

SMALLBRIDGE

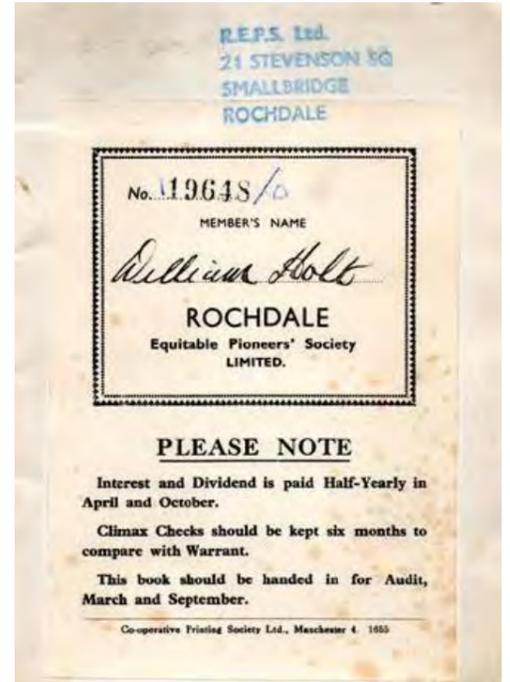
The Village

Smallbridge Village is on the A58 Halifax Road from Rochdale towards Littleborough. The Village straddles the A58 Halifax Road from the roundabout with the A664 up to St. John the Baptist Church on Halifax Road on the right hand side. Its early strong identity as a compact and densely populated working class village was shattered by the construction of the dual carriageway in the 1960's. The construction of the dual carriageway in the resulted in the disappearance of the close knit working class community. Many small shops and businesses on both sides of Halifax Road were demolished, including several Co-operative stores. Only two Co-operative sites remain.

Halifax Road towards Wardle or Littleborough (alight at the bus stop near Smallbridge Library, walk towards the Library then turn left into Rhodes Street, the houses are on your left). One of the residents of these Co-op houses in the 1930's was a regular supporter of the Co-operative Women's Guild in Rochdale.

The Smallbridge Store, Halifax Road

At the junction of Wardle Road and Halifax Road, you will see the Bull's Head Pub on one side of Wardle Road and a former pub and attached building on the opposite corner. The 'attached' building, next to the bridge over Ash Brook, is the only remaining shell of a Smallbridge District Co-operative Store. It was a branch of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society, which probably opened in the 1920's. Known locally as "the Smallbridge Store," it closed in the early 1970's.



Smallbridge Divi Book, 1950's



First electric tramcar to run in Smallbridge, 24th May 1905. In the background is the Steps Industrial Co-operative Store.



Former Smallbridge Store near the corner of Wardle Road and Halifax Road



Former Smallbridge Conservative Co-operative Society "Blue Store", Halifax Road

Co-op houses, 82-96 Rhodes Street

The well-constructed houses in Rhodes Street, numbers 82 - 96, built in the early 20th century by the Steps Industrial Co-operative Society (established 1849), highlight the financial and community strength of the Co-operative Societies in the area. Rhodes Street can be reached either by car (turn left off the dual carriageway into Buckley Lane, then right into Rhodes Street; the houses are on the right just past the Wesleyan Chapel), or by any buses travelling along the

"I delivered my mum's order here on my way to school at St John's on Halifax Road. The order was delivered by bike on Wednesdays. I loved going in there; it smelled so nice. You could choose your own biscuits from the tins under the counter on the right."

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History

It is easy to miss the village of Smallbridge. It is a place you may, or may not, notice as you travel along the A58 towards Littleborough. This was not always the situation. By the later 19th century Smallbridge was a thriving, active, busy, working village with a colliery, 12 or more mills, numerous shops spreading along the Halifax Road, and several churches. Local schools came later. Houses were crowded and the streets close to each other; life was a bit rough and ready, but Smallbridge people knew what they wanted. Like many working people in the Borough of Rochdale at the time, they knew about political and social developments that were affecting their life chances.

Over time they supported a series of Co-operative Societies and their stores, which flourished for many years alongside the varied small shops along Halifax Road. They had no need of Rochdale. One of these stores, the "Blue Store", survived until 1968 when it closed before being demolished. It was the longest serving Conservative Co-op store in the Borough. Like many of Smallbridge houses and streets, few Co-operative buildings withstood the construction of the A58 dual carriageway in the 1970's.

Towards Dearnley, two former Co-op buildings (at Hurstead and on New Road) remain ; there is another on the Wardle Road corner, but this is more difficult to distinguish from its attached buildings. Older residents speak with affection and vivid detail of the parts played by all these stores in improving the lives of their members. A few facts have been uncovered and we hope these will help you to appreciate the strong Co-operative past of this area.



Smallbridge, Hurstead and Greengate Co-operatives information leaflet

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Halifax Road, Smallbridge



Typical weaver's cottages on Halifax Road before demolition

The door for the hoist and crane on the gable end can still be seen. Its cool cellar has had a variety of uses since its cheese and butter and meats days: flowers like being kept in a cellar too.



Hurstead Co-operative Store, 615 Halifax Road

Co-operative Store, Arm Road

Here, on your left at the junction of Arm Road with 120 New Road is the former 2 storey Arm Road Co-operative Store, purpose-built in 1867 by the Steps Industrial Co-operative Society of Smallbridge. This strong Society attracted 345 members with its Arm Road Branch, and built three houses in Arm Road the year after opening. These can still be seen. Arm Road Store has no architecturally noticeable features; it is solid and unadorned with its three large windows on the first floor allowing plenty of light into the top warehouse space.

Practical and functional, it has a central doorway, iron staircase at the rear and the necessary warehouse hoist window on the side facing Arm Road.



Arm Road Co-operative Store

HURSTEAD AND GREENGATE

Hurstead and Greengate: these areas on Halifax Road cover the houses approximately between St. John the Baptist Church and the junction of Smithy Bridge Road with Halifax Road.

Hurstead Co-operative Store, 615 Halifax Road

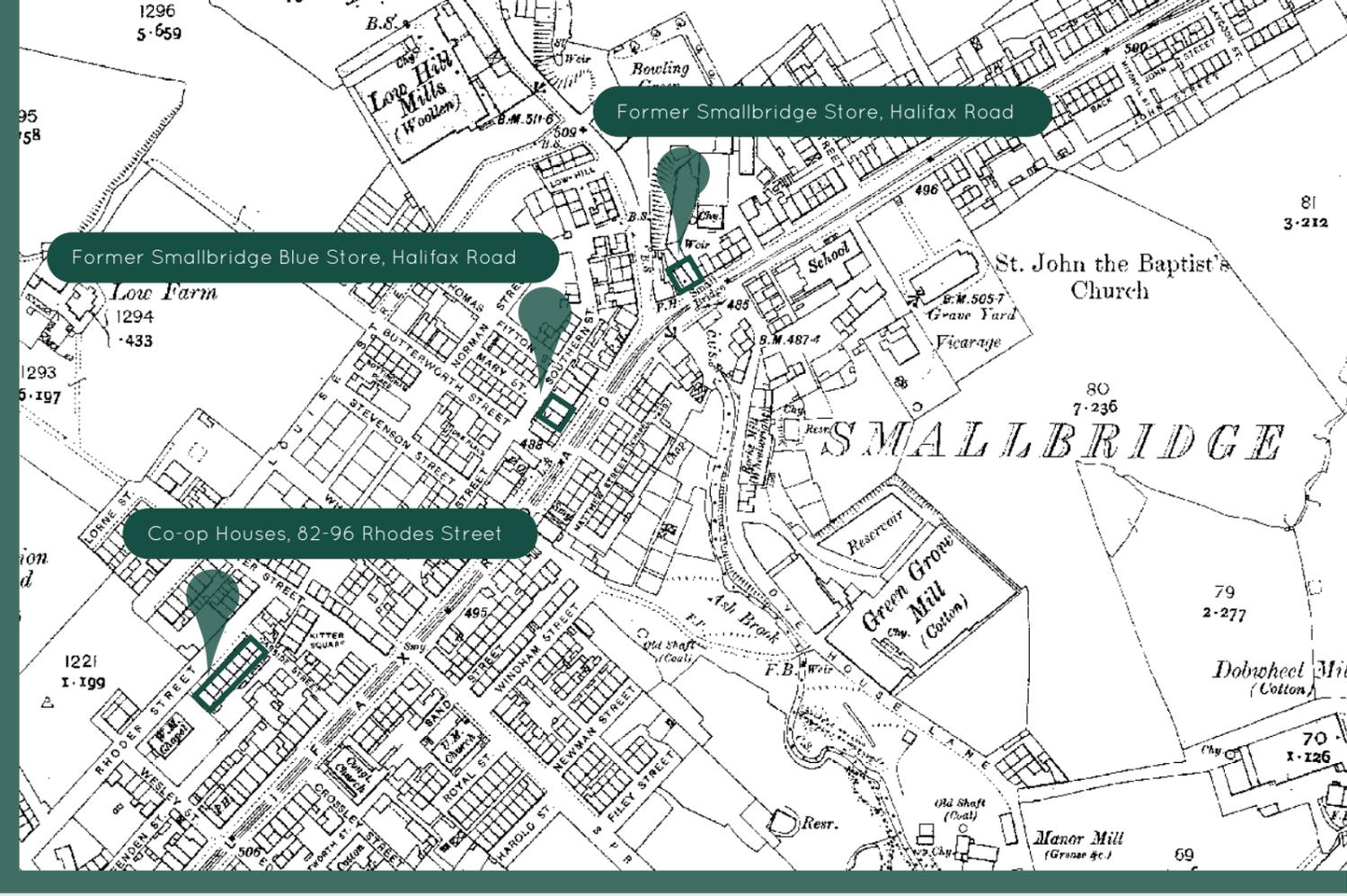
615 Halifax Road is a well-proportioned, 2 storey, end building on a stone terrace. Known locally as the "Hurstead Co-operative Store", it was managed by Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society, probably from the early 1860's. It survived until the 1950's and has been a florist shop ever since.

DEARNLEY

Dearnley is the next settlement on the A 58, which now becomes New Road, and stretches from the Smithy Bridge Road traffic lights towards the Stubby Hall area.

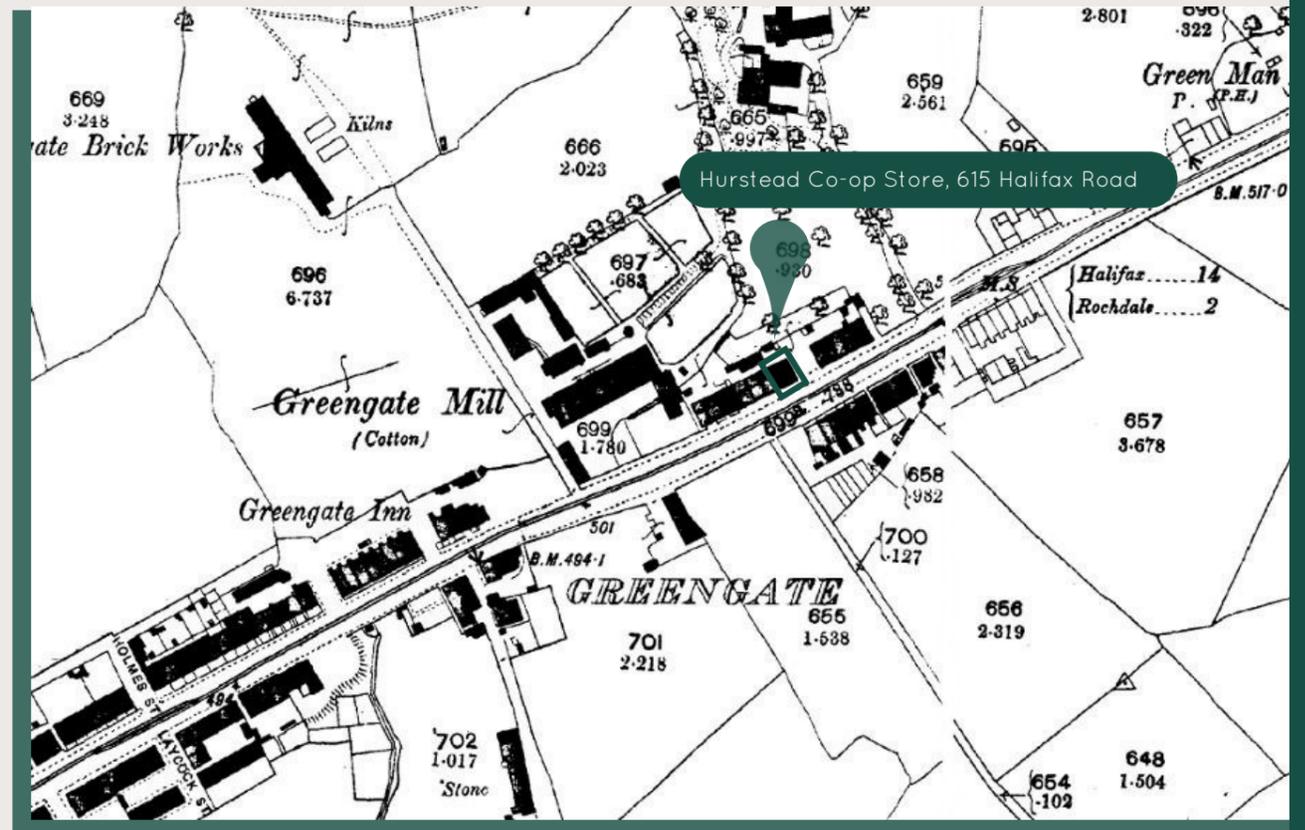
# Smallbridge, Hurstead and Greengate Co-operatives information leaflet

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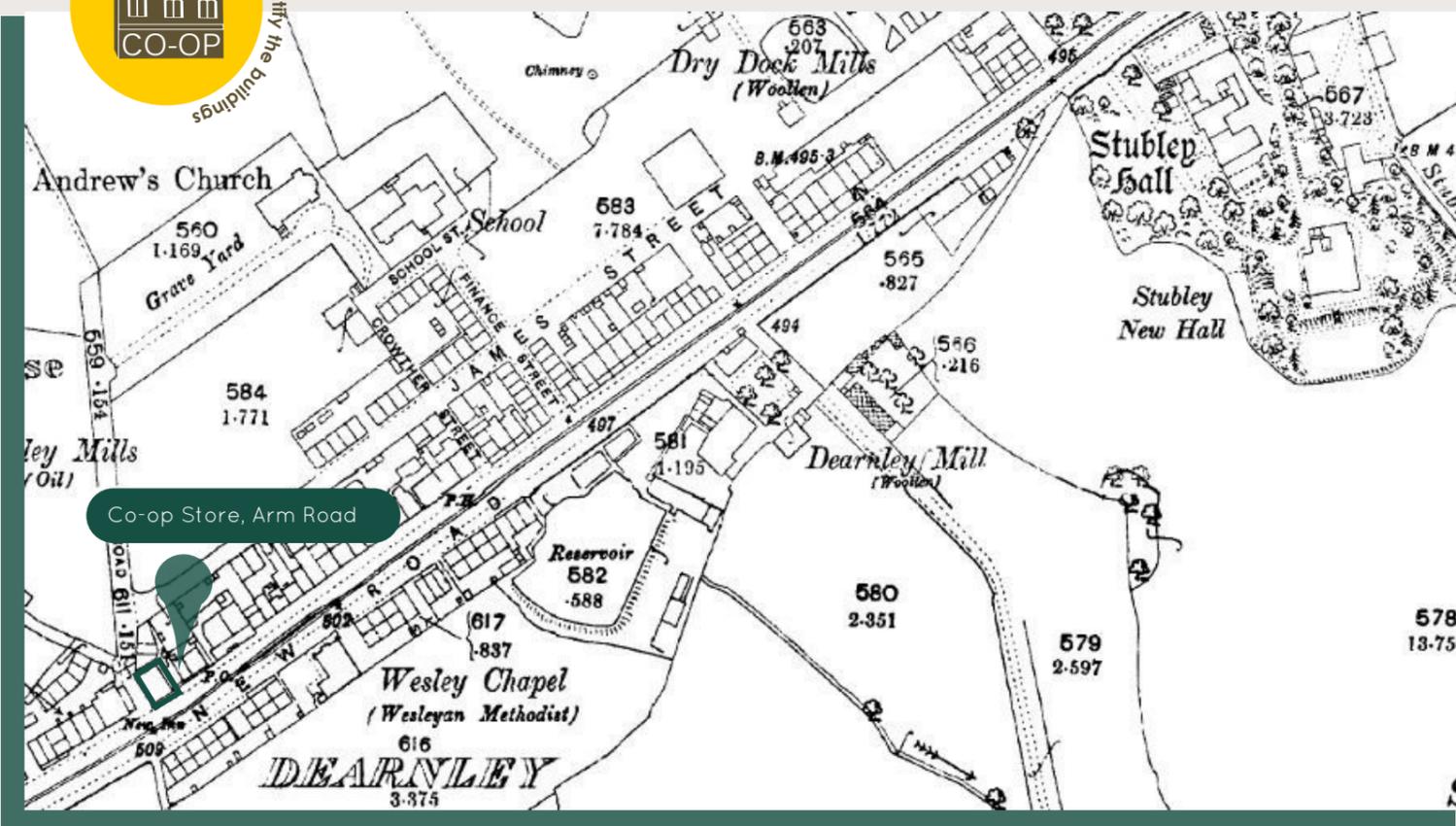
Ordnance Survey map Smallbridge, 1909

1909



Ordnance Survey map Greengate area, 1893

1893



Ordnance Survey map Dearnley area, 1893

1893

The Ordnance Survey maps show the villages of Smallbridge, Hurstead and Greengate. The Co-operative Societies and their purpose built stores played a positive role in the development of these areas. Some of the co-op buildings and sites described on the other side of this leaflet are marked on the maps.



Halifax Road, 1966



Halifax Road, 1965

This document was created by The Co-operatives History Group (Rochdale), in collaboration with Rochdale Council, Link4Life and Rochdale Pioneers Museum.

- Visit the web page and download the leaflets at: [www.rochdalepioneersmuseum.coop/cooperheritagetrails](http://www.rochdalepioneersmuseum.coop/cooperheritagetrails).
- For more information, contact the Visitors Information Centre at Touchstones Rochdale 01706 924928 - [vic@link4life.org](mailto:vic@link4life.org)
- Explore the Five Ways to Wellbeing at: <http://fiveways.rochdale.gov.uk>

Historic Maps