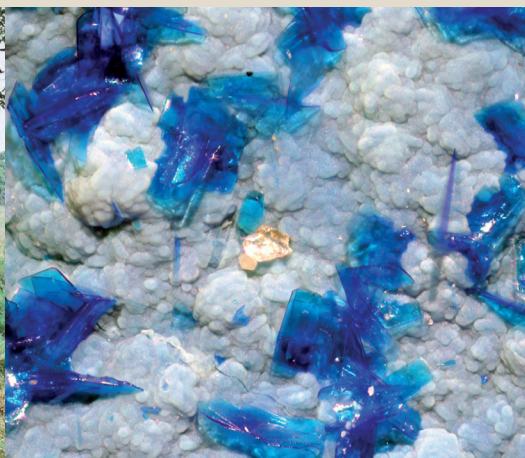




THE STORY OF ALDERLEY

LIVING WITH THE EDGE



EDITED BY A.J.N.W. PRAG

The story of Alderley



Manchester University Press

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Living with the Edge

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If you're not living on the Edge then you're taking up too much space.
(Graffito seen in Verona Youth Hostel, 2008)

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http://www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/alderley_resources/

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Foreword

Lord Stanley of Alderley

My family lived at Alderley for over 400 years so I was fascinated, as I am sure you will be, by the detail you will find even from the headings of the various chapters and by the number of people who have been involved in the Alderley project, for it covers a multitude of disciplines and interests, including a separate book on its archaeology. You will be fascinated by the detail of the work done by so many, all of whom have through their work on the project become intimately connected in one way or another with Alderley. There is, however, one thing that unites them, and that is how the social history is intricately tied in with the land itself and the effect it has had on them and on those who live there or indeed visit it.

We live in an age when the importance of belonging to a particular area has been downgraded and perceived as being of little or no value. Globalisation, whatever that means, is the current philosophy but this book points us the other way, to the danger of separating people from their local surroundings and background. Anyone reading this book will soon realise that one of our modern problems has been caused by divorcing people from the place where they live and by a failure to understand the importance of its history and the people who make and have made it. It has made me understand some of the problems caused by my cousin failing to appreciate this simple but important fact when he sold and left Alderley so insensitively some seventy-odd years ago.

Its detailed study of so many aspects of the story of Alderley makes this volume a blueprint for all of us, wherever we live, for how to appreciate and learn from our surroundings, so I am left with the strong message that where you live is important and interesting, something that today is sadly missing in our national life. The book has taken many people a lot of time and effort to produce, not least because there was so much to discover, so I hope it will have sequels, for there are always more things to discover and appreciate about where you live, now, and who lived in it yesterday and how it has come to be what it is.

Preface

Tristram Besterman

Come to the edge.
We might fall.
Come to the edge.
It's too high!
Come to the edge!
And they came,
and he pushed,
and they flew.

By Christopher Logue, copyright © Christopher Logue, 1969, Untitled ('Apollinaire said'), in *New Numbers* (London: Cape): 65–6.

Teased out in the pages of this remarkable book is a many-stranded tale of a place and its people. In one sense it might be thought a commonplace: there is surely nothing unique about a landscape defined by nature and reshaped by people whose lives are in turn moulded by it. It is, after all, but one small part of the mosaic of Britain and its people. Yet in other senses it is a narrative without precedent. By turns baleful and benign, Alderley Edge seems uncannily to demand our attention, exerting an extraordinary influence over countless lives through the turn of the centuries. This might help to explain why so many facets of one place have now been subjected to such intense, prolonged and expert scrutiny.

Palimpsest. That was the word that came to mind when I walked the Edge with John Prag and Alan Garner as my guides in 1995. A document from which the original writing has been erased and later overwritten. While not exactly a scraped parchment, Alderley Edge nonetheless teases us with layers of information contained in, on and around it. Information embedded, accreted, disrupted, fragmented – but still

there to hear and to read if we have the wit to listen and see. And that is exactly what the Alderley Edge Landscape Project (AELP) set out to do.

This book is one of the more notable offspring of that project. There have been many others, some unforeseen at the outset, but all welcome progeny of creative interactions: an exhibition at Manchester Museum in 1998 (part of which transferred to Alderley Edge); a specialist book in 2005, *The Archaeology of Alderley Edge*; a newsletter; educational events on the Edge that involved, among other things, extracting and smelting copper, Bronze Age style; an award-winning educational website (regrettably no longer extant) that was used by schools all over England as a template for local studies; archaeological investigation; a permanent archive to be lodged with Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, in addition to the excavation archive in Manchester Museum; and data that have informed the National Trust's management and interpretation of the Edge.

As anyone can see from the chapter headings, this book is the collective outcome of many individuals collaborating across a range of disciplines, each contributing specialist expertise and, in many cases, years of hard work, some starting long before the AELP was established. This cooperative endeavour began well before ideas of 'multidisciplinarity' became fashionable in higher education, when a cell biologist working with a geneticist was considered ground-breaking. The buzz of excitement was palpable when a newly uncovered nugget of information appeared at the table, stimulating an unstoppable flow of knowledge and ideas as it was passed from ethnographer to miner to local historian to geologist to local resident to storyteller to botanist to archaeologist and back again. As with all good research, every discovery raised a dozen new questions, pursued in the field, in the library, record office and laboratory.

I thank everyone who contributed to this book, some of whose names are represented as authors, many whose names are not. I am grateful to Manchester Museum's corporate partners, on whose goodwill, active cooperation and financial support the project relied: the University of Manchester, the National Trust and other landowners in the study area, Derbyshire Caving Club, Cheshire County Council, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. If I had the privilege of occasionally wielding the conductor's baton, it was John Prag who kept the score and who made sure that everyone and everything came together as it should; it is to him that we owe this book and the success of the AELP. Like some of the enigmatically carved stone Celtic heads of the north-west of England, the AELP faced in many directions. The project looked to the academic as well as to the local community; it studied what was below ground as well as what was at the surface; it seized on fact and myth, on artefact and on nature; it looked to the past and connected it to the

future. John channelled that activity and wove those disparate strands into a coherent narrative in a way that exemplifies all that is worthy of Manchester Museum.

This book is written for readers of many kinds. For as many, and more, as have experienced Alderley Edge themselves; for those who are the sons and daughters of the three villages of the Edge, and its villas; for those who live in and around the Edge; for those who work there; and for those who visit: we hope that this book will be the source of interest, delight and inspiration it has been to its many contributors. And for those who may never have been near Alderley, there is resonance in its pages for anyone who is interested in their relationship with the land and how it subtly informs our sense of who we are.

Post scriptum

I now live close to Bodmin Moor, another man-made landscape, scarred above and riddled below with old copper mines. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century remnants of industry survive, from the towering engine houses to the rust-drilled granite sleepers of mineral railways half overgrown by moorland heath. Prehistoric stones entice us with ritually enigmatic purpose. Common ground, in some ways, with Alderley Edge, but this stark, unforgiving land is quite different geologically and topographically from Cheshire's; its history is distinctive, too. To the west the granite uplands and streams yielded tin to miners from prehistoric times to the late twentieth century, the sound of pick and shovel echoing the winning of copper at Alderley Edge, to which this Cornish landscape must surely have been linked. For the Bronze Age miners who worked the copper ores of Alderley needed Cornish tin to make the alloy they cast for the tools and weapons they used to feed and defend themselves. In more recent times, from South America to Australia and South Africa, they say that where metal was to be had from rock, a Cornish miner was never far away. As Alderley Edge has shown us time and again, the connections are probably there if we look for them, just as others emerge, unsought, in the looking.

Tristram Besterman
Director, Manchester Museum, 1994–2005

Preamble and acknowledgements

A. J. N. W. Prag

Like the story of the Edge itself, this book has taken a long time to put together and for that I must take much of the responsibility. For that too I offer my apologies to all concerned with this project, especially to the contributors and to the long-suffering people of Alderley: but it is a long story and a complicated one and the telling of it has involved many people in many ways.

The Alderley Edge Landscape Project – AELP – was conceived under Tristram Besterman’s directorship of Manchester Museum as a multidisciplinary undertaking such as befitted a university museum, even before such things became fashionable: had I realised in 1995 that it would come to take over my life I might have been less keen to follow his enthusiastic lead, but that very multidisciplinary has of course been a pleasure and an inspiration for us all, and I am grateful to Nick Merriman, the present director of the Museum, for continuing to support the project as we attempt to draw it to a conclusion. Harnessing so many different enthusiasts and enthusiasms is not a recipe for a speedy conclusion, and understandably some of the contributors and some of the funders have occasionally expressed concern over the delays – one even confided to a co-author that he hoped that I would live long enough to see it through to completion. I appreciate his concern and offer my warmest thanks to all my colleagues on the Project and to those who have supported us in so many ways. As we noted in the opening pages of *The Archaeology of Alderley Edge*, the first report on the Project’s work (Timberlake and Prag, 2005), this has been a joint project between the Manchester Museum at the University of Manchester and the National Trust, and then, as now, we offer thanks to colleagues in both organisations for their help and advice that often went much further than simply help and advice, and provided encouragement and stimulation. That

volume was primarily concerned with the archaeology of the Edge and its associated disciplines; this one covers ‘everything else’, and thus the opportunities and the requests for help have grown accordingly and exponentially.

So many of the people and the organisations whom we thanked then still deserve our thanks (or deserve them again). If I do not repeat them all here then it is not for lack of gratitude, but simply to keep this preamble within the bounds of reason and perhaps also because their support and their contributions were intended (and appreciated!) chiefly for the Project’s archaeological work and or the accompanying exhibition in 1998. However, the Leverhulme Trust’s generous award was fundamental to the whole Project on the one hand, and on the other we could have achieved very little without the continuing support and goodwill of the people of Alderley Edge, in particular all those who allowed us access to their property, who offered us items for the Project Archive, and who gave us their time and their memories by allowing us to interview them. It is a mark of their openness and generosity of spirit that there are too many to list them individually here, but many of their names can be found scattered through the chapters that follow. This is their book: we are sorry it has taken so long to produce, but we hope they feel it has been worth the wait.

Through the good offices of Will Spinks, AstraZeneca kindly gave us money to complete the publication and launch of the first book. Further very welcome funding towards the production of this second volume has come from the Alderley Edge Institute (whose secretaries, Kevin Ranshaw and later Ashley Comiskey Dawson, had to be very understanding when the book suffered further delays), from the National Trust (some of it from the fund established in memory of Michael Ford – my thanks to Jeremy Milln for arranging this, some of it from Cheshire property funds, thanks to Christopher Widger), and from the Marc Fitch Fund for additional photography and drawing, for which I thank the late Dr Elaine Paintin.

On the Edge we could have achieved little in recent years without the constant help of both Christopher Widger and David Standen, the National Trust’s Countryside Manager and Warden respectively. Without the initiative and passion of Jeremy Milln, the Trust’s Regional Archaeologist first for Mercia and then for the West Midlands, AELP would never have happened and I owe him much more than he probably believes. With the reorganisations within the Trust, responsibility for Alderley has now shifted to Jamie Lund, Regional Archaeologist for the North West Region, and it has been good to know that I could rely on his support too. Underneath the Edge we could have done nothing without the commitment and enthusiasm of the Derbyshire Caving Club, whose members I think soon realised that our hearts were in the

right place and were liberal with their support, and then with a donation towards the cost of this volume: Nigel Dibben and Stephen Mills in particular have been ever-willing to answer questions, take us into the mines and to provide us with more and more interesting facts. Stephen Mills generously capped this with a gift for the book itself.

In Alderley Edge village, Mandy Parr's knowledge of the ways and means and people has made her a splendid facilitator, and I already miss the sparkling eyes and the fund of stories that were such a part of the late Harold Smith's presence. Chris Jervis's researches provided a mine of information when the story of Philip Jarvis came to light, and we remain delighted that Gill Davies told us so promptly of her finding of Jarvis's gravestone in her garden. It was very good to be able to consult the archives of St Mary's, Nether Alderley, through the kindness of Jenny Youatt, the church archivist, and before her of the late Brian Hobson, while the methodical and willing guidance through the burial records and the burial ground given by Geoff Windsor, chairman of the parish burial board, helped considerably in the final part of Jarvis's story.

Some unfortunate contributors have found themselves on the receiving end of streams of queries from me about parts of the book for which they bore no responsibility as I picked my way through this long and intricate volume. Here I owe very special thanks to Dmitri Logunov, who not only found me somewhere in his department to work after my previous office was absorbed in one of the Museum's reorganisations, but who also expanded and completely rewrote the chapter on the invertebrates ([Chapter 13](#)) from a small fragment into a masterly and many-faceted survey, and who after that still had the kindness to help me with illustrations and with questions about other aspects of the Edge's natural history; those people who helped him and provided photographs of the invertebrates are named in that chapter. Laurence Cook kindly brought some order to [Part III](#), on natural history, at an earlier stage in the proceedings. Jonathan Guest revised and updated the pondlife chapter ([Chapter 12](#)) after the untimely death of Jill Smethurst and also cast a very helpful eye over the chapter on the birds ([Chapter 11](#)). Nigel Dibben did the same for some of [Part IV](#), 'Human history – archaeology and underground', and for [Chapter 22](#), on graffiti (and answered numerous questions with tact and promptness as well as taking endless trouble in improving some of the images reproduced in this book), and Jeremy Milln revised the chapter on the 'large stones and hoary rocks' of historical significance ([Chapter 27](#)). Alison Scott (at that time in the Centre for Continuing Education of the University) and Stuart Burley (then at British Gas) read early drafts of the geology chapters ([Part II](#)) and Geoffrey Warrington rechecked [Part II](#) when I thought it was finished. Lucy Armstrong at the National

Trust kindly gave advice and information on the recent restoration work at Nether Alderley Mill. Jonathan Pepler (the Cheshire County Archivist) and his successor Paul Newman at Cheshire Archives and Local Studies in the Cheshire Record Office provided the image of the *Stanley Notebook* and gave us permission to reproduce this and other items from the Stanley archive ([Figures 19.1, 19.5, 19.7–19.9, 19.13–19.15 and 20.8](#), and [Plate 61](#)), such as sections of the ‘Crossley’ map and the Enclosure Award map and Norman Abbott’s map of the feathered singing visitors on the Edge ([Figure 11.1](#)). Jonathan Pepler deserves my particular gratitude for patiently answering so many of my questions, and for reading over some of the chapters in their final form.

Others who have borne with my importunities include John Adams, Sean Edwards, Matthew Hyde, Carolanne King, John Nudds, Phyllis Stoddart and Simon Timberlake, my co-editor on the first book. I have badgered colleagues in other parts of the university and elsewhere too: Melanie Giles and Bryan Sitch for advice on Celtic matters, Nick Higham on questions of local history (he also kindly read drafts of some chapters), David Langslow on the etymology of some insect names and Rosie Stoddart (née Pearson) for advice on some of the nicer points of the naming of woodlice and codlice and their possible but unlikely role in cuddling or rumination in cattle. My thanks too to Donna Sherman, Assistant Librarian (Maps) in the University of Manchester Library, for help in identifying the sources of some of our maps, and to Mike Nevell and Norman Redhead (formerly directors of the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit and the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit respectively, and now respectively Head of the Centre for Applied Archaeology and Heritage Management and Director of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service at Salford University) for elucidating some obscure aspects of Manchester archaeology. Steve Allen at the York Archaeological Trust provided information on the Brynlow ‘goblet’, Chris Carlon told me about the Cheshire Basin and the Alderley mines and read drafts of part of the book, and Jill Collens and Mark Leah (now with Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council) and Moya Watson (Cheshire Shared Services) gave welcome advice on matters of planning, footpaths and other such local issues. Numerous other friends and colleagues allowed themselves to be persuaded to read and comment on drafts of chapters, among them George Bankes, Paul Cavill, Alan Garner, Melanie Giles, John Hodgson, Ken Howarth, Matthew Hyde, Jamie Lund, Neil Philip and John Pickin.

Many people have helped us with the illustrations. I have tried to acknowledge them appropriately in the list of figures but there are some who should be mentioned here. My late colleague Barri Jones and after him John Garnons-Williams flew over Alderley for us and generously

gave their photographs to the Project archive. Julie Ballard and David I. Green digitised the images for [Chapters 5](#) and [7](#). John Beswick gave us the photograph used as [Figure 19.17](#). Peter Blore and his colleagues in the Graphic Support Workshop in the University's Media Services department, in particular Dan Wand, provided crucial help with the scanning of the maps in [Chapter 1](#) and elsewhere and in sorting out 'difficult' images. Eleanor Casella allowed us to use a version of the location map ([Figure 1.1](#)) for Alderley Edge from her book *The Alderley Sandhills Project* (Casella and Croucher, 2010). Paul Deakin has let us use his magnificent photos of the mines. Harry Fairhurst presented the Project with the 1938 *Sale Catalogue* from which [Figures 19.19](#), [24.1](#), [24.5](#) and [24.8](#) are taken. Jan Hicks, Archives and Information Manager at the Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester (MOSI), tussled with the sources for [Figure 16.17](#). Alan Hulme lent us his collection of old postcards of Alderley to be copied for the Project archive, some of which have been used in [Chapter 19](#) of this book and elsewhere. Lona Jones kindly helped us with a reference to a work in the National Library of Wales. Philip Manning gave assistance with [Plate 5](#). Stephen McCabe, now in the University of Manchester's Communications and Marketing office, digitised and redrew the maps for [Chapter 28](#). Jack Mitchell allowed us to show his magnificent hand axe as [Figure 14.6](#). The photograph used as [Figure 10.19](#) was part of a gift from Sheila Mackie. Bryan Perceval and Stephen Mills provided the photos of Hayman's Quarry and the stone cart ([Figure 18.5](#)). Jeremy Milln made the drawings of the seal of Richard of Alderley for [Figure 14.12](#). Thanks to Seán Ó'Brógáin we can use his reconstruction drawings freely ([Figures 2.5](#), [14.2](#) and [15.5](#)). Ian Roberts, Malcolm Bailey and Rachel Bailey have allowed us to reproduce the photo of Rachel Bailey with the newly discovered coin hoard yet again ([Figure 2.4](#)). Mrs Maria Robins-Bailey gave us permission to illustrate the finds made at Alderley by her late husband, David Bailey. Duncan Broomhead kindly provided the photograph for [Figure 19.18](#), and I am grateful to Mary Houseman for permission to reproduce it here. Dr Ian Somerville kindly facilitated permission for us to re-use material from the *Geological Journal*. Thomas, eighth Lord Stanley, allowed us to reproduce portraits of members of his family ([Figures 19.2](#) and [19.11](#)), and his daughter-in-law Lady Stanley kindly gave us the photograph used as [Figure 19.2](#). Elaine Taylor provided us with the photographs of John Evans from the Derbyshire Caving Club archive for the appendix to [Chapter 21](#), and the permission to use them. George Twigg lent us his collection of old photographs of Alderley, some of which are reproduced in [Chapters 19](#), [20](#) and [23](#). Roger and Elaine Williams have permitted us to use the plan of Hill Cottage ([Figure 23.3](#)). Another long list – but in no way does its length diminish or dilute my gratitude to them all.

My thanks too to the Churches Conservation Trust for permission to reproduce the painting of Charles Roe by Joseph Wright of Derby in Christ Church, Macclesfield (Figure 16.4); to Christie's Images Limited for permission to reproduce the photograph of the Leycester map (Plate 61) and to Francesca Hickin for help in obtaining that permission; to Elsevier Limited for permission to publish figure 132 from R. C. Selley, *An Introduction to Sedimentology* (second edition), London: Academic Press (1982), as Figure 5.5; to HarperCollins Publishers Ltd for permission to reproduce the cover of the *Weirdstone of Brisingamen* (Figure 29.1d); to Philippa Sitters, of David Godwin Associates, Ltd, literary agent of the late Christopher Logue and to Rosemary Hill, Logue's widow, for permission to quote in full the poem known as 'Apollinaire said'; to Manchester Archives and Local Studies for allowing us to use part of the 1807 Stanley estate map from the Stanley estate book (Figure 18.3); and to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office for permission to reproduce various parts of the 1992 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Pathfinder map sheet 759 and some other maps (Figures 1.2, 1.3, 8.1, 10.16, 14.1, 16.7, 16.14, 18.2, 18.10, 19.15, 28.1, 28.2, 28.3; Plates 3a and 20). We have tried to track down all the copyright holders, and if unwittingly we have reproduced any images without permission then I offer our sincere apologies.

When a book has as long a gestation as this one it is inevitable that other works will appear which will supplement or complement it before it sees the light of day. One in particular needs to be mentioned, *Alderley Park Discovered*, by George B. Hill, to be issued by Carnegie Publishing: as its title suggests, this will focus on the story of the Park, which largely lay outside our area of study, and the two books will (we both hope) provide very satisfactory foils for each other. Nonetheless, George Hill has been extremely generous with his knowledge, and has provided us with better versions of some of the illustrations, for which we owe him very warm thanks.

Ralph Footring checked the final text with a masterly, hawk-like eye and pounced on many a wayward slip and inconsistency: his sympathetic and thoughtful reading saved us from all too many sins of omission and commission. We are all very, very grateful to him. The house rules of Manchester University Press discourage authors and editors from naming individual members of their staff – but that need not prevent me from expressing enormous gratitude to the tact and understanding of those who have helped me to put this leviathan of a tale into publishable form, notably our editor Matthew Frost.

It is a great sorrow that some of those who contributed to the book, indeed some who took a leading part, have not lived to see its publication: among them we remember George Banks, John Ecclestone, Julie Green, Matthew Hyde, Chuff Johnson, Jill Smethurst, Harold Smith,

Thomas eighth Lord Stanley of Alderley, Sarah Whitehead and David Thompson (for whom the geological story of Alderley Edge was such an important part of life).

However, it would be wrong to end on a downbeat note. Without the certainty that I could always call on Alan Garner's innate and passionate knowledge of everything connected with the Edge in any way (and of Griselda's take on that) I would have felt much less confident about what I was doing. And there are two other people who deserve my especial thanks: Clare Pye, who has always been there to answer my endless questions about the story of the Edge and its people quickly, knowledgeably and with unfailing good humour – even when I asked her the same question a few weeks later having in the meantime pigeon-holed her answer and moved on to something else (nominally the Project's archivist, she has been my prop and stay as this book came together); and my wife Kay, who since at least 1996 has had to live with my ever-growing and over-riding obsession with Alderley's story and its people, seemingly to the exclusion of all other interests, and who – an experienced archaeologist and editor herself – even volunteered to read over everything as a means of speeding the book on its way. I hope that she will be as pleased as I to see this saga drawn to a conclusion.

Note on units

Given the wide range of subject matter covered in this volume, the units of measure, imperial or metric, used across the chapters vary with the context. For readers less familiar with one or other system, some conversions are given below:

Length, area, volume

1 inch = 2.5 cm

1 foot = 30.5 cm (12 inches)

1 yard = 0.9 m (3 feet)

1 mile = 1.6 km (1,760 yards)

1 fathom = 1.83 m (6 feet)

1 acre (statute acre) = 0.4 hectare (ha = 10,000 m²), 0.4 ha

1 Cheshire acre = 0.8 ha (2 statute acres)

1 pint = 0.57 litres

1 gallon = 4.5 litres (8 pints)

Weight

1 ounce (oz) = 28 g

1 pound (lb) = 0.45 kg (16 oz)

1 stone = 6.35 kg (14 lb)

1 hundredweight (cwt) = 50.8 kg (112 lb)

1 ton = 1,016 kg (20 cwt; 2,240 lb)

Power

1 horsepower = 746 watts (550 foot-pounds per second)

Currency

In the historical chapters, monetary values are given in the original pounds, shilling and pence, expressed in the format £1.1s.1d. There

were twenty shillings in the pound and twelve pence to one shilling. No attempt has been made to indicate the purchasing power in a modern money equivalent.

2.4d (old pence) = 1p in modern terms (not value)

12d or 1 shilling = 5p

20 shillings = £1

Abbreviations

AELP	Alderley Edge Landscape Project
AELPHER	Alderley Edge Landscape Project Heritage and Educational Resources
AEMCL	Alderley Edge Mining Company, Limited
AMC	Alderley Mine Company
AMCL	Alderley Mining Company, Limited
AOD	above Ordnance datum
<i>ArchAE</i>	Timberlake, S. and Prag, A. J. N. W. (eds). 2005. <i>The Archaeology of Alderley Edge: Survey, Excavation and Experiment in an Ancient Mining Landscape</i> (British Archaeological Reports, British Series 396). Oxford: John and Erica Hedges.
BGS	British Geological Survey
BP	before present
CALS	Cheshire Archives and Local Studies
CPBF	Chester Pebble Beds Formation
CPI	Conservation Performance Indicator
CRO	Cheshire Record Office (now CALS)
DCC	Derbyshire Caving Club
EVC	Engine Vein Conglomerate Member
GIS	geographic information system
GPS	Global Positioning System
ha	hectare
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
HSF	Helsby Sandstone Formation
MCC	Macclesfield Copper Company
ME	Middle English
NA	Nether Alderley
NASM	Nether Alderley Sandstone Member
NGR	National Grid reference

NT	National Trust
NTSMR	National Trust Sites and Monuments Record
OA	Over Alderley
OE	Old English
OS	Ordnance Survey
PDOP	Position Dilution of Precision. PDOP is an error indicator of the triangulation by which GPS satellites calculate a position. PDOP = 1 indicates good satellite constellation and high-quality data; PDOP \geq 8 is poor
PRO	Public Records Office
RIGS	Regionally Important Geological and geomorphological Site
<i>Sale Catalogue</i>	John Pritchard and Co. (auctioneers). 1938. <i>Alderley Park Estates Sale Catalogue</i> (no place of publication given)
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument (now referred to as a Scheduled Monument)
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<i>Stanley C7</i>	<i>Stanley Estate Book</i> , 1800–1808. Manchester Archives and Local Studies Centre: C7, mf2678.
<i>Stanley Notebook</i>	Stanley, J. T. 1830–44. <i>Genealogical Manuscript Book</i> (copy in the AELP archive, item no. 3; original in Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, D 8065/1).
TSF	Tarporley Siltstone Formation
WMCM	Wood Mine Conglomerate or Pebbly Sandstone Member
WMSM	West Mine Sandstone Member
WSF	Wilmslow Sandstone Formation

Part I

Introductory

The background to the Alderley Edge Landscape Project

A. J. N. W. Prag

This is the SHOVEL that dug the COPPER, that fetched the Roman,
who sunk the SHAFT that hid the POT till we found it.

These are the RAILS that fetched the MAN from Manchester mills,
who built the HOUSE on ALDERLEY EDGE with a garden.

This is the WORT that grew on the HILLS, that the MINER heaped
when he hacked the STOPES under the ground of the STANLEYS.

This is the place where the Sleeping Knights lie.
And is this the WIZARD to wake them?

It all started with a shovel, a singer of tales and an archaeologist. The singer of tales found the shovel (it was prehistoric) that had been hidden for very many years, and he told the archaeologist. Together they delved – not alone – and together they began to spin a tale that caught up many others in its spinning and in its telling. That is the tale told in this book, but first it needs a few words of introduction.

When I arrived in Manchester in 1969 as a sadly ignorant southerner to take up the post of Keeper of Archaeology at the Manchester Museum, I found in the Museum collections a small assemblage of crude hammer stones and a few other prehistoric stone implements (see [Figure 2.2](#)) from a place called Alderley Edge on the southern outskirts of Manchester ([Plate 1](#), [Figure 1.1](#)). I heard stories of early mining there, of Roman and even Bronze Age miners, but any traces of their work seemed to have been largely obscured by later digging and,

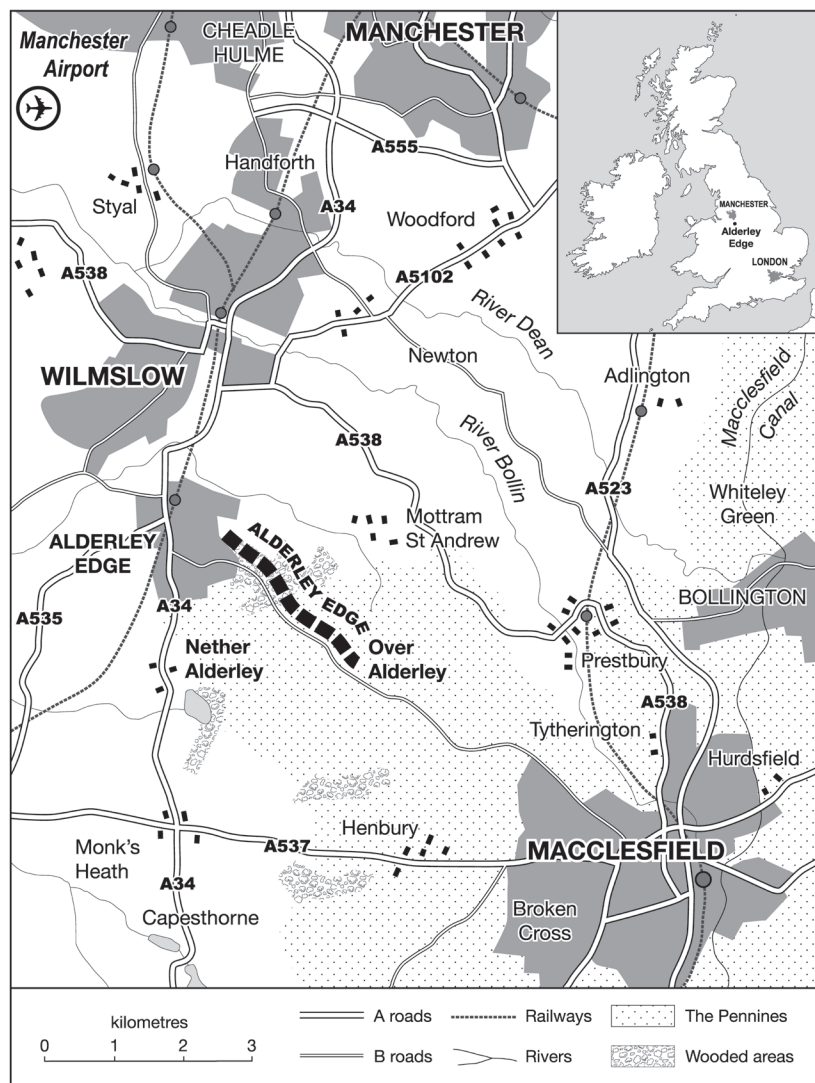


Figure 1.1. Location map of Alderley Edge. The layout and numbering of some of the roads (notably the A34) on this map and on Figures 1.2 and 1.3 have changed slightly since the opening of the Alderley Edge by-pass in November 2010. The naming of the village after the Edge itself is explained at the start of Chapter 23, p. 586.

After Casella and Croucher (2010: fig. 2.1).

besides, I had a huge task on my hands in the Museum and all this really lay outside my area of expertise. Alderley Edge was simply one of many local sites about which I was expected to know and show an interest when occasion demanded. Sometimes members of the public asked me for an opinion on objects found at Alderley; once I was even shown a stone head allegedly spotted in the bank at the roadside by someone whiling away his time waiting for a bus at Over Alderley which – inspired no doubt by those tales of Romans – I identified as the representation of a maenad, a follower of the god Bacchus, dating from the second century AD (wrongly, as I later discovered). As new arrivals, our house-hunting activities soon made it clear that Alderley Edge was not a place in which a young academic could aspire to live but, like many urban

Mancunians, we found the Edge a nice place to walk at the weekend, easily accessible and with stupendous views, as well as that extra layer of archaeology and history and the undercurrent of the legend of a sleeping king and his treasure guarded by a wizard somewhere beneath our feet. Where it was not dotted with the villas of the wealthy, the Edge – some 250 acres of it – was largely owned by the National Trust, whose reputation for stewardship at that time was larded with tales of having had the Territorial Army blow up the entrance to Engine Vein ‘in the interests of public safety’, and by a general lack of interest or concern for anything other than the fauna and the flora of the place, most notably the trees. In the later 1970s I heard tell of a plan to open West Mine (the only mine whose entrance lay on land not owned by the Trust), on a scale – they said – to rival the burgeoning attractions at Alton Towers, a plan – they said – that was scotched only by the valiant efforts of the villagers (later I found that the facts were otherwise, of course). There were stories of witchery, or at least of unseemly goings-on, on the Edge at Hallowe’en, which the Trust and the local police tried to prevent. As our children grew up we read more about the legend of Alderley in *The Weirdestone of Brisingamen* (1960) and its sequel *The Moon of Gomrath* (1963) by Alan Garner, and there was a memorable day when their author came to address our son’s English class at school, memorable not least because of events that unfolded over the ensuing years.

By then I had discovered a little more about Alderley Edge, not least that Manchester Museum had a link that went back to the nineteenth century, starting almost by chance:

In May, 1874, Mr H. Wilde and myself happened to take a walk to the new excavations which were in progress at the copper mines at Alderley Edge.... While walking over the surface, which was fantastically hollowed, a worked stone happened to catch my eye; and when we examined the stones lying about in the hollow we saw at once that a large number had been used in mining operations; and of these, owing to the kindness of the manager and the captain of the mine, we were able to secure thirty-five, which are now lodged in the Museum at the Owens College [later the University of Manchester]. (Boyd Dawkins, 1875: 74)

In the autumn, Boyd Dawkins went back and collected some more and studied the site further, and then in the 1875 he had to return once again to examine new finds:

As some miners were at work on the Edge [clearing round an old working at Brynlow], they came upon a large collection of stone implements, consisting of celts or adzes, hammerheads or axes, mauls, etc. from one to two feet below the surface ... and others were left in some old diggings of the copper ore, from three to four yards in depth, along with an oak shovel that had been very roughly used. (Sainter, 1878: 47)

Boyd Dawkins concluded, albeit tentatively, that the whole group were of Bronze Age date, although his arguments had to be based simply on the crudeness of the tools he had found. A selection of these stones was for long displayed in the geology galleries of the Museum, along with a model of the stratigraphy and topography of the Edge. The Museum also had finds from the excavations carried out by C. Roeder and F. S. Graves around the turn of the twentieth century, including Mesolithic and Neolithic flint implements as well as more hammer stones, and a large collection of minerals: indeed, *in toto* these formed the largest collection of finds from the Edge in any public collection. In the late 1970s all the Alderley material was recatalogued along with the rest of the Museum's lithic collections as part of a pioneering scheme funded by the government's Manpower Services Commission to put all the Museum's holdings onto a computerised database. This, and the research interests of David Gale of Bradford University, led to a spate of renewed archaeological activity on the Edge from the late 1970s into the early 1990s, which is described more fully in [Chapter 14](#). Meanwhile, underground the Derbyshire Caving Club, the lessee of the mines from the National Trust since 1969, had re-opened Wood Mine in 1970 and has regularly taken parties of visitors underground ever since; over the next twenty or thirty years it extended its underground lease, clearing more mines and making them accessible to visitors as well as holding regular open days (see <http://www.derbysc.org.uk>). The year 1979 saw the publication of what is still the only handbook to the mines, C. J. Carlon's *The Alderley Edge Mines* (Carlon, 1979, revised in 2012 with N. J. Dibben), and Alderley and its legend came to feature more and more in local guidebooks, as well as in some of the more fanciful literature and websites (e.g. Pickford, 1992).

This was the setting when in 1991 I had an invitation from Alan Garner to visit his house to look at some items which he wanted to donate to Manchester Museum. To my amazement, chief among them was that oak shovel from Brynlow, which had disappeared from knowledge soon after its publication by Dr Sainter in 1878 and which by a combination of serendipity, childhood memory and sheer persistence he had rediscovered nearly forty years before. How that came about is for him to tell in the next chapter of this book (and to illustrate in [Figure 2.3](#)), but for me this was one of those rare moments in a museum curator's life when he does not really believe that he is seeing what is laid before him. One's colleagues, more senescent, more cynical or just less gullible, tended not to believe it. Not, perhaps, a Tudor winnowing fan as the British Museum had once suggested, but very probably a peat-cutter's spade, no older than Medieval, they said. No one argued with the circumstances of the discovery, but the fact remained that the hammer stones on which the context depended were themselves not

properly dated, and at least two recent writers had cast serious doubt on the prehistoric date for Alderley and other sites, on the grounds of insufficient evidence (Warrington, 1981; Briggs, 1983). The donor bravely agreed to our seeking a radiocarbon date for the shovel and we submitted an application to the Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit at the Research Laboratory in Oxford. Oxford confirmed Boyd Dawkins' Bronze Age date: at *c.* 1750 ± 90 BC. Thus, the wood from which the shovel was fashioned appeared to belong firmly in the early Middle Bronze Age. At last there was proof positive for Bronze Age activity on the Edge (Sainter, 1878; Garner *et al.*, 1994).

Then in March 1995, while they were making safe on old shaft that had begun to cave in beside Engine Vein, the Derbyshire Caving Club found a coarse-ware pot containing a hoard of over 500 Roman coins, which they promptly and properly reported both to Jeremy Milln, the National Trust's Regional Archaeologist for Mercia, in whose patch Alderley belonged, and to Manchester Museum (Figures 2.4, 14.9). A rapid first study by Keith Sugden, then Keeper of Numismatics at the Museum, established that they were from the time of the emperor Constantine I and his son Constantine II, minted between AD 317 and *c.* 335, and were probably deposited around AD 340. There had been a very few earlier finds of Roman objects from Alderley: for example, in 1901 Charles Roeder recorded some Roman coins that had been found on the Edge, which seem to be the same as the four pieces shown to the Cheshire Museum Service in Northwich in 1978 (Roeder, 1901: 95; *ArchAE*: 106), but this was the first real evidence for Roman occupation at Alderley, and with it came a new danger. The story of the wizard and his treasure were enough in themselves to spark interest in the site among less reputable treasure hunters, and the new find – even though it was a humble hoard consisting entirely of copper coins – could only add fuel to this. Already in 1992 a curious gold bar allegedly found by the side of Artists Lane by a metal-detectorist had been reported to the Museum and, after the treasure trove inquest, stories of another five similar bars found on various sites across the Edge began to appear in the press and on the internet. Although only the first one, now lodged in Manchester Museum, has ever been seen by professional archaeologists (and so far it has not been possible to identify either its date or its origin, despite our best efforts), and despite the fact the use of metal-detectors on its land is contrary to the National Trust's bye-laws, incidents like this pointed to the urgent need for positive action to understand and to protect the archaeology and the history of Alderley Edge.

Not just the archaeology and the history, for the story of Alderley Edge is much longer and wider than that. Geologically, the Edge is of outstanding interest for its mineralisation, and for the relationship of this mineralisation with the Triassic rock strata in which it occurs; indeed, it

has been identified as the most important British occurrence of the enrichment of sedimentary rocks by ores of copper and other metals, notably lead and cobalt. As well as the 250 acres of the Edge held inalienably by the National Trust, which include most of the area of mining and early occupation, a similar area – partly overlapping the Trust's holding – had been identified as a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Regionally Important Geological/geomorphological Site (RIGS), largely because the unique combination of geology, geomorphology and human impact has created an unusual environment that has given the flora and fauna a special identity and interest (Figure 1.2; the National Trust's holding on the Edge itself is shown in Figure 14.1). An area of hedgerow trees at Brynlow is protected by a Tree Protection Order, and Cheshire Conservation Trust had marked Waterfall Wood on the Trust's land as a grade C Site of Biological Interest (SBI); while not as significant or as highly protected as an SSSI, this still means that the habitat type and the species to be found living there are of more than local importance. The site had already been recognised as an important candidate for review under the Monuments Protection Programme, which could lead to its scheduling under the Ancient Monuments Act (and this did in fact happen later, but that is looking ahead). The special nature of the geological story had also influenced Alderley's social history. It was once the home of miners and smelters, farmers and craftsmen, swamped since the coming of the railway in 1842 by Manchester commuters, who have their own story, one that is revealed most clearly by the villas which they built. Sufficient 'folk memory' still survived – just – for one to be able to reconstruct something of the chronicle of this double community. Overlying it all is the legend of the wizard, which could provide an opening for an ethnographic study.

But because the Edge is also very beautiful and so rich in legend and history and because it lies only twelve miles south of Manchester, it had become a honeypot for urban folk seeking country air. This was nothing new: early in the twentieth century it was said in Alderley that during holidays you could walk from the railway station to the Edge on the heads of the people, but now they were coming in their cars too. The Cheshire County Structure Plan (1977, updated 1986) recognised the area both as of Special County Value for Landscape and as a priority for countryside recreation facilities, but these two designations do not sit easily together. The National Trust in its turn recognised that Alderley Edge was one of its more sensitive open-space properties: it estimated that it was receiving some 70,000 visits per year and that the numbers were growing. Not surprisingly, some areas were beginning to suffer badly from erosion and hill-wash of the light sandy soils, especially along popular corridors and at the most attractive locations, such as Engine Vein and Stormy Point. While the Trust could manage access up

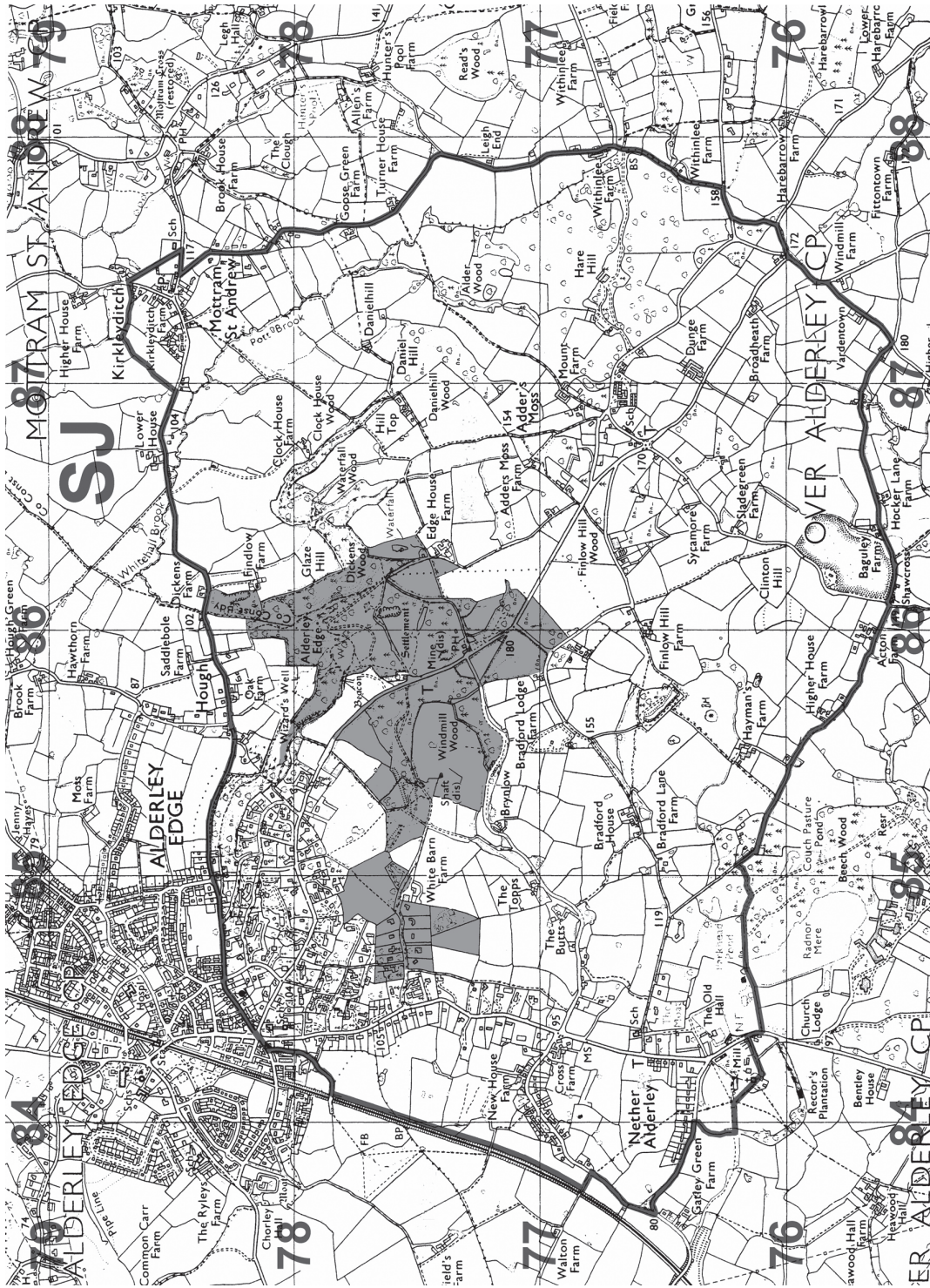


Figure 1.2. Map of Alderley Edge: the area identified as a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is shaded, and the Regionally Important Geological and geomorphological Site (RIGS) is enclosed in a dark line.

Based on the 1992 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Pathfinder map, sheet 759, with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown copyright October 2013.

to a certain degree, the situation really demanded a programme of conservation and of diversifying visitor interest by spreading their impact over a wider area. However, such plans would have to be founded on a full and properly researched understanding of the human and natural history. The discovery of the Roman coin hoard provided the catalyst for action. In April 1995 Jeremy Milln called a site meeting of the interested parties, which involved, among others, representatives from the National Trust, the Department of Archaeology of the University of Manchester, Manchester Museum, Cheshire County Council, Bradford University, the Derbyshire Caving Club, the Early Mines Research Group and the local residents. Further meetings followed during the summer and a Steering Group was set up to draft a proposal for a full historical and topographical survey of the Edge, and to plan the area that would be covered, the topics to be surveyed, the methods of doing so, the bodies that might be involved and, indeed, the destination of any finds and research archives. It was agreed that Manchester Museum was their natural home, in part because of the long history of involvement with the Edge by both University and Museum, and also because in 1992 the Museum had already reached an agreement with Cheshire County Museum Service that all archaeological finds from the site, past and future, should come to the Museum in order to maintain the integrity of the Alderley archive. This agreement did not cover finds from the Trust's land, which are subject to the National Trust Acts, but during 1995 a similar agreement was reached with the Trust for archaeological finds from Alderley. An application for funding to the Heritage Grant Fund of the Department of National Heritage in September 1995 was unsuccessful, but after further discussion and refinement of the plan Manchester Museum submitted a bid to the Leverhulme Trust in the following year on behalf of both organisations for the Alderley Edge Landscape Project. Its objectives were set out as follows:

The Alderley Edge Landscape Project is a joint venture between the Manchester Museum and the National Trust to make the first complete survey of the story of the Edge. The suite of minerals at the site is both unique and complex: from this geological starting point the project intends to record both the flora and fauna and the traces of man's activity both above and below ground. The further aims of the project include (a) a management plan for the site; (b) an exhibition at the Museum, followed by a longer-term display at the site; (c) opportunities for teaching linked to the National Curriculum; (d) an illustrated guidebook to the Edge as well as a multidisciplinary monograph or series of articles; (e) avenues for possible further research, both archaeological excavation and in the study of the species identified.

The timing of the bid was good. Not only is the site unique archaeologically, but it straddles three major themes of current British

archaeological interest which had recently been identified by English Heritage: the archaeology of multi-period landscapes, of industry, and of extraction and processing of non-ferrous minerals (English Heritage, 1991). Moreover, a number of books and articles on early mining in Britain had recently been published which highlighted the need for a proper survey of Alderley (Crew and Crew, 1990; Ford and Willies, 1994; Thackray, 1994). One could say that the Alderley Edge Landscape Project fitted precisely into the interest in landscape studies that was burgeoning in the late twentieth century. Its time had come. The Leverhulme Trustees and their referees were impressed with the Project, especially its holistic approach, and commented that ‘if successful, it could well provide a model for future projects of this nature, and reflects a growing feeling that “heritage”, archaeological and natural, cannot be considered in isolation’. They awarded the Project nearly £108,000, and over the next two years AELP, as it came to be known, won further funding from a number of other bodies for parts of its work – Cheshire County Council, Rio Tinto plc, Survey Systems Ltd, Zeneca Pharmaceuticals and its successor AstraZeneca, the Mabel Evans Trust, ICL Computers, Gifford and Partners, and National Tyre. As this book takes its course it will become clear how many other individuals and organisations provided help in kind or as colleagues and collaborators, and how essential and integral they became. We give their names in the Preamble and acknowledgments.

Methodologically, one of the attractions of the Landscape Project was its multidisciplinary approach: in this it reflected the range of subjects covered by Manchester Museum, from archaeology to zoology – unlike other departments of the University of Manchester at that time, the Museum embraced a wide variety of disciplines in both the sciences and the humanities, and virtually all my curatorial colleagues became involved in the Landscape Project at various times. At the same time, the Project could and did call on those working in other specialised disciplines available within the University and the National Trust, as well as a remarkable range of skills and interests that became apparent in Alderley village. Nonetheless, it fell to me as the Museum’s Keeper of Archaeology to take responsibility for coordinating the Project: we had estimated it might take 25 per cent of my time over two years. If only! For the next two decades – well beyond the original two years of the core research which the Leverhulme Trust funded and indeed well into my official retirement from the Museum – it really took over much of my working life. With some prescience we had included in our application to the Leverhulme Trust the sentence ‘since this is primarily a survey, we anticipate that it will raise questions in more than one discipline meriting further research later – but not forming part of this application’. As will become clear from the rest of this book, and from the list of

chapter headings and the names of their authors, I was by no means the only one entrapped in this way by the Edge. Although geographically restricted, the range of topics and of questions which the Landscape Project proposed to investigate was so wide that, as time went on, many other people also became involved because of their interest or because of their connections with Alderley. It was interesting to find that no matter how detached, how scientific, how academic one tried to be in one's approach to the work, almost everyone came to agree that in some way Alderley Edge was a special place. The National Trust and others may own the ground of Alderley Edge in a physical sense, but nobody actually 'owns' the Edge – certainly not the Alderley Edge Landscape Project, however possessive some of us may have come to feel about it. Other people are here too: many of them have been here much longer than we have, and they often have a quite different perspective and a different agenda. While it was hardly unexpected that the Landscape Project brought together people from a variety of walks of life who shared a deep interest in the Edge, a remarkable by-product was the way in which it reunited and galvanised some who over the years had reached a point of misunderstanding and non-communication which had stalled further research and prevented practical on-site cooperation. It cannot be said too often that this was a project about people as much as about a place, and to name all those who have helped us in all kinds of ways would fill many, many pages of this book. I hope that they will forgive us if we simply thank them all here as a group united by their interest in the place rather than as discrete individuals, in the middle of a chapter that is trying to set the scene, rather than in a long and ultimately overwhelming list at the beginning of the book. If the story of the people of Alderley in the earlier twentieth century was still one of 'them and us', by the end of the century we all felt that this was *our* story now.

We had already been given a great deal of help, advice and information by the people of Alderley; one of the first things that we did once funding had been confirmed was to arrange a public meeting at St Hilary's School, at which we could tell them of our plans. There was a little suspicion and hostility to the notion that a bunch of academics from Manchester would be moving in on their village, prying into their secrets and publishing them to the world for their own profit, intellectual or otherwise, and that the publicity which such activities would generate would bring in yet more visitors to disturb their peace and increase the threat to their beloved Edge after we had moved out again. It is only fair to say that a significant proportion of this antagonism came from people who were themselves incomers to the village, but it was important to assuage such concerns at the outset, to make it clear that this was the opposite of what we intended, and that we had already given the matter much thought. The representatives of the National Trust made it clear

that they would not have been partners in this project if they believed that this was a real risk, and we gave an undertaking, which always remained important in any public activities and in any dissemination of our work, that we would do our best to respect the privacy of the village and the fragility of the Edge itself. One might add that, at this time, television programmes such as *Meet the Ancestors* and *Who Do You Think You Are?*, which fostered and built on people's interest in the past of their homes and towns or the history of their families, had yet to make their appearance, and even *Time Team* was still in its infancy. Tony Blair could claim publicly that history did not matter to the people of New Labour's Britain, and the enthusiasm to know about one's past on which these programmes played was still around the corner. It might well be said that projects like AELP and its offshoots helped nurture it. In fact, the great majority of those attending that first public meeting gave us their warm and enthusiastic support. Names were written down, addresses noted, offers of help and further likely contacts listed. One local resident was heard to say 'you have made us speak to each other again': there could not have been a more heartfelt vote of confidence and, as we found over the following years and months, this was not just something said in the enthusiasm of the moment, for the support and commitment continued all through the life of the Project. But then William Smith, writing *A Treatise on Cheshire* in the seventeenth century, had already noted that 'The people of the country are of a nature very gentle and courteous, ready to help and further one another' (cited in Ormerod, 1882: vol. 1, p. 129).

As we carried out our surveys over the following years we met only one blank refusal from a landowner to allow us access – and he was an absentee landlord; his tenant, by contrast, had been as cooperative as the terms of his lease would allow. The sensitivity and fragility of the Edge as well as the right of the villagers to live without undue disturbance always remained uppermost in our minds, and when in due course an approach from *Time Team* would have enabled us to tackle one of the problems for which we lacked the resources we turned it down because of the great number of visitors it would generate in the months following broadcast. Much later I discovered that this concern was not really shared by the local people themselves.

To make the Landscape Project work, several things needed to be done: a scheme as complex as this needed a proper management structure; the area and the topics to be studied had to be defined; and a Chief Surveyor needed to be appointed together with a support team.

From the outset, the Landscape Project's work was guided by the Steering Group mentioned above. Chaired by the Director of Manchester Museum, coordinated by the Keeper of Archaeology and serviced by the Museum, this group comprised the interested members

of the Museum and National Trust staff and of other University departments, notably Archaeology and Geography, representatives of other bodies with an interest in Alderley Edge, such as English Heritage, the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, the Derbyshire Caving Club and St Hilary's School, and a number of private individuals with a preoccupation with the Edge's story. Once the Project began work we created a number of working groups to establish the direction in which particular topics should be pursued, and later on there were various occasions when sub-committees were set up to tackle specific issues. By the summer of 1998 the Steering Group had perhaps become too large to make effective strategic decisions and a small Management Group was created to take on this role, made up of representatives of the Museum, the Trust and the Derbyshire Caving Club. The Steering Group nevertheless continued to act as the main – and very spirited – forum for discussion and collaboration over the Landscape Project's research, publication and day-to-day activities: indeed, at the point when the two years of Leverhulme funding were over and the Steering Group might properly have been wound up, its members were almost unanimous in reforming themselves into a 'working group' to allow those with a continuing interest to have a framework within which to carry out their research. In this form the group continued to meet and to interact for another seven years, ceasing to exist formally only when its chairman and coordinator both retired from the University in 2005. Even at the time of writing, in 2013, several of its members are still active in their research and involvement with the Edge, and questions and problems still come in from researchers, members of the public and sometimes from one of the various special interest groups at Alderley such as the Edge Association.

Simon Timberlake, a geologist and prehistorian and a founder member of the Early Mines Research Group as well as its Excavation Director, was appointed Chief Surveyor to the Landscape Project, taking up his position on 1 December 1996: this marked the formal starting date for AELP. Through a very satisfactory arrangement with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, Tom Burke was seconded to the Landscape Project as Assistant Surveyor, allowing the Project to call on the other resources of the Unit when necessary. Later Timberlake took on the role of Project Consultant, with particular obligations towards the provision of copy for the exhibition and the writing up of the Landscape Project's research and was replaced as Project Surveyor by Carolanne King, who had previously conducted some of the Project's excavations.

An essential part of the Project brief was to create a proper archive, not only of our own papers but of the various documents and photographs which we anticipated would be lent or given to the Landscape Project; most opportunely, Karna Bloch, a history and gender studies student at Aarhus University in Denmark, had come to the Museum

on a six-month placement in February 1997. In the course of this she established the Landscape Project's archive most efficiently, and was then appointed as Research Assistant and Archivist for a further six months. At this point the designated funding for the archive came to an end, and she returned to Aarhus, where she used material from the Landscape Project for her dissertation – surely the only Dane working on the landed families of Cheshire: AELP produced many offshoots, but this must be the most far-flung. However, the archive had proved such a popular and important part of the Project that it could not be abandoned, and its maintenance and expansion were ably undertaken by a number of volunteers and members of the Steering Group. Because the National Trust has built up a tradition of recording the voices and memories of people who have lived or worked on its properties, we also began a programme of recording Alderley voices and memories, and of collecting and copying earlier recordings. These archives are described in [Chapters 20](#) and [21](#). Like so many aspects of AELP, they seem to have acquired lives of their own, and even ten or twelve years later offers and suggestions for more material were still coming into the Museum. Our first plan was ultimately to deposit all original material in the archive in the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester, with similar collections from other University projects; however, changes in University policy and funding meant that it became more practical to lodge it with the Cheshire Archives and Local Studies service. This includes the sound recordings made for the oral archive, although copies of these have also been placed in the National Trust archive and in the National Sound Archive in the British Library, in accordance with the Trust's normal practice. The excavation archive, of course, should remain in the Museum.

However, this is looking ahead. Although the intellectual scope of the Landscape Project was very wide (one of the Leverhulme Trust's referees commented 'there is no technique that they do not mention', adding sagely 'perhaps they are being a little over-ambitious') its geographic compass was limited. We divided Alderley Edge into 'core' and 'hinterland' areas for our research ([Figure 1.3](#)). The 'core' focused on the parts of the Edge owned by the National Trust and those designated as an SSSI, therefore including the area of the Sandhills and around Whitebarn Farm, beyond the Trust's western boundary, and between Engine Vein and Edge House Farm to the east: here 'every' aspect was to be studied, at least in theory: this area had been the subject of a detailed topographic and archaeological survey and some exploratory excavation (*ArchAE*: ch. 8). However, there are features of archaeological, historical and scientific interest outside these boundaries, so we included a 'hinterland' extending west to the railway line, north to the Mottram Road and incorporating part of the Hough and Kirkleyditch

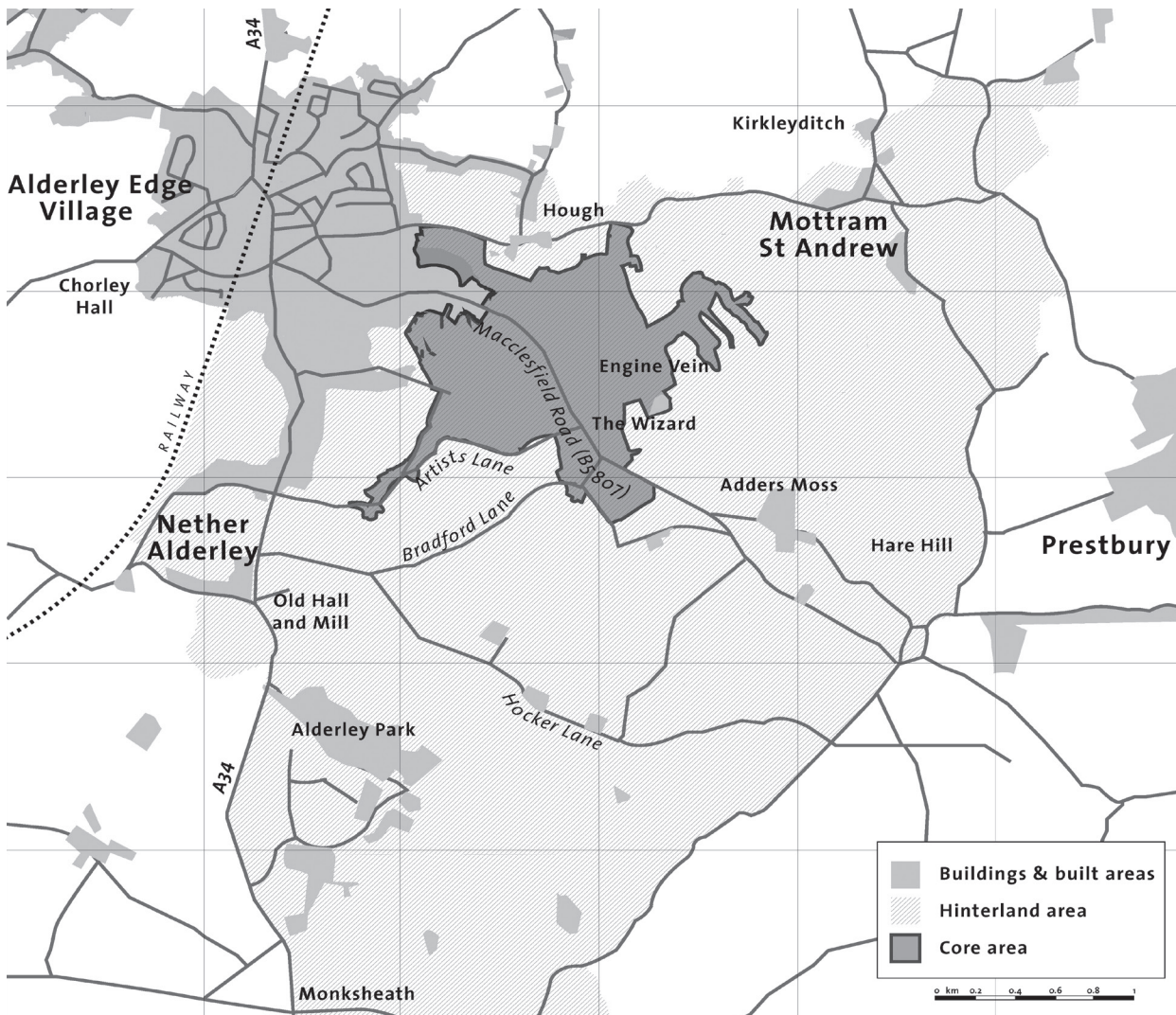


Figure 1.3. Map of Alderley Edge showing the Project's 'core' and 'hinterland' research areas.

Based on the 1992 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Pathfinder map, sheet 759, with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown copyright October 2013.

(the site of Mottram Mine) as well as the village of Mottram St Andrew, east to Shaws Lane and Birtles Lane, taking in Adders Moss, and south to the Chelford–Macclesfield Road (the A537) so as to include Alderley Park. In this area research was selective and picked out only items of particular interest or relevance, mostly relating to Alderley's geology, such as the kettle-hole at Adders Moss, and to its topographic and social history – place names, trackways, buildings and the like. This was a slight extension of the hinterland as we had originally conceived it: as this book makes clear, we are of course a long way from being the first to work on story of the Edge, whether on the mines and the minerals, the

archaeology, the flora and fauna or indeed the legend. There were many before us on whose shoulders we stand or under whose feet we dug. The proposals to the Department of National Heritage and the Leverhulme Trust were based on a pilot study involving desktop research and searches of the literature, and once the fieldwork began it became clear that a small amount of tweaking to the area we should cover would yield a more coherent picture in the end.

It is also worth saying here that when our Project was conceived, landscape studies of this kind and this breadth were still in their infancy and much of the technology was still relatively untried in the field of archaeology, but this was one of the things that gave the Project its zest and excitement. The fact that ‘geofizz’ in all its forms could be seen on television every week on *Time Team* showed how far archaeology had progressed in a decade or so, but one should remember that devices using the satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS), now to be found in almost every new car and in many walkers’ hands and on their mobile phones, were then still in their infancy in field archaeology, as was the application of geographic information systems (GISs) to build up a record incorporating all the archaeological, mineralogical and biological data: we had many teething problems to overcome, ranging from heavy tree cover to the error built into the GPS coordinates of the time that was intended to confuse enemy spy planes. As coordinator of the Landscape Project, sitting in my warm office in Manchester, I could sense all too clearly the occasional frustration of the survey team working in the field and in the rain. The survey is described in *ArchAE* (ch. 8) and I have written in that book how much we owe to our colleagues in the Cheshire County Council Geographic Information Unit for their help in solving the difficulties that arose over the GPS survey, but I happily repeat our thanks here. In our final report to the Leverhulme Trust in 2000 we said:

one of the most exciting aspects of the various surveys has been their integration as separate ‘coverages’ onto a single computerised MapInfo database through a Geographic Information System: this was achieved thanks to the collaboration of the Regional Research Laboratory in the School of Geography of the University of Manchester, sometimes using technology that did not exist and was thus scarcely anticipated when our Proposal was drafted in 1995. Despite problems of both time and developing technology this gave a whole new dimension to the results, for their collation and interpretation and also for their dissemination.

For this collaboration we owe particular thanks to Dr Robert Barr, the director of the Lab, and to Neil Matthews, the GIS manager.

If the start of the Landscape Project was accompanied by the excitement that goes with nearly every new venture of this kind, what was more unusual was the way in which the Edge seemed to take hold of nearly

everyone who became involved, however ‘detached’ and ‘scientific’ they believed themselves to be. In part this was undoubtedly the effect of having not just such a wide range of disciplines involved and new technologies to employ, but also such a mix of people, all passionately committed to their particular disciplines but linked on this occasion by their interest in the Edge. Trying to coordinate such a ‘team’ was sometimes like herding cats or directing a choir composed of prima donnas, but perhaps one of the Landscape Project’s achievements was to bring a sense of order and discipline and also of unity of purpose to a wide range of pre-existing interests and discrete groups and individuals. In the end the extent of the Project was limited only by our own efforts to rationalise it (at one point there was even a notion to commission an opera – but we agreed that we needed to complete the written word first). The extent and range of the Project is probably demonstrated most clearly by the titles of the chapters that comprise this book, and also, it must be said, by the different approaches and backgrounds of the various contributors: inevitably there is occasionally overlap or repetition where people come at a question from different disciplines and standpoints. Sometimes there will be inconsistencies, although I have tried to keep these to a minimum – the reader will have to bear with the fact that (for example) sometimes we refer to the Goldenstone and Monksheath as one word and sometimes as two, reflecting variations in usage. (Similarly, we sometimes refer to the project as AELP, but as often happens the acronym assumed a life of its own and so it is also called ‘the AELP’.) However, this approach should make it possible for those with a particular interest in part of the story to read just the relevant chapter or section.

Even so, the titles are not a completely accurate reflection of the Project’s activities. On the one hand there are chapters that describe work that happened only after the Landscape Project was officially completed, or that never formed part of it, such as Mike Redfern’s description of the restoration of Nether Alderley Mill ([Chapter 25](#)) or the account of Philip Jarvis speaking to us from a German prisoner-of-war camp in the First World War ([Appendix 21.2](#)). On the other there are the activities not recorded in this book but essential to the Project as a whole, such as the research conducted by students not just from Manchester but from universities and colleges as far away as Cumbria and in topics as diverse as geology and leisure management, and the visitor surveys carried out to find out why people visited the Edge and what they expected to find.

One essential strand – and part of the commitment to the funders – was the notion of ‘giving something back’. After all, this Landscape Project had sprung from a shovel that seems to have been deliberately buried and a pot of coins that had been hidden, which the Edge had given back to us. We owed it something in return. This bunch of academics from

Manchester (and elsewhere) owed it to the people of Alderley, onto whose patch and into whose lives they were intruding, to let them be among the first to see the fruits of their labours. Therefore we arranged a number of events during and at the end of the Project, ranging from a set of lectures (held in St Hilary's School on a series of amazingly wet evenings but always fully attended), a day-school and finally a farewell event in the village at which the book reporting on the Landscape Project's archaeological work was launched, to an exhibition at Manchester Museum, whose information panels then travelled to local venues before ending up in the information centre on the Edge itself. Although the exhibition – called 'Living on the Edge', with the subtitle 'The Myths, Mines and Merchants of Alderley' – aimed to describe all the different layers of Alderley's story as the Landscape Project was unpeeling them, the feeling of the unexpected and of the strong local traditions that still run through the village was epitomised by a performance by the Alderley Mummers at the opening, repeated at various stages during the exhibition. There were other activities too, perhaps most notably and most usefully the experimental archaeology carried out during the National Archaeology Days in July 1997, when members of the public of all ages were encouraged to take part in practical experiments to make hammer stones and use them in fire-setting to begin a mine adit, and then to assist in some experimental smelting of the local copper ores. One of the most interesting aspects was not just what one learned about the practical aspects of replicating Bronze Age technology (though it was extremely valuable as an academic exercise too), but the way in which it became a group activity which could involve a large proportion of the community (*ArchAE*: chs 10 and 11). The reconstruction of a Bronze Age mining scene depicted in [Figure 15.5](#) illustrates this, and it cannot be chance that the artist has chosen to model several of the 'Bronze Age' figures on people who actually took part in the experiment. And if there were events and involvement for the public, there were also books and articles produced by members of the Landscape Project team that derived from their work at Alderley, even if they did not form part of the formal publication plan, ranging from the semi-popular *The Villas of Alderley Edge* by Matthew Hyde (1999) to specialised articles such as an account by Dr Dmitri Logunov, the Project's spider specialist, of one complete field season spent on Alderley Edge, 'Preliminary Survey of the Spiders, Harvestmen and False-Scorpions of Alderley Edge, Cheshire', published in the *Newsletter of the British Arachnological Society* (Logunov, 2003), or one that brought the story of the famous shovel into the twenty-first century which we wrote for the *Journal of Archaeological Science*, entitled 'Natural Preservation Mechanisms at Play in a Bronze Age Wooden Shovel Found in the Copper Mines of Alderley Edge' (Smith *et al.*, 2011).

However, there was an inevitable focus on the archaeology of Alderley Edge, since, in the end, all the human story of the place derives from that. When it came to putting together the final full publication of the Landscape Project's work there was simply too much archaeology to describe for it to sit comfortably in a single publication with all the rest of the story: this would have become an unbalanced book intellectually, and an impossibly weighty one physically. Therefore the archaeological work was brought together and set in its wider context in a separate volume, entitled *The Archaeology of Alderley Edge (ArchAE)*, edited and largely written by Simon Timberlake together with myself. Aimed at a specialist audience, it was published by John and Erica Hedges in 2005 in the British series of 'British Archaeological Reports', with an identical separate version for sale locally – mostly through Manchester Museum (the book is now distributed by Archaeopress, via Hadrian Books). All the rest of the story, with a summary of the archaeology, is to be found in the present book. One might argue that the geology is also so complicated and so fundamental that it deserves a separate volume too: however, there was a danger that the picture would fragment just when we were trying to put the jigsaw together, so we have tried to divide this book into separate and comprehensible sections that do not distort the overall view, while giving those with a particular interest in one area clear avenues which they can follow.

In the course of its life, AELP became such a vigorous plant that it grew several offshoots which developed lives of their own. The first of these was AELPHER, the 'Alderley Edge Landscape Project Heritage and Educational Resources'. The brainchild of Griselda Greaves and John Adams, it had a twofold purpose: first to make the Project's findings and its archive available to a much wider audience by means of a website (<http://www.alderleyedge.manchester.museum>; no longer extant but in the British Library's archive – see below and [Chapter 20](#), p. 532); and second to use that web-based archive to create a learning resource that would address the dip suffered by many children as they move from primary to secondary school, and which could be used in tandem by secondary schools and their feeder primaries. It is based on *The Stone Book Quartet*, Alan Garner's account of a single crucial day in the life of a child in four different generations of his own family in Alderley Edge village (Garner, [1979](#)). Because the book celebrates the landscape and the power that landscape has to shape the people within it, it serves to show how an author gathers his material and writes his book, how people belong in their particular setting and how that setting has grown up. In the language of education used on the website:

the scheme of work consists of integrated Humanities teaching units for English, Geography and History, specifically designed to encourage the development of transferable higher thinking skills across all three subjects.

Each subject unit may be used on its own, but if used together, the units are more than the sum of their parts: they support children in a systematic enquiry into the Geographical and Historical background of the book.

The Project was funded principally by the Heritage Lottery Fund but with further help from bodies such as the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, Manchester Airport Community Trust Fund and Macclesfield Borough Council, and developed in partnership with the Cheshire Education Authority; it became a model for similar schemes across the county and indeed further afield. However, this rather prosaic account of its development conceals its somewhat turbulent gestation caused by the sizzling high-energy enthusiasm of all the participants. As with so much of our Alderley story, the problem lay in keeping the excitement in check, not in driving it along. It is a great sorrow to us that when the University changed its policy on hosting ‘additional’ websites a few years later, many of the links in this site were broken, so that although there are plans to re-establish it in a different format, at the time of writing (2013) it is no longer possible to use it to access the Project Archive nor the recordings of interviews. Fortunately, it survives intact as a CD and in the British Library’s archive (see [Chapter 20](#), p. 532).

Another of the offshoots was the Alderley Sandhills Project (ASP), an excavation at the site of the Miners’ Cottages in the Hagg, conducted in 2003 jointly by the Museum and the University Department of Art History and Archaeology under the direction of Dr Eleanor Casella, with the involvement of local volunteers and schools and funded by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund distributed through English Heritage (the Sandhills at Alderley Edge were, after all, created from mining spoil and the material was later used as aggregate for roads and runways). This was an innovative excavation, employing New World methods, of two pairs of supposedly eighteenth-century cottages that linked the archaeology of the cottages to the memories of three children who had grown up in them but were now in their eighties: it produced some fascinating and revealing mismatches between the facts recollected by the boy and the two girls when compared with the archaeological evidence (Casella and Croucher, [2010](#)).

The story does not end here, however. One of the initial purposes of AELP was to collect information that would provide the National Trust with the basis of a proper management plan for the site. It was clear in the early days that the Trust sometimes found it hard to comprehend the mindset of some of its new partners from the University and to appreciate the disinterested nature of the Landscape Project’s research – to understand that those involved were there to help, to be a source of expert advice not readily available to them at most of their properties, and that this was not just another special interest group. However, [Chapter 29](#) of this book (‘Close to the Edge – Ensuring the Future

of the Edge for Everyone’), written by the Trust’s present Countryside Manager for Cheshire and the Wirral, should make it clear how that attitude has not so much changed as made a complete *volte face*. Now that the University-led Landscape Project has drawn to a close, it is the Trust that is driving the archaeological and environmental research on the Edge (with University support) as part of its wide-ranging and innovative conservation and access programme. A plan put together by the Trust and the University to investigate further the archaeology of the landscape has had to be shelved for lack of resources, but it is there to be taken down and put into action when its time comes, while from the University Faculty of Life Sciences and the Museum has come a project to use DNA sequencing of bacterial diversity on the Sandhills and in Windmill Wood as a test-bed for a study of the long-term effects of industrial pollution. Sons of AELP, in fact.

In the village itself there is now the Alderley Edge History Group, founded by the late Harold Smith, who had served on the steering group as one of the village representatives. Its first meeting was in 2006, a year after the launch of *The Archaeology of Alderley Edge* at what was intended to be the ‘farewell event’ for the Landscape Project. It goes from strength to strength, recruiting its members both from ‘old locals’ who have lived in Alderley all their lives (and possibly for several generations) and from younger incomers: there is enormous enthusiasm, and regular meetings that seem to be ever more crowded – at the time of writing the Group has had to move to larger premises. At one stage the Project issued a regular newsletter called *Edgewise*, giving information about its work and its plans, largely for the benefit of the village and for the various volunteers who gave their time, and more, for our benefit. However, when it was suggested that the village or one of the existing groups which claimed to care for Edge’s interests might take on its production there was little response. It seems that what was needed here was a pause while everyone sat back and recovered from AELP, took a deep breath, and started again on a new footing.

What of that sentence in our funding application which I quoted earlier: ‘since this is primarily a survey, we anticipate that it will raise questions in more than one discipline meriting further research later’? Some of those questions are answered – at least in part – in the chapters that make up this book. Others are still raising their heads a dozen or more years later. There are new insights into the legend that can be only touched on here, for they deserve a whole other book to themselves. What of the ‘Roman’ mineshaft that we believe we had found? The radiocarbon date for the planks from the bottom of the shaft came out at 360–280 BC or 250 BC–AD 15 (the alternative dates result from the ‘flat spot’ in the dating curve at this point): this appears to be too early for the tree to have been felled when the Romans advanced into northern

Britain during the later first century AD. We can quite reasonably try to dismiss that by saying that these planks were being re-used by the time they were put into the bottom of the shaft – but as Simon Timberlake asks in [Chapter 14](#), how do we then explain the growing number of Iron Age dates for other mines that had previously been thought to be Roman (*ArchAE*: 88–9)? The Landscape Project began with the rediscovery of a Bronze Age wooden shovel: why did it survive so well in what was clearly not a waterlogged anaerobic context? Perhaps twenty-first-century technology could provide the answer: the shovel was submitted to the Synchrotron Radiation Source at the Science and Technology Facilities Council’s Laboratory at Daresbury, near Warrington, as one of the last investigations to be carried out at before its final closure on 4 August 2008. The answer appears to be a very high concentration of copper (no surprises there), along with high levels of lead (again to be expected) and arsenic. While the arsenic is important as the element that binds the copper to the wood – Cuprinol before it was modified to respect current health and safety regulations – the most interesting result of this study was the discovery that the concentrations of copper were markedly higher over working areas of the blade and the unbroken parts of the handle, where it would have been rubbed by the miners’ ore-stained hands more than elsewhere: in other words, the copper was forced into the wood while the shovel was being used rather than leaching into it while it was buried in the ground afterwards. In contrast, the Roman planks from the sump in Pot Shaft, which had simply lain in wet if copper-rich conditions for 2,000 years, contained much less copper, and are less well preserved (Smith *et al.*, 2011). There is good evidence that the shovel was deliberately broken (‘killed’) and sacrificed – we discuss this further in the chapter on the archaeology of the Edge ([Chapter 14](#)). Also described in that chapter is the discovery of a wooden goblet in 2005 close to the find-spot of the shovel. The Edge does indeed still have many surprises to catch the unwary or indeed the open-minded.

Alan Garner concludes his ‘Approach to the Edge’ ([Chapter 2](#)) by wondering how much his readers’ fingernails have grown in the course of the chapter. The Project coordinator has grown a beard and it has turned grey in the course of this Project, though he has probably not acquired the wisdom that should go with it: even after years of working up there it is still easy to lose one’s way on the Edge, for so much is not quite what it seems.

Further reading

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 Carlson, C. J. and Dibben, N. J. 2012. *The Alderley Edge Mines*. Nantwich: Nigel Dibben.
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Approach to the Edge: a personal view

Alan Garner

This chapter was first written as a handbook for the Alderley Edge Landscape Project's exhibition 'Living on the Edge' in 1998, but even then I felt that I could not limit it just to that event, and the editor of this volume has suggested that we reprint a version of it now in the wider context of the full and final publication of the Project's work. Those who would know more about the geology and the water-fleas or the ritual and the chemistry of the shovel's survival or indeed the myriad flora and fauna of the Edge will find some answers in later chapters of the book. The exhibition was a first attempt to give a larger public a sense of what we who grew up in Alderley from childhood have always known: that the Edge is a most special place, and now it is possible for hard evidence to support that inborn knowledge.



Figure 2.1. Alan Garner in Miss Bratt's class at Alderley Edge Council School, aged six

Photograph courtesy Alan Garner.

The feelings and their truths will remain, for they are permanent, but if the exhibition and now this book do their job, the bringing together of *some* objects, of *some* images out of many hundreds, and of *some* of the stories and facts about the Edge will combine to show how the feelings and the truths came about and how, through unimaginable time, everything connects and has influenced everything else; and that is the greatest of wonders.

For me, this Project started in 1940. I was six years old (Figure 2.1) and in the Infants' Department of Alderley Edge Council School, and my teacher was Miss Bratt.

Miss Bratt always called me Richard, because she had taught my father and his brothers, and I shared with Uncle Dick a frequently employed habit of running away from the Gothic hell-hole of that classroom, with its lancet windows too high to look out from, with uncut evergreens blocking the light so that we were denied even the sky. There was just Miss Bratt, perched at her desk by the blackboard, a coke stove protected by a brass railed wire mesh guard, on which hung the reeking, steaming undergarments of those of us who could not wait until playtime. On the wall there was a cupboard, by the cupboard a nail, and from the nail hung something of no interest whatsoever, except that nobody knew what it was.

So, as my uncle before me, I found myself running down the lane from the school, Miss Bratt panting, 'Richard! Richard!', because she had to catch us before we got to the main road.

The next chapter was the summer of 1953, during my last term at Manchester Grammar School. I had been dispatched to the Central Reference Library to compare differing versions of a Classical text. But I was reading another book, which had the memorable title: *The Jottings of Some Geological, Archaeological, Botanical, Ornithological and Zoological Rambles Round Macclesfield*, by J. D. Sainter, FGS, 1878. Page forty-seven had me hooked. It described the recent findings by miners of a number of grooved stone hammers, or mauls, in an old surface working 'from three to four yards in depth' near the copper mines at Alderley Edge (Figures 2.2, 4.3).

The hammers were quite distinctive. They were used as door stops in the cottages and farms of the area, and I found three myself on the Edge. (In later years, I learnt that such artefacts are common where early metal-working has taken place. Those that I have handled, in Ohio and Armenia, had been found in the first metal cultures of the two places, and although they were separated in time by millennia, they were identical. It is simply that the same problems tend to produce the same answers.) Yet, although the Alderley hammers suggested a Bronze Age occupation, they could not be dated. Flint tools and waste from the Neolithic and Mesolithic periods showed that the Edge had been

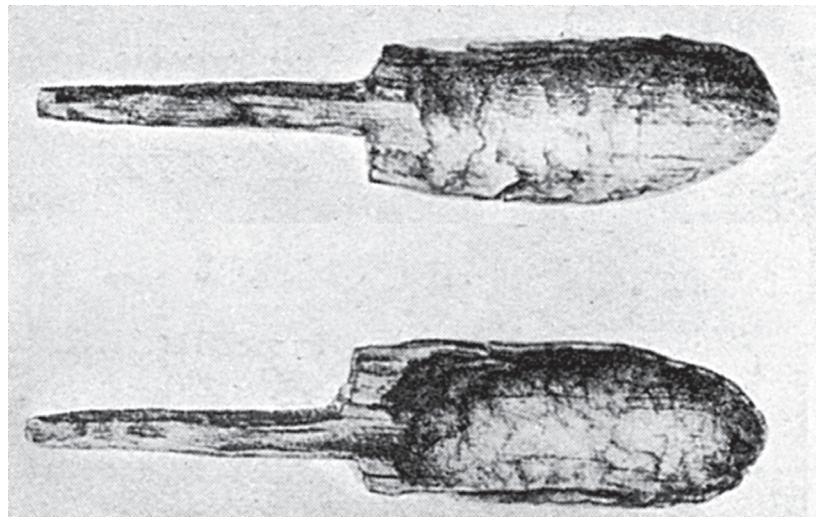


Figure 2.2. A characteristic group of stone hammers from ancient mine pits, Alderley Edge.

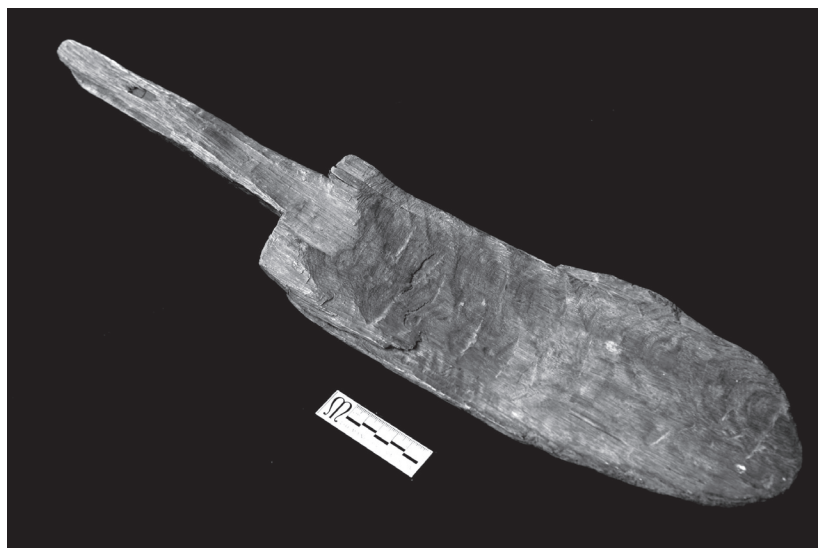
After Shone (1911: fig. 35).

occupied for about eight thousand years but what these hammers were, and what they had been used for, could not be proven. Indeed, some archaeologists would not accept that they were more than weights to hold down the roofs of bothies in quite recent mining.

What was so interesting about Sainter's record was that among the hammers lay 'an oak shovel that had been very roughly used'. Sainter



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 2.3. The Alderley Edge shovel. (a) J. D. Sainter's drawing, 'Back and Front of an Oak Spade, Found in the Ancient Mine Pits, Alderley Edge'. (b, c) Front and back views.

(a) After Shone (1911: fig. 39).
 (b,c) Manchester Museum acc. no. 1991.85. Photographs Manchester Museum, University of Manchester.

illustrated the shovel, back and front, opposite page sixty-five ([Figure 2.3a](#)), and to my bewilderment I knew that I had seen that ‘shovel’, and seen it often. But where? I couldn’t remember. I knew only that it was familiar.

Days later, in the way that such things happen, I was thinking about something else when I ‘saw’ the ‘shovel’ and where it was.

I rushed to Alderley Edge Council School and cornered the headmistress, Miss Fletcher. She was a formidable authoritarian, with a heart as golden as the plait of the hair of her youth that she wore as a wreath about the equally striking silver of her age.

‘The shovel! The shovel in Miss Bratt’s room. The shovel!’

Miss Fletcher, used to my manic ways, said, ‘I don’t know, Alan. Calm down. Let’s go and look.’

We went to Miss Bratt’s room. Sainter’s ‘shovel’ was the strange thing that had hung above my head and had absorbed much of my attention as I fended off the droning of the eight times table all around me. I am still not happy with the eight times table.

I was even less happy with what I now saw. The cupboard was on the wall. The nail was next to it. But there was nothing on the nail. ‘I remember there was something,’ said Miss Fletcher. ‘We’ll ask Mr Ellam.’

We found the caretaker. ‘Oh, ay, there was a bit of a thing, wasn’t there?’ said Billy Ellam. ‘But we had a sort-out when Twiggy retired, and most of it went on the tip.’ I became hysterical. ‘I’ll tell you what,’ said Billy Ellam. ‘If it’s not on the tip, it’ll be under the stage in the hall.’

I squeezed into the twelve-inch gap below the stage, lighting my way with Billy Ellam’s torch. The space was filled with coconut matting, high-jump posts, Miss Bratt’s fireguard of mephitic memory (we still use it at home as a towel rail), baskets, boxes, hoops, balls: all the clutter of a village school. I was lost to sight, and Miss Fletcher called after me, but I persevered, turning everything over systematically. Soon contact with the outside world was lost as I worked my way into the dark. Under a rag, at the furthest end of the last corner, was the last object. It was the ‘shovel’. Sticking to it was a grubby typed label describing its origin. It was the ‘oak shovel that had been very roughly used’ ([Figure 2.3b,c](#)).

There was no room to turn in. I had to find my way back blind, pulling with my toes and pushing with my one free hand.

‘Well!’ said Miss Fletcher. ‘I think it’s “finders keepers”. I’ve never seen anything like that performance in all my born puff!’

I took the ‘shovel’ to the Manchester Museum. Despite my protestations, there was ‘no one available’ to comment.

So it began. I felt compelled never to leave the ‘shovel’ at risk again. It went with me, all through the army, occupying the centre of my kit bag, to the detriment of Her Majesty’s property. The British Museum dismissed the ‘shovel’ as ‘possibly a Tudor winnowing fan’.

It was with me at Oxford. The Ashmolean Museum was not interested and declared it to be a ‘child’s toy spade: Victorian.’ The conditions of its finding were ignored. Eventually I stopped asking. There were other things to be done. So I kept the Tudor winnowing fan and Victorian child’s spade safe and bided my time. I knew instinctively, and, later, intellectually, that the object was of considerable archaeological importance, and trusted that, one day, it would be recognised. I bided for forty years. And I shall not forget the sense of justification as I formally put the shovel into the hands of John Prag, then Keeper of Archaeology at the Manchester Museum, entrusting it to his care.

Radiocarbon dating was carried out at Oxford. The so-called ‘Tudor/Victorian’ implement was found to be made of oak that was nearly four thousand years old.

In 1995, the Derbyshire Caving Club, in starting to make safe a shaft that was beginning to collapse at the surface, found a pot holding fourth-century copper Roman coins, fortunately of no great financial worth, and certainly not a question of treasure trove. But the excitement they created was beyond price ([Figure 2.4](#)).

Nothing Roman had ever been found on the Edge; which was surprising, since, if anything, Roman remains were the most likely to be expected. But here was evidence, and beyond evidence suggestion: suggestion that, towards the end of the Roman occupation, something had happened that had scared whoever the people were living on the Edge.

The British tribe of this area were the northern Cornovii, relatively peaceful for a part of Britain that was always under military law, which was especially strict where mining of any kind took place. But within a few hours’ march were the real bogeymen, the Brigantes.

Everyone, Roman or British, was in trouble if the Brigantes decided to take a stroll down from the Pennines, an area that was never pacified. And, at the time of the digging of Pot Shaft, which turned out to be close to AD 65, the Brigantes were still some five years from being ‘conquered’, itself a Roman euphemism (research at other sites in Britain and elsewhere carried out since the Project was at work now suggests that Pot Shaft may actually have been dug before the Roman conquest, but it does not affect this discussion – see [Chapter 14](#)). Before then, they had been classified as ‘precarious’, and in AD 69 they were upgraded to ‘open enemies’, and the Governor of Britain, when called upon to supply troops for troubles nearer home, refused, giving as his reason his inability to manage the Brigantes. The Edge, and its mining, were on the very limit of the controllable Roman Empire. You have only to stand at Pot Shaft and look to the hills to realise that in AD 65 a miner’s lot was not a happy one; nor was a Roman soldier’s. One of my most intense understandings of Roman Britain came as a schoolboy, when in Brigantine Northumbria, I saw a Roman tile, on which fifty years after



Figure 2.4. The pot containing the hoard of Roman coins, in the hands of Rachel Bailey, immediately after its discovery by her father in April 1995.

Photograph Ian Roberts, courtesy of Ian Roberts, Malcolm Bailey and Rachel Bailey.

Pot Shaft, the maker had scribbled with his finger on the tile before it was fired the Latin equivalent of, ‘Oh, shit!’

So it is not unreasonable to suppose that, at a time when the Romans were in the first years of losing their grip, the Brigantes would sniff a chance. The result would be panic. That panic rose up at us in 1995 as we looked down into what is now called Pot Shaft. Someone had been in a hurry to hide the pot and its contents (Figure 2.5). Any old hole would do, so long as it could be found again. And here was a shaft, filled nearly to the top with rubbish and wind-blown sand. Whoever hid the coins almost certainly knew of it and where to come to find them again



Figure 2.5. Artist's reconstruction of the burial of the coin hoard c. AD 340.

Drawing by Seán Ó'Brógáin.

when times were better. But it seems that, for him, time ran out, and stayed out for nearly two thousand years. (Figure 14.9, p. 332, shows the hoard itself.)

When it was excavated in 1997, Pot Shaft proved to be eleven metres deep, a tunnel had been cut from the bottom to reach the copper ore, and there was a wooden construction in perfect condition so that radiocarbon dating at a laboratory in Miami could give evidence for the possible digging of the shaft in about AD 65, less than a quarter of a century after the Roman invasion of southern Britain, and possibly



Figure 2.6. Alderley Edge and Stormy Point from the north-east.

Photograph Sean Edwards.

during the reign of the emperor Nero ([Figures 14.10, 14.11](#)). It must have been a considerable military operation, and so the next, and not yet proven, matter had to be that of where the soldiers were quartered.

It was as if the Edge had been waiting until people showed that they were worthy of its knowledge, and that it felt that we were ready to be told. A pot of coins, an oak spade twice their age, and now. The gaps were so even, so neat. We were being invited to join in the rhythm of the Edge. The Project's exhibition was some of the first notes of the tune.

Although the Project started for me in 1940, the Edge was earlier in my forming.

Suburban Mottram Road ends at the Woodhill, an abrupt scarp of beech trees above the footpath. A sloping bank only twice my two-year infant height goes up to a level path. Here was my first experience of the struggle with gradient and land; my engagement with the Edge ([Figure 2.6](#); [Plate 1](#)).

Plates



(a)

Plate 1. (a) Aerial view over Alderley Edge looking west, taken in May 1996. Edge House Farm is in the foreground, the National Trust car park and the Wizard are on the left with Artists Lane and Brynlow immediately beyond. Engine Vein shows as a scar in the centre, with Windmill Wood behind and a spur of woodland running down to the Sandhills in the middle distance. Alderley Edge village with its railway is in the background. (b, *over page*) Aerial view over Alderley Edge looking north-west, taken in May 1996. Dickens Wood and Glaze Hill are on the left, the erosion at Stormy Point is in the centre, with Saddlehole to its right and the Hough beyond, and Findlow Bower Farm is just visible on the right. The spire of St Philip's Church in Alderley Edge village can be seen in the background.

Photographs Barri Jones.

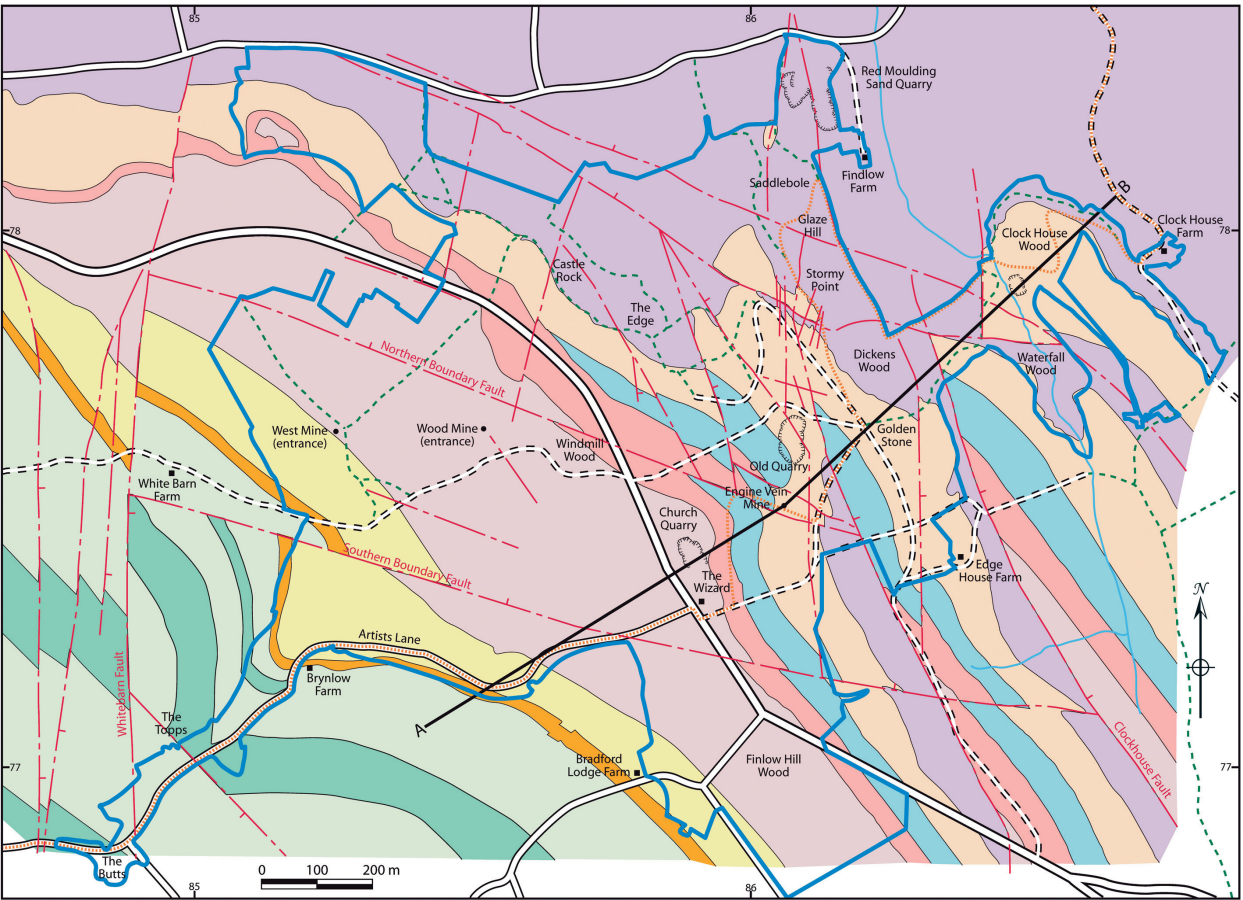


(b)



Plate 2. Cupriferous sandstones in the largely aeolian Wilmslow Sandstone Formation above Pillar Mine. Exposures like these first attracted Bronze Age and perhaps earlier miners to this site. The porous sandstones lying in between and beneath the less permeable red and green mudstones have become the sites of secondary mineral deposition.

Photograph Simon Timberlake.



Local and superseded nomenclature | Current nomenclature

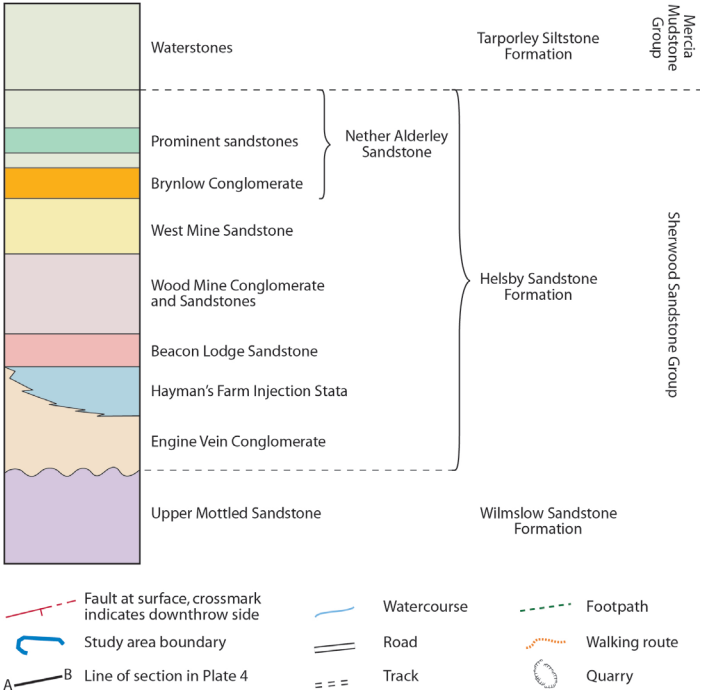


Plate 3. Geological map of the Alderley Edge area (*above*), with key (*right*). Topographical base from Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 maps (2010). Broken red lines, faults; thick black line, line of section in Plate 4; thick blue line, boundary of the AELP core area. (The long WNW–ESE fault running from White Barn Farm incorrectly marked as ‘Southern Boundary Fault’ is the Brynlow Fault.)

Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, Crown copyright October 2013. Geology from mapping by D. B. Thompson (1966).

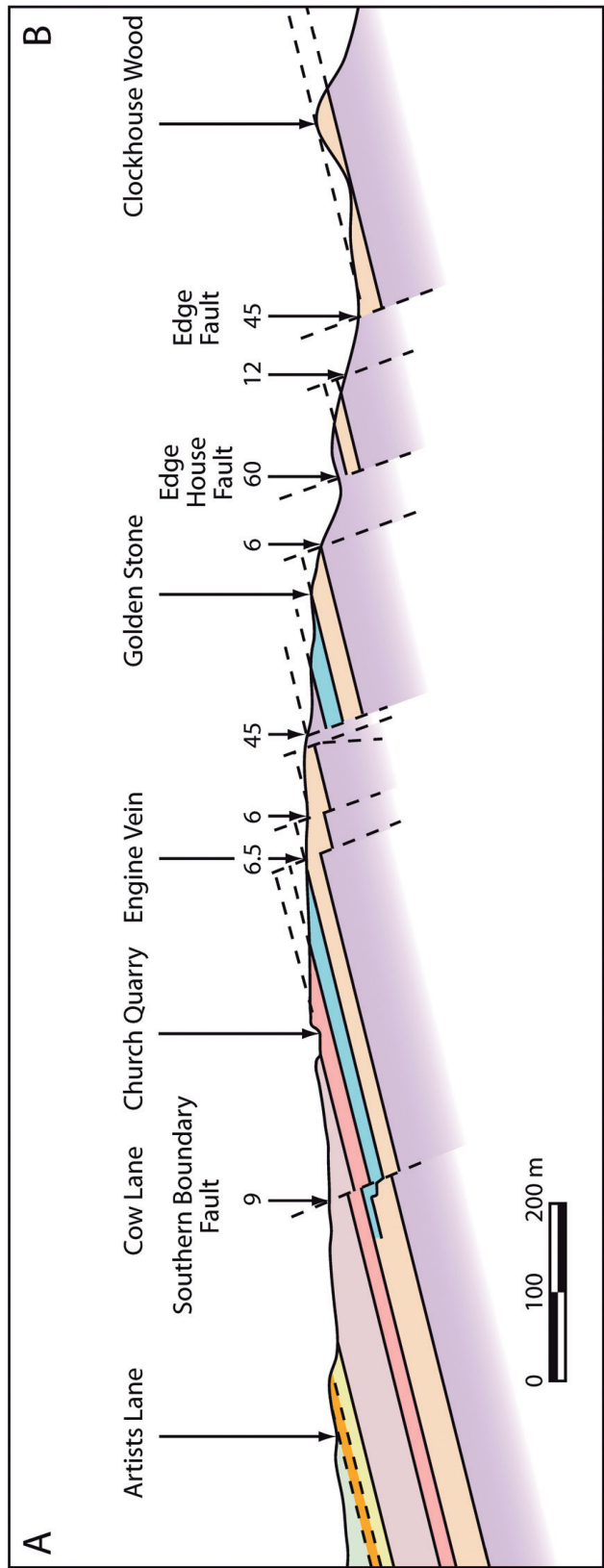


Plate 4. Detailed geological cross-section (north-east to south-west) across the AELP core area (Plate 3a), using local rock unit names and showing the effect of the main fault lines See Plate 3b for key to colours. Numbers indicate the displacement on faults in metres.
After Thompson (1991: 72).

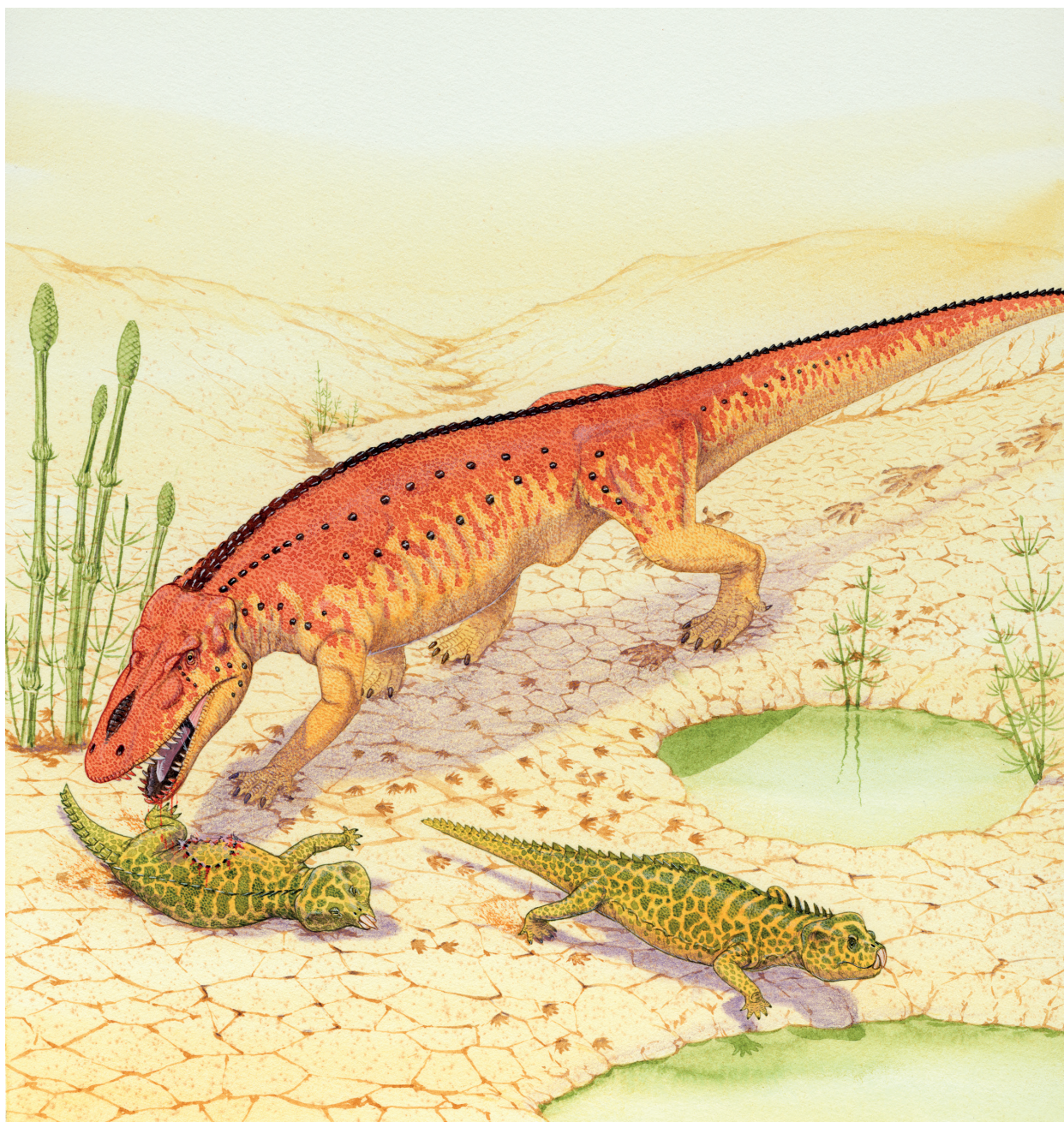


Plate 5. Reconstruction of a carnivorous archosaur (*Ticinosuchus*) attacking a pair of herbivorous rhynchosauroids. The presence of footprints attributed to these creatures (the large, hand-like *Chirotherium* and the smaller *Rhynchosauroides* respectively) in the Alderley Edge area indicates the presence of these reptiles there in Mid Triassic times.

Painting by Graham Rosewarne.

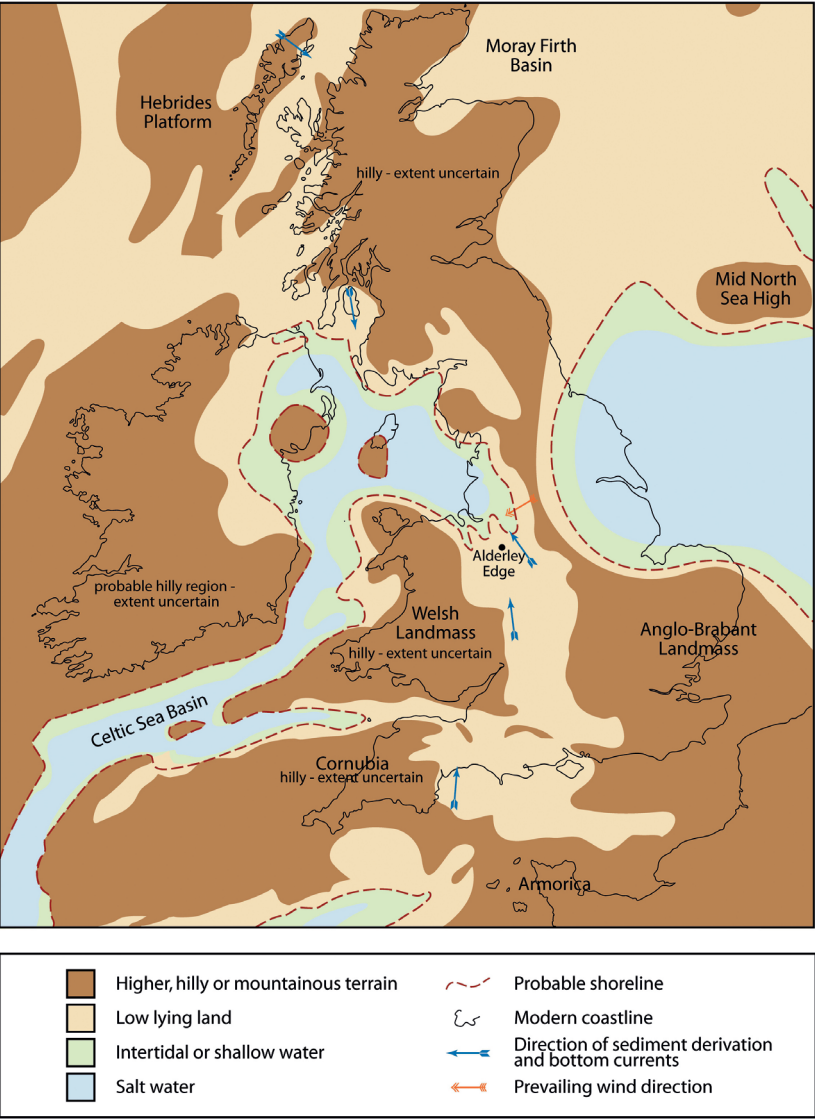


Plate 6. Regional palaeo-geographical setting of the Cheshire Basin during deposition of the Helsby Sandstone Formation in early Mid Triassic times (c. 245 million years ago). The Alderley area is situated in a fluvial system that drained north-westwards into semi-marine environments connected to an oceanic source.

After Warrington and Iimey-Cook (1992: fig. Trib).



Plate 7. A flask of vanadium-bearing solution prepared from the mine residues at Mottram St Andrew by Sir Henry Roscoe and used in his experiments on vanadium.

Manchester Museum acc. no. N18851. Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 8. Dark botryoidal mottramite aggregates from Mottram Mine. To this day, some doubt remains as to where the original mottramite specimens came from. Some argue that Pim Hill Mine in Shropshire was the source. Others regard Mottram Mine as the type locality. This specimen, with botryoidal aggregates up to 3 mm across, was collected in 1994 and is definitely from Mottram Mine.

Manchester Museum acc. no. N12134. Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 9. Coarse-grained sandstone from Alderley Edge containing disseminated grey to black copper and lead sulphide ores, with minor alteration to yellow and blue supergene minerals. This type of ore is typical of the Triassic sandstones at the locality.

Photograph David I. Green.

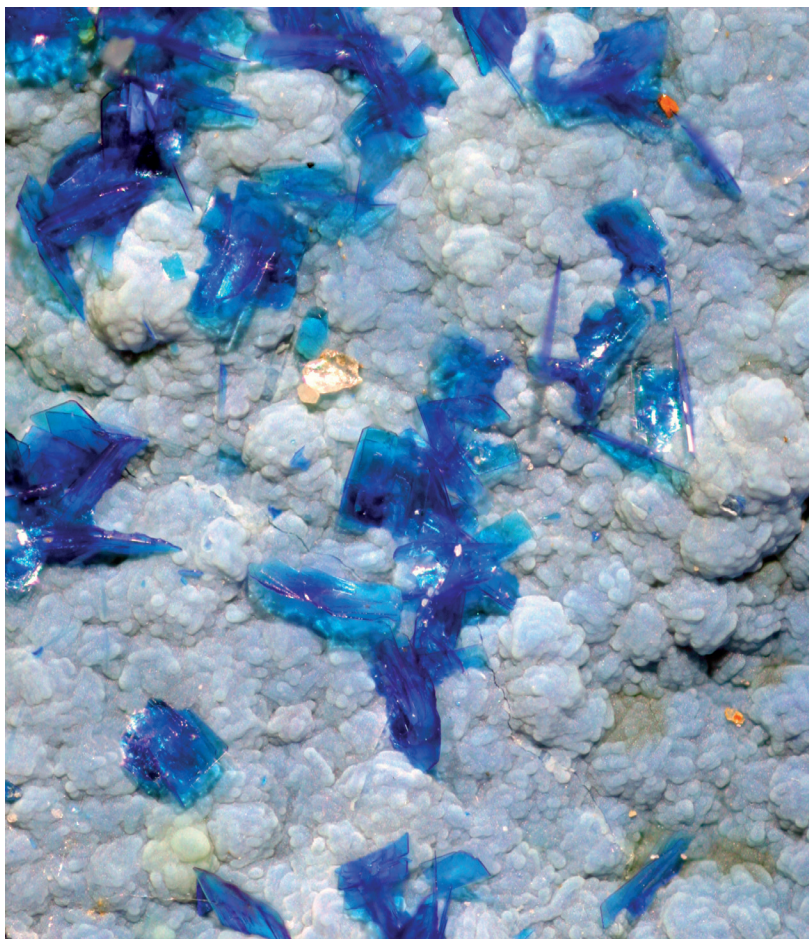


Plate 10. Dark blue azurite crystals, up to 0.8 mm long, of an unusual platy habit from Wood Mine.

Photograph David I. Green.

Plate 11. Supergene alteration in action: this blue deposit in Engine Vein Mine ('Blue Shaft') is made up of copper silicate gel which has been dissolved from the overlying ore and is precipitating on the mine walls.

Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 12. Dark green drusy pyromorphite crusts lining a cavity in sandstone and overgrown by paler pyromorphite pseudomorphs after an unknown mineral. The specimen is 40 mm across and from Engine Vein Mine.

Manchester Museum acc. no. N15613.
Photograph David I. Green.



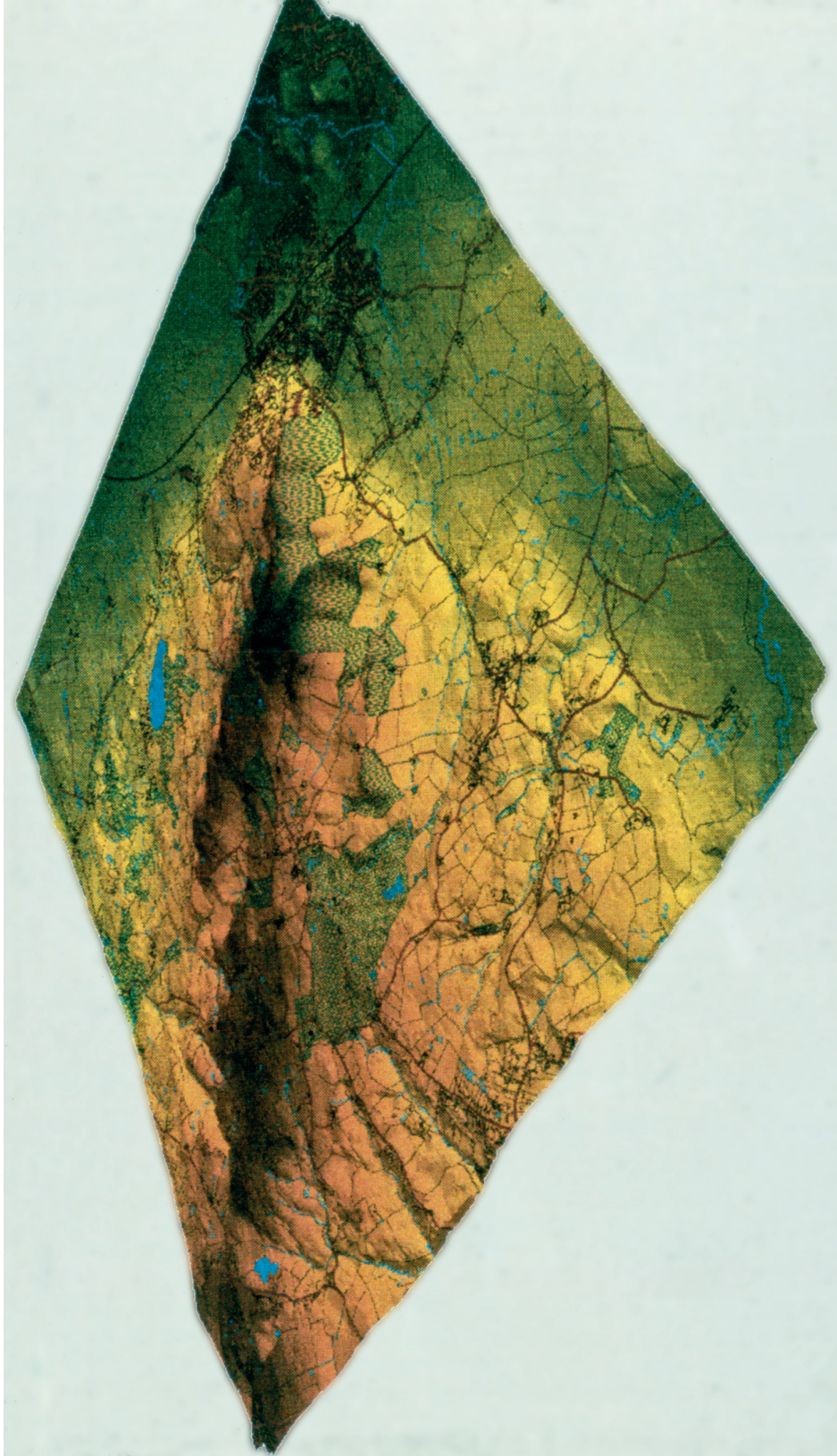


Plate 13. GIS-based MapInfo model of the Alderley Edge area as viewed from the north-east. From the present Bollin river valley at the north-east corner of the model the view extends south-westwards to beyond Radnor Mere. The Edge and the Ridge, partly masked by cloud shadow, form the high relief and along their margins moraines and other glacial landforms can be identified.

Created by Neil Matthews in the Regional Research Laboratory, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester, based on an aerial photograph of the area defined on Ordnance Survey maps by the coordinates 383 380, 389 380, 389 374, 383 374.

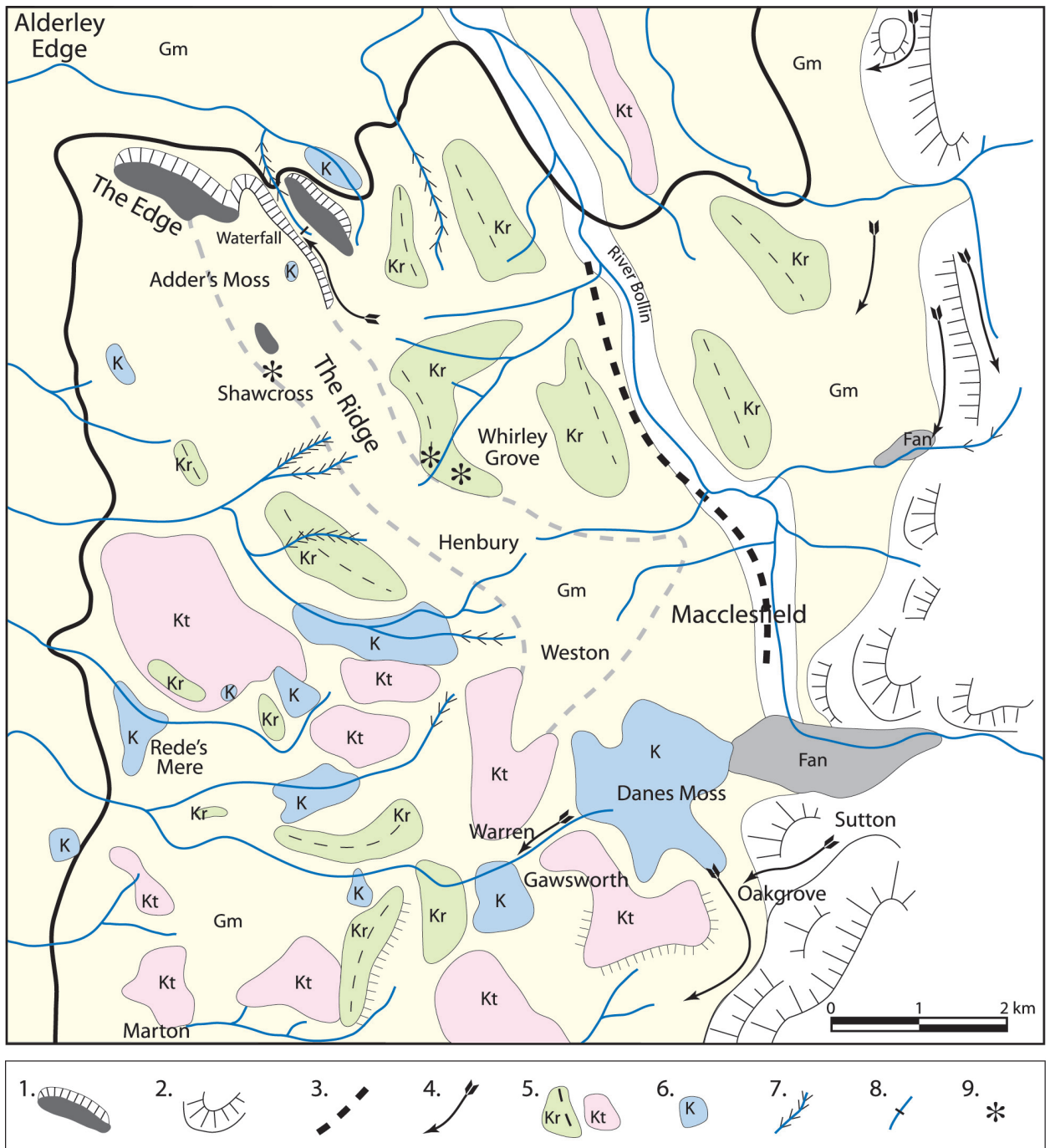


Plate 14. Geomorphological sketch map showing principal landforms associated with the glacialiation of the Edge and surrounding area. (1) The Edge and other Permo-Triassic rock outcrops. (2) Pennine Upland scarp features. (3) Alignment of the Bollin buried valley. (4) Meltwater channel. (5) Glacial and glacio-fluvial landforms: Gm, ground moraine/till surface; Kt, kame terrace; Kr, kame or moraine ridges. (6) K, Kettle-hole or former ice-margin lake site. (7) Incised valley or gully. (8) Waterfall. (9) Site of former sand/gravel quarry where deformed strata were observed.

Drawn by the author and digitised by David I. Green and Julie Ballard.



(a)



(b)

Plate 15. (a) Bailey's Bramble (*Rubus baileyi* DP Earl MS). (b) The Alderley Edge Bramble (*Rubus alderleyensis* DP Earl MS).

Photographs Sean Edwards.

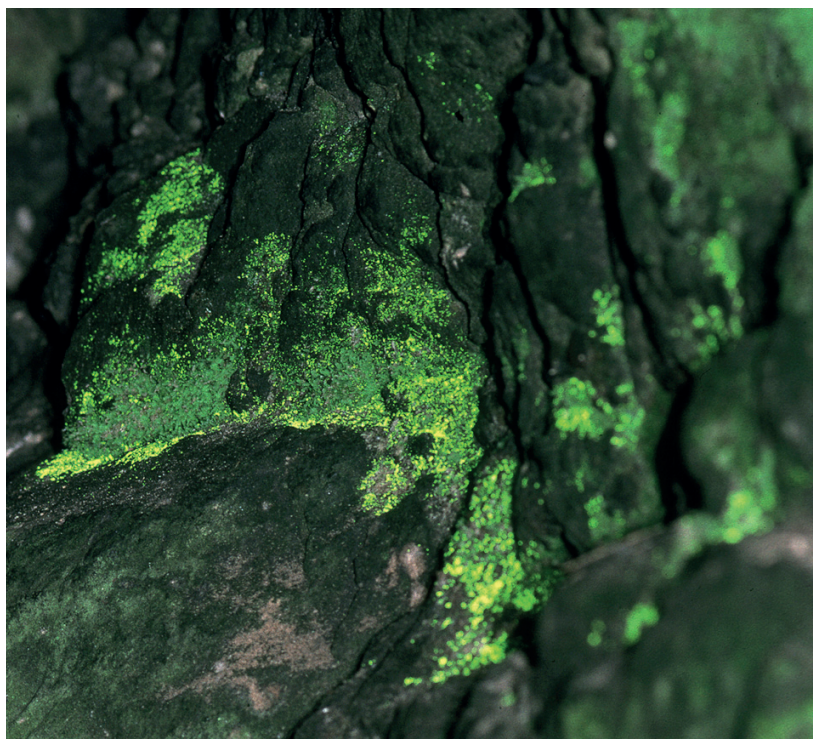


Plate 16. The moss Goblin Gold (*Schistostega pennata*)

Photographs Sean Edwards.



Plate 17. Birch Polypore fungus
(*Piptoporus betulinus*)

Photograph Sean Edwards.



Plate 18. The threadwort
Cephaloziella divaricata

Photograph Sean Edwards.

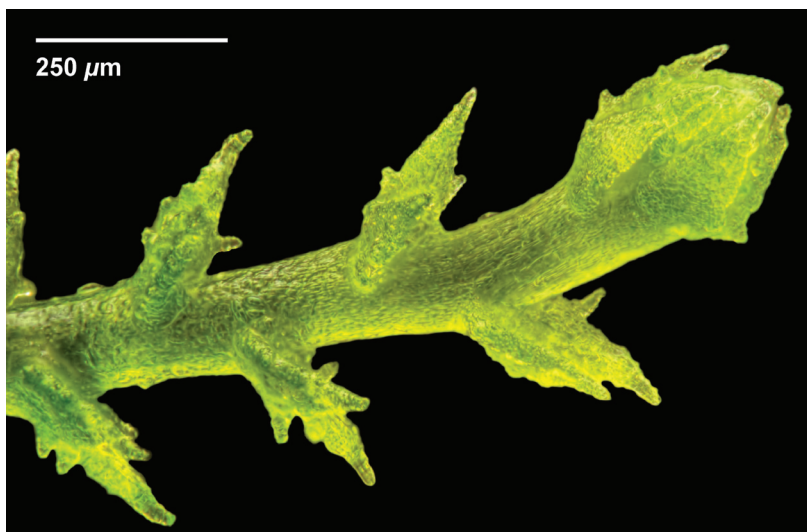


Plate 19. Great Copperwort
(*Cephaloziella nicholsonii*) (scale
shows 0.25 mm).

Photograph Des Callaghan.

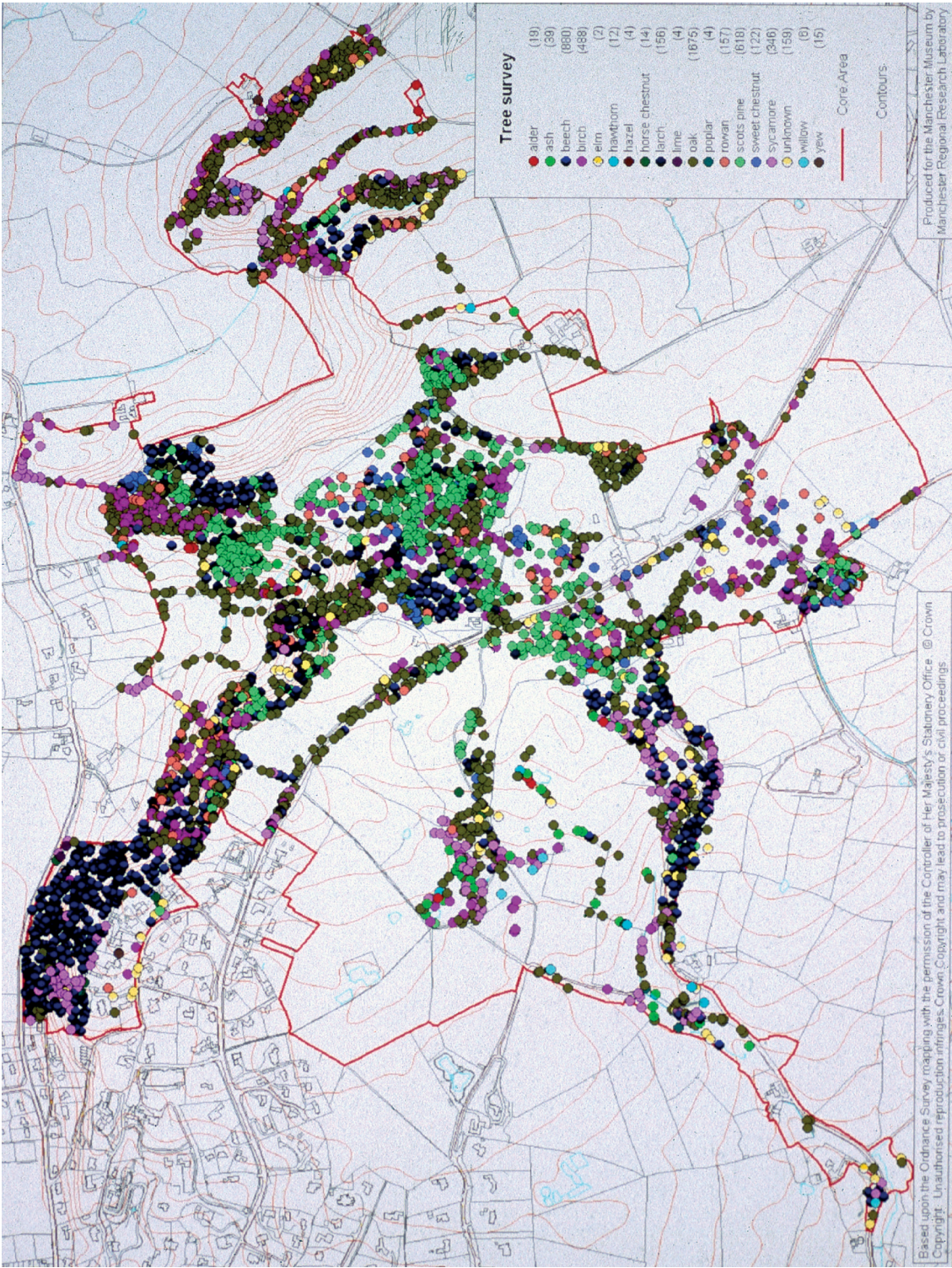


Plate 20. Distribution map of tree species in the AELP core area.

Based on the 1992 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Pathfinder map sheet 759, with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown copyright October 2013.

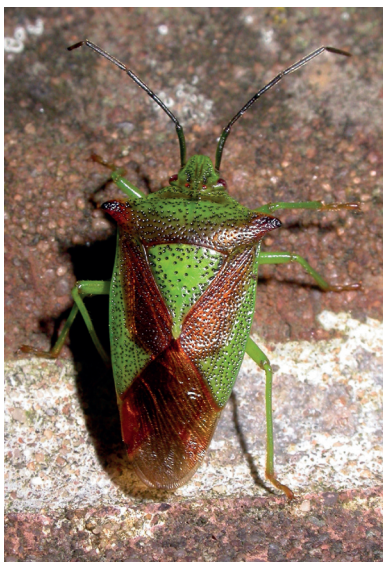


Plate 21. Hawthorn Shieldbug (*Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*), widespread and common across Britain in wooded areas.

Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 22. Common Green Lacewing (*Chrysoperla carnea*). Its larvae are fierce predators of greenflies, whiteflies and other garden pests.

Photograph David I. Green.

Plate 23. Field Grasshopper (*Chorthippus brunneus*), a medium-sized grasshopper widespread throughout much of the British Isles.

Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 24. Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*; female).

Photograph David I. Green.





Plate 25. Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*; male), widespread in Cheshire but rare at the Edge.

Photograph David Kitching.



Plate 26. Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*; female): can be seen in spring and can be found on almost any habitat near water.

Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 27. Ruby Tiger Moth (*Phragmatobia fuliginosa*), a common species throughout Britain.

Photograph Michael Dockery.



Plate 28. Peppered Moth (*Biston betularia*; typical form), a favourite of geneticists investigating the problem of industrial melanism.

Photograph Michael Dockery.

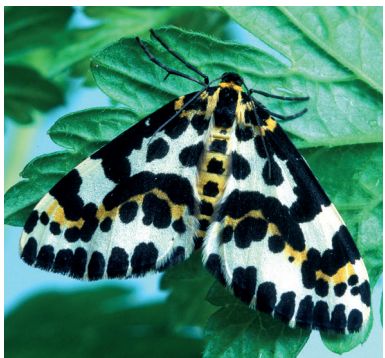


Plate 29. Magpie Moth (*Abraxas grossulariata*), a common garden species whose caterpillars can damage currant and gooseberry bushes.

Photograph Roy Leverton.

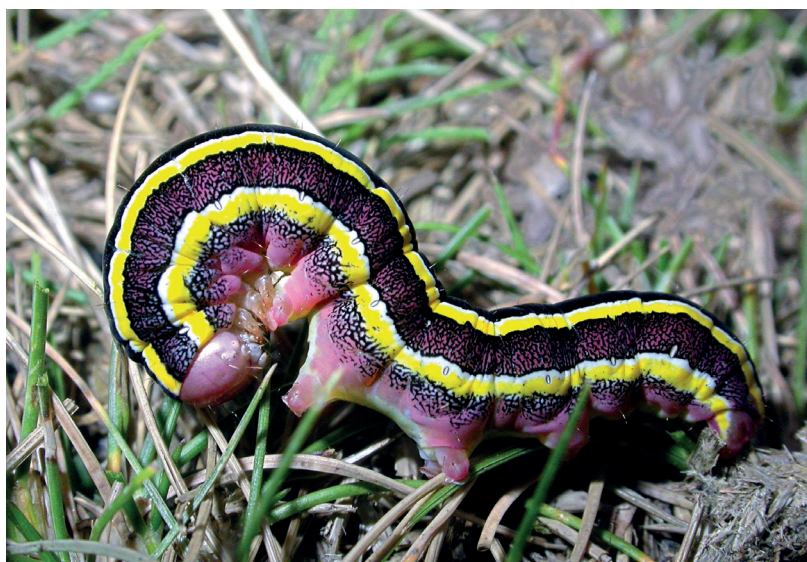


Plate 30. Broom Moth caterpillar (*Melanchra pisi*): can be seen in a wide range of habitats, including gardens.

Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 31. Heart and Dart Moth (*Agrotis exclamatoris*), a common species throughout most of Britain.

Photograph Michael Dockery.



Plate 32. Peacock Butterfly (*Aglais io*), a common resident on the Edge.

Photograph Roger Dennis.

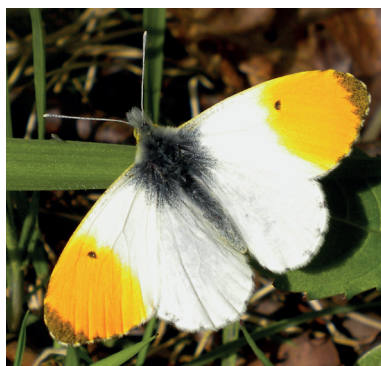


Plate 33. Orange-tip Butterfly (*Anthocharis cardamines*; male), another common resident on the Edge.

Photograph Peter B. Hardy.



Plate 34. Small Copper Butterfly (*Lycaena phlaeas*), an uncommon resident on the Edge.

Photograph Peter B. Hardy.

Plate 35. Speckled Wood Butterfly (*Pararge aegeria*; male), a species that has recently colonised the Edge.

Photograph Peter B. Hardy.

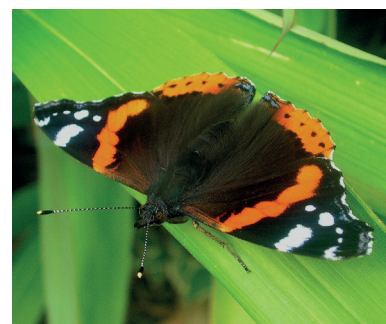


Plate 36. Red Admiral Butterfly (*Vanessa atalanta*), a migrant from the Continent.

Photograph Peter B. Hardy.



Plate 37. Brimstone Butterfly (*Gonepteryx rhamni*; male), another uncommon resident on the Edge.

Photograph Peter B. Hardy.

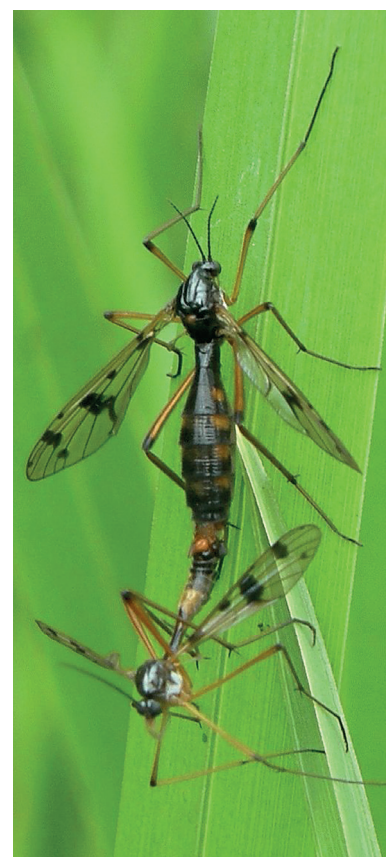


Plate 38. A mating pair of the Fold-winged Cranefly (*Ptychoptera contaminata*): the female is the larger.

Photograph Steven Falk.



Plate 39. Fever-fly (*Dilophus febrilis*; female). Common and widespread around low vegetation in April and May.

Photograph Steven Falk.



Plate 40. Hoverflies *Eristalis tenax* (Dronefly, larger) and *Episyrphus balteatus* (smaller), two species which can commonly be seen in British gardens.

Photograph Yvonne Golding.



Plate 41. Yellow Dung-fly (*Scathophaga stercoraria*): can be seen on the Edge crowding on pats of cow or horse dung.

Photograph Steven Falk.



Plate 42. Stablefly (*Stomoxys calcitrans*), an obnoxious blood-sucking species that can be seen around open pastures on the Edge and can inflict painful bites.

Photograph Steven Falk.



Plate 43. Mining Bee (*Andrena barbirabris*; female), a common species restricted to places with exposures of sand.

Photograph Mike Edwards.



Plate 44. Four-coloured Cuckoo Bee (*Bombus (Psithyrus) sylvestris*), known to aggressively attack colonies of other bumblebees.

Photograph Mike Edwards.



Plate 45. Spider-Hunting Wasp (*Anoplius nigerrimus*), found in a wide range of habitats and reported to prey on Wolf and Nursery-Web Spiders.

Photograph Mike Edwards.



Plate 46. Slender-Bodied Digger Wasp (*Crabro cribrarius*), a large solitary wasp which nests in sandy soil and stocks its burrows with flies.

Photograph Mike Edwards.



Plate 47. Ruby-tailed Wasp (*Elampus panzeri*), a brood parasite of digger wasps (*Sphecidae*).

Photograph Mike Edwards.



Plate 48. Green Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela campestris*), an active predator, usually seen in early summer on heaths, dunes and sandy places

Photograph David I. Green.

Plate 49. A museum specimen of *Anacaena globulus*, a common representative of the Scavenger Water Beetles, which can be found in rich mud at pond edges
Photograph Katherine Child.

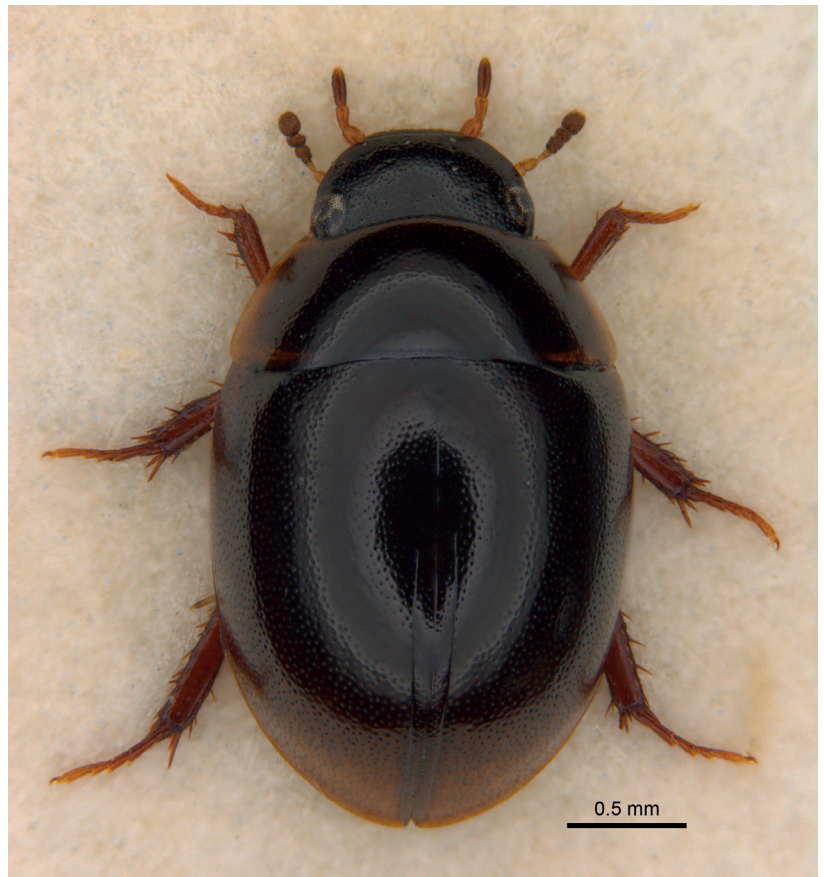


Plate 50. Common Red Soldier Beetle (*Rhagonycha fulva*), a frequent visitor to open-structured flowers such as members of the carrot family.
Photograph David I. Green.





Plate 51. Two-spotted Ladybird (*Adalia bipunctata*), a fairly common species and one of 'England's true guardian angels' (see text, p. 275).

Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 52. Long-jawed Spider (*Metellina merianae*, colour variety *celata*; female), a common dweller in entrances to old mines.

Photograph Martin Askins.

Plate 53. Cryptic Wolf Spider
(*Arctosa perita*; female), dwelling
in the Sandhills region.

Photograph Martin Askins.



Plate 54. The Giant House
Spider (*Tegenaria gigantea*)
occurs in houses and out-
buildings as well as outside.

Photograph Peter Nicholson.





Plate 55. Window Spider (*Amaurobius fenestralis*; female), which builds retreats in holes in rocks and under tree bark.

Photograph Martin Askins.



Plate 56. Zebra Spider (*Salticus scenicus*), a common dweller of stony walls and rocks.

Photograph David I. Green.



Plate 57. Nursery-web Spider (*Pisaura mirabilis*; female) with egg sac inside its nursery web.

Photograph Martin Askins.