



National  
Trust

Come closer to the fire  
and listen to the tales  
I have to tell of this place.

Mine down through the  
centuries and connect to  
people who have been here  
before you...

and with people before them...

and before them...

further and further back,  
deep into Time...

## The Legend of Alderley Edge

Deep inside Alderley Edge, a secret cavern guarded by a wizard holds a hundred and forty knights in silver armour. By the side of each knight lies a white mare. All are in enchanted sleep, but will one day awake – in a time of dire peril – to fight in a great battle and drive the enemy into the sea.

Long ago, when there still remained one sleeping knight without a white mare by his side, the wizard saw a farmer taking such an animal to Macclesfield.

He offered to buy it, but the farmer thought he could get a better price at market. The wizard foretold that no-one would buy. This prophecy came true and the wizard appeared and again offered to buy it.

The farmer finally agreed. The wizard made an entrance appear in the rocks and took him to the cavern of sleeping knights. He then showed the farmer another cavern full of treasure and told him to take what he wanted in return for the mare. Soon after found himself once more outside, unable to find a way back into the hill.



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between columns

## Treasure from Underground

Four thousand years ago, in a time we call the Bronze Age, people first discovered how to turn certain rocks (called ores) into metal. No magic is needed – simply heat the ore, and the metal appears. This is called smelting.

Early Bronze Age metal hunters came to Alderley Edge, attracted by outcrops of green ore, which they knew would yield copper when smelted. Copper is needed to make Bronze, a much harder and more useful metal.



Archaeologists have not only found traces of Bronze Age mining and smelting, but also tool making – and even of bringing ore from outside the area to be

processed here! This means that the site was a very important Bronze Age metal-working centre.

Romans also found metals here, but we do not know very much about their mines. It was another 1,500 years before mining returned to Alderley Edge on a large scale. The 18th and 19th century miners dug huge underground caverns and tunnels up to X miles long to get at the valuable metal ores.



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between columns



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between columns

## The Writer's Tale

Many years ago, in the semi-darkness of his fire-lit forge, a local blacksmith told the Legend of Alderley Edge to his young grandson. The boy grew up to be the writer Alan Garner.

Alan turned the Legend into a book called "The Weirdstone of Brisingamen." A sequel, "The Moon of Gomerath" followed. Both books are set in and around Alderley Edge and use real place names and features.



Time fascinated Alan. As a teenager, he saw a book illustration of an ancient wooden shovel, found in one of the mines. It looked very familiar. Realising where he had seen it before, he rushed to his old infants' school – where the shovel was kept – and rescued it!

Alan knew the shovel was important, but it was not until 1993 that it was accurately dated and found to be Bronze Age. Until then, the Alderley mines had been thought relatively recent, but this sparked new interest led to the discovery of Bronze Age activity on the site.



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## The Ghosts of Deserts and Rivers

Even the sandstone rocks of Alderley Edge have stories to tell.

They tell of a time, millions of years ago, when Alderley was part of a hot, sandy desert. There were dramatic storms and floods. Rivers appeared suddenly – and then dried up. The stories are in the rocks themselves: they contain the outlines of sand dunes – shaped by wind – and pebbles, brought here by rivers.



Long after the rocks had been laid down by wind and water, solutions of copper and other metal compounds seeped in through faults in the rocks. They got trapped between layers and eventually turned into seams of metal ores.

## Saving the Stories

You – the visitors – have your own story. Alderley first became a fashionable place to visit in Victorian times: your visit today is one of XXXXX per year in modern times.

The visitor story is one of escape from the city and enjoyment of the countryside. Sadly, it's also the story of thousands of feet gradually wearing away and erasing all the other stories that have come before. From the story of the desert and river to the story of the first metal-workers: these are the stories that make Alderley Edge such a special place.



Caption goes here



Caption goes here

And there are stories yet to be revealed! There are many things that we do not understand about Alderley Edge, but Archaeology is losing the race against erosion. If action is not taken, some stories may never be told.

You can help by following 3 simple guidelines:



Behaviour point one  
Behaviour point one  
Behaviour point one

Sign off comment...

A series of 4 or 5 questions to pose the visitor, perhaps a riddle – or observations to make as they go around the Edge and explore...