. John Salt.

The Community Centre

After years of determined fund raising the Community Centre was built and opened in 1983. It was extended in 1998 when a stage area was added to the hall. In 2010 solar panels were added to the roof of the building which, on an annual basis, generally meet the electricity needs of the Centre with any surplus is fed back into the National Grid



The Hutchinson Memorial School

The Hutchinson Memorial School was built in 1879 in memory of the Reverend William Hutchinson who was the Rector of Checkley from 1839 until 1878. It was constructed on a piece of glebe land donated for the purpose, and originally there was a schoolhouse for the head teacher to the left of the school building when viewed from the road. The house was demolished in the early 1970s.



As can be seen the older part of the building (that built in the 1870s) was a brick building with a small bell turret. The bell was not a decorative feature in those early days. It is recorded that when the bell was out of service for a short while the school register shows that the children were late to school for nearly a week. When it was originally built there was only one classroom divided by a wooden partition and there was also a small kitchen. In the latter part of the 20th Century extra classrooms were added at the rear of the property.

The school was lit with oil lamps hanging from the ceiling until 1935 when the Checkley Silver Jubilee Committee agreed to donate money to have electricity installed as a memorial to King George V's Silver Jubilee.

On 5 September 1939 40 children and 3 teachers were evacuated from Manchester to join the children in Checkley.

In 1974 the school became a 'First School', taking children from age 4+ to 9. This was when the school became part of the three tier system of education in the Uttoxeter area. Generally, children move on to Windsor Park Middle School in Uttoxeter at the age of 9 (year 5) and then to Thomas Alleyne's High School at the age of 13 (year 9).

There are currently around 80 pupils at the school.

As has been mentioned elsewhere, Hutchinson Memorial School, replaced the earlier Sunday School that had been in the churchyard from 1840. It is interesting to note that the Reverend Hutchinson brought

The Hutchinson Memorial School—continued

about a revolution in education in the village. The marriage registers show that over 55% of Checkley people were illiterate when he came to the village in 1840 but by the time that the new school was built in 1879 less than 20% signed their names with a cross.

Also see 'Education in Checkley' towards the end of this publication.

Church Lane Cottages



In the 1837 Rate Book there were only three cottages recorded. The present Number 8 was converted to a dwelling soon after the Second World War from a stable and coach house which had been built on to the next house in 1860 which at that time was rented by a wheelwright, Thomas Brough. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the other two cottages had been beer houses at different times. From 1851 the one on the corner became a butchers shop, run by John Reeves..

The Old Post Office.

The Old Post Office was originally the coach house to the rectory (next door) and it was converted into the house that it is today by 1819. A large (infilled) archway at the back and a wide doorway at the far end of the house are some of the reminders of its origin. The red post box (now disused) was installed in the late 19th century. The small room in the house, directly behind the post box, was used as the Post Office from 1913 to 1993.



The replacement stables for the rectory, a few yards back from the house, and the rectory orchard, were cleared to build the new rectory on the corner of Church Lane in the mid-1980s.

Directly opposite the Old Post Office is Church View Cottage which is a listed building originally constructed in the late 18th century.

The Old Rectory

The Old Rectory was built in the late eighteenth century and at the time of his death in 1839 it belonged to the Rector of Checkley, the third Reverend Samuel Langley. However he was not living there at that time and the building was inhabited by his tenant, Joseph Walker. Instead the Reverend Langley had resided at Rectory Farm.



It was not until 1843 that it became the Rectory when the Reverend William Hutchinson, Rector since 1839, moved from Rectory Farm. It then remained the Rectory until 1985 when a new vicarage was built on the corner of Church Lane and the main road. The Old Rectory was initially converted into an old peoples residential home but in 2005 was further converted into 11 self contained apartments.

The new vicarage which had been erected in 1985 was sold in 2008 and became a private residence. Since then there has not been a vicarage in Checkley.

White Horse Cottage

This property stands on Church Lane opposite to the church tower. Until the 1840s it was the White Horse Inn standing where there had almost certainly been a hostelry since medieval times. The premises also included a blacksmith's run by William Beardmore of a well-known family of blacksmiths in the Tean area. Originally the back part of the building was let as a separate dwelling. It is now a private house.



Beyond the centre of the village

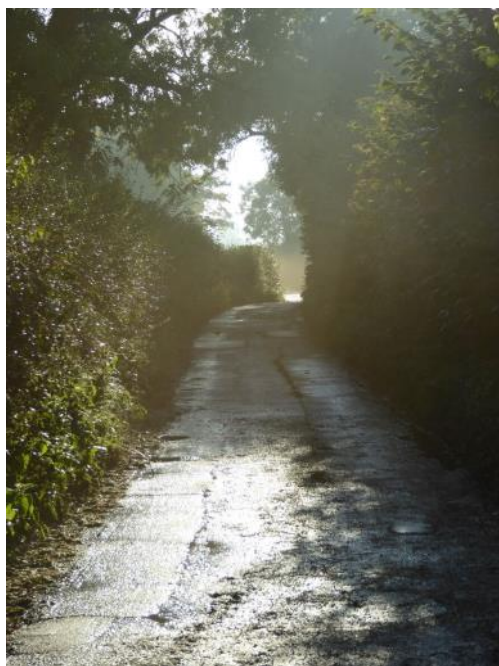
Points of interest beyond the centre of the village.

The New Broom

It was built between 1843 and 1850 as a beerhouse on the new turnpike road that had been built in 1822. It was originally known as The Cock Inn. It then became known as the New Inn from 1870 and continued as a public house changing its name yet again to the New Broom in the 1970s. It was then expanded to include a restaurant in the 1980s.



Old Lane



Old Lane between Checkley and Deadman's Green, or Badlands as it was originally called, formed part of the original Uttoxeter to Newcastle under Lyme turnpike system from 1758 until 1822 when it was bypassed by a new section of the turnpike road, the modern A 522. It is difficult to imagine that the narrow winding lane was once an integral part of one of the major cross-country routes of England. The roadway itself was used only by wheeled traffic or riders. Pedestrians used a raised footpath in the fields on the south side of the lane and the stone retaining wall of the bank on this side is still intact in some places.

Deadman's Green and Ebenezer Chapel

There are various theories about the origin of the name 'Deadman's Green' but it is thought to refer to a battle between the Danes and Saxons which it is understood to have taken place there, perhaps during the 9th, 10th or 11th century. It is said that three Christian Bishops lost their lives in the battle and they are now buried in Checkley churchyard marked by the fragments of three Saxon crosses (near the south porch of the church).

Today, Deadman's Green consists of about 30 homes mainly built between the 1950s and 1990s.

On the south side of Old Lane at Deadman's Green (about 100 metres from the junction with the A522) was the independent Ebenezer Chapel, built in 1821 to meet the needs of local dissenters, including those

Deadmans Green and Ebenezer Chapel—continued

who had broken away from the Providence Chapel in Upper Tean. Thomas Bull was the preacher there, the Bull family having been instrumental in the founding of the Chapel.

From 1830, when more chapels had been built locally, the number of services at the Ebenezer Chapel gradually declined and at the time of the 1851 Religious Census, it was declared closed. It became used as a storage shed and it was finally demolished in 1992. The name plaque has been incorporated into the facade of a bungalow built near the site.



Green Park

In the 1930s a transport café was constructed at Deadman's Green on the A522 (then the A50) about half a mile east of the centre of the village. By the 1980s it was run by Barry Brash. As well as the café there was a bar and accommodation for lorry drivers and they could also purchase fuel. Up to about 70 lorries would park up overnight at the truck stop.

However in the mid 1980s a new dual carriageway bypass was built between Uttoxeter and Blythe Bridge to take the increasing amount of traffic using the road. This was about half a mile to the south of the village. The A50 through Checkley was then redesignated as the A522 and the volume of traffic on the road decreased.

Around 1990 the truck stop closed and the land, that had previously been the truck stop, was redeveloped into a small housing development, Green Park. There is a plaque which bears the date '1936' on one of the new houses (number 7). The plaque came from one of the original buildings on the site.

Cranberry Avenue and Badgers Hollow

In the 1960s there was expansion of the village to the west towards Tean with the construction of around 30 houses in Cranberry Avenue.



Cranberry Avenue

Badgers Hollow



Also at that time Barker & Shenton had a garage at New Garage, Uttoxeter Road, selling new and used cars. They described themselves as "Appointed Agents for: Vauxhall, Bedford, Standard, Triumph, Morris, Wolseley, Riley, Jaguar". The garage closed in the late 1970s and the site was then used as a depot when the new A50 bypass was being constructed. With the completion of the road project the site was redeveloped and it subsequently became the Badgers Hollow development in the 1990s.

Checkley Cricket Club

The Checkley Cricket Club was founded in 1860 thanks to the, kind patronage of the Philips family of the Heybridge Estate, Lower Tean. Initially the Club played on various grounds within the Heybridge estate including a site near to the New Broom (formerly New Inn).

The Club's activities were curtailed during the First World War but in 1919 when Lt Col. H.B.Philips made the present ground at Four Trees available and provided a pavilion and mowers etc. The generous terms for the rent for the cricket ground stipulated by Lt. Col. H.B.Philips called for the payment of one peppercorn per annum, if so demanded.

Club cricket was played under his patronage until his death in 1951 and in accordance with his wishes, the ground and pavilion was purchased by the Club from his executors for the sum of £400 in 1954.

In the autumn of 1970 the Club embarked upon what was then their most ambitious project when a major ground levelling and drainage scheme commenced. This extensive work was undertaken by leaving the hallowed square undisturbed. A number of local sporting organisations kindly accommodated the Club for Checkley's 'home' fixtures during 1971 but cricket was able to resume at Four Trees on 1st August 1971 when Mr Michael Philips officiated in the re-opening of the ground.

The first phase of the pavilion rebuilding programme was completed in 1980. The second phase of the main clubroom was completed in April 1982 and the final stage comprising changing rooms and showers was achieved in 1984.

The Club plays in the Premier Division of North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Cricket League. Youth cricket was first introduced in the Club in 1976. Since then, the Club has maintained a successful youth development policy and it now has Under 9s, Under 11s, Under 13s and Under 15s competing in the South Moorlands Junior Cricket League.

The A50 Bypass Dual Carriageway

During most of the 20th Century the main road through the village had formed the main route from the North West and the Potteries through to Derby or to Leicester and then on to London. It was classified as the A50 with the introduction of road numbering on 1 April 1923.

By the 1970s it was planned to construct a new motorway, the M64 to link the M6 at Stoke-on-Trent with the M1 at junction 24 near Castle Donington. Its purpose would have been to allow traffic travelling from the south-east to the north-west to avoid the busy M6 around Birmingham. However it was cancelled in 1976 and the A50 was upgraded instead.

Locally, as traffic volumes increased, the narrow winding roads between Blythe Bridge and Uttoxeter became severely congested and construction of a new dual carriageway bypass was commenced in January 1983. The new road was built about half a mile to the south of the existing road and avoided the through traffic passing through Fole, Checkley and Tean. It was opened at Easter 1985 and the old road was reclassified as the A522.

Since then the volume of traffic on the new A50 bypass road has increased dramatically, particularly with the completion of the Doveridge bypass in 1998 and the Meir tunnel in that same year.

Changes to the Roads & Lanes of the Village

How the roads of the village have changed over the years

The National Picture

Before we consider the changes to the road and lanes of the village we need to look at the wider picture of the state of road across England. By the 16th Century the roads throughout the country were in poor condition: quagmires of mud in winter and rutted dust trails in summer. Travel, even over a short distance, was very time consuming, uncomfortable and hazardous.

At that time it was the responsibility of each parish to maintain the roads in their area but it was often beyond their resources to meet their obligations. To address this, during the 1700s, many of the major roads of the country were Turnpiked: in effect they were privatised. The roads were then run by Turnpike Trusts. Gates were erected across the roads and fees were charged to allow road users to pass. Those fees were then used to pay the wages of the toll collectors and to maintain the roads.

Often the road surface would be improved thus encouraging more people to use the better road. For example in the early 1800s, Scottish surveyor, John McAdam, promoted a new form of road construction using a road crust of small stones that would protect the soil underneath from water and wear.

The action of the wagons passing over the road would cause the broken stone to combine with its own angles, merging into a level, solid surface that would withstand weather or traffic.

Obviously road improvements on this scale were expensive and the Turnpike Trusts could borrow money against future tolls to pay for this work.

By the mid-1800s, with the advent of the railways the volume of traffic using the roads had dropped considerably and many of the Turnpike Trusts were falling into debt. In 1888 The Local Government Act brought about the formation of the County Councils and the responsibility for maintaining the roads passed to these new authorities: the roads were effectively re-nationalised. The assets of the remaining Turnpike Trusts were sold and the debts paid at whatever rate in the pound the funds would allow.

The Turnpike Through Checkley

The route between Newcastle-under-Lyme and Derby was one of the major commercial highways in Staffordshire and it was a significant stage coach route. In medieval times the route linked the Earl of Lancaster's castle at Tutbury with his 'New Castle' in the town which grew around it. As the Earls were also Lords of the Manor of Uttoxeter it was inevitable that Newcastle and Uttoxeter would have strong trading links making use of this road.

In 1759 a Private Act of Parliament (32 Geo.II c60) was granted 'for the repairing of the road between Derby and Newcastle' and as a result the Uttoxeter to Blythe Marsh Turnpike Trust was established. There were 4 toll gates on the 11 mile section of turnpike. They were at near the modern locations of The Parks at Uttoxeter, Waterloo Farm at Beamhurst, Near Fourtrees between Checkley and Lower Tean, and at Totmoslow near the junction of Cresswell Old Road.

Although Blythe Bridge is now used to describe the whole area, originally it referred to the bridge over

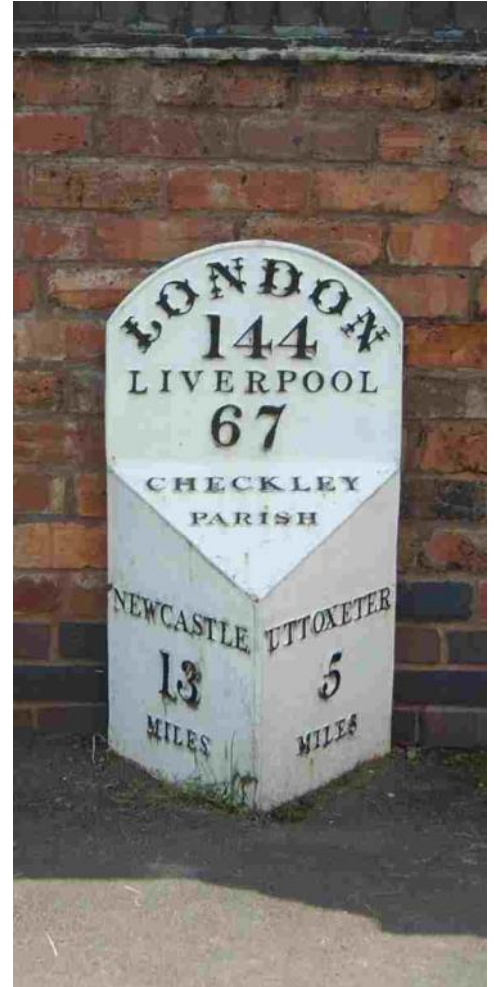
The Turnpike Through Checkley.—continued

the river Blythe near what is now Blythe Bridge station. Blythe Marsh was the area near the Duke of Wellington public house (now Tesco Express) and the turnpike ended at the junction of Uttoxeter Road and Cheadle Road.

This also became an important coaching route. Long distance coaches from Manchester to Birmingham joined the Blythe Marsh Turnpike at Tean and travelled along it to the rest halt at the White Hart in Uttoxeter.

At this time travellers coming from Uttoxeter would get to Deadman's Green and then the road swung to the left down the narrow and winding Old Road into the village of Checkley, past the Red Lion and the church and it would turn left at the top of Church Lane to follow the line of the current road towards Tean.

In 1822 a new section of turnpike road was built to link Deadman's Green directly to the top of Church Lane thus avoiding the village and this of course is the route of the current main road, the A522. As far as can be established the turnpike roads through Checkley were never 'McAdamised'.

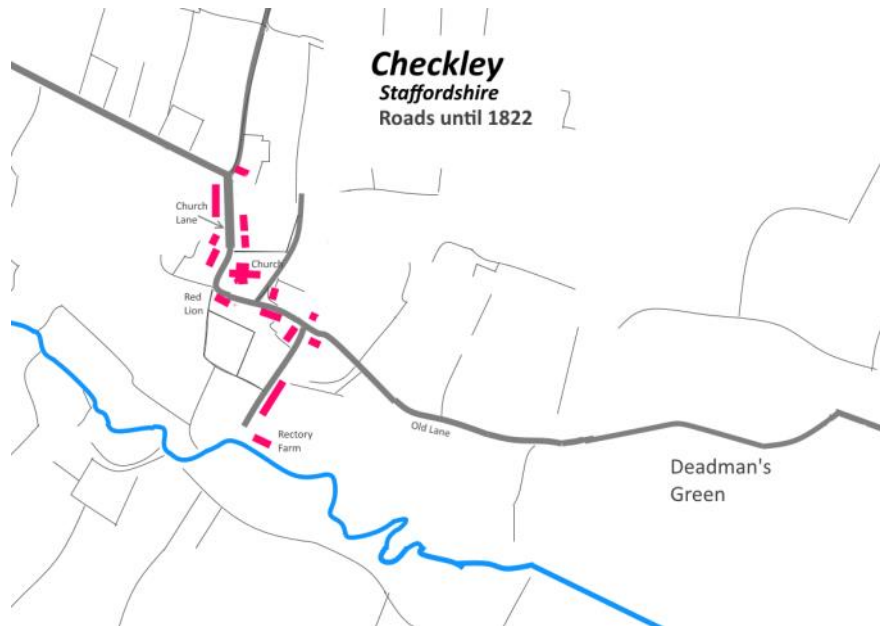


Under the 'General Turnpike Act' of 1767 the Turnpike Trusts were directed to erect mile-stones on their roads and an example of one of these can be seen near Green Park at Deadman's Green (see photograph). This one was made by I & F Thornehill at Burton on Trent in 1828.

On the following pages you can see how the roads have changed over the years.

The Development of the Roads of Checkley

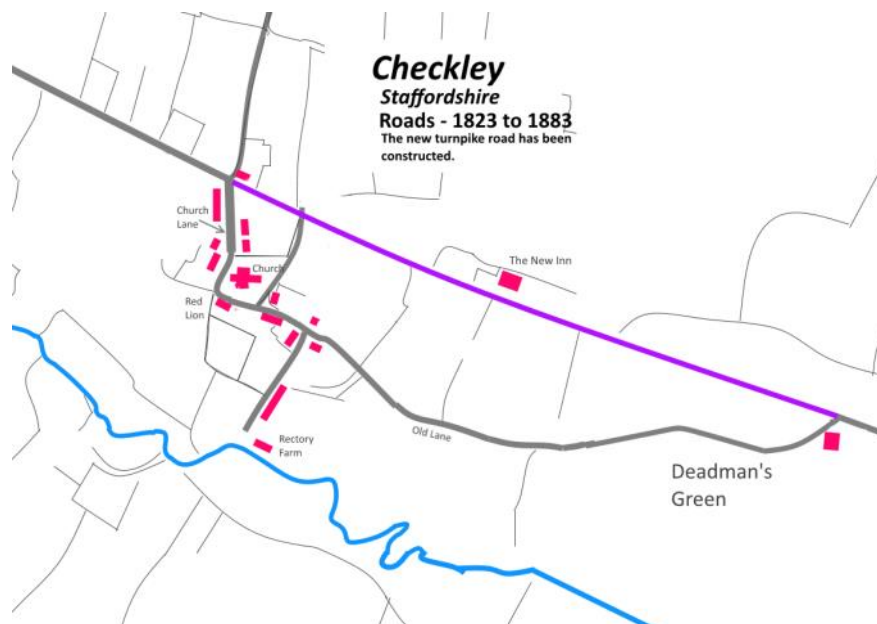
Before 1822



As we have seen on the previous page prior to 1759 all of the road and lanes in the parish were maintained at the expense of the parish. In 1759 the road from Uttoxeter to Blythe Marsh (Blythe Bridge) was turnpiked but it still used the old lane between Deadman's Green and Checkley. This relieved the parish of the expense of repairing the roads but it meant that as well as the longer distance travellers the local people would also have to pay to use the road. For example to travel to Uttoxeter they would have to pay fees at two toll gates.

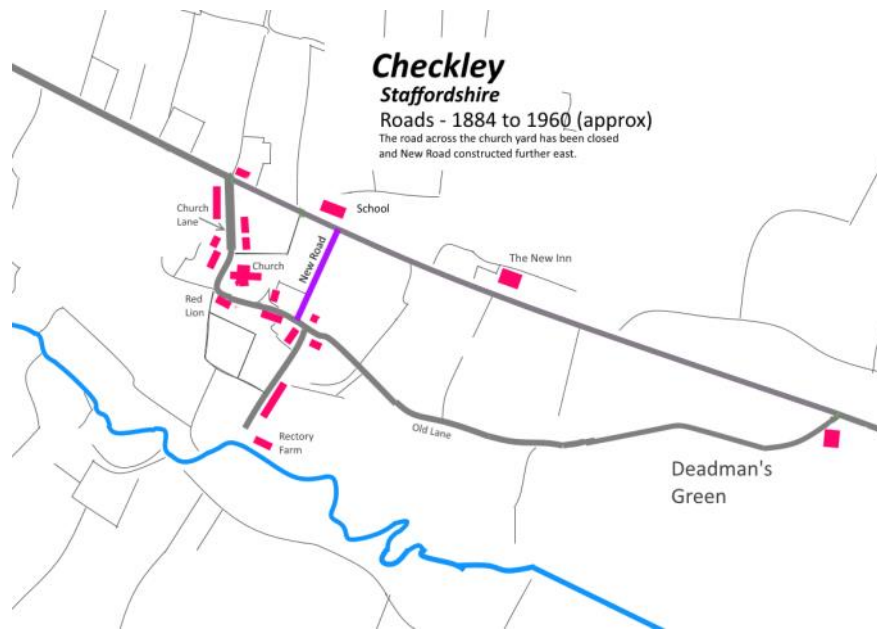
1823 to 1883

In 1822 a new stretch of turnpiked road was constructed from the top of Church Lane to Deadman's Green thus avoiding the need to travel through the village and down the narrow and winding Old Lane. In the 1840s a beerhouse (initially called the Cock Inn but now known as The New Broom) was constructed on this new road.



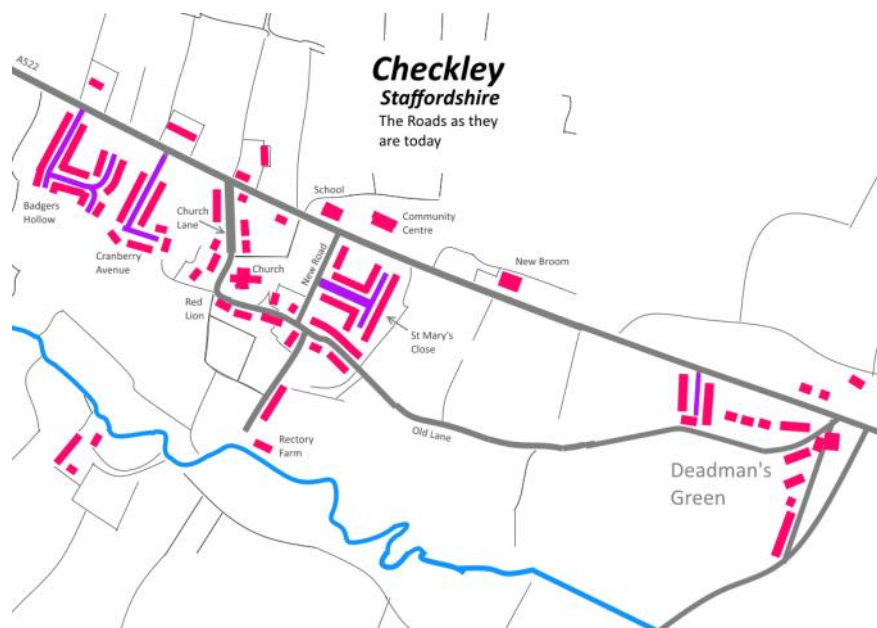
The Development of the Roads of Checkley—continued

1884 to 1960s



In about 1883 it was decided that it was necessary to extend the churchyard and the lane that ran from the steps by Glebe Cottage to the newly turnpiked stretch of road (at a point almost opposite where the school now stands) was closed and another road, New Road, was constructed about 50 metres further east. This allowed a new section of the churchyard to be constructed and in 1887 a memorial to mark the 50th anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign was constructed in this new part of the church yard.

The Village Roads & Lanes Today



The village then remained largely unchanged until the 1960s. However over this period travel became much easier and the village shops closed as people chose to travel to Uttoxeter or Cheadle for their shopping. In the early 1960s the need for extra housing brought about the construction of Cranberry

The Village Roads & Lanes Today—continued

Avenue to the west of the village centre. About 30 properties were constructed marking the start of the expansion of the village.

In the mid-1970s houses were constructed in a new development, St Mary's Close to the east of the village and more houses were constructed to the east of the village along Church Lane to the point where it becomes Old Lane.

In the 1990s the Badgers Hollow development was built to the west of the village on the site of the former Barker & Shenton garage and ten houses were constructed at Green Park on the site of a former transport cafe near Deadman's Green. As well as this there have been various infill building projects around the village and the building of five bungalows at Deadman's Green.

It should also be mentioned that between 1983 and 1985 a multi-million pound bypass was constructed (the A50) between Uttoxeter and Blythe Bridge which took most of the through traffic and unclogged the congestion along the original road (now the A522).

Education in Checkley

A brief history of the Checkley Schools

One of the earliest attempts to educate the children of Checkley was in April 1734 when it was agreed to pay the sum of £5 per annum from the public vestry “for the payment of a schoolmaster to teach a selection of poor children”. At this time the building, the Endowed School, was at the edge of the churchyard behind the Old Rectory.

However the arrangement was short lived and by the early 1800s the building had fallen into disuse. It was not until William Hutchinson took over as Rector of the village in 1839 that the idea of general public education was revived. There had been the private boarding school for young ladies at Manor House since about 1800 and this was to continue until around 1860.

In 1840, a year after the Rector's arrival in the village, he arranged for the building of a small school behind Glebe Cottage. It was supported entirely by the Rector and used as a Sunday School until 1874 when it became the Checkley National Day School. For a few years prior to 1880 there had been rumours of the introduction of compulsory education and in preparation for this Rev Hutchinson promoted the building of a new school which was financed by subscriptions from the Checkley parishioners and friends of the Rector. This school was built on the opposite side of the Uttoxeter Road from the churchyard. By the time that the new building was opened on 2 November 1879 the Rector had died so he did not see the finished building and in recognition of the fine work that he had done for the village over the previous 40 years the school was named The Hutchinson Memorial School.

The Rector was right – compulsory education for children between the ages of 5 and 10 years of age was introduced in 1880 although education was not free until 1891. There was however quite a lot of truancy as many parents preferred their children to work on the local farms or in the mills in order to earn a few pence rather than going to school.

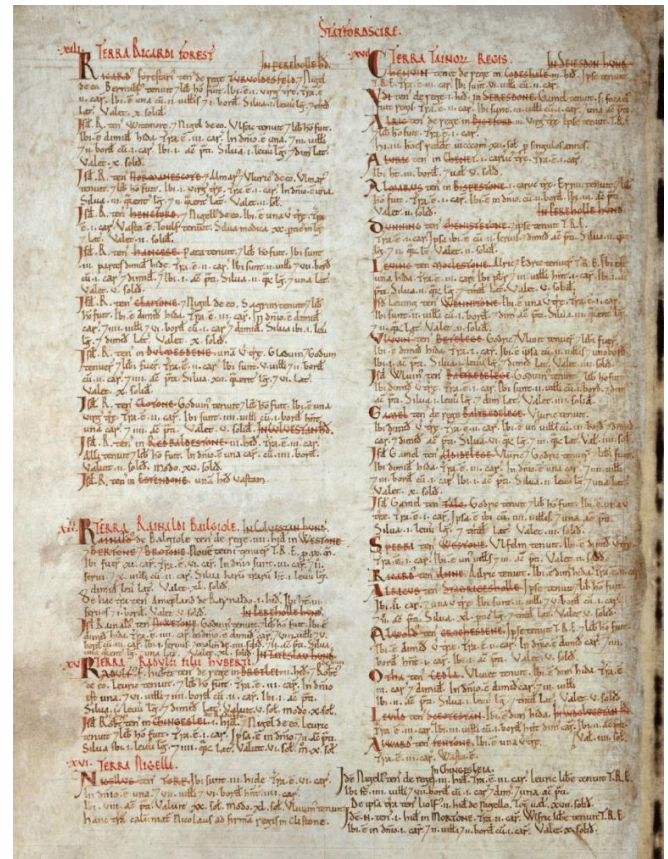
The Hutchinson Memorial School has gone on from strength to strength since it was founded over 130 years ago.

Checkley in the Domesday Book

Checkley has had a number of names over the years. At the time of the Domesday Book it was called Cedla but some of the various names over the years have been:

- "Calclinth or Calcuith" - In Saxon Times
- "Cedla" - In the Domesday Book of 1086
- "Checkeleg" - In the 1196 Feet of Fines (conveyance of land)
- "Checkley" - Modern day

All the place-names share the same derivation, which is from the Olde English, pre 7th Century personal name "Ceacca", and the word "leah", meaning a clearing or glade; hence, "Ceacca's clearing".



William the Conqueror invaded Britain in 1066 and some 20 years later he ordered a detailed survey of property in England. This was to become the Domesday Book. The survey was undertaken in 1086 but it was not a census of the population. It was a detailed survey and valuation of landed property in England.

The book was written in Medieval Latin, and it was highly abbreviated.

The Domesday Book was designed to perform three key functions:

- To record the transfer and possession of land. After the conquest huge amounts of land in England changed hands and a record of these changes was needed to keep track.
- To record the value of each estate (land held by an individual).
- To introduce a new system of taxation on each estate that allowed the king to raise more money from all landholders.

Under the structure of society introduced by William, he, the king, owned all the land. Below the king was a layer of great lords who held land from him. They were called his tenants-in-chief. And below them there were others who held the land from the tenants-in-chief, and so on. This meant that the individuals named in the book were almost exclusively land-holders.

Checkley in the Domesday Book - continued

At the time of the Domesday survey, the land-holder in Checkley was Otto, although little further is known about him. The survey records the holding as:

- *There is half a hide [60 acres]*
- *There is land for 3½ ploughs [420 acres]*
- *In demesne [used by the lord of the manor] is half a plough [60 acres]*
- *3 villans [unfree peasants - farmworkers]*
- *There are 2 acres of meadow*
- *Woodland 1 league [1½ miles] long and as much broad.*

It is worth 5s. [25p]

The area measurements at that time were by no means standardised. Most of the land measurements were related to agriculture, thus a 'hide' or 'plough' was originally intended to represent the amount of land sufficient to support a household. This was generally reckoned to require an amount of land which could be ploughed using eight oxen, in a single annual season. Although these areas were not fixed in size and varied from one village to another (partly depending on soil conditions), this averaged 120 acres.

An acre was the amount of land tillable by one man behind one ox in one day. Traditional acres were long and narrow due to the difficulty in turning the plough. They were a furlong long (meaning furrow length) which was the distance a team of oxen could plough without resting (220 yards) and they were 4 perches (22 yards) wide. This is equivalent to a modern day acre. A 'perch' or 'rod' is a historical unit of length equal to about 5½ yards and may have originated from the typical length of a mediaeval ox-goad.

In Norman times a league was defined as 1½ Roman miles (approximately 1.4 modern miles) although later it was defined as 3 miles.

A 'villein' was a term used to denote a peasant (tenant farmer) who was legally tied to a lord of the manor. Villeins had more rights and social status than those in slavery. They had their own small pieces of land which were rented to them by the lord of the manor in exchange for work on his farm.

Sources of Information

The information contained within this website has been drawn from a number of different locations some of which are mentioned below.

- Checkley – A History Trail - a leaflet by Margaret Johnson of the Tean and Checkley Historical Society to coincide with the millennium.
- The History of Checkley School – 1979 – author unknown
- Checkley, Where Time Stands Still – Jim Foley – 1992
- Checkley Church was Sharpening Stone for Archers of Old – an article in the Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel – 7 January 1955
- Hansard – 19 March 1984
- St Mary & All Saints Church, Checkley – by Clive Smith – Approximately 1990
- SMDC – Planning website
- Turnpikes in the Uttoxeter Area – a leaflet written by Patricia Turner – Approximately 1980
- W Yates map of Staffordshire – 1798
- Ordnance Survey Maps 1857, 1880, 1898, 1901, 1957, 1971 and 2017
- Wikipedia on Turnpike Trusts
- Turnpike Roads in England & Wales – a website by Alan Rosevear
- Sylloge of Mile Markers in Staffordshire – by John Higgins – 2008
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission - website
- The National Archives - details of the Domesday Book

All photographs (except that of the Domesday Book) and the maps are by Peter Taylor

This booklet has been prepared to provide an outline to the history of the village of Checkley, Staffordshire. It has been prepared in good faith but if you believe that there need to be any amendments or you have other comments please email trail@checkleystaffs.co.uk . If it is about a specific matter then please identify the page that you believe may need to be adjusted.

Although all the information is believed to be correct, no responsibility for loss arising from any errors can be accepted.

Thank you

Notes:

Notes:

This booklet has been prepared by Peter Taylor of Checkley Staffordshire.

All photographs and maps are by Peter Taylor

July 2022

This information is also available at :

www.checkleystaffs.co.uk/trail

Contact: trail@checkleystaffs.co.uk