

A Brief History of Ainsworth Village



Ainsworth is located about three miles west of Bury town centre in Greater Manchester, on undulating ground to the south of the West Pennine Moors. The topography of the village, on a slightly elevated site, gives Ainsworth an attractive setting, with fields on all sides. The land lies between 140 and 240 metres above sea level, and the underlying geology is carboniferous sandstone.

Ainsworth is a good example of a village which developed initially as a farming community, but expanded during the industrial period. The village grew during the 19th century as a result of the development of local stone quarrying and the spinning, weaving and bleaching of cotton.

The village now has a linear form, spread along the east-west road (The B6196) between Bolton and Bury. Subsidiary streets and lanes lead into the fields to the south and north; many of these lanes are un-metalled which contributes to the rural character of the village. The place name of Ainsworth is Anglo-Saxon, with “worth” meaning a small enclosure or farmstead, and the prefix probably being the name of a land owner.

Historically the village was also known as Cockey, now the name of the moor to the east of the village.

From a historical society point of view there are many topics to investigate.

- A barb and tang flint arrowhead discovered in 1961 in the spinney at the bottom of Starling road.
- In 1839 a Bronze Age looped palstave or axe found in the area
- In AD 79 the Manchester to Ribchester Roman military road was constructed on the eastern side of Cockey Moor. Roman burial urns containing bones on nearby Brightmet Hill in 1774 and again in 1807. Roman coins, some gold discovered off Starling Rd and again at Height Barn.
- 1200 First mention of Ainsworth in a land grant from the lord of the manor of Middleton to Cockersand.
- 1642 Lord Strange called a muster of royalist supporters and 1200 troops, mainly cavalry gathered on Cockey Moor
- Under the Tolerance Act of 1672 a license was granted to John Leaver to be a Presbyterian teacher The present Presbyterian Chapel was erected in 1715.
- In 1843 the Methodist New Connection movement was established, first meeting in a cottage in Delph Lane and in 1847 a chapel was built opposite the present one which replaced it in 1892.

These and other topics will be dealt with in more detail as the website develops. If you have any information concerning the history of Ainsworth or you would like to get involved please do not hesitate to contact us.

This article was written and provided by Tony Dallas.