

North Rode Newsletter

February 2026

What's on in North Rode
To subscribe or unsubscribe to this
newsletter mailing list,
Email: northrode@btinternet.com
Stories: huwwilliams200@gmail.com

We are back after the long Christmas Break and Happy New Year to all! It has been a cold start to the year, which is to be expected in Winter, however the nights are already drawing out and it won't be long before spring is here! In the meantime there is lots going on in our community and more tales of 'Old North Rode' to tell over the coming year. This month we have the tragic tale of an attempted murder in North Rode!

If you have any interesting stories, pictures, celebrations or events coming up, don't be shy and send them in to share with everyone.

Welcome

Michael & Theresa welcomed baby Oscar Hinchcliffe on 1st September 2025. Sorry we missed this last year and congratulations!

Happy Birthdays!

Birthday wishes to the following:
Hector Petts – 10 on 2nd Feb
Neil Robinson – 50 on 2nd Feb
William Boxford – 15 on 3rd Feb
Rosie Burwood – 13 on 17th Feb
Otto Petts – 4 on 22nd Feb

Neil Robinson at NATO

Neil Robinson, son of Pam and Paul Robinson of North Rode, lives in Brussels and works for NATO. He recently met with Mark Rutte, Secretary General of NATO and sent his parents a photo.



Mark Rutte on the left, Neil on the right.

Cuppa for Cancer

Winnie Bullock is organising a coffee morning for The Christie at Eaton Village Hall on **Wednesday 4th February from 10:30- 2pm**. Please come along and support Winnie and this fantastic place that benefits so many in our area.

CHESHIRE YFC'S COFFEE MORNING
CUPPA FOR CANCER

WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY
10:30-14:00

Eaton Village Hall,
Congleton,
CW12 2NH

RAISING MONEY FOR THE CHRISTIE

Cakes, Soup, Raffle, Tombola,
Tea and Coffee and more

North Rode Knit and Natter

Our inaugural meeting took place in January, when we started by learning how to knit poppies. We hope to be learning about crocheting at the next few meetings also. Interested in coming along? Learners welcome. Message Joan-Marie Williams at williamsjoanmarie@gmail.com to find out more.

The Rector's Letter February 2026

After the dreariness of January (and post-Christmas blues), February heralds the beginning of Spring. Amid the current madness and suffering of the world, we give thanks for the constancy of “*Mother Nature*”, seeing the snowdrops and daffodils beginning to emerge, and the long dark nights receding.

For some, the significant date this month will be St. Valentine’s Day on 14th February, with cards, roses, perhaps a romantic dinner for two and all that jazz. For others, the main event will be “Pancake Day”, Shrove Tuesday on 17th February. In the Christian calendar the most significant date is Ash Wednesday on 18th February, marking the beginning of Lent, when churchgoers are marked with a cross of ashes as a reminder of our mortality.

While people flock to Church during December for Christingle services, Christmas Tree Festivals, Nativity Plays, Carol Services and Midnight Mass, Ash Wednesday and the forty days of Lent (even among many regular churchgoers) have never been very popular. Our mortality is something we prefer not to think about. While the Baby Jesus in the Crib is lovely and heart-warming, the grown-up Jesus dying on the Cross is something most people prefer to largely ignore.

One thing I have learned since moving here is that, sadly, Bible Study attracts little interest. During Lent I have run Bible Study groups, attended by a small number of people from St. James’ Church, Gawsworth, with sometimes one or two from St. Michael’s, North Rode. So, this Lent I will try something a bit different. On Wednesday evenings at 7.00pm during Lent there will be a service of Compline at St. James’ Church, with a short address/reflection on some of the Parables of Jesus. All are welcome.

Meanwhile, when the time comes, enjoy your pancakes, and perhaps even roses and romantic meals!

Yours ever, *Colin*

North Rode Services February 2026

Feb 1st Candlemas Flowers: Brenda Lomas	11.15 am Holy Communion (CW)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	Revd Anne Freestone Anne Lever Charles Baxter
Feb 8th 2 nd before Lent Flowers: TBA	11.15 am Holy Communion (BCP)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	The Rector Shirley Tudor-Evans Margaret Cann
Feb 15th 1 st before Lent	No service at North Rode	Gawsworth	10 am Holy Communion 4 pm Evensong
Feb 18th Ash Wednesday	Gawsworth 7.00 pm	Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes	The Rector
Feb 22nd 1 st Sunday of Lent No flowers	11.15 am Holy Communion (BCP)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	The Rector Louise Jackson Geoffrey Petts
Feb 25th	Gawsworth 7.00 pm	Compline & Address/Reflection on the parables of Jesus	The Rector
March 1st Lent 2 No flowers	11.15 am Holy Communion (CW)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	Revd Anne Freestone Lynn Petts Diane Lowe

Lent 2026
St. James’, Gawsworth
~ Ash Wednesday 18th February ~
 7.00pm Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes
~ Wednesdays during Lent ~
 25th February, 4th March, 11th March, 18th March, 25th March
 7.00pm Compline & Address/Reflection on the Parables of Jesus
 All are welcome!

If anyone would like to receive Holy Communion at home, or while in hospital, please contact the Rector.



Rector: Revd Colin Wilson 01260 223201
Enquiries: Mrs Diane Lowe 01260 272576
Secretary: Mrs Diane Lowe 01260 272576
Treasurer: Mrs Lynn Petts 01260 222902
Newsletter: Huw Williams 077991717459

<http://www.northrodechurch.org.uk>

North Rode WI Report

Secretary Pam Robinson writes



In early December Members and friends went to the Legs of Man for our Annual Christmas Lunch. This was enjoyed by all who attended. Due to the President Diane Lowe being on Holiday Pam Robinson conducted the January Meeting in her absence. Pam wished everyone a Happy New Year. Apologies were given out as several Members were away or poorly. Thanks were given for the Table Flowers - Pauline Croft, Teas - Mary Hobson and Norma Knaggs, Cakes - Pat Lovatt and Norma Knaggs and Raffle - Pam Robinson.

There are 5 Resolutions this year and Members were asked for the Voting slips. These are due back in early February. There are some very good Resolutions providing a difficult choice.

The Annual Council Meeting for 2026 is on Monday 23rd March at Nunsmere Hall Hotel in Tarporley at 11am. Tickets are £10 plus £10 for a Packed Lunch. The Speakers are The Lord Mayor of Chester and Will Kirk from the Repair Shop. Names were asked if anyone wished to go.

Our Coffee Mornings are on Thursday April 23rd and Thursday September 24th at Gawsorth Methodist Church Hall. More details to follow. The Treasurer reported that WI Subs would be £54 for this year, but we will be looking at a reduction for this. The Reindeer Competition given out at the Christmas Meal achieved £90 for our Funds. Members were reminded about the March Competition, which will be a Bowl of Dwarf Tulips. Our Speaker in March will be Rob Mason talking about Northern Humour. The Cheshire Show will be on June 16th and June 17th at the Tabley Showground.

Paul Robinson, Pam's Husband, kindly filled in for the Speaker at short notice. He did a very good Watercolour Demonstration of the view of Bosley Cloud from North Rode. He is a Group Leader for the U3A and runs a Mixed Media Class at New Life Church weekly. Members were extremely impressed by the end result and the speed at which Paul worked. He had a few other Paintings on show for Members to view and discuss. Paul works in Watercolour Oils Pastels and Acrylics. As our Speaker Tom Morrison did not attend there was Competition this month. The Raffle was won by Jackie Spooner.

The next Meeting is on Tuesday 10th February at 2pm. A talk will be given Jo Taylor on Well-being and Mindfulness and the Competition will be for a Mindful Quotation. All Visitors will be made welcome at Eaton Church and Community Hall.

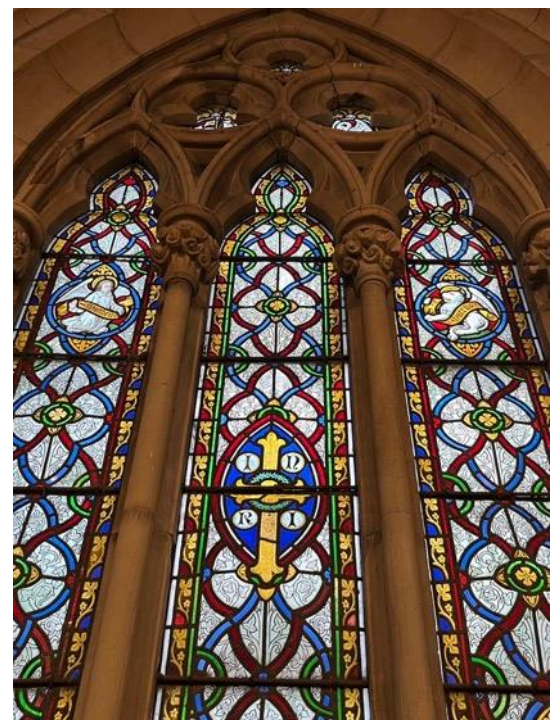
Stained glass windows creator discovered

Marilyn Ainslie writes

We've never known the source of the stained glass windows in the church, so we were delighted to hear from Priscilla Frost in Oxfordshire who is researching the work of Thomas Willement FSA (1786-1871). The internet indicates that he created many church stained glass windows throughout the country.

She has found evidence that in 1846 John Daintry commissioned him to produce a stained glass window for the altar in St Michael's church. This is confirmed by his signature pane of TW initials in the bottom right hand corner behind the altar carving, indicating the Daintrys' generosity when building the church.

Willement created stained glass windows in the Great Hall at Capesthorpe Hall nearby and was also a stained glass artist to King George IV.



January Letter

Happy New Year from everyone at School!

We hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and a happy, restful start to the New Year. We certainly did here at school – the children returned full of stories, smiles and excitement, and it has been lovely to see them settle back into routines so positively. We are now looking ahead to what promises to be a very busy and enjoyable spring term, full of learning, growth and new opportunities.

We are pleased to share that our Little Seeds Stay and Play sessions will be starting up once again, with the next session taking place on Wednesday 4th February. These sessions are always a joy and we look forward to welcoming our youngest children and their grown-ups for a relaxed and friendly time together.

Some key dates: Spring Term 1

02–04 Feb – Year 4 Residential Trip – Time for some outdoor adventure and independence!

03 Feb – Parent Surgery at 9am – Drop by with questions or ideas.

04 Feb – Little Seeds Session

10 Feb – Internet Safety Day

February Letter

With Christmas now a distant memory, school life has very much settled into the rhythm of the Spring term. Our children are busy and engaged in their new topics, showing great enthusiasm for their learning across the school.

We are also pleased to share that our after-school clubs are up and running once again, offering a range of opportunities for pupils to explore interests, develop new skills and enjoy time with friends beyond the classroom.

Our Play Patch and ELSA Patch continue to provide valuable support for children at lunchtimes, giving them safe, nurturing spaces to talk, play and build positive relationships. These provisions remain an important part of our commitment to children's wellbeing.

Looking ahead, preparations are already underway for World Book Day, a highlight of the school year that celebrates our love of reading. The children are very excited and there is already much speculation about the staff theme this year! We look forward to surprising them once again and sharing in the fun.

We post regular news updates on our school Facebook page. Please do take a look if you are able, as it is so lovely to see and share in what our children have been enjoying and achieving each week.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and interest in our school

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nevin'.

Mrs Nevin Deakin, Headteacher

Christmas Crossword Answers

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Mrs Lowe | 9. Daintry | 17. Kennerley |
| 2. Rodo | 10. Locks | 18. Bullgate Lane |
| 3. Ladderstile | 11. Bramhall Hill | 19. Chain and Gate |
| 4. Cow | 12. Seven | 20. The Plough |
| 5. Churnet | 13. River Dane | 21. Tootal |
| 6. Vesper | 14. Bank Lane | 22. The Cloud |
| 7. St Michael | 15. Marton School | 23. Eaton |
| 8. UPS | 16. Well | |

North Rode Parish Council Report

Meet Your Parish Council

Here are your parish councillors. The Parish Council meets every 3 months or so and has an AGM and Annual village meeting every May. The last parish council election was in 2023 and the next will be in 2027. If vacancies come about inbetween these dates new councillors can be co-opted.



Clerk Brenda Lomas

Cllr Huw Williams
Chairman

Cllr Georgina Bailey
Vice Chair

Cllr Alistair Bayley

Cllr Mark Bullock

Cllr Jon Burwood

Cllr Brian Evans

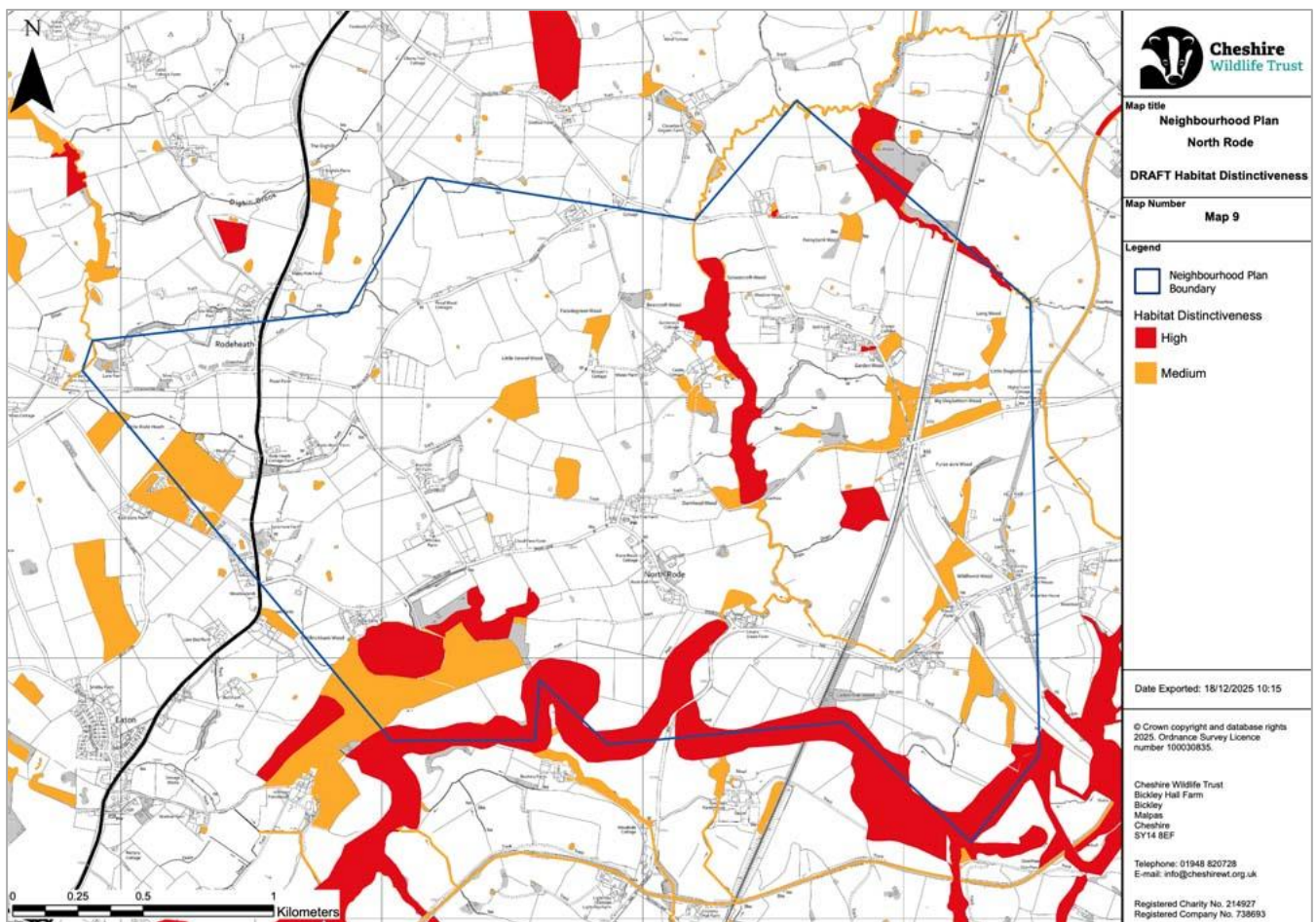
Cllr Jacqui Lea

Next Parish Council Meeting

Our next parish council meeting will be held on **Thursday 5th February, at Daintry Hall at 7:30pm**. All villagers are welcome to come along.

Wildlife Corridors

The Parish Council, along with our neighbouring parishes, has been consulting with Cheshire Wildlife Trust (CWT) to identify wildlife corridors in our parish and between neighbouring parishes. This has been a result of the Parish Liaison Group we are in, which includes Eaton and Marton. CWT have now produced a **draft** map below, identifying High and Medium areas of Habitat distinctiveness from desk studies. We are now looking for feedback from local land owners who would like comment on if they agree with the areas shown and also to identify other areas they feel should be included. If you would like to contribute and obtain a more detailed map, please contact the Parish Council Email: clerk@northrodepc.co.uk.



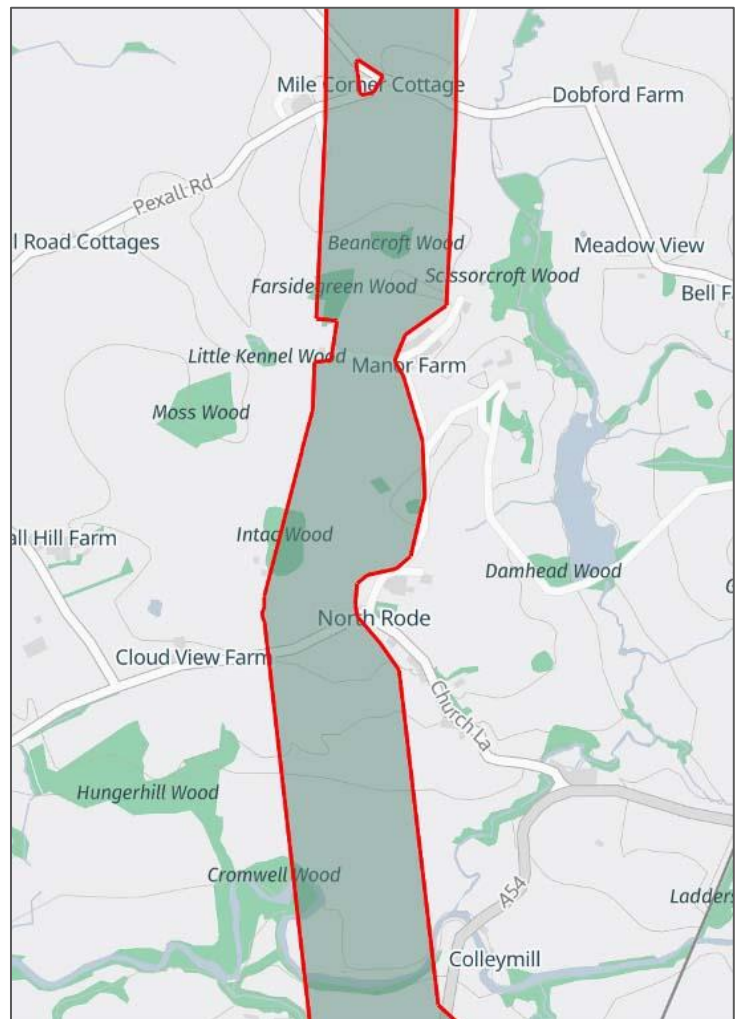


Peak Cluster in North Rode

Many North Rode villagers will have received leaflets through the post about a new pipeline that is planned to pass through North Rode in 2029. The project is called Peak Cluster, and in brief its purpose is to capture CO₂ produced by lime and cement producing facilities in the Peak District and transport the gas by pipeline to the Wirral, then pumped out to and stored in depleted gas fields off Morecambe.

The pipeline from Cauldon Cement Works is planned to pass over the River Dane to the south and travel due north crossing Bank Lane and Pexall Road/Shellow Lane to the north. We understand that land owners have already been contacted by Peak Cluster. This project will undoubtedly lead to disruption to farming, grazing and crops and local access for villagers.

The map on the right shows the ~300m corridor in North Rode identified by Peak Cluster as a viable route with the final Working Width being approx. 30-40m. The pipe itself being from 600-1000mm in diameter, depending on location. You can view the map in more detail and see further information on the project online at www.peakcluster.co.uk.



The Campaign to Protect Rural England have some useful information on the project on their website at <https://www.cprepdsy.org.uk/news/understanding-the-peak-cluster-project>. They highlight the importance of engaging with the consultation for the following reasons:

- The project is not approved, and its future is still uncertain
- The route is not fixed and alternative options can still be considered
- Environmental impacts are still being assessed, with opportunities to highlight local concerns
- Mitigation measures are not yet designed, meaning communities can influence what protections are put in place
- Community feedback can still shape the project, including how it is delivered and where it goes

Whilst the pipeline trench should only remain open for less than 2 weeks, the working width may remain open for access for as long as 6 months after installation. We understand that for underground sections they are seeking voluntary agreements for subterranean leases – not wayleaves.

The Parish Council have already raised the following queries:

- How will the River Dane will be crossed and disruption to wildlife minimised?
- How will narrow and busy lanes in North Rode be crossed to minimise disruption to road users, locals, businesses and farms?
- How will access to working farmland bisected by the working width be provided for farmers?
- What building/farming restrictions will be in place alongside and above the pipeline?
- How will they maintain access for footpaths across the working width?

The current phase of consultation runs from **January 12th to 11:59pm on February 27th 2026**. For your feedback to be formally recognised you must submit this directly to PEAK CLUSTER before the end of this period, using the form and email address on the Peak Cluster website, details of which are below. Feedback will be used to develop the plans at the end of 2026, before a second consultation is run.

If you copy the parish council with your concerns, we will try to incorporate within our response to the planning inspectorate, which is due by 10th February 2026.

Peak Cluster Contact Information:

Website: www.peakcluster.co.uk

Email: Consultation@peakcluster.co.uk

Phone: 0800 0129 167 (freephone)

Write: FREEPOST PEAK CLUSTER

Huw Williams – Chairman North Rode Parish Council

*****STOP PRESS ***** We understand that Bank Lane will be closed for 5 days from Monday 2nd February, from the junction of Macclesfield Road to the junction of Bramhall Hill, for drainage works

North Rode Now in Pictures

We are aware that many readers of this newsletter are friends or family not living in the village. So here are a few photos for you from around the village over the last few weeks.



The canal freezes over



Crash on the ice on Bank Lane



Baby Highland cattle in the park



St Michaels in the snow

TRAGEDY AT NORTH RODE

A SEXTON SHOT

SUICIDE OF ASSAILANT

A tragic tale was published in the Stoke Sentinel on 7th May 1898 - Researched by Mark Bullock & Huw Williams

The quiet country district of North Rode, near Macclesfield, was thrown into a state of consternation on Saturday evening by the report that an attempt had been made to murder an elderly man named George Dale, the sexton [Church Caretaker] at the Parish Church, by his son-in-law, a farm labourer, named Charles Cotterill, aged twenty-four. It appears that Cotterill, who was married to Dale's daughter, had had some disagreement with his wife some time ago, in consequence of which she left him and went to reside with her father and mother, who lived at Rode Green Cottages, Mile End Corner. Cotterill resided a short distance away in the park. He had asked his wife to return to him on several occasions, but she refused, and on Monday last he left his work and did not again return to it. On Saturday he went to Macclesfield, and in the afternoon appears to have gone home, and lay in wait for



his father-in-law Dale, who about seven o'clock in the evening was on his way to the church for the purpose of preparing for Sunday morning's service. When near two clumps of dark fir trees in the Park, Cotterill, it is alleged, shot him with revolver, the shot grazing the left side of his skull. Cotterill pointed the pistol at him a second time when Dale knocked it on one side with a brush, and it went off without doing any harm. They then closed and a struggle took place, but Cotterill managed to break loose and decamped, but turned round and fired a third shot at Dale which missed him. The police at once investigated the matter, and about one o'clock on Sunday morning found the dead body of Cotterill in the Mere in the Park, the body being scarcely covered with water.

THE INQUEST

An inquiry into the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Charles Cotterill (a native of Biddulph Moor), was held by Mr. H. C. Yates, at Cheney Gate Hotel, North Rode, on Tuesday afternoon. Deceased, it will be remembered, had quarrelled with his father-in-law, George Dale, on account of his wife living with her parents and persistently refusing to return home. On Saturday evening he waylaid Dale and it is stated fired at him three times, but fortunately without fatal results. His dead body was afterwards recovered from the Mere.

Mr. T. A. Daniels, Congleton, watched the proceedings in the interests of the relatives of deceased who live at Alders Cottage, Biddulph Moor.

The first witness called was Annie Cotterill, wife of the dead man, who lives at Rode Green Cottage. She stated that her husband was turned 23, and was a farm labourer by occupation. They had been married two years but had not lived comfortably all the time. Recently they separated. That was because she was very ill, expecting confinement. Her husband had been unkind to her and she went home for protection. Closely questioned she said he did not strike her: "it was his tongue." He was not addicted to drink, but had drunk lately. No objection was offered by him to her going with her father. She last saw him alive last Monday week when he was at her gate. He then wanted to know whether she was ready to return home, and she told him she was not. She was afraid of him, but did not tell him so.

The Coroner: Would it not have been more candid to have told him so?

Witness (with hesitation): I didn't. He seemed indifferent as to whether she came or not, and left her without making any threats. He never mentioned her father at the time, and she had never heard him utter threats against her parent, She had given him no cause for jealousy. She thought he would leave her, but not do away with himself. He had regular work, plenty of food; but lived alone. He was passionate, and had a violent temper. His hard words hurt her. Witness left her husband on January 8th. He had asked her several times to return.

By Mr. Daniels: He had not always made her a good allowance. He had given her nothing for eight weeks until last Monday, when he gave her two sovereigns. Her husband allowed her 5s, a week. He did not tell her he would not allow her anything as long as she lived with her father. Asked the sample of violent words used, witness said deceased only swore; he never threatened to do anything at all to her.

George Dale, the wounded man, whose head was encircled with a broad bandage, deposed to living in Pexhill Lane. He was father of the last witness, and deceased was his son-in-law. At a quarter to seven on Saturday evening, the latter stood at his wicket-gate, when witness passed with his broom, with which he was going to sweep the churchyard walks. Deceased passed the mutation "How do you do?" and witness replied "middling." They preceded down the road together and Cotterill inquired if he would arrange to keep her. In reply he said it was not likely long as he (the husband) was there to keep her. Deceased then asked how the child (about two years of age) was and he told him it was very well. It had been ill a fortnight previously. When they got to the plantations in North Rode Park his son-in-law again asked whether the wife was ready to go back. He said he was willing for her to return whenever she liked. Deceased then stepped behind, and witness felt something strike him on the side of the head. He turned round, and guided a second shot out of his face with the broom he was carrying. Interrogated by the Coroner he said when he turned round he saw a pistol. Continuing witness stated Cotterill made at him and they closed together. The pistol was in the man's hand, and he felt it against the side of his face. Then he went down on the floor, and rolled over. When deceased was at the top, using an oath, he said "I will kill you," on which witness remarked they were very hard words. They turned over again, and he managed to get up, and went in the direction of the church as well as he could, meanwhile shouting for assistance. Deceased turned back, took up the firearm, and ran down the park away from him. With regard to his injuries the bullet did not enter his head, but grazed the surface. Witness said he was wishful that the young people should live together. On the 8th January his daughter came back from market at Macclesfield, where she had been taken ill. She went to her parents' home. They informed the husband and asked him if it would not be best for her to stay there, as there was no one at his home to look after her. Deceased expressed himself quite willing for her to remain until she was better. His son-in-law had asked from time to time about her going back, but she said she was not well enough. The husband had never asked her kindly to go home. On Monday morning week witness met Cotterill, who asked after his wife. He told him she would get better, and as he was moving away his son-in-law shouted, "I will make it right for you." Reverting to the firing he stated there was a third shot fired when he was running down the field. It was not fired at him, but sideways, as deceased ran. His daughter had been about four weeks in bed. She had had a miscarriage, and inflammation and pneumonia supervened.

Cross-examined by Mr. Daniel, he said before the 8th January, for aught he knew they were on comfortable terms. His daughter came home once a week. Since the above date the husband had often been his house, sometimes twice a week, and sometimes more than that. The wife said she was not strong enough to go with him. He came drunk and rough on the 22nd February, and his wife had been afraid of him ever since, never heard deceased threaten her, and she never complained of any. Two days before she came home she was very ill in the night and asked her husband to get up and make a cup of tea, but he did not do it. His wound was a scalp one. The doctor seemed to think there was no bullet, but pellets,

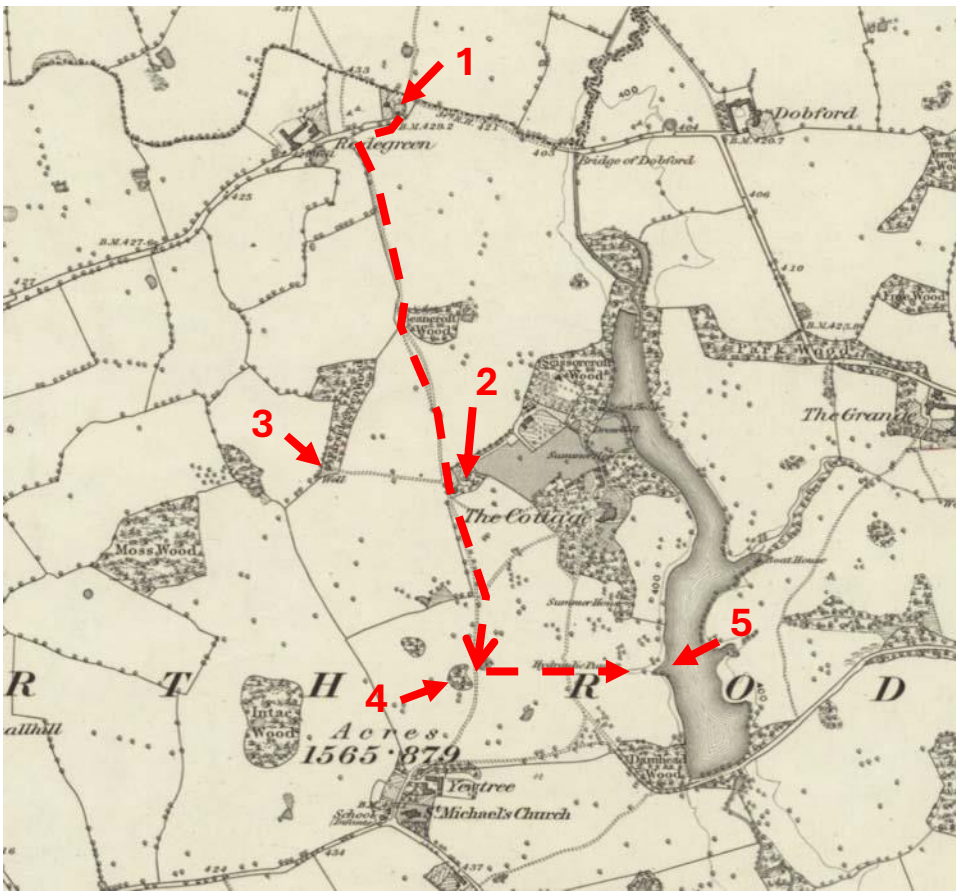
James Andow, Keeper, living in North Rode Park, and next door neighbour to deceased, gave evidence to seeing the latter, with nothing unusual about him, resting his arms on his own wicket gate. He had come up the road with Dale and left him to go inside his own house. Through the window of his house, which overlooked the park, he saw them going along together. He only casually looked through the window, but about five minutes later he heard two distinct shots. This did not alarm him: he thought some farmer was shooting rabbits and took no notice. If there was a third shot he would not have heard it, as he went into the house above. Hearing afterwards what had occurred he went with P.C. Jerral to search for Cottrell. They saw some dark object (it was midnight) in the pool, and found it was the body. Witness had known deceased for three years, and gave him the character of a civil and steady man. He had never seen him the worse for drink, and was surprised to hear what had taken place. He never knew of any ill-feeling between father-in-law and son-in-law.

By Mr. Daniels: It was a direct line down to the pool from where there were evidences of the struggle between the men. The constable picked up a cap and a collar and front was found about ten yards from the side of the lake. The water was shallow where the body was found, but it was a distance of seven or eight yards from the margin.

P.C. Jervis deposed to finding Dale at his home about eight o'clock. He was suffering from two cuts on the left-hand side of his head, which appeared to have been caused by pellets. They had cut through the skin to the bone and

apparently glided out again. Both wounds were exactly the same. There was a large quantity of blood on the vest and shirt. He then went to search for deceased. The body was face downwards in the water. There was a wound on the right ear dripping with blood.

A verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane" was returned.



1. Rode Green Cottage (George Dale's abode)
2. Manor Farm (James Cotterill's abode)
3. Keepers Cottage (James Andow's abode)
4. The Plantation where the incident took place
5. James Cotterill's body was found around here



Some further notes :

The funeral of James Cotterill took place at Christ Church on Buddulph Moor, attended only by relatives. His family were not satisfied with the suicide verdict and applied to the home secretary for the body to be exhumed. The request was turned down.

Charles Cotterill and Annie Shortridge Dale were married at St Michaels, North Rode on 11th March 1896.

George Dale was a bricklayer who lived at No 1 Rode Green Cottages with his wife Mary, two young children and their 22 year old married daughter Annie along with her daughter Mary, who was aged 2 at the time of this tragedy. Annie later remarried and went to live in Sutton.

The cottage were James Cotterill used to live was once two farm labourers cottages, now merged into one and called Manor Farm. James Andow, the witness lived in Keepers Cottage.



Cotterill's Cottage (now Manor Farm)

Was the gun ever found? George Dale said he saw a revolver and was shot at twice and heard a third shot. At the inquest it was said that George's injury was caused by pellets, so indicated a shotgun of sorts was used. Perhaps it was a cut down shotgun? In which case it needed to be reloaded for the third shot. Perhaps the gun is still in the lake?