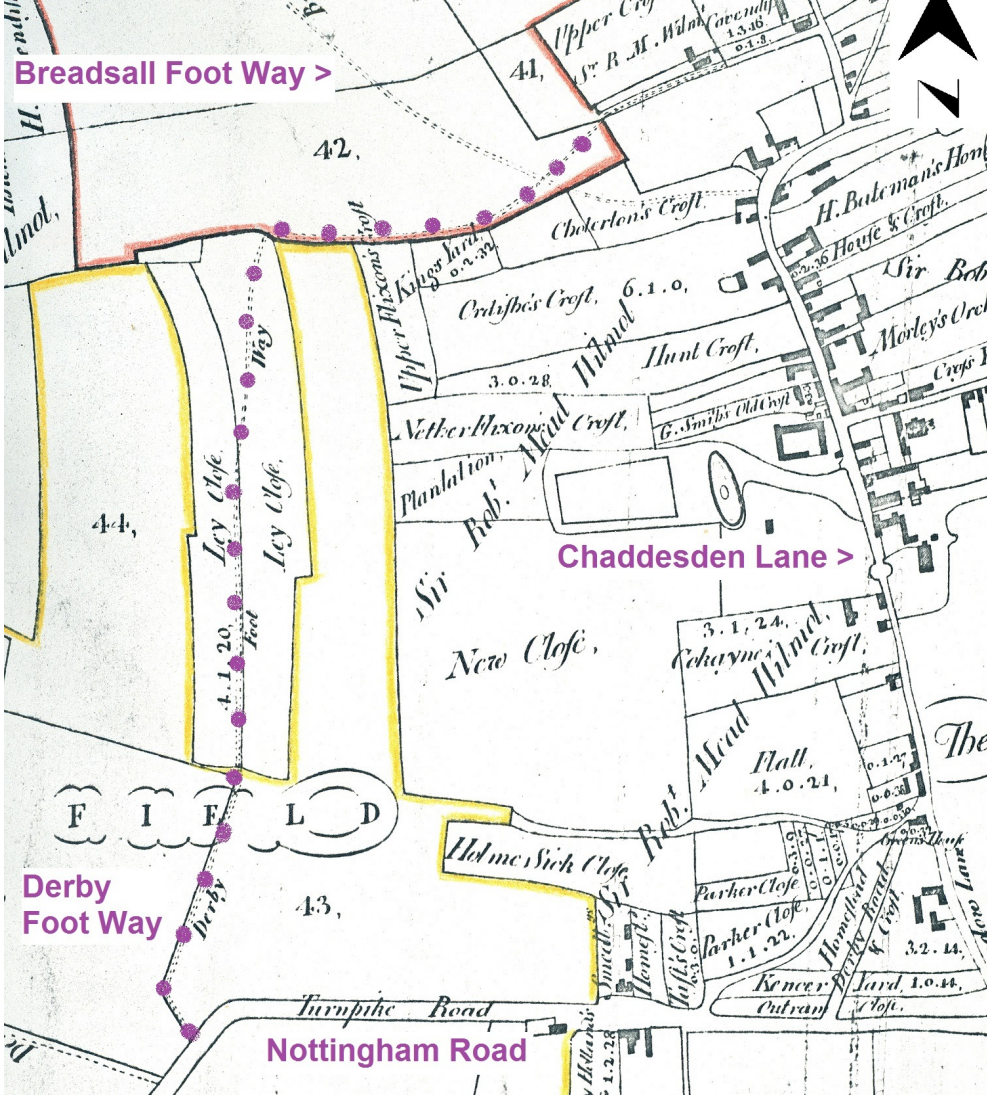


## CHADDESSEN'S OWN PENNY LONG LANE

You might perhaps be familiar with the road called Penny Long Lane just north of Broadway at Darley Abbey. This is now all that remains of what was once a long, narrow lane which ran between Kedleston Road and Duffield Road, and was largely obliterated in the early 1930s during the construction of the Broadway section of Derby's Outer Ring Road. Far less well known is the fact that Chaddesden once had a lane with exactly the same name.

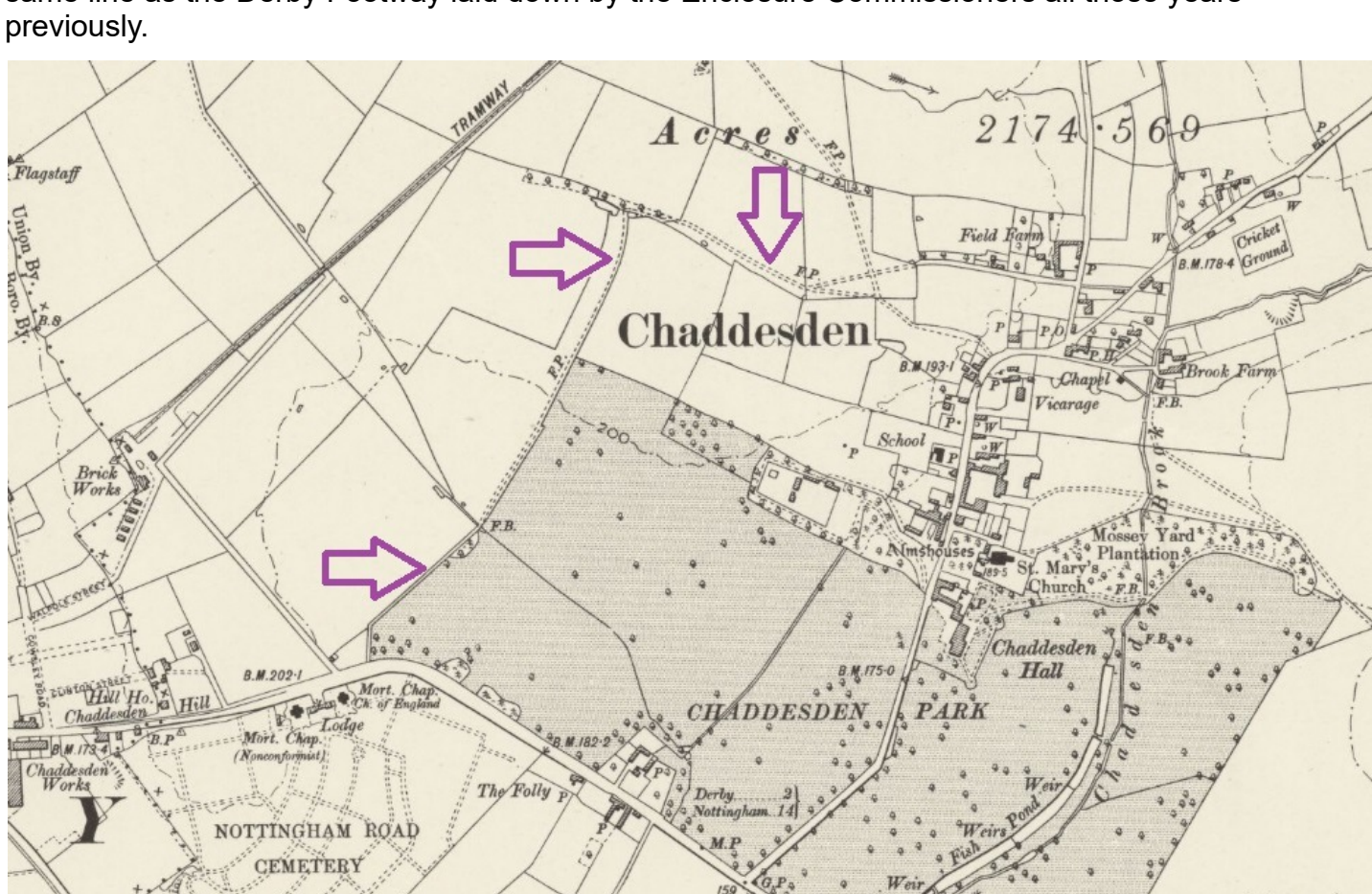
Our Penny Long Lane originally went by the name of Derby Footway and was created over two and a quarter centuries ago, back at the time of the enclosure of Chaddesden's open fields and common land (1791–93). In the



Enclosure Award we can read that the Commissioners set out "One public Footway from the Westwardly end of a Lane called Kings Yard Lane [Field Lane] ... to and into the said Turnpike Road leading between Derby and Nottingham, Which said last described Footway is hereby called Derby Footway." [Note 1]. The relevant section of the enclosure map is reproduced as Fig. 1, where it may be seen that Derby Footway intersected with Breadsall Footway a short distance to the south-west of Field Lane, thereby providing local people with convenient pedestrian routes not only to and from Nottingham Road to the centre of Chaddesden village, but also to Breadsall and beyond avoiding dusty and poorly-maintained roads.

**Fig. 1: Enclosure map of 1792 showing Derby Footway (dotted line)**

A look at the 1901 edition of the Ordnance Survey's six-inch map (Fig. 2), shows Chaddesden Park as a shaded area extending to both the east and west sides of Chaddesden Lane. To the left-hand side and just outside the western boundary of the park is Penny Long Lane, following exactly the same line as the Derby Footway laid down by the Enclosure Commissioners all those years previously.



**Fig. 2: 1901 Ordnance Survey map showing Penny Long Lane marked by arrows. Map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (<https://maps.nls.uk/index.html>)**

Quite when our path became known as Penny Long Lane is unclear, maybe it was so named in imitation of its better-known counterpart at Darley Abbey. Interestingly an internet search revealed the presence of only one other throughfare with this name in the country, at Leicester Forest East – this appears to be of comparatively recent origin and is in reality very short, only some 80 yards long.

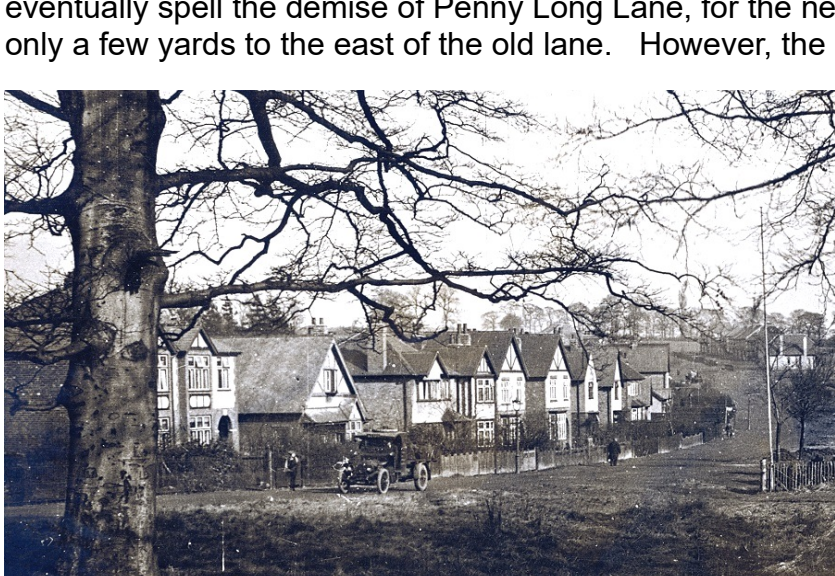
For anyone wishing to explore the countryside our Penny Long Lane was sometimes suggested as part of a possible route from Derby to either Locko or Dale Abbey. For example, as John Ward mentioned in his book about Dale Abbey: "An extremely pretty walk of 6½ miles [to Dale Abbey] may be made by following up the foot-path almost facing the entrance of the New Cemetery on the Nottingham-road, to Chaddesden, where inquire for the bridle-path through Locko Park ...." [Note 2].

As recently as March 2023, an item advertised for sale on eBay provided a fascinating account of one person's walk along the path in search of plant and flower specimens. These had been collected, classified according to habitat type (e.g. roadside, hedgerow, etc) and pressed into a sixteen-page book for preservation, together with a hand-drawn scale map detailing the route taken by the author as he began at Nottingham Road tram terminus, walked along Penny Long Lane (which was marked but not named) and then over more fields to Breadsall and Coxbench. According to the seller, the date written on the cover of the book was thought to be September 1915, but the last two digits were somewhat rubbed and indistinct. Perhaps it had been made by a senior school pupil as part of a project.

The path's proximity to the tram terminus meant that an increasing number of people from Derby could enjoy a pleasant ramble amidst the green fields of Chaddesden, but this state of affairs would change rapidly after the First World War and by the end of the 1920s Penny Long Lane had lost much of its rural charm thanks to encroaching suburban development. In the *Derby Daily Telegraph* of 18 May 1928, T. L. Tudor wrote:

*It is now quite a few years since the familiar little twitchel by the tram terminus began to lose its rustic setting and to breathe anything but salubrious odours from the new and neighbouring bungalows, and notwithstanding that its hedges were clothed in virgin green when I was there recently, that smell, not of honeysuckle or anything in the way of hedgerow blossoms, was still hanging round. At the crossing of the brook the signs of civilisation were still more in evidence, and here a street crosses the meadow. The path goes on again to another new street (or road, the word sounds less brutal) and at last one gets to a stretch of the original field path which runs to the ponds and turns down hill to the old village where, at first sight, everything seems as usual. Here one can forget the raw freshness of Mayfield-road and the garage pumps, and all the inevitable accompaniments of town expansion, but we do not forget for long.*

It was inevitable that the extensive house-building programme in this part of Chaddesden would eventually spell the demise of Penny Long Lane, for the new Chaddesden Park Road (Fig. 3) ran only a few yards to the east of the old lane. However, the end was surprisingly late in coming and it was not until 10 May 1946 that the Derby Borough Surveyor published a notice to the effect that application was to be made to the next Quarter Sessions for "... an Order that a certain public right of way in the Parish of Chaddesden in the said County Borough of Derby being a bridle path or footpath running from Nottingham Road in a North Easterly direction and parallel with and on the North Western side of Chaddesden Park Road shall be stopped up from its junction with Nottingham Road for a distance of approximately 757 yards to the Borough Boundary." Two points of the application are worth commenting upon. Firstly the path was not by then actually in the parish of Chaddesden, since that area of the village had previously been acquired by Derby when the borough boundaries

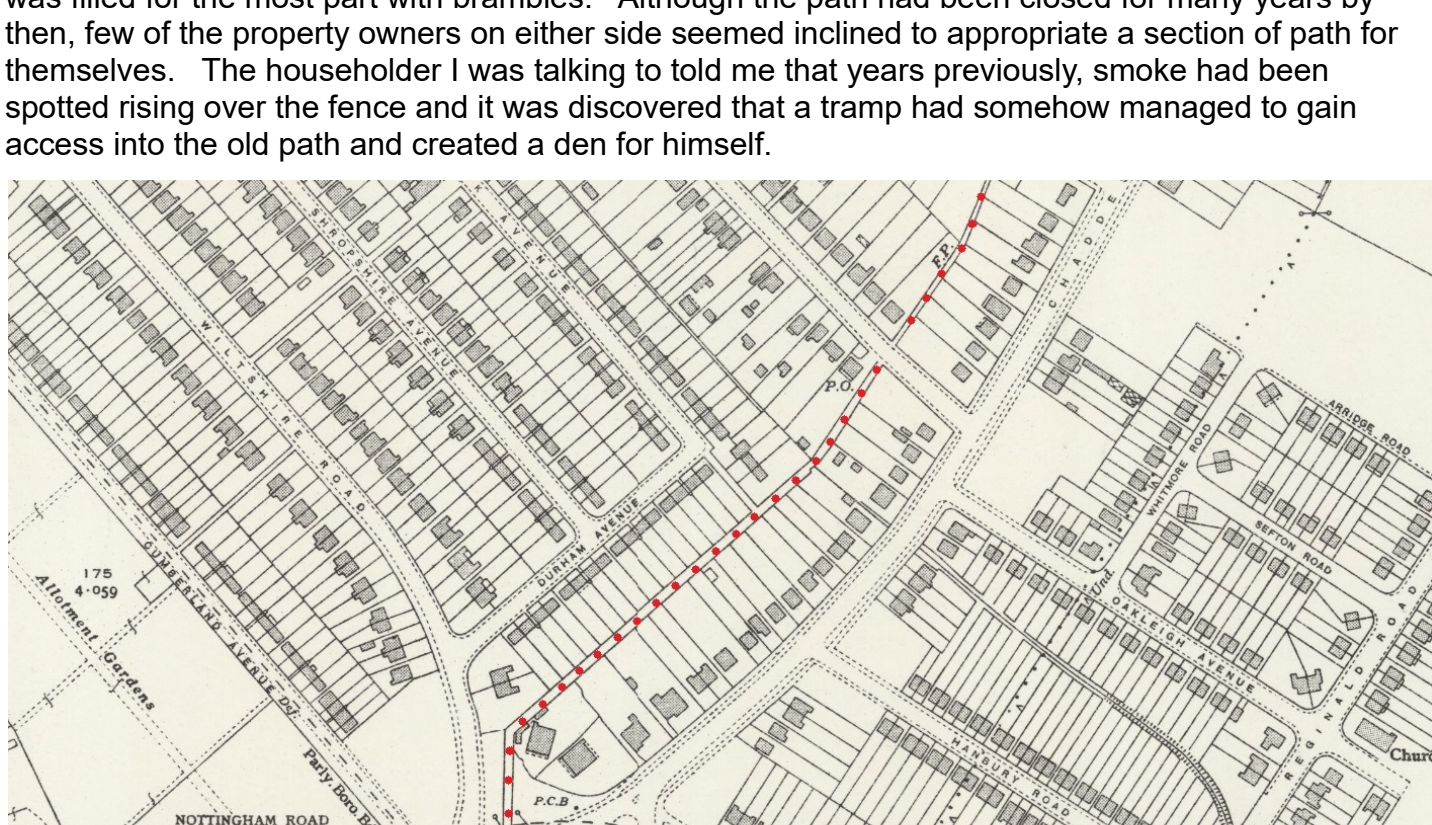


**Fig. 3: The new Chaddesden Park Road removed the need for Penny Long Lane footpath, which ran behind the houses seen here.**

were extended in 1928; and secondly the quoted distance of 757 yards relates to the length of the former path as measured from Nottingham Road to what was then the borough boundary near Aylesbury Avenue.

The actual etymology of the lane's name is uncertain. Back in 1829, it was suggested in *The History of the County of Derby* that Penny Long Lane at Darley Abbey was so-called because of its proximity to Long Lane (the Roman road leading to the fort of Derventio at Derby), the "Penny" part of its name being derived, so it was said, from a Latin word meaning "near" [Note 3]. Alternatively perhaps the lane was originally a permissive path which members of the public could use only after paying a nominal charge of one penny. Rather more likely is that since a penny was just a comparatively small and insignificant sum, Penny Long Lane was once thought to be a route of only minor importance.

In the early 1980s I was visiting a house at the bottom of Chaddesden Park Road (near Nottingham Road) and happened to mention Penny Long Lane to the householder. Although he was well aware of his garden, he hadn't heard of the name before, but told me to look over the fence or so between his boundary fence and the fence of an adjoining house on Durham Avenue (Fig. 4) and was filled for the most part with brambles. Although the path had been closed for many years by then, few of the property owners on either side seemed inclined to appropriate a section of path for themselves. The householder I was talking to told me that years previously, smoke had been spotted rising over the path and it was discovered that a fox had somehow managed to gain access into the old path and created a den for himself.



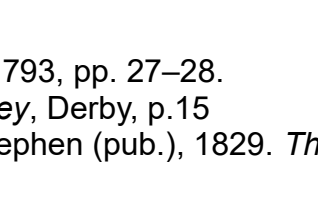
**Fig. 4: This Ordnance Survey map of 1942 shows part of Penny Long Lane (dotted line) before it was formally closed. For many years afterwards the line of the old path should be easily discerned. Map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (<https://maps.nls.uk/index.html>)**

Recollections of this old public right-of-way are now becoming increasingly scarce. Fred Rushton of Breadsall, who remembered Chaddesden in the days prior to the First World War, when Miss Constance Wilmot still lived at the Hall, happened to mention Penny Long Lane in a letter published in the *Derby Evening Telegraph* on 8 June 1999, when he recalled that it marked the start of the Wilmot estate. Possibly the last time I heard it referred to by name was some fifteen years ago when a lady whose relatives had lived in Chaddesden for several generations chanced to speak of it in conversation.

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### ENDNOTES:

1. Enclosure Commissioners' Award, 1793, pp. 27–28.
2. Ward, John, 1891. *Dale and its Abbey*, Derby, p.15
3. Noble, Thomas (ed.) and Glover, Stephen (pub.), 1829. *The History of the County of Derby*, Derby, Vol.1, p.291.



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