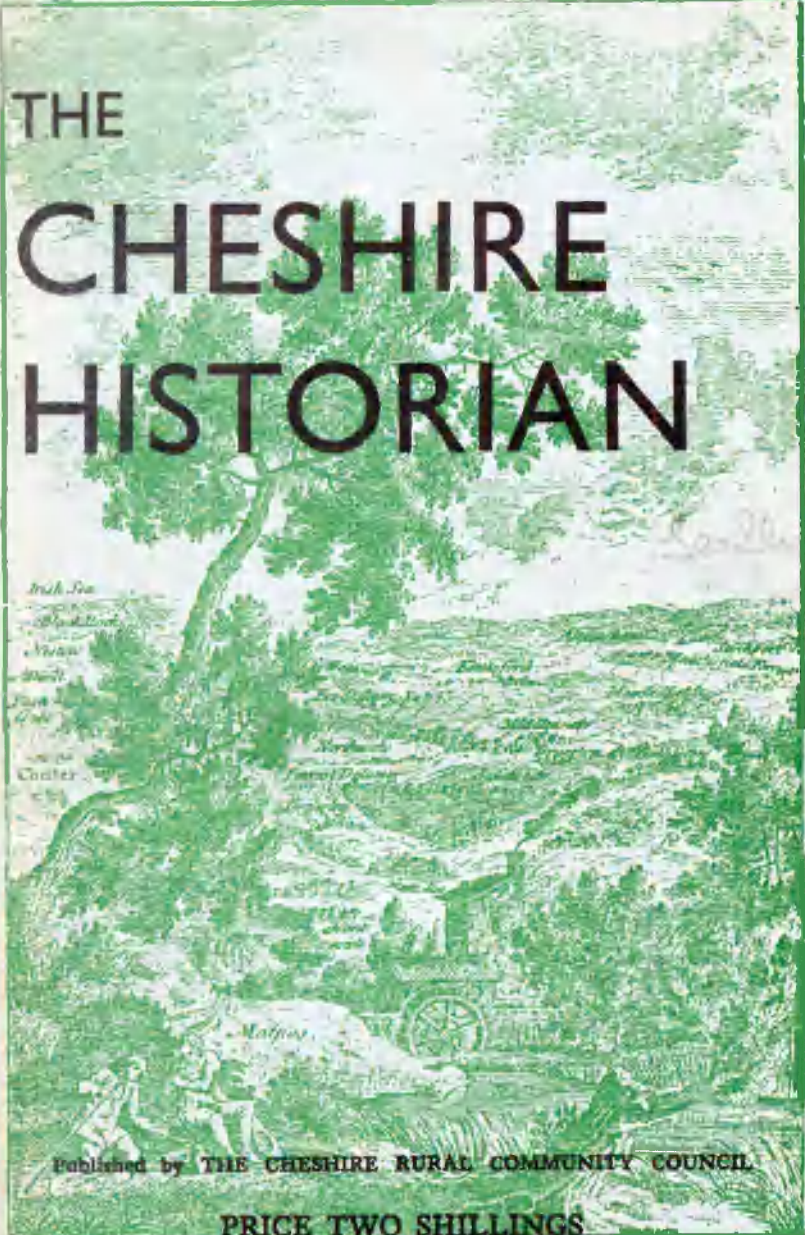


A MAP of CHESHIRE North West from LONDON  
Numbly Trunked to the N. Hon. the Earl of Chalmers July 20th 1810 East of the County

# THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN



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CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION by ARTHUR OAKES, B.A. ....	1
TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS IN THE CHESHIRE COUNTRYSIDE by WILLIAM A. SINGLETON, M.A., Ph.D., B.Arch., A.R.I.B.A., A.M.T.P.I. ....	4
CHESHIRE MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES:	
No. 1. The Lady Lever Art Gallery by ANDREW CARLYLE TAIT .....	13
THE ARCHAEOLOGIST IN THE FIELD by G. WEBSTER, F.S.A. and G. B. LEACH, F.S.A. ....	19
THE CLAY PIPE INDUSTRY IN CHESHIRE by A. WARHURST, B.A. ....	30
EXCAVATIONS .....	33
COLOURED GLASS WINDOWS by MAURICE A. RIDGWAY, B.A. ....	35
THE CIVIC REGALIA OF THE CITY OF CHESTER by MARGARET J. GROOMBRIDGE, B.A. ....	43
NOTES AND QUERIES .....	46
WHAT IS TREASURE TROVE? by GRAHAM WEBSTER, F.S.A. ....	47
THE CHESHIRE CAT by A. OAKES, B.A. ....	49
WHAT ARE THE SCHOOLS DOING? AN INDICATION BY ONE HEADMASTER .....	50
CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS .....	51
LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES .....	INSIDE BACK COVER

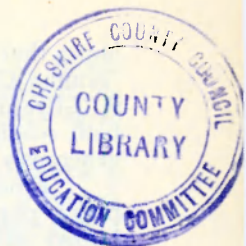
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# Introduction

BY

ARTHUR OAKES, B.A.,

CHAIRMAN OF THE HISTORY COMMITTEE.



**T**HIS is the first number of "The Cheshire Historian," a booklet which the History Committee of the Cheshire Rural Community Council proposes to issue annually. It is hoped that it will be found of value to Cheshire folk interested in the history of their Country, and there are very many such

Signs are not lacking to warrant such a statement. Whenever a lecture is advertised on a topic dealing with the history of a locality, a packed audience is assured. W.E.A. Classes and University Extension lectures in Local History are always well attended. The Women's Institutes of the County are at present engaged in the production of "A Scrap Book of Local History" as one of their efforts to commemorate the Festival of Britain. Historic Societies and Field Clubs are flourishing as never before. Books dealing with the history of the County, its famous houses, or its glorious Churches have a ready sale and an edition is rapidly sold out. A publication like "Prehistoric Cheshire," the first of the Handbooks to the study of the history of this County, published by the Cheshire Rural Community Council in 1940, and one with only a limited appeal, is now out of print, though the demand for it remains unsatisfied.

"Why not produce a second edition?" is the natural rejoinder. Unfortunately this is far from easy to achieve. The book was copiously illustrated. Not only were the plates acclaimed as excellent by the many subscribers to the volume, but they proved of great attraction to the German bombers. For safety, most of the blocks were stored in the cellars of the Liverpool Museum, but the raiders found them and they went up in flames during the Merseyside holocaust. The few that were left at the Printers' warehouse shared a similar fate when their premises too went up in smoke. To re-issue the volume to sell at 4/6d. a copy is now impossible, and the money to encourage the Council to embark on the project at 1951 prices is not available.

So a second edition of Varley and Jackson's "Pre-historic Cheshire" must reluctantly await a more auspicious season. However, two other ventures are on the stocks and the Council

hopes that their launching will not be too long delayed. They are "Roman Cheshire" and "Pre-Conquest Cheshire," the former by R. Gilyard-Beer, F.S.A. and the latter by Dr. F. T. Wainwright, both scholars putting their services at the Council's disposal most generously without fee.

From the above it is obvious that the History Committee's major purpose of producing a series of handbooks to Cheshire history will occupy it for many years, for the difficulties in the way of a calendared programme of publication are insuperable. Partly to offset this disability, the present booklet has been produced. Through this medium the History Committee propose to acquaint readers with its aims and intentions and to secure their co-operation.

Here are some of them:

- (1) To survey the antiquities of the County.
- (2) To provide a panel of lecturers who can be called upon to talk to associations, clubs, etc. upon topics of local history.
- (3) To be of service to the schools and teachers in the County by informing them of the local history projects that are already being carried out in some schools, and by offering help and guidance to those about to embark on similar enterprises.
- (4) To keep readers informed of what is being done in the County to advance our knowledge of events and things of the past by excavation and research.
- (5) To support all endeavours to preserve "ancient monuments" from the hands of the despoiler.
- (6) To publish articles of interest to local historians. The Committee's intention is to make such articles authentic and informative but written so that they can be understood by the ordinary reader. Some articles will be complete in themselves; others may have to be serialised.
- (7) To provide an organ through the pages of which question and answer can be exchanged on matters of local history.
- (8) To make contact with all individuals and societies etc. interested in the study of local history.
- (9) To stress the importance of the preservation of old documents and manuscripts and the advisability of handing them over to the County Archivist so that they can be recorded and be available to the research student.

An amplification of the first objective is desirable, for the Survey of Antiquities begun before World War II and suspended during the war years is once more being revived. The main purpose is to compile a record of any surface find; agricultural!

implement; household tool, building etc., in the County of earlier date than 1820. In this way no matter what is unavoidably destroyed as a result of industrial or housing development, there will be some evidence of its once existence in the County.

People interested in the survey are asked to complete a card giving the location of the antiquity, its type, date or period, and a brief description of it, accompanied by a photograph if possible. Further information about any reference to it in published accounts, the name and address of its owner or occupier will also be of great value. Cards and other literature relevant to the survey can be obtained from the General Secretary of the Cheshire Rural Community Council, 22, Newgate Street, Chester.

Anyone who decides to engage in this "treasure hunt" will find it a fascinating pursuit, and one that will add to his knowledge and open up to him delights of which he was hitherto ignorant. His researches will lead to further study, for the thrill of trying to identify the "find" or of solving the mystery, can be most exciting.

To assist you in gaining the necessary skill, the Editor and Mr. Graham Webster, F.S.A., the Curator of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, present an article in this number.

Help us therefore, to make "The Cheshire Historian" a success by informing other interested people of its publication and by offering your assistance by a contribution to the pages of the next number. Contributions should be sent to The Editor, Mr. G. B. Leach, Ashton, Chester. Any suggestions for making future numbers having a wider appeal and an increased popularity will be gratefully received and carefully studied by the Editorial Sub-Committee. The opportunity is yours. Seize it.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editor writes to express his thanks to all who have contributed articles or in any way aided him in his task, to the Manchester University Press, the Manchester Public Library and the Chetham Society for the use of the cover block.

# Traditional Dwellings in the Cheshire Countryside

BY

WILLIAM A. SINGLETON,  
M.A., Ph.D., B.Arch., A.R.I.B.A., A.M.T.P.I.

**T**HE economic conditions and general growth of an area are often governed, in a large measure, by geographical factors. Circumstances such as proximity to the sea, access to an important highway or the shelter of a mountain range, frequently exert as great an influence on the development of a region as its natural resources or the character of its people.

In Mediaeval times, Cheshire, with its well watered plains, extensive forests and the variety in the configuration of its surface, had physical features which determined to a large extent its economic and social progress. The broad lines of development have been centred upon agriculture, both pastoral and arable, with a pattern of individual farms surrounding small villages. These in turn were dependent on marketing centres. The soil overlying the triassic formation, which has made this agricultural economy possible, has always been considered among the most fertile in England.

The whole settlement pattern of traditional domestic buildings in the County has been developed, since the early Mediaeval period, along the lines of individual small holdings, the land for which was generally won directly from the forests or 'wastes.' This structure is still clear today despite the intervening industrial development. Cottages and farms were clustered together in the village, with a few perhaps scattered outside, and each surrounded by its own small garden or 'toft.' All these rural communities were self-supporting, with home-grown food, home spun and woven fabrics, tools fashioned by the carpenter and shod in iron by the blacksmith. The homes were constructed by the village mason, carpenter, thatcher, and other craftsmen.

Domestic buildings vary greatly in size and importance in accordance with the social status of their owners, and it is obvious that this factor is of the greatest importance and must be considered at an early stage. The range of sizes to be found in the rural areas of Cheshire varies from the humble cottage of the peasant to the manor house, or 'Hall' of the landed gentry, with suitable types for the various social grades between these

two extremes. In general, any new developments in the field of structure, or in the use of materials, would first be apparent in the larger houses, whence they would be transmitted in turn, and by ever diminishing degrees, to the smaller types. It is natural, therefore, that the smaller dwellings retain particular traits of local character for longer periods than the larger ones.

In the short space allotted here, it is not possible to review all these size-types, but, as the lesser dwellings retain and illustrate the characteristics of local traditional style for longer periods, and in a simpler form than the larger ones, reference is being made only to, what may be called, the "Cottage" and "Small House."

Throughout the County, domestic buildings of a very wide range of dates are to be found, but, because the smaller dwellings did not achieve a reasonably permanent form before 1500, it is natural that few, if any, can definitely be placed before that date. Likewise, few traditional dwellings were built after 1840, as the impact of the industrial revolution on the use and manufacture of building materials and techniques almost completely destroyed the local methods and styles. This industrial trend was particularly felt in the great advances that took place in the field of transport. Whereas, up to this time it was unusual for building materials, because of their weight and bulk, to be transported more than a few miles, distance was no longer any deterrent and materials were transported freely from one area to another.

In addition, due to the various geographical, geological, economic and social conditions prevailing in the area, many different local and regional styles and practices have been found. Indeed, the further this subject is pursued the more it becomes evident that these diverse factors, physical and otherwise, have dictated the structural materials available in each locality and in every period. For example, on the Cheshire "Plain" prior to the 16th century, timber, principally oak, was the generally accepted structural material, and it remained in use, on a gradually diminishing scale, until about the end of the following century. In the foothills to the Pennines, however, the supply of timber, with a very few exceptions, was extremely poor and local stone was the staple building material.

It is a well established fact that traditional dwellings were, in general, very simple units, where the outer coverings confined and narrowly defined the interior. Indeed, the external appearances reflected very faithfully the inner facts of use and disposition. The available constructional materials of any area and period were used logically to provide a suitable internal living space for the owner or tenant in accordance with his social status. The basic elements of wall, roof and floor were provided with suitable windows, doors, chimneys, etc., all of which were arranged logically within the primary elements and almost the

whole of the internal arrangements could be easily plotted and assessed from the outside.

A careful study of traditional dwellings will reveal, that, after consideration of the various factors related to size, the next most important index is that of the basic walling material. Indeed, if a systematic classification of these buildings is carried out, it is desirable to make this factor the basis for the whole system.

Cheshire contains examples of three primary walling materials, brick, stone and timber. The regions of their use have been defined directly or indirectly by the geology of the locality. Considering the county as a whole, brick dwellings predominate, followed at some little distance by sandstone, gritstone, and timber. Each of these materials has its own very special characteristics, which have been fully utilised and exploited by the local craftsmen and moulded into the various traditional details peculiar to the area.

Bricks are, at present, the most universal of building materials, but it would be wrong to imagine that this was the case when a cheap and plentiful supply of timber was available. The majority of brick dwellings in the county date from the latter half of the 17th century or the first few decades of the 18th century.

The bricks themselves, which were manufactured from the boulder-clay of the region, were hand-made and those generally used were approximately 9 inches long by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick. Variations of these sizes have been recorded where the length has been as little as  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches and as great as 10 inches, the width as much as 5 inches. No obvious evidence of larger bricks, which may have been used on account of the brick tax\* (1784-1850), has been found. However, there is a tendency for the thickness of bricks to increase towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, while colour, texture and size became more uniform.

For the main part, the type of brickwork found in the area can only be styled "plain." In fact, only very few examples of any form of decorative work are to be found. One interesting feature emerges in that only a small percentage of brick dwellings in Cheshire were constructed in "English" bond, the remainder making use of "Flemish" or variations of "Flemish." This seems a peculiar fact, as it would be reasonable to suppose the "English" bond originated or was extensively used in England. However, it is probable that many more Flemish craftsmen were employed in this country on brick-making and bricklaying than is commonly supposed. The early bricks were well-burnt and irregular in shape,

\*NOTE—The tax on bricks was imposed in 1784 and not repealed until 1850. The tax was levied on the basis of so much per 1,000 bricks and it is this fact which tended to encourage brick-makers to produce larger bricks.



which facts, combined with the rather thick ( $\frac{1}{2}$  inch or even over) and irregular joints, made up the vernacular character of traditional domestic buildings in Cheshire from the late seven-teenth century onwards.

Whilst timber dwellings were being constructed throughout the lowland portion of the county, the weather in the high uplands to the East necessitated a stouter protection than wattle and daub could provide. The result was the traditional sturdy cottages and small houses in stone. Their character was largely determined by the local masonry and the form in which it could be obtained. This is an important fact, and it must be borne in mind that the smaller dwellings were invariably built with stone from the local quarry, and it is to this fact that they owe so much of their resultant variety in colour and texture. In most cases their charm is entirely dependent upon this intense local character and aesthetically they are always appropriate to their surroundings and, in fact, appear to "grow out" of the landscape. Their sturdy appearance, however, often belies their powers of resistance to cold and damp, especially as floors and even walls often rest directly upon the earth without any base or foundation.

Two distinct types of natural free-stone are found in the county. Millstone grit, or gritstone as it is generally called, is the formation which covers the portion of the county adjoining the Pennines and Derbyshire. It is a hard stone which does not lend itself readily to any form of incised decoration. It must always be used in angular or simple moulded shapes, and it has the very considerable advantage of good resistance to climatic erosion. It is rather coarse in texture and its colour is a dull golden brown, which often became very dark with age and weathering.

The other and, in many ways, the least interesting masonry type in the area is sandstone. It is found in the several small outcrops of rock which appear through the boulder clay of the county at such places as Alderley, Lymm, Beeston and Burton. It is particularly soft, rather porous in nature and therefore weathers badly. It is normally a dull reddish brown in colour, although a wide range of tones is to be found. It has a rough texture, is easily worked and lends itself to a richer form of detailing than is possible with the gritstone. Local masons were quick to note this fact, but, unfortunately, it is so soft that many of the mouldings and other decorative features have suffered badly from the erosion of wind and rain. In complete contrast to gritstone, this material is used in large blocks laid in courses and forming a rough ashlar wall. In addition to the use of this stone as a main walling material, it has been used in several instances to provide a base or plinth for timber framed buildings.

The earliest stone examples were constructed of unworked, or very slightly worked random-rubble, laid in two distinct "leaves." The cavity between these was filled in with small stones and mud. The thickness of these walls varied considerably, but, as a general rule, twenty-two to twenty-four inches was a minimum. The bonding material was composed of clay, beaten to an even consistency with straw and dung. For these early rough masonry buildings, the stones were seldom quarried, an ample supply generally existing on the surface of the ground or in the beds of rivers and streams. They were sometimes used in their entirety, but more often were broken up in a simple manner and cleaned of all irregular projections.

Since these early examples, the whole trend of masonry construction has been towards more regular stones and more even coursing and joints. Eventually, the machine cut stone of the late nineteenth century, which is so unsympathetic to the rural landscape, appeared in large quantities and new mechanical techniques superseded traditional methods.

Cheshire falls within a group of counties in the North-West Midlands which were the chief timber producing districts in Mediaeval times. The county contained the vast forests of Macclesfield, Delamere and Wirral, and indeed the whole region appears to have been well wooded. Careful field study reveals that, not only are there a considerable number of timber dwellings still extant, but a great many more buildings which were timber-framed at one time. No complete examples of very early timber dwellings are to be found, and those still surviving belong mainly to the late 16th and 17th centuries or even later.

The earliest type of timber house was constructed with two or more pairs of "crucks," one pair at each end. The roof and walls were always independent of each other, whatever materials were used. The "crucks" were large curved, or naturally bent, timbers. Often a whole tree (possible trunk and suitable branch) was split down the centre and the two sections faced together to form a rough arch. The top of each was "halved" and notched into the other to provide a support for the ridge-pole. Each pair of "crucks" were fastened together laterally and kept in place by a horizontal beam, into which they were pegged with oak pins. This beam supported a purlin, which spanned between pairs of "crucks" and formed a "wallplate" for the roof timbers. As a general rule all the main timber framing was cut and shaped in the forests, each member being given a mark to relate it to the others. It was then transported to the site of the proposed building and framed together. The timber framework linking the "crucks" and forming the sides of the house was constructed of horizontal and vertical members, which from base to eaves were mortised, tenoned, notched and pegged together into a homogeneous whole, quite independent of wall-filling and roof.

The first member to be laid was a large oak cill, around seven inches square. It was laid upon a low plinth of stone or brick about twelve inches high by nine inches wide. Into this cill were tenoned the upright posts which were securely pegged in position by oak pins about 1 inch in diameter. The top of the frame was a kind of inverted cill, again mortised for the upright, and pegged. Between these vertical posts were placed the lesser important horizontal members, which were also tenoned and pegged into the uprights.

This main fabric, or "cage," as it is often called, was the responsibility of the carpenter, a craftsman little heard of today. He designed as well as constructed, the frame, while the joiner carried out the finer work, such as doors and windows.

In the earliest houses the panels between the timber frame were filled in with a variety of materials in several different ways. The method generally encountered in Cheshire consisted of forming a lattice, by first springing upright hazel wands into grooves notched into the timber frame, and inter-weaving them with smaller wands or brushwood rather like a wattle hurdle. Daub was applied to this wattle in layers on either side by the wallwright or dauber, hence the description, "wattle-and-daub." It seems possible that wattle-and-daub and thatching were carried out occasionally by the same craftsman, as references to "thatcher and dauber" are to be found. The daub consisted of marly-clay mixed to the right consistency with water, chopped straw and dung. The whole of the work was afterwards coated two or three times with lime-wash, thus adding an eggshell-like protection to the rather soft daub, which additionally was liable to shrink. It is due almost entirely to this lime-wash finish that so much wattle and daub still survives. The infilling of the panels in the later examples (i.e. late 17th and early 18th century) was often brick, laid in even courses occasionally stuccoed externally.

The early cruck dwellings were, broadly speaking, of one storey only. The whole inner cubic content of the house being occupied by the one or more rooms required. Gradually the idea of dividing a portion of the house in a horizontal direction to form a loft or 'shelf' was developed. This provided a good sleeping space, which was dry and warm and gave the owner additional room. A rough ladder gave access to this loft. The next step was to provide a continuous first floor which was lighted and ventilated, either at the gable ends, or by small dormer windows pushed out through the roof covering. This roof space was cramped, especially in the case of the cruck-framed buildings, and so further development was directed towards remedying this drawback. Gradually the houses increased in height until two complete storeys were quite common.

The main changes were affected in the gable ends and intermediate roof supports. Crucks disappeared and were superseded by a complete rectangular frame for the whole building, surmounted by simple timber trusses. Various kinds of "king-post" trusses were used in which, at first, curved timbers, similar to small crucks, were used. These became more regular and straight as time went on.

With the shortage of timber, which became acute in the first half of the 17th century, due to the great demands made upon it for ship-building, industrial and domestic purposes, the timber frames became more slender in character with smaller timbers and larger panels.

Space does not allow for a more detailed review of wall structure and attendant details, and so the final portion of this article will be devoted to a short summary of traditional roofing.

A cursory glance at the traditional dwellings of the county, at once gives the impression that the keynote of the roof structure is simplicity. Further detailed study will confirm this impression, more especially in the case of the cottage and small house. The large house also follows this general line, but in a few cases the roofs are more elaborate, in order to cover such well-known forms as the "E," "T" or "U" plans. The buildings are, in the main, simple and compact rectangular units, where the roof, whatever its covering, spans with a straight ridge between two gable ends. In some areas, particularly the upland ones, this rectangular roof is also continued to cover the shippon and barn. The only exceptions to this form of gabled roof are a very few examples of primitive dwellings such as those found adjoining Pickmere. Here the houses are single-storey, timber-framed, and roofed in thatch, which is "swept" round the square gable ends in a manner which is reminiscent of the "shielings" in the Isle of Skye.

Two main roof coverings are to be found in the county, stone "flags" and thatch. The first of these materials was gained from open quarries, which were everywhere to be found in the gritstone region, notably at such places as Kerridge, which is situated on a ridge of high ground, overlooking Bollington, and close to the Derbyshire border. These "Kerridge Flags," as they were called, were well renowned locally and were produced by hand-splitting suitable strata into thicknesses of one-half to one and one-half inches. The characteristics of the geological formation were such as to render them almost imperishable. In fact, it is not uncommon today, to find stone flagged roofs of derelict dwellings being stripped to provide material for roofing new houses.

The roof was constructed by hanging the flags on slender hand-riven batten by oak pegs, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, which were inserted in a hole at the top of the flag. A comparatively low pitch was employed and, if well laid, there was no drag upon the battens. The laying of these flags called for a high degree of skilled craftsmanship, as the courses diminished in size towards the ridge, and the valleys were "swept" round or laced to avoid the use of lead.

The general effect of these roofs has always been that of complete harmony with the rural landscape and the buildings thus treated appear to "rise out" of the moorlands, hills and valleys. Even the growths of moss, lichens and even large plants, which frequently adorn the roofs, have never seemed inappropriate.

The use of thatch is a survival of the most primitive of all forms of roof covering, and it is both interesting and remarkable to note that, during the many centuries of its use, no other natural material has ever been found which equals thatch in resistance to both extremes of weather and temperature. It is possible for a variation in temperature within a slate roof to be over four times that under thatch, for similar conditions. This insulating property, which applies equally well to sound as temperature, is due to the cellular nature of the construction caused by the many reeds, each with innumerable cavities in and around them.

The general character of thatching in Cheshire was to be found in the rather steeply pitched and gabled roofs covered with plain thatch. Very little decorative treatment, such as "cross-stitching" was to be found, and ridges, eaves and verges were as simple as possible. The local material was "wheat reed," and the roof was laid from the eaves upwards, and from left to right. The whole was secured to the roof-timbers by "spars" of cleft-hazel or willow, sharpened at each end and bent into the shape of a hairpin. Afterwards the surface was trimmed by the thatcher with shears or bill-hook.

Space does not permit a further enlargement of this fascinating subject. All the features of traditional domestic architecture in Cheshire are of great interest and represent a magnificent tradition. It is hoped that, as a result of this short review, many people may be encouraged to devote at least some of their energy to ensuring that this great heritage is not only fully understood but respected.

Books suggested for further reading.

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# Cheshire Museums and Art Galleries

## No. 1. The Lady Lever Art Gallery

BY

ANDREW CARLYLE TAIT,

LATE ASSISTANT CURATOR.

**B**RITISH art is a friendly art, linked always to the countryside and the living people of any period. Its setting is the home rather than the public building. To anyone who will give it the sympathetic study it deserves, the art of our country will remain an inspiration and a lasting pleasure.

Probably our painters were never so completely successful in their aims as our furniture designers, nor our sculptors as compared with our potters, since these include such a man of genius as Josiah Wedgwood who transformed coarse stoneware into a new art-form of the most refined grace, aided by his designer, John Flaxman. In furniture, Britain has produced the three great styles which it is convenient to call Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton, although we now know that, even in their own day these designers were only responsible for a small part of the furniture we associate with them.

In painting, two British characteristics stand out. First, that the picture should tell a story intelligently: this tradition has guided us for a thousand years. Secondly, our love of portraiture, from the days of Holbein onward: his people are types we can readily recognise among us today. Sporting art and the water-colour landscape have been developed in Britain more fully than anywhere else. We have never had a painter as great as Rembrandt or Rubens. Indeed, until Hogarth's day we can scarcely claim one British-born painter of importance. Our indebtedness to the art of other nations, to the Low Countries, to Italy, to China, and, in particular, to France, we gladly acknowledge. Our artists and craftsmen, however, were never mere copyists, but rather translators, changing the foreign fashion into something recognisably English. And with the Brothers Adam we developed a national style of our own, which led the fashionable world between 1765 and 1795. Josiah Wedgwood was an early and faithful follower of Robert Adam and Chippendale abandoned his own style, complete as it was, to produce the Adam furniture which

still challenges the world. What our people did with all the ideas they borrowed was to develop and combine them into an ideal unity for the Englishman's home. It is this harmony of comfort and dignity, commonsense and idealism, of things old and new which is Britain's contribution to European art, a unity achieved by no other nation. In such wonderful collections as the Duke of Bedford's, exhibited last year at Burlington House, we see the supreme examples of this unity, but, in degree, we can also see it in the typical country house of our own county, still dwelt in by descendants of the men and women whose portraits and cherished belongings continue to adorn it. It is a loss, not only to ourselves, but to mankind, every time an old home is broken up and its treasures dispersed. This is particularly grievous when the collection includes family portraits and heirlooms, which lose much of their historical value when divorced from their natural surroundings.

Cheshire has the honour of possessing a treasure-house of British art in which this unity and historic progress can be seen perhaps better than anywhere else. The Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight, with thirty rooms displaying a varied collection of things which are among the finest of their kind, is not at all like the old-fashioned museum, but rather has the aspect of a palatial country house in which the visitor can roam freely as a welcome guest. William Hesketh Lever, afterwards Baronet, Baron, and finally Viscount, erected it in memory of his wife, Elizabeth Ellen Hulme, who died in 1913. On his elevation to the peerage he added her surname to his own. They were boy and girl sweethearts in Bolton. In the excellent biography by his son, published in 1927, he says "my parents used to say they never remembered a world without each other in it."

The great business established at Port Sunlight in 1888 is now linked to hundreds of others, and has a world-wide scope. Its founder was a many-sided man of genius, and in his strong character a love of beauty was inborn. It shows itself in one way in the industrial village, still unsurpassed, and in the Gallery, with its low broad domes rising among the red roofs, the lawns, the tree-bordered roads. The great industrialist was born in Bolton just a hundred years ago and began to collect at the age of fifteen. Although new purchases (particularly of contemporary art) continue to augment the collections, the greater part represents his personal choice and many pieces were originally in his houses at Hampstead and Thornton Manor, a beautiful Wirral mansion where his grand son lives today.

The foundation stone of the Gallery was laid by His Majesty King George V in March, 1914, but the intervening war delayed its completion until the 16th December, 1922, when it was opened by H.R.H. the Princess Beatrice. From the opening day, and indeed for some time previously, when the great



collections were being arranged, the progress of the Gallery has been directed by Mr. Sydney L. Davison, F.R.S.A., F.R.G.S, a leading man in his profession, and one of the founders of the North-Western Federation of Art Galleries and Museums. This was the first of the local Federations in England: now they cover the whole country.

British art is primary in the display to be seen at the Lady Lever Art Gallery. The chief exception is the Chinese porcelain, which has so long been a favoured guest in our rooms that it has become "one of the family." Even in Tapestry, an art mainly practised abroad, there is a complete set of the story of Hero and Leander from the Mortlake looms and another large panel, probably woven at Soho. The exhibits in the Wedgwood Room, one of the finest collections of its kind, represent English ceramics. English furniture is magnificently represented, particularly inlaid satin-wood. Needlework is also a special feature, described in two articles in *Apollo* in 1947. And the collection of Masonic jewels and relics exhibited in the Banqueting Hall is fittingly shown here, as it was in Cheshire that Elias Ashmole and his friends developed the ideals of the ancient guild into Freemasonry. Special "period rooms" display the Tudor and Stuart, William and Mary, early Georgian and Adam interiors.

Merely to give the artists' names and the titles of the more important pictures in the Gallery would take up more room than the present introduction will allow, but among those of the period of George III are:

John Crome.	MARLINGFORD GROVE.
Thomas Gainsborough.	ANNE LUTTRELL, DUCHESS OF CUMBERLAND and MRS. CHARLOTTE FREER.
John Hoppner.	EARL OF MOIRA, IN UNIFORM, and LADY ELIZABETH HOWARD DUCHESS OF RUTLAND.
Sir T. Lawrence.	FLORENCE, LADY HARBOROUGH.
George Morland.	Pair. THE BILLETED SOLDIER'S DEPARTURE and RETURN, and THE ROADSIDE ALEHOUSE. The latter a large and fine example.
Sir H. Raeburn.	MRS. PEAT AND DAUGHTERS and JAMES EDGAR OF AUCHINGRAMMONT.
Allan Ramsay.	THE DINWIDDIE SISTERS, daughters of Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia, whose part in U.S.A. history was important.
Sir Joshua Reynolds.	MRS. PAINE AND DAUGHTERS, DUCHESS OF HAMILTON AND ARCYLL, A SACRIFICE TO HYGEIA (Hon. Mrs. Peter Beckford) and LADY GERTRUDE FITZPATRICK (little girl with bunch of grapes).

George Romney.

MISS SARAH RODBARD, full length in shimmering satin. MRS. OLIVER, with infant, seated.

George Stubbs.

Four enamels on large Wedgwood slabs.

Francis Wheatley.

LADY IN LARGE STRAW HAT.

Richard Wilson.

CASTEL GANDOLFO and THE VILLA OF MAECENAS, TIVOLI.

with these may be grouped Madame Vigée Lebrun's LADY HAMILTON AS A BACCHANTE, painted at Naples in 1790, a beautiful likeness of a woman whose beauty we still regard as unsurpassed, and who was born in Cheshire.

In this collection many of our nineteenth century painters are better represented in water colour than in oil. This is particularly true of Turner, seen in all his glory in Watercolour Room B. The minute detail of his earliest period is well displayed in his large watercolour of a Welsh Gothic mansion, HAFOD, the famous house of the Johnes family, though the cloud effects introduced show his aspiring genius reaching out to the sunlight and the skies. In his quest for sheer beauty, Turner seldom surpassed such pictures as his RICHMOND HILL, and LANCASTER; his BOLTON ABBEY, WHARFEDALE is a poet's dream in landscape form. In OFF YARMOUTH, MOONLIGHT, and DUDLEY CASTLE, DAWN, we see Turner attempting subjects no previous watercolourist had ventured to take. To this period belongs the only important oil by Turner in the collection, THE FALLS OF CLYDE, in the Main Hall, perhaps too wonderful an effect to be shown in paint. It needs the spectator's own imagination to see, as Turner saw it, the rocky hollow in the hot September afternoon, filled with iridescent mist which veils the waterfall.

Our nineteenth century artists may well begin with Constable. His large watercolour, EAST BERGHOLT CHURCH, has a romantic history. There is little doubt that the young woman in pink included in the view, is the artist's future wife. Constable's large oil, EAST BERGHOLT MILL, can be claimed as the earliest example of what came to be known as impressionism. Sir David Wilkie's QUEEN VICTORIA, painted in 1840, occupies a place of honour in the Main Hall. William Etty has a whole wall in the North Gallery, including THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS, and other important oils. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's SIBYLLA PALMIFERA was painted in 1866 for George Rae, his Birkenhead patron: his BLESSED DAMOSEL is finer still. William Holman Hunt painted THE SCAPEGOAT on the salt-encrusted shores of the Dead Sea in 1854: no picture in the Gallery awakens such deep emotions as this, symbolic of the world's treatment of Our Saviour and of the Jewish people. The artist's MAY MORNING ON MAGDALEN TOWER, in an embossed copper frame by Ashbee, has the same underlying sincerity, expressed in an Oxford choral group, where all the faces are portraits. The best example of Ford Madox Brown

is CROMWELL ON HIS FARM. Here also the artist is less concerned with beauty than with the subject that will stimulate our thought.

The Victorian painter best represented at Port Sunlight is undoubtedly Sir John Everett Millais, including a striking juvenile watercolour, PREACHING TO THE ROUNDHEADS, his magnificent SIR ISUMBRAS AT THE FORD: A DREAM OF THE PAST, THE BLACK BRUNSWICKER, AN IDYLL OF 1745, and a good half-length portrait of LORD TENNYSON. Lord Leighton's GARDEN OF THE HESPERIDES is a harmony in glowing colour, contrasting with FATIDICA, in which the figure of the prophetess stands out almost in relief: his eighteen-foot canvas THE DAPHNEPHORIA occupies the north end of the Main Hall, specially designed to take this picture, in which the glorious civilisation of ancient Greece lives again for all to see. There are three large paintings by Sir E. Burne Jones, of which the most important is THE ANNUNCIATION. Sir Hubert von Herkomer's spectacular success THE LAST MUSTER now hangs near Fred Walker's BATHERS which Herkomer so much admired that it decided him to take up oil painting. Sir W. J. Orchardson's THE YOUNG DUKE is a banquet scene and a social satire. So is Edgar Bundy's FINANCE, with lighting very cleverly handled. John Singer Sargent's ON HIS HOLIDAYS commemorates a fishing holiday with George McCulloch, the picture collector, and his son, the manly lad seen in the picture, which vividly realises the open air effect.

But the greatest art is seldom the most widely appreciated. The most popular picture in the Gallery is certainly Briton Riviere's FIDELITY, a young poacher and his dog in prison. Next in general choice would be THE SHORTENING WINTER'S DAY, most realistic of all Joseph Farquharson's snow scenes, with perhaps FINANCE for third place. Those who come to the Gallery to gaze upon a picture which has power to heal their troubles will find it in the perennial restfulness and charm of THE SAMPLER by Campbell Taylor.

Among works of more recent date are a portrait head in bronze, DEIDRE, by Jacob Epstein. G. A. Brockhurst is at his best in JEUNESSE DOREE, as is Laura Knight in MALLOWS and BALLET, and there is a masterpiece by Sir A. J. Munnings, THE FRISIAN BULL.

In watercolour art a whole room is devoted to Peter de Wint, while David Cox and William Hunt share another. Several Cheshire artists, such as Wilson Steer, Randolph Caldecott and E. M. Wimperis are represented. There are two interesting views in Bridge Street, Chester, by G. S. Shepherd, one of a fine house next to St. Olave's Church which has long since disappeared. Two of Fred Walker's best watercolours, THE FISHMONGER'S SHOP and a Highland subject FISHERMAN AND GHILLIE can be compared with G. J. Pinwell's GILBERT A BECKETT'S TROTH and G. H. Mason's THE GANDER. All three men shared the same feeling for beauty

and died, in the prime of their powers, about the same time. A small but good example of J. S. Cotman, *THE WINDMILL, ST. BENE'S ABBEY*, is among the recent additions. The average visitor to an art gallery is at least as much interested in the subject of a picture as in the way it is painted, and Welsh people can become quite excited over Curnow Vosper's *SALEM*, the interior of a little chapel in the mountains behind Harlech, with women wearing the old high hats. No other artist seems to have realised the importance of recording such an epitome of Welsh national life, and all Wales has now heard of this picture. The chapel celebrated its hundredth anniversary last year.

The furniture at the Lady Lever Art Gallery deserves an article to itself. The only thing lacking is cottage and farmhouse furniture, for which the visitor must wait until an extension can be built. There are a score of the inlaid tables, cabinets and commodes made in the workshops of Chippendale and his contemporaries. The long-case clocks, chiming through the day, give the gallery a music of its own. Four come from the North-West: one, by William Kirk, was made in Stockport. Both in mechanism and in the design of their cases, these clocks show that our district could hold its own with London in the great period of furniture design.

Visitors to the Gallery will find it open on weekdays at 10 a.m. and on Sundays at 2 p.m. From April to September the closing hour is 6 p.m., and from October to March, an hour earlier. On Good Friday and Christmas Day the Gallery is closed. Light teas are provided in the Banqueting Hall, downstairs, from 3-30 to 5 p.m. Applications to photograph or sketch must be made in writing and addressed to the Curator, Mr. S. L. Davison, F.R.S.A.

# The Archæologist in the Field

(PART 1)

BY

GRAHAM WEBSTER, F.S.A.

AND

G. B. LEACH, F.S.A.

OUR present knowledge of pre-historic and Roman Cheshire is pitifully meagre. Many discoveries have been made from time to time but only a few were properly recorded. Dr. W. J. Varley, before the war, carried out a valuable series of excavations on the hill forts of Eddisbury and Bickerton; and the Roman Fortress and mediaeval city of Chester has, until recently, been under the eagle eye of that indefatigable archaeologist, the late Professor Newstead. Apart from these valuable contributions, Cheshire has not received any serious archaeological attention since the last century and it is significant that the most valuable account of Roman Cheshire, although it contains many errors, is still that of Watkins, published in 1886. "PREHISTORIC CHESHIRE" by Varley and Jackson, is more up-to-date and accurate, but a study of these two accounts will quickly reveal the unhappy state of ignorance which exists on these early phases of the history of the county. This state of affairs was not altogether due to any lack of material evidence. Cheshire has been as intensively occupied since the Middle Bronze Age as any adjacent area, but there have been insufficiently interested and observant persons to record and report any discovery made. The History Committee of the Rural Community Council has for many years tried to develop and encourage a system of field workers but with only moderate success.

These notes have been prepared to help would-be archaeologists to play their part in gathering together the evidence which people with a wider experience and background can use to build up the story of the past. At the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, a complete set of 6 inch to the mile maps of Cheshire is kept on behalf of the Archaeological Branch of the Ordnance Survey. The Curator is responsible for plotting on these sheets all discoveries which come to his notice and he is prepared to help field-workers to identify objects and pottery they find.

There are two kinds of things to notice; (a) structural remains and (b) objects. Into the first class fall a large number of earth-works, ranging from the complex defences of a camp to the simple burial mounds, and only a trained or experienced eye can discern the main characteristics which permit deductions to

be made, but the inexperienced worker can do a valuable service by measuring and describing such earth-works and there must be some in Cheshire as yet unknown and unrecorded.

The main task of the field worker will always be that of looking for the material remains of antiquity. These range from flints and stone implements and scraps of domestic pottery to the more exciting coins, brooches, beads and similar objects. These may be found anywhere as excavations, however shallow, may turn over occupation levels of previous centuries. One of the most useful ways discoveries can be made is by following the plough; this can be an exhausting and tiring job and at times most unrewarding, but by traversing the fields in one's vicinity it soon becomes apparent if there has been any intensity of occupation in a particular area. Once one is known to be on the look-out for antiquities, people who have found objects which they think may be of ancient origin will usually bring them along for your inspection, hoping for an authoritative opinion. A friend of ours, not so long ago, was startled to see in the window of a cottage in a small village, a fine geranium growing out of a Bronze Age cinerary urn. Anxious enquiries soon revealed a few more. They had been found some time previously in quarrying operations, and the cottager thought they would "do nicely as flower-pots."

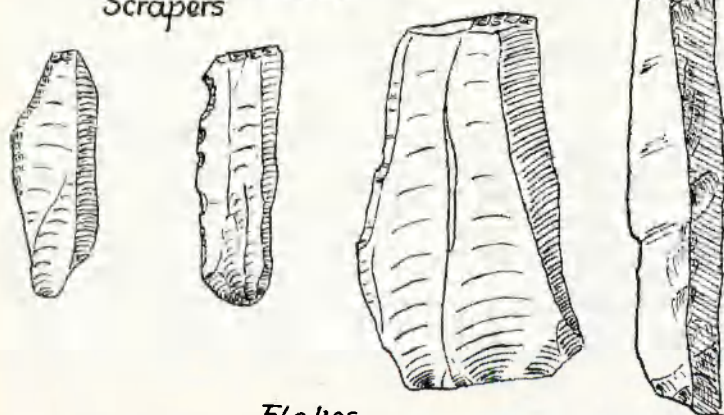
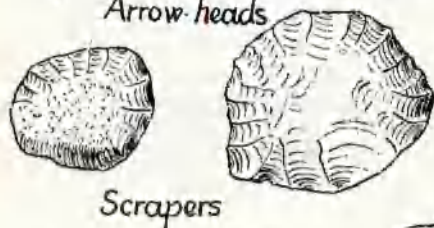
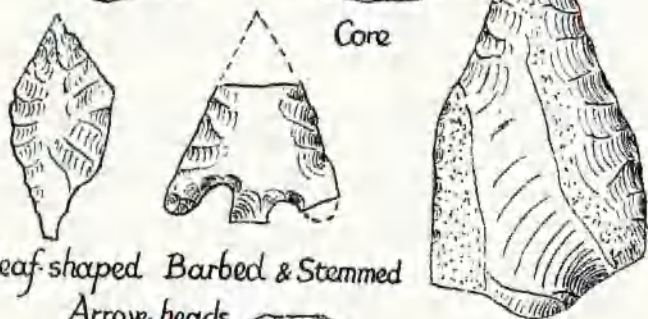
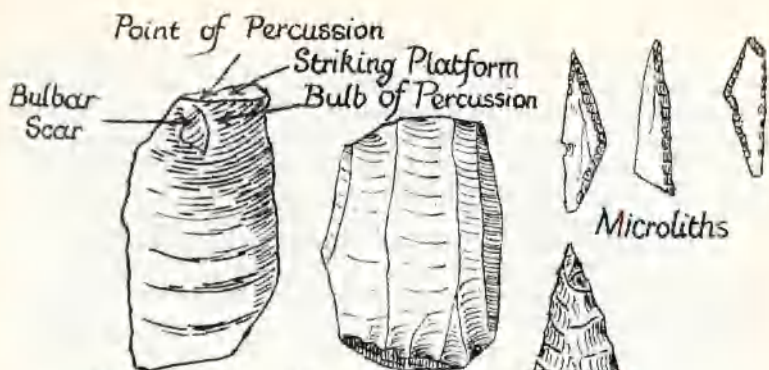
Most families have a little junk-box which may contain anything from odd buttons to foreign coins passed in change, but here and there are other things lying unrecognised. Another friend of ours once found an old man in Cheshire sharpening his knife with a fine polished stone axe and was thought queer in the head when he offered half a crown for it.

In these and other ways useful knowledge can be gleaned about the antiquities of Cheshire and we hope that many keen, sharp-eyed investigators will be encouraged to look around for themselves and bring notice of their finds to us.

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## PREHISTORIC ANTIQUITIES

Where written records are not available the only reliable sources of information on Prehistoric man are the material objects made or used by him in his daily life, which were often dropped and lost by him in the course of hunting, trading or husbandry. Those made of bone or wood disintegrate in course of time unless they happen to be preserved by such natural agency as a peat bog, but the ones of flint or other stone come down to us practically in the same state as when they were lost. The metal weapons of the Bronze Age are also normally in good condition but covered with a smooth green patination which adds to their beauty.



Scale 1/2

Flint Implements. found at Ashton, Chester G.A.L.

What evidence have we of man's presence in Cheshire during prehistoric times? The only object of the Paleolithic Age is a flint axe found at St. John Street, Chester, but this evidence is of doubtful character as it was found in disturbed ground mixed with later material. The nearest places where Paleolithic implements have been found are at Creswell Crags, Derbyshire, and caves in Denbighshire.

After the close of the Paleolithic period, roughly 10,000 years ago, a change of climate occurred, the arctic cold giving way to warmer and wetter conditions, and so the cave dwellers of the Ice Age had to adapt themselves to the altered conditions. They still remained hunters and collectors of food as cultivation of the soil and the keeping of domestic animals was still unknown. The most characteristic feature of this period, known as the Mesolithic, was the use of very small flint implements (Microliths) fixed on bone or wooden hafts.

These people lived and hunted over the Pennine Range and their implements can be found on the bare patches of ground where the peat has been washed away and situated between the 1,000 ft. and 1,300 ft. contours. A number of flints from a workshop at Boar Flat, Cheshire, have been found by Mr. F. Buckley and are in the Grosvenor Museum. It is therefore quite possible that at times these Mesolithic men came down into the plains of Cheshire in order to hunt. A few microliths, typical of their period, have been found at Ashton, near Chester, but it is unsafe to base too much on these few specimens as some types may have survived in use for a very long time in an area like Cheshire where good quality flint had to be imported from outside the country. At Alderley Edge,\* a chipping floor was discovered from which one or two implements having affinities with the Mesolithic ones from Creswell Crags are in the Manchester Museum, but the rest have been lost.

The coming of invaders to the south east coast of Britain from the Continent about 5,000 years ago, marks the beginning of the Neolithic period. These people introduced the cultivation of the soil and rearing of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. Coarse pottery was made and suitable stones were ground and polished for use as axes. The dead were buried in long barrows, and ditches were constructed on the hill tops for defence and settlements. Whether these people reached Cheshire is not definitely known, so far little evidence of their presence has been found, but during the succeeding Bronze Age, which commenced about 1800 B.C., man had definitely arrived on the plains of Cheshire. The round barrows in which they buried their dead are situated in the Delamere district and in east Cheshire. One of them was partly excavated early this year at Kelsall, resulting in the recovery of a cinerary urn (p. 27).

\*"Prehistoric Cheshire" by W. J. Varley & J. W. Jackson.



A number of polished stone axes have been found in Cheshire. It is possible that they belong not to the Neolithic but to the early Bronze Age. Bronze implements were scarce at first and polished stone axes would remain in use at least until such scarcity no longer existed. Two factories where stone axes were made are known; one at Penmaenmawr in Wales, and the other at Langdale in Cumberland. The axes were roughly chipped to shape from suitable stones in the locality and as no polished ones have been found there, it is naturally suggested that they were traded in the rough state and polished elsewhere. In "Prehistoric Cheshire" a list of 28 flint and stone axes found in Cheshire is given, two of them from the Penmaenmawr factory. There is also a list of 32 perforated stone implements and 14 bronze implements also from Cheshire. No doubt there are others in private possession so far unrecorded.

On the plains the best places to search for stone implements are fields which have been ploughed or are lying fallow, the best time being the autumn or winter months especially after a spell of rain. Naturally one should ask for permission from the landowner before walking over his fields and care should be taken that gates are not left open, crops damaged or hedges broken through. Mole heaps and rabbit warrens are worth while inspecting. A barbed and stemmed arrowhead was recently found on a mole heap at Thursaston, Wirral, and a fine flint blade on a rabbit warren at Beeston; both are now in the Grosvenor Museum. Look where ditches have been deepened and other field drainage work done, or where the soil has been recently turned up and is lying bare of vegetation; along the banks of streams, bare sandy patches with good drainage and the foreshore of beaches. A number of barbed and stemmed flint arrow-heads have been found in the past on the foreshore at Meols, Wirral. Over 200 flint cores, flakes, scrapers and a few arrow tips, a broken polished stone axe and a stone spindle whorl have been found in the ploughed fields at Ashton. No doubt other areas would yield their quota if field workers were forthcoming.

How can one tell whether a piece of stone or flint has been fashioned for use by man? Stone axes are easily determined but sometimes it is difficult to be sure whether a piece of flint has been chipped by man, as natural agencies can produce something which is not unlike human workmanship. The effect of a sharp blow or blows by a hammer on the flat surface of a piece of flint is to strike off a flake having what is termed a bulb of percussion at the butt end, leaving a bulbar cavity on the parent flint. Simple flakes show this bulb, whilst implements such as arrowtips and daggers have been subjected to secondary trimming which works out the original bulb. Many scrapers show this bulb on the flat face, having been made from the butt end of a flake. Sometimes there are secondary trimmings on the upper face and along the

edge of the flake, or they may show signs of usage along the edge. Fuller information on the subject is given in "Flint Implements" by William Watson and "Man the Toolmaker" by Kenneth P. Oakley, both books published by the Trustees of the British Museum. A good book on field work is one by R. J. C. Atkinson, entitled "Field Archaeology," published by Methuen & Co.

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## EARLY POTTERY

An attempt to describe all the types of objects likely to be found on Roman or Mediaeval sites would go far beyond the limits of a single article. Selection must therefore be made and only the more common remains considered. Metal objects usually show a considerable degree of corrosion; iron work for example, appears as an indefinable mass at first sight and bronzes have a fine green patination. The most common of all classes of objects, and the one which centuries of burial changes least is pottery. The archaeologist depends more and more on the sherds of broken crockery discarded from the kitchens.

In those distant days there was no elaborate system of refuse collection and disposal and the normal practice was for waste materials to be buried or just left lying around. As a good supply of well-made pottery was available throughout Roman times, occupation sites of this period produce quantities of pottery from all levels. The variety of shapes, fabrics and decoration is enormous and the subject very complex. For descriptions of Roman pottery one must read the excavation accounts or better still go to Museums housing a good collection and persuade the Curator to allow you to handle specimens. Roman pottery can readily be distinguished from that of prehistoric times. The paste is much harder, the vessels better finished, and made on a wheel, an operation which causes the appearance of fine rings on the inner surface of the vessel, whereas most prehistoric pottery has a very coarse, gritty texture, sometimes soft when wet and crumbly when dry, due to imperfect firing. The Romans did not normally glaze their pottery, although the well-known red Samian ware has this appearance. A characteristic which distinguishes all Roman pottery from that of more modern centuries is that it is earthenware; i.e. it is made in a low-temperature kiln and once handled can be readily distinguished from stoneware and modern china. The beginner must, however, be warned at this stage that ceramic terms used by archaeologists differ from those of the modern pottery industry in which earthenware consists of a class of low grade hard-paste porcelain. Apart from Samian ware, Roman pottery is usually buff, cream, grey or black in colour, but some vessels have black, red or chocolate-colour coatings.



POPLAR COTTAGE, WEAVERHAM.  
Photo by Miss Beatrice Tunstall.  
Reproduced by courtesy of "Cheshire Life."



TYPICAL 18TH CENTURY GRITSTONE HOUSE OF THE EASTERN HILL-REGION.  
Photo by Dr. Singleton.



Group of Mediaeval Pottery in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.



Group of Roman Pottery in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.  
Photographs, Grosvenor Museum.



Part of the Saxon Silver Bullion found on Castle Esplanade, Chester, December, 1950.



Middle Bronze Age Cinerary Urn found at Kelsall, January, 1951. Photographs, Grosvenor Museum.



THE LADY LEVER ART GALLERY.

REPRODUCED THROUGH THE COURTESY OF MR. S. L. DAVISON, THE CURATOR.

At the close of the Roman occupation, the technique of making pottery on a wheel was lost, and the vessels of the Dark Ages are not readily distinguishable from those of pre-Roman periods. Their use was restricted almost entirely to cremation burial, a practice presumably surviving from earlier times, but which had ceased by the time Cheshire was colonised by the Mercians. The first vessel of this period to be found in Cheshire is the pot containing the hoard of silver pennies and bullion recently discovered in Chester. It is of thin, but well-made fabric, closely resembling mediaeval wares. Pottery continued to be scarce in the Middle Ages and the only kind of vessels found were for cooking or storage of liquids. These vessels are usually large and partially covered in a thin green or yellow glaze. Decoration took the form of stamped designs or applied reliefs and a fairly constant feature is the sagging base with thumb pressed notches round the edge to prevent the vessel from rolling over. The tendency towards the close of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Tudor period was for the vessels to be better made and more like metal ware in shape and the glaze to become thicker and of a darker green. At the beginning of the 16th century a dark brown glaze was introduced and used on a type of vessel resembling a conical glass, this kind of drinking cup, known as the *tyg*, continued to be made to the end of the 17th century, having in some cases several tiny handles and yellow slip decoration. Earthenware continued to be made and Staffordshire became a centre for the production of slipwares with a great variety of vigorous decoration. Rural potters still produce pottery with the same dark chocolate glaze on a brick red body in the form of bread panshions and having continued so long unchanged these vessels are difficult to date.

The mercantile revolution following the Reformation saw the introduction of new techniques, the Italians had invented the tin-enamel process whereby there was a thick white layer over the earthenware paste and on it were painted designs in many colours. This ware is known as *majolica* or *faience*. From our point of view the most important centre of production was the Dutch town of Delft, where great quantities of blue and white ware were manufactured and exported to Britain. In the 17th century English potters started factories at Lambeth for the manufacture of similar ware. At first producing small drug pots, but very soon plates, bowls, and other kinds of vessels with coloured decoration were being made at Bristol and Liverpool; but about 1780, Wedgwood, with his improved mass-production methods, put them out of business. At first sight *delftware* looks like modern china, but if a broken edge is examined it will be found to have an earthenware base below the enamelled surface.

Another technique which came in about the same time was saltglazed stoneware, originating in Germany. Vessels made in this way have a hard stone-like quality and the glaze, which was made by throwing salt in the kiln during firing, is usually a mottled brown which gave it the name of "tiger-ware." Examples of this ware are the famous Bellamines with a face mask. At the beginning of the 18th century white stonewares were made and Wedgwood produced fine cream dinner services, but it was said to have been unpopular as it wore out the aristocratic silver spoons.

During the 17th and 18th centuries many attempts were made in Europe to learn the secret of the manufacture of porcelain, specimens of which were coming into Europe from China. At first, the European potters imagined that the secret lay in the firing rather than in the material used, but it was not until 1708 that a German eventually made a soft-paste porcelain from a mixture of materials, giving a beautiful glossy finish. This is not the place to enter into a detailed account of the development of this industry and the eventual discovery that true porcelain is made from kaolin, a special white clay formed from disintegrated granite, but it is sufficient to say that china, as we know it today, is of comparatively modern invention and the field worker would do well to ignore examples of it and concentrate on earthenware and stoneware.

It should be the first aim of all field workers to be able to recognise the main types of pottery, as only by doing so is one able to date an occupation site. With this knowledge and with that of recognising worked flints, a great deal of useful field work can be done by merely traversing the ground. It is very important that an accurate record of discoveries should be made and pottery, after washing, carefully marked in Indian ink with some indication of the site on which it was found, for as the old Chinese proverb says, "the strongest memory is weaker than the palest ink."

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## THE CLAY PIPE INDUSTRY IN CHESHIRE

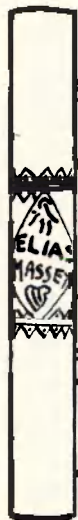
BY

A. WARHURST, B.A.

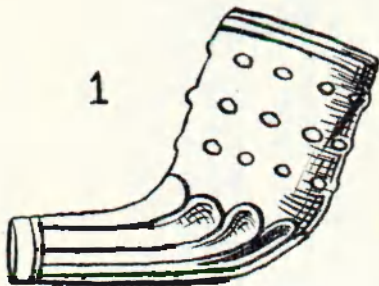
The scope offered to the archaeologist in the field is not necessarily restricted to prehistoric, Roman, or mediaeval antiquities. Whilst it is true that the recovery of the history of later times is greatly facilitated by the availability of written records, archaeology still has its part to play. Finds in the field can often supplement our literary evidence, confirm, or even disprove it.

A particular example of the way in which the archaeologist and the archivist can work closely together is furnished by the

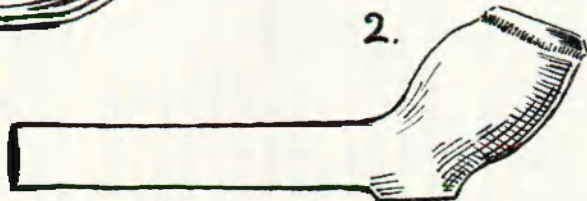




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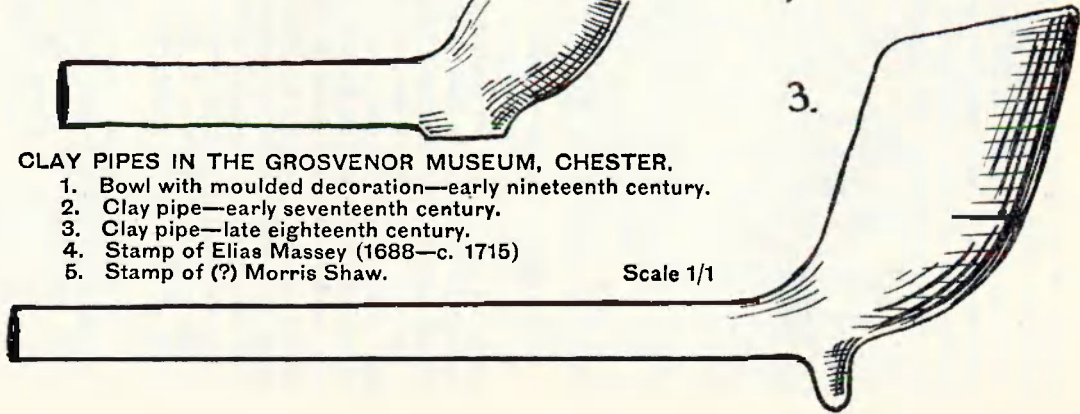
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CLAY PIPES IN THE GROSVENOR MUSEUM, CHESTER.

1. Bowl with moulded decoration—early nineteenth century.
2. Clay pipe—early seventeenth century.
3. Clay pipe—late eighteenth century.
4. Stamp of Elias Massey (1688—c. 1715)
5. Stamp of (?) Morris Shaw.

Scale 1/1



recovery of the history of the clay pipe industry in Chester. The Grosvenor Museum has in its possession one of the finest collections of clay pipes in the country, and from a study of this material it has been possible to trace important steps in the development of their manufacture. We learn from literary sources that tobacco smoking was introduced into this country in the second half of the sixteenth century, and from shortly after this time to the end of the last century the clay pipe was the most popular of all types because of its cheapness, efficiency and appearance. The probable scarcity and expense of tobacco in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is reflected in the small bowls of the pipes of that time (fig. 2). As tobacco became cheaper and more plentiful, pipe bowls became larger and the heel at the base of the bowl tended to be replaced by a spur (fig. 3), still sufficient however, to prevent a hot bowl from marking a surface upon which it may have been rested. Decoration at first was nothing more than a single milled line around the bowl (fig. 2), but in the nineteenth century pipe bowls were decorated in low relief (fig. 1).

Chester was the centre of a flourishing pipe-making industry from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and manufacturers would often stamp their initials and names on the heel of the bowl, on the bowl itself, or on the stem (fig. 4 & 5). The earliest Chester manufacturer known is Edward Evans, described in records as a fisherman and pipe-maker of Chester in 1646, and one of his stamped pipes is now on exhibition in the Grosvenor Museum. The Chester pipe-makers never seem to have been under the control of the London Pipe Makers' Guild, but carried on their business by virtue of being Freemen of the City. Many pipe stems have the impress of the City Arms upon them. Over one hundred names of Chester makers are recorded on the Freeman's Roll and in local directories, and the finding of many of the products of these known pipe-makers has facilitated the study of the stylistic development of the clay pipe.

Fragments of these clay pipes are common finds whenever digging takes place, both in Chester and in the County. Although much has been done towards the recovery of the history of this important Chester industry, only you can help us to learn more, by bringing into the Grosvenor Museum all fragments of stamped or decorated clay pipes found.

# Excavations

CHESTER, 1950

**O**WING to a shortage of labour in the Chester area, the excavations for 1950 were forced to a premature conclusion and only lasted a fortnight. One trench only, 60 feet long, a continuation of last year's, was completed.

The original purpose of the excavation was to explore the barrack-blocks lying east of Trinity Street and the area to the north, also to discover the east-west road which runs along the north end of the *principia* and investigate the building fronting the north side of this road. However, it was only possible to trench the barrack-block which faced that discovered in 1949.

The curtailment of the season's work was all the more unfortunate as mediaeval and later interference in the single trench was found to be heavy and in its whole length only a three-foot length of Roman flooring remained undisturbed. By chance, however, a series of four walls remained and this offered an opportunity of plotting the barrack-block, but attempts at a chronological assessment of the periods of occupation and construction were made difficult by the absence of stratified deposits in association with the walls. Efforts were directed at salvaging scraps of evidence in the few inches left here and there below the later pits. Very little pottery and only a few small objects were recovered but from them it is clear that there are strong possibilities of third century occupation in this part of the fortress.

Trace of the timber period (A.D. 78—c. 103) in the shape of sleeper beam slots and a roadway were found, demonstrating the fact that the buildings of this period are not coincident with those of the later stone periods and it is probable they were not barrack-blocks, but too little survives to establish their foundation.

The excavations were under the auspices of the Chester Archaeological Society and directed by Mr. Graham Webster.

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## EXCAVATION AT THE SOUTH-EAST ANGLE TOWER

In 1949, excavations in Trinity Street revealed the existence of an Agricolan turf rampart along the line of later defences. The purpose of the above excavations is to investigate the same features of the Roman defences at another point. At the time of going to press the excavations are still in progress, and so far it

has been proved that the Agricolan turf rampart is in position at the South-east corner, and therefore the defences of this phase of the legionary fortress appear to coincide with those of a later date. It is hoped to determine the relationship between the stone fortress and the turf rampart. Mr. Graham Webster is undertaking the excavations.

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### BRONZE AGE BURIAL, KELSALL

About fourteen years ago during ploughing operations at Messrs. Morrey & Son's Nursery Gardens, Kelsall, a large flat stone was struck, which when removed revealed a thick deposit of "soot." This incident was recently reported by Mr. S. B. Flood to the Editor, and in January, 1951, excavations were commenced to investigate the matter. Permission to do so was kindly given by Messrs. Morrey & Son.

Several cart loads of stone and about two barrow loads of "soot" had been removed at the time of the incident, but despite this disturbance, sufficient evidence was left to mark the outline of a stone circle 7 ft. in diameter, in which was an area of concentrated charcoal and on the southern edge, a small deposit of calcined bones.

Four feet to the east of the stone circle were more stones of varying sizes closely packed together and showing signs of sinkage towards their centre. Underneath these stones was a small circular pit at the bottom of which was a Middle Bronze Age cinerary urn (p. 27), inverted with its mouth fifteen inches below the underside of the stone covering. A small fragment of bronze was also found in the pit. The urn contained calcined bones which are to be submitted for expert opinion; on the top of the bones was a tusk of a large wild boar.

Five feet south-east of the urn pit was another similar pit which did not contain any visible sign of burial. A larger pit was found eleven feet south of the stone circle. It measured roughly eight feet in diameter at the top and one foot at the bottom. Large stones had been placed in the pit, built up into a kind of rough walling two feet thick, commencing at the bottom and following up the slope of the pit to the top of its eastern edge. Again there was no trace of a burial.

Excavations could not be done in the eastern half of the site as it was under cultivation, but Mr. Ellis Morrey said this could be done when the ground was clear, probably in twelve months' time.

Thanks are due to Messrs. Morrey & Son, for their whole-hearted co-operation, and to all those who gave of their labour or expert assistance.

# Coloured Glass Windows

BY

MAURICE H. RIDGWAY, B.A.

WHEN the precarious nature of the times endangers our national treasures, interest in them frequently increases. This has been particularly noticeable in connection with what is popularly, though not wholly correctly, termed "stained glass;" of all treasures perhaps the most friable. For this reason it has perhaps suffered greatest, and yet it is surprising how much has survived the vicissitudes of seven hundred years. War, iconoclasts, changing taste, indifference and the weather have all taken their toll; and lost glories have not always been restored when windows have been replaced by well-intentioned benefactors. The present very marked interest in coloured glass has been shown and fostered in recent years by the appearance of Dr. Christopher Woodforde's studies in Somerset and Norwich glass, and also by the works, large in size and cost, by Rushforth and Rackham on the Malvern Priory and Canterbury glass respectively. They are delightful books and illustrate admirably how a study of coloured window glass will introduce one to innumerable kindred subjects of equal fascination, for quite apart from the research into the makers and the making of the windows themselves, into it are blended heraldry and hagiology.

Cheshire is not a particularly good county in which to begin a study of coloured glass from existing examples, for it has suffered more than most from wanton destruction and from ill advised erection in more recent years. This does not mean to say however that there are not many specimens of interesting coloured windows hiding in the most unexpected corners of the county, all well worth searching for and examining in detail. If possible, the beginner is well advised first to visit those places which are renowned for their glass. Book learning on the subject cannot supply the thrill experienced when the original is seen in its original setting.

England and France are richest in this peculiarly and distinctively Christian art and of these England is the better blessed, for there is scarcely an early parish church which does not contain at least fragments of early glass which reveal points of considerable interest.

No glass earlier than the 12th century has survived in England, but Canterbury Cathedral is particularly rich in glass of the 12th and 13th centuries. Chartres, Bourges and Le Mans, the

pride of early French glass, have nothing better to show. The Five Sisters Window in the north transept of York Minster presents one with an almost perfect specimen of 13th century grisaille glass. It illustrates the passing desire, some say under the influence of the Cistercians in the north of England, to depart from the rather dark multi-peopled medallions and panels of the preceding period, and to allow more light to stream into the churches through the long lancets provided by Early English architecture. By the end of the 13th century and during the first years of the 14th, considerable changes again took place in the history of glass making and design and also in the development of the architecture which furnished the frames into which the glass was housed. It was an age of healthy experiment and adventure and as such never lacks interest. For glass of this period there are numerous good examples in the country, Merton College, Oxford, and the Latin Chapel of Christchurch, Oxford, Wells, Gloucester and Exeter Cathedrals possess outstanding examples and many parish churches also retain good examples including Eaton Bishop, Herefordshire, S. Denys York, Morpeth in Northumberland, and Tewkesbury.

The latter half of the 14th century witnessed another major change in glass colouring with the advent and growing popularity of a yellow stain which could be painted on to glass, producing for the first time (with the exception of sepia) a colour to share with another the same piece of glass. This had revolutionary consequences, although it was only one of the contributory factors in the change which took place in 14th century work. The Black Death coming in the middle of the century, and the development of what is known as the 'Perpendicular' style of architecture also contributed to the change; the former, with a gigantic social upheaval which produced eventually new wealthy classes who became ready patrons, and the latter, great window spaces shouting to be filled with glass. Here was a conjunction of circumstances, the one assisting the other and producing a most favourable atmosphere for the growth of keen and able glass painters. Their schools were to survive (as at York) for almost two hundred years and to enrich almost every church in the land with their work. The York churches, especially All Saints, still retain in an unparalleled way the rich output of the York glaziers. More fine displays of glass from other centres may be seen at Great Malvern Priory in Worcestershire, Greystoke in Cumberland, Ludlow in Shropshire, All Souls, Oxford, and Gresford in North Wales; whilst Long Melford, East Harling, St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, and many other Norfolk and Suffolk Churches still display the work of a Norwich school of glass painting. Glass at Cirencester and the Beauchamp Chapel, Warwick, is also famous, and many of the Somerset churches, for example at Orchardleigh and East Brent, serve to illustrate another group in the west country.

All these help to show how late 14th century tendencies reached their logical conclusion during the 15th century. They illustrate also the peculiarities of different schools, and many of them the touch of the master hand in portraiture and setting. Their influence was felt in many parts of England and their products sometimes travelled considerable distances to supply their customers. This accounts for typical York glass being found so far away as the isolated mountain church of Llanrhychwyn in Caernarvonshire.

Cheshire is conveniently situated to enable the Cheshire historian to study the fine glass which remains in North Wales. Much of it belongs to the early years of the 16th century. The east windows of Disserth, not far from Prestatyn, and Llanrhiadr near Ruthin both illustrate different conceptions of the same subject . . . the stem of Jesse. It is an ideal subject for a large east window and has been so used in most centuries. Llanrhiadr is the more complete and represents Jesse the father of David lying at the bottom of the central lights whilst there rises from him in the form of a family tree, the royal ancestors of Christ, with the Virgin Mary, dominating the top of the central light. Apostles, Evangelists and Prophets are usually in attendance. At Disserth (where the apostle group is complete, each one holding an appropriate article of the Creed written on a scroll) the figure of Jesse has been destroyed. The glass in both places illustrates that on the eve of the Reformation new influences were again shaping the treatment of glass design in England. The origin of the glass is still a mystery but the inspiration behind the Llanrhiadr glass at least is from the Rhineland of Europe and probably reached this country through the German woodblocks. Other places in England also have glass which illustrates the influence of foreign glass painters on English work. King's College, Cambridge, and Fairford in Gloucestershire are other examples, both of which seem to show the stamp of the King's Glaziers who were at that time foreigners, probably Flemings.

The unsettled times of reform curbed but no means halted the glass painting industry in England. There was always a ready market for the display of ever popular heraldry both in churches and private houses. It was not the Reformation as much as the introduction of a new and easier method of presenting coloured pictures in windows which did so much to change the face of the art in England and on the Continent. The use of pot metals (glass which receives its colour whilst molten in the crucible) and flashed glass, when separate colours had to be grouped and leaded together to form a picture with only the additional use of line drawing in sepia and enrichment with yellow stain, had called forth the utmost skill in the glazier. It necessitated the

blending of several media, glass, lead, iron, stone, with due consideration for the effects of light. This was now partly discarded. By the discovery and use of coloured enamels the glass painter often became an artist using large panes of clear glass in place of a canvas and so broke with the skilful tradition of previous years. Much glass of this type and period was brought to this country in roundels and panels from the Rhineland and Switzerland by English tourists in the 18th and 19th centuries. Religious houses were passing through hard times and were willing to part with their glass for ready money. Many very large windows came to this country in the same way. St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, and the chancel of Lichfield cathedral both have glass of this description. They are fairly easily recognised when once their character has been pointed out. Cheshire is particularly fortunate in possessing at Birtles, one of the finest collections in the country of this late 16th and 17th century glass, mainly Swiss.

Heraldry, which by its nature avoided the doctrinal controversies of the changing scenes of the Elizabethan age and the 17th century was free to develop and did so, the enamels helping considerably in catering for a more complicated blazon. Though often well drawn, the windows were not too satisfactory because the enamels tended to flake off, many colours looked washed out, and 'gules' (red) an essential colour in heraldry, could not be satisfactorily represented. Yarnton in Oxfordshire offers good work of the early 17th century. Coloured windows were frowned upon by Puritan England which not only discouraged their making but often wantonly destroyed what had survived from earlier and more enlightened centuries.

With the restoration once more of the Anglican Church, came better days, in which glass painting could be fostered and appreciated. The Laudian revival of the early part of the 17th century had during its short life patronised the Dutch enamel men, who with their brilliant colours usually painted animated scriptural scenes on rectangular panes. Oxford is rich in their work. Wadham, Lincoln and Christchurch Colleges have complete windows. English work of this short period follows the Dutch lead but few examples of their work survive, indeed few were executed.

When the civil war and the Protectorate were over, the Dutchmen had left England and for another two hundred years the English craftsmen and painters tried to rebuild the art which for so long had been shamefully treated. Enamel work remained. English glass painters again become popular and Henry Gyles of York was a pioneer in this revival at the end of the 17th century. Interest was lacking at first but increased as the 18th century advanced and produced such men as Joshua Rice (who executed the windows at Whitley Court, c. 1720), William Peckitt



of York (N. Windows at New College, Oxford), and John Rowell (The Chapel of the Vyne, Hampshire, 1770). Both English and foreign artists provided them with the original designs. For example, a Dr. Wall provided Wm. Peckitt with the original for an Oriel College, Oxford, window of the Presentation; Ricci, an Italian, the originals for Joshua Price's work and now at Witley, and Sir Joshua Reynolds a series of full size oil paintings on canvas to be copied on squares of clear glass by Jervais between 1777 and 1782 for the large west window in the ante chapel of New College, Oxford. Some years earlier, William Peckitt also had worked there from designs by Rebecca.

Francis Eginton of Birmingham, though trained under Boulton in Soho as an enameller, began working on glass about 1780, producing what were really transparencies on glass, and became a popular 'glass painter' by the end of the century. Nelson and Lady Hamilton visited his Birmingham studio in 1805 and his son, Raphael Eginton became 'Glass stainer to Princess Charlotte' in 1816. The work of Francis Eginton however, is the better remembered and of this the window of St. Pauls, Birmingham has been regarded as his best work (done in 1791). New changes again took place as the 19th century advanced. Evans of Shrewsbury produced some interesting original work and also supplied a number of reproductions of earlier glass which was being replaced (Winchester College Jesse window and the East window at Ludlow). Unfortunately, the older glass which it replaced was often allowed to be discarded or scattered. It was illustrative of the general attitude towards early glass which had existed throughout the 18th century, when the destruction of most of it took place.

In the next century the researches and labours of Charles Winston and others to drive everything within prearranged moulds resulted in the production of 'period' glass from the works of Warrington, Wailes, Willemont, O'Connor and Messrs. Heaton, Butler and Bayne. It is to some of these persons and others like them that we owe much of the unsuitable, crude and gaudy outpourings commonly associated with Victorian glass. Usually their earliest work is the best. Even these men differed considerably in their capabilities. But when it is realised that Wailes was really a grocer in Newcastle and later employed between 80 and 100 artists in his works to execute the numerous orders he received for windows, one can appreciate how and why the individual touch, had it been worth preserving, had got smothered beneath those of his apprentices.

The 19th century owes a great deal to the Pre-Raphaelites who helped to rescue much of English art from the abyss into

which it had fallen. The Burne Jones and William Morris studios are outstanding at this period.

The latter half of the 19th century also heralded the first of the 'Bells,' Alfred, whose work was linked with Gilbert Scott and later with Clayton with whom he was founder partner of the firm of Clayton and Bell in 1855. Most people are familiar with the name of Kempe. His pupil, H. W. Bryans, was the son of a Cheshire Vicar.

The present century has produced outstanding examples of both good and bad glass painters. The bad should be discouraged and the good supported, for the latter have proved by their work that if given the chance they can match in quality, originality and loveliness, the best that has gone before.

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This is the setting into which we must fit the scattered Cheshire remains of early glass and with which we must compare the work of more recent years, and to this end it is best to tabulate certain Cheshire or border examples which the Cheshire historian may wish to locate and examine.

Cheshire has no glass earlier than the 14th century. Of the 14th century the south window of the Boydell Chapel at Grappenhall has an interesting array of glass which however, fails, because of its unfortunate history, to give any idea of the original grouping. There is the recently discovered Annunciation group in the tracery lights of the north aisle east window at Shotwick. Part of the south chancel window at Tattenhall, and fragments at Nantwich (South Chancel) and Marton (West window) also belong to this period.

The best 15th and early 16th century glass in Cheshire is to be found in the west windows of the north and south aisles at Astbury. The fragments in the north came from the clerestory and the early glass in the south is found amongst the tracery lights, some of which are modern, as are the main lights. There is an interesting half figure in the organ screen door at Grappenhall, often overlooked, executed in sepia and yellow stain, and a collection of fragments showing donors, saints, heraldry, and part of an Assumption at Higher Peover. The tracery lights of the west window, south side of the Troutbeck Chapel, St. Mary's, Chester, have four small but complete Saints including deacons. Bramhall Hall Chapel has a three panel representation of the Crucifixion of early 16th century date (on loan but originally from Bramhall). Another earlier Crucifix of the 14th century from here is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Ashton under Lyme (Lancs.) has good glass of this period so also have several churches in North Wales, notably, Disserth, Llanrhiadr near Ruthin, Gresford, Nerquis, Hope, Cilcain, Llanasa and Llandyrnog.

The best of Elizabethan glass has been removed from Cheshire to Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwick. It was a curious array of the Saxon and Norman Earls of Chester from Brereton Hall. A few coats of arms of 1577 date remain at Brereton Hall, and there is a damaged coat of arms and inscription of 1601 at Prestbury.

The 17th century is well represented in a small window at Farndon, executed after the Restoration in enamels from drawings done by Abram Bosse about 1635 and is a kind of War memorial window to the Royalist, Sir Francis Gamul and his Cheshire companions.

Heraldic glass of this century is to be found in the north chancel window at Broughton in Staffordshire where other early 16th century glass representing kneeling donors, removed from Wybunbury in Cheshire, is housed, with other glass in a south chancel window. The best and almost only surviving specimen of 18th century glazing is at St. Peter's, Congleton, in the top of the east window, but a complete window by Eginton remains at Llandegla across the border in North Wales (removed from St. Asaph Cathedral) and at St. Alkmunds, Shrewsbury, is another interesting window dated 1795 by Eginton, based on Guido Reni's Assumption.

David Evans is represented at Davenham, near Northwich, with four figures of Evangelists removed from the east window and now placed in the west windows of the aisles.

Of later 19th century glass, Heaton, Butler and Bayne are represented at St. Peters, Chester, and in the south aisle of Chester Cathedral, Wailes in the east window of the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral and south Transept of Nantwich, and the work of Warrington in the two obituary windows to Cholmondeley and Egerton at Malpas about 1846.

There are Burne Jones windows at Parkgate, Boughton and Macclesfield. Kempe is well illustrated at Eastham in Wirral and at Bunbury, (south chancel) whilst the best Bryans window is in the north aisle of Tarvin. The window is a memorial to his parents, his father having been the Vicar of Tarvin for many years.

Cheshire is not without glass painters at the present day. Several are at work and the results of their labours are to be seen in quite a number of churches in the county. The Cheshire historian must judge for himself whether or not he likes them.

#### A SHORT GLOSSARY.

**ABRASION.** The process whereby the red film on flashed glass is ground away to reveal the clear glass (see **FLASHED**).

**CAWMES.** Sometimes Calmes. Grooved lead strips having an H. cross section, with which glass is pieced together to form a leaded window.

**CRUCIBLE.** The pot of hard earthenware in which molten glass was prepared and melted.

**DIAPER.** Ornamentation applied as an all over pattern on a surface.

**FLASHED GLASS.** Clear glass having a thin coating of red glass on one side to ensure transparency.

**GROZING.** The process whereby the edge of a piece of glass is nibbled into a required shape by means of a grozing iron.

**GROZING IRON.** A piece of metal having a small notch with which glass is shaped, by a process called 'grozing.'

**LIGHT.** A single aperture of a window.

**MATT.** A thin wash laid upon glass by means of a brush.

**POT METAL.** Glass which has received its colour in the pot or crucible, and is therefore coloured throughout. The term is used to distinguish it from flashed glass (qv).

**QUARRY.** A lozenge shaped piece of glass.

**SADDLE BARS.** Sometimes called sondlets. The internal horizontal iron bars of a window. Vertical bars are called standards or stanchions. Both gave strength to the window to resist wind pressure.

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Books suggested for further reading.

"ENGLISH MEDIAEVAL PAINTED GLASS." Le Couteur. S.P.C.K.

"STAINED GLASS IN SOMERSET." Christopher Woodforde. Oxford.

"THE NORWICH SCHOOL OF GLASS PAINTING IN THE 15TH CENTURY." Christopher Woodforde. Oxford.

"A GUIDE TO THE COLLECTIONS OF STAINED GLASS." Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Bernard Rackham.

"THE ANCIENT GLASS OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL." Bernard Rackham.

"ANCIENT PAINTED GLASS IN ENGLAND." Nelson.

"MEDIAEVAL CHRISTIAN IMAGERY." G. McN. Rushforth. Oxford.

"THE PAINTED GLASS OF YORK." F. Harrison. S.P.C.K.

"CHESHIRE GLASS: AND INTRODUCTION." Chester Arch. Society., Jnl. vol. xxxvii, pt. i. Maurice H. Ridgway.

"COLOURED WINDOW GLASS IN CHESHIRE. 14TH CENTURY." Lancs. and Cheshire Antiq. Soc. Jnl. vol. lix. Maurice H. Ridgway.

"COLOURED WINDOW GLASS IN CHESHIRE. 1400-1550. Lancs. and Cheshire Antiq. Soc. Jnl. vol. lx. Maurice H. Ridgway.

# The Civic Regalia of the City of Chester

BY

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CHESTER is the proud possessor of some very fine symbols of its authority. These have existed from very early times, as it was customary to have some outward sign of one's authority.

Legend has it that a sword was granted to the City as a symbol of justice by Richard II when he visited Chester in 1394, but though there is mention of a swordbearer in the 15th century, the first written evidence of the City's right to bear a sword is in the charter of incorporation granted to the City in 1506 by Henry VII. In it, the City is permitted to carry the sword upright on all occasions except when the King is present. This privilege was challenged by the Canons of the Cathedral in 1606, but as a result of the Judge's decision, made after the incident, what had formerly been largely a custom, now became a definite right. It was a very great honour to be granted a sword as it was a sign of considerable independence in the administration of justice. Chester's sword has never been a fighting sword, as it is too long to be a one-handed sword and not long enough to be a two-handed one. The date of its manufacture is full of uncertainties. It is thought that parts of the sword itself may date from the 15th century, but the style of decoration on the blade, which incorporates four shields, suggests that the blade at least may date from the 17th century. The scabbard of cedar wood covered with silk plush is also 17th century in date and has on it several gold plaques and bands commemorating some of the notable occasions when it was used, including one to its use as the state sword at the investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarvon in 1911.

The early history of mace-bearing in Chester is equally wrapped in mystery as it is known that the present mace belonging to the City is not the first that it possessed. The earliest evidence of the existence of a mace is to be found indirectly in the fact that in Henry VIII's reign there were Sergeants-at-Mace. There were four of these officers who were responsible for delivering summonses and making arrests, but in addition, there

was another officer called simply the Macebearer. He also acted, at least from Elizabethan times, as Sergeant of the Peace. The mace itself is one of the earliest of the style to be elaborately ornamented. It is silver gilt about 4 ft. 3 ins. long and round the base of the mace-head is an inscription which gives its origin in these words, "A guift to the Cittye of Chester by Charles, Earle of Derbye, Lord of Man and the Isles, Maior, 1668." The bowl is ornamented with cherubs interspersed between the emblems of the Stuart Kings, the Tudor rose, thistle, harp and fleur-de-lys, and is surmounted by a royal crown. The shaft, on the other hand, is decorated with spirals of roses and thistles and is divided into three by massive knobs, one of which bears the arms of the Lords of Man and the Stanleys and another, that of the City. Its condition at the present day is excellent, and there is evidence that it has only been re-gilt twice since it was first made; once in 1711 and again in 1772, when the repair work cost £24 13s. 6d. Today the sword and mace are always present at Council Meetings, when the Judges come to hold the Assizes, and on all official occasions. Since 1835 the offices of Swordbearer and Macebearer had been allowed to lapse. The then holders of the offices were permitted to continue to carry out their duties until their death, but afterwards it was arranged that two policemen, who dress in 18th century uniform, should carry the sword and mace at all functions.

The third emblem of privilege which the City possesses is a silver oar about 14 inches long. This is the emblem of the Mayor as Admiral of the Dee and was carried by the Water Bailiff in the execution of his duties. The origin of this post of Admiral, which was largely judicial and rarely seafaring, lies in the grant made by the Black Prince in 1354 which gave the City complete authority over the estuary of the River Dee from Chester to Hoylake to make arrests, regulate the shipping and collect customs. The oar itself dates from 1719 and bears on one side of the flat part of the oar the arms of the City and on the other, the arms of Whitmore of Thurstaston impaled with those of Haselwell of Heswall. The only occasion when it is now used is at the time of the Chester Regatta, when the Mayor is rowed up the Dee by the Sea Cadets.

Apart from these, the City possesses several emblems of office, all of which are less than a hundred years old. The Mayor's and Sheriff's chains are very simple in design, consisting of a gold medallion bearing the City crest with a chain of gold links for the Mayor and silver links for the Sheriff. These are worn at all daytime functions, but for evening occasions pendant jewels are worn. The Mayor's consists of a gold medallion surrounded by 51 diamonds with the City coat of arms in true colours in the centre, while that of the Mayoress is a delicate ornament of sapphires and diamonds surmounted with a fleur-

de-lys, also with the City coat of arms in the centre. The Sheriff and his Lady have jewels as well, but they are much less ornate, being of gold with a coat of arms in enamel on them. Though these badges are not old, the Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffs did not in the past carry out their duties without wearing something to distinguish their rank. This distinguishing mark lay in the gowns and tippetts\* which they wore. These varied in colour and style, but it does not seem that they were always particular to wear them as there were comparatively frequent orders requesting these dignitaries to remember to wear their robes. How different is the position today.

\*Tippetts were worn down the back and were modelled after the merchant's hat of the 15th century in the same way that a modern university hood is modelled on a monk's hood.

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## ROMAN WEIGHT FOUND AT KELSALL

In 1950 a farmer near Kelsall, digging in his garden found a Roman weight on which the figures VIII were impressed. He gave it to Mr. T. H. Clark, in Watergate Street, Chester, and asked him to hand it in to the Grosvenor Museum.

Since then the Curator has unsuccessfully tried to find where this weight was discovered and to thank the farmer for his gift.

The weight, which is shaped like a small flat cheese, weighs  $3,302\frac{1}{2}$  grains; only 64.2 grains less than the VIII *unciae* the weight claims to be.

Help from anyone living in the Kelsall district who knows anything about this weight would be much appreciated by the Curator as this discovery may possibly indicate the presence of a Roman site hitherto unsuspected.

# Notes and Queries

## QUERY No. 1.

I am particularly interested in locating the present whereabouts of certain lozenges of 17th century glass (mentioned in the Historic Soc. L. & C., 1851, p. 109) as being then in Tranmere Hall. They were later removed to the District Council Offices of Bebington and are indeed listed in their collection. (Cheshire Sheaf, vol. xxxi, 1936, no. 6936). These panels have now apparently disappeared and may be in private possession. They depicted soldiers in 17th century uniform illustrating the commands at drill and are of considerable interest.

Much early glass passes into private hands and is often not valued. I am engaged upon making a catalogue of all the coloured glass in Cheshire and from Cheshire (extant and destroyed) and should be most grateful if any of your readers could inform me of the nature of the glass which is in private possession, so that the list may be as complete as possible.

MAURICE H. RIDGWAY,  
Bunbury Vicarage,  
Cheshire.

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## QUERY No. 2.

I have in my possession an early coloured print published by S. Gans of 15, Southampton Street, Strand, on February 16th, 1830, called 'Partial Distress.' It shows presumably the Duke of Wellington riding a mule and calling to a 'team' of labourers who are harnessed to a wagon holding what appears to be potatoes. On the Wagon is written, 'Manchester Wagon,, Cheshshire, Tarvin and all parts of the Kingdom.' A sign post nearby reads "To Cheshshire, Chester, Tarvin," and the words spoken are 'Go it ye Mongrels!!! Ye can't call this anything but Partial while I keep a Bit in your Mouths.' The words are underlined as shown. Can any of your readers tell me why Tarvin should have been introduced into this cartoon of apparently national importance?

M.H.R.



## WHAT IS TREASURE TROVE ?

by GRAHAM WEBSTER, F.S.A.

Considerable interest in the Law relating to Treasure Trove has been aroused by the recent discovery of the hoard of Saxon silver pennies and bullion in Chester (p. 27). There are three important questions to be considered. Firstly, the objects, no matter whether coins, plate or bullion, have to be of gold or silver entirely or in part, secondly they have to be found in such a position that it can be said they were originally hidden with the owner's intention of retrieving them at a later date; and thirdly the owner cannot now be traced. If objects fulfil these three requirements they are normally declared "Treasure Trove," but before this, the matter requires to be reported to the Coroner for the district, who is the proper authority to inquire into the question as to whether the objects are Treasure Trove and to declare who are the finders. To do this he is assisted by a jury, and evidence is given in the normal legal manner. In some parts of the country there are special powers vested in the ownership of the land covering Treasure Trove; but normally it becomes the property of the Crown and by law is handed to the British Museum. The finders each receive a reward which consists of the market value of the objects concerned, provided, of course, they have made no attempt of concealment and they fulfil all the proper legal requirements.

The British Museum retains only the objects it requires for the National Collections and the remainder is usually offered to the most appropriate local museum which can purchase the objects from the Crown at approximately the value given out as a reward.

In recent years there have been two remarkable instances of the discovery of hoards of treasure. One of these was the famous Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, which was excavated in 1938 and the materials recovered, both in quality and quantity, represent the finest collection of this kind ever found in this country. It was, in effect, the treasure of one of the Saxon kings of East Anglia. An inquest was held in 1949 and it was decided that it was not Treasure Trove as it came from a burial and therefore there was no intention on the part of the owner to recover his wealth. Fortunately, the owner of the land, who had been the instigator of the original excavation, with great generosity, gave the whole of the collection to the British Museum. Had there been in Mrs. Pretty's position anyone less public spirited the results might have been most unfortunate.

The second treasure was found in 1944 near Mildenhall in Suffolk. This consisted of a collection of silver dishes, plates and spoons of the late Roman period and was valued at £10,000. In this case there was the delay of 4 years before the discovery was reported and after an inquest had been held it was declared

"Treasure Trove" and acquired by the British Museum. The owner of the land and the tractor driver, who actually made the discovery, received a substantial reward.

There is always about these discoveries a touch of the fabulous which seizes the public imagination and they are given a prominence which more important but less spectacular archaeological discoveries never assume. Interesting and valuable as this gold and silver treasure may be, to the archaeologist and historian the greater value lies in the context of the discovery. So it is of vital importance for those who are fortunate enough to make one of these discoveries not to up-root it, but to leave it in position until a competent archaeologist can make a full investigation and retrieve information that might otherwise be lost.

In the case of the Chester hoard, for example, the workmen broke the vessel in which the coins had been deposited and threw it back into the trench. Consequently the museum staff was given several weeks' work in re-excavating the area to try and retrieve all the pieces of the vessel so that it could be reconstructed; an arduous task which would have been quite unnecessary if the original discovery had been reported. This work was as vital as that of recovery of the hoard itself, as it is the first vessel of this period ever found in Chester and the coins give it a close date.

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# THE CHESHIRE CAT

BY

A. OAKES, B.A.

"Grinning like a Cheshire Cat" is a puzzlesome proverb. What is its origin? A writer in "NOTES AND QUERIES" (1895) "traces its origin to the unhappy attempts of a sign painter of that county to represent a lion rampant, which was the crest of an influential family, the Egertons, on sign-boards of many of the inns." In several districts the "Egerton Arms" is known as the Rumping Kitling.

But why only the Egertons? Surely the sign of the Lion Rampant would be much more widespread than merely in that part of Cheshire over which the Egertons bore sway. Ranulph Meschines, the third Norman Earl of Chester bore a gold lion rampant on a red (gules) shield, and his successor, Ranulph Gernons a similar device with the colours interchanged. This red lion rampant was most likely the ancestor of the red cat.

Many a sign painter or mason had never seen a lion, but being informed that it belonged to the cat family, depicted or chiselled the creature as a cat. What was meant to be a snarl turned out a grin.

In the little hamlet of Brimstage in Wirral, there used to be an inn called "The Red Cat," its site now being occupied by the Village Institute erected by the First Viscount Leverhulme, the Lord of the Manor. The Institute sign bears a red cat as a memento.

On the opposite side of the road is Brimstage Hall with its 14th century machicolated tower and the remains of the oratory built by Sir Hugh Hulse and Margery his wife in 1398. It is a stone vaulted chantry chapel, the ribs of the vaulting springing from the capitals of six semi-octagonal piers. In the S.W. corner is a corbel, bearing the likeness of a cat, and from the colour of the sandstone known as the red cat.

Now Lady Margery, before marriage, was a Domville, and the Domvilles were an off-shoot of the Montalts, the Lords of Mold, whose coat of arms was a lion rampant. Later the estate descended to the Troutbecks and then to the Talbots from whom it was purchased by the first Lord Leverhulme. A ceiling boss keeps green the memory of the Troutbecks (three fishes entwined). So surely, the founder family would be remembered also in stone. Hence the lion's head—the red cat. Yes, and it bears a grin, whether through chewing gravel, as a variant of the proverb has it, is for you to decide.

## WHAT ARE THE SCHOOLS DOING ?

AN INDICATION BY ONE HEADMASTER

To answer the question in one page of print is impossible; all that can be attempted is to indicate sketchily one line of approach to history teaching.

Are we to regard a pupil as a vulcanite disc upon which the history teacher scores the tune to be reproduced at examination times, or something more than a mere receptacle and to develop in him an awareness of the past in his present environment? The former outlook emphasises factual memory only and breeds detestation of a subject that will be eagerly dropped immediately school days are over; the latter develops careful observation and a spirit of enquiry and provides a lasting pursuit, the interest in which will remain throughout a pupil's lifetime.

Its situation in Bromborough in Wirral provides my school with many advantages for this second method of approach, despite the fact that the district is growing so rapidly that all signs, except those of the very recent past, will soon be obliterated or rendered inaccessible. But the project is worthwhile and has resulted from children's questions. Such queries were "Why is the place called Bromborough?" "When and for what purpose was The Cross erected?" "Why are our streets so named?" and so on.

Thus to obtain an answer to the first question has led to a study of wells—the Petrifying, Shodwell (St. Chad's) and St. Patrick's—and of the doings of Aethelfleda, the Lady of the Mercians, and the foundation of her "burhs." In this way the Saxon v. Dane conflict became a real issue. The second query has yielded much of value. The Abbots of St. Werburgh's, Chester; Mediaeval markets and fairs; "Barnaby Fair, Barnaby bright, The longest day and the shortest night," though St. Barnabas's Day is on June 10th and hence "Give us back our eleven days" becomes a vital issue; the various proclamations announced from the steps of The Cross; these are some of the topics involved in the answer and embracing almost 700 years of the Country's history.

This line of approach makes History much more than a subject and entails visit, observation, measurement, drawing, modelling, recording, research, and written account. To the syllabus-loving teacher it is unattractive for measurable accomplishments are often lacking. Moreover it demands much more from the teacher—careful planning, wide reading, equable temperament, and optimistic but determined outlook. The guiding principle must be not "What will His Majesty's Inspector think about it?" but "Will it promote a continued study of history when schooldays are over?"

CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE  
ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

VOLUME 58. 1945/46.

THE BELLS OF CHESHIRE TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE 18TH  
CENTURY (illustrated) by Fred H. Crossley, F.S.A.

VOLUME 59. 1947.

THE PORT OF CHESTER by Gwyneth M. Haynes-Thomas.

COLOURED WINDOW GLASS IN CHESHIRE, pt. i. by Maurice H.  
Ridgway, B.A.

A BRONZE AGE URN FROM ASTBURY, CHESHIRE by Maurice H.  
Ridgway, B.A.

CHURCH OF ST. MARY, LYMM (illustration and note) by Archer  
Hodgkinson, F.S.A.

VOLUME 60. 1948.

RUSHBEARING AND MORRIS DANCING IN NORTH CHESHIRE by  
Alderman T. Middleton, J.P.

COLOURED WINDOW GLASS IN CHESHIRE, pt. ii. by Maurice H.  
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CHESHIRE BELLS. A DETAILED SURVEY AND HISTORY OF THE  
BELLS OF THE COUNTY, pt. i. by J. W. Clarke.

PRE-REFORMATION EFFIGIES IN CHESHIRE, pt. i. by Claude Blair.  
A SPEAR HEAD FROM BULKELEY, CHESHIRE by C. Blair.

HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE.

VOLUME 98. 1946.

THE SANDBACH CROSSES by A. C. F. Tait.

REVENUES AND DISBURSEMENTS OF THE BISHOPS OF CHESTER  
by J. H. E. Bennett.

VOLUME 99. 1947.

'SIGNEBY' IN CHESHIRE by F. T. Wainwright, B.A., Ph.D. (This  
is a placename).

VOLUME 100. 1948.

THE DOMESDAY WOODLAND OF CHESHIRE by I. B. Terret, B.A.

VOLUME 101. 1949.

RURAL SETTLEMENT IN CHESHIRE; SOME PROBLEMS OF ORIGIN  
AND CLASSIFICATION by Dorothy Sylvester, M.A., F.R.G.S.

TRESPASSES IN THE FOREST OF WIRRAL IN 1351 by W. F.  
Irvine, M.A., F.S.A.

THE CHAPELS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AND ST. JOHN AT  
HIGH LEGH, CHESHIRE, with some account of the Cornwall-  
Legh and Egerton Leigh Families, by Raymond Richards,  
M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

THE PRE-REFORMATION PLATE OF THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER,  
ASTON-BY-SUTTON, CHESHIRE, by Raymond Richards, M.A.,  
F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

THE CHURCH OF ST. OSWALD, MALPAS, CHESHIRE, by Raymond  
Richards, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

CHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL.

VOL. XXXVII. 1948.

THE DISSOLUTION OF ST. WERBURGH'S ABBEY, by the Ven. R. V. H. Burne, M.A.

THE FOUNDING OF CHESTER CATHEDRAL, by the Ven. R. V. H. Burne, M.A.

THE OLD BISHOP'S PALACE, CHESTER, by J. H. E. Bennett, F.S.A.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MAKING OF COLOURED WINDOW GLASS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE EARLY GLASS DESTROYED AND EXTANT IN CHESHIRE, by the Rev. Maurice H. Ridgway.

FURTHER NOTES ON THE GLASSHOUSE SITE AT KINGSWOOD, DELAMERE, CHESHIRE, by the Rev. Maurice H. Ridgway and Geo. B. Leach.

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AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF MALPAS IN THE COUNTY OF CHESHIRE, by Fred H. Crossley and J. C. Wolley Dod.

CHESTER'S EARLIEST DIRECTORIES, by Miss Estelle Dyke.

THE CLOISTER OF VALE ROYAL ABBEY, by A. J. Taylor, M.A., F.S.A.

MISCELLANEA:—

THE FOUNDATION-DATES OF THE CHURCHES OF ST. WERBURGH AND ST. PETER IN CHESTER, by W. J. Williams, M.A.

THE OLD BISHOP'S PALACE, CHESTER.

THE BUNBURY PAPERS.

1949.

- (i) AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FABRIC OF BUNBURY CHURCH, by Fred H. Crossley.
- (ii) BRIEFS AND COLLECTIONS IN BUNBURY CHURCH. 1665-1704. pt. i.

1950.

- (iii) THE CHURCH BELLS OF BUNBURY, by J. W. Clarke.

LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF  
SOCIETIES.

---

The Standing Conference of Local History:

G. Dando, 26, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.

Macclesfield and District Field Club:

A. J. Wood, 3, Brooklands Avenue, Macclesfield.

The Chester and N. Wales Architectural, Archaeological and  
Historical Society:

H. C. Wickham, 18, St. John Street, Chester.

County Archivist, Cheshire Record Office:

Major F. G. C. Rowe, The Castle, Chester.

City Archivist, Chester:

Miss Margaret J. Groombridge, Town Hall, Chester.

Grosvenor Museum, Chester:

Graham Webster, Curator.

Workers' Educational Association:

Frank Garstang, 62, Hope Street, Liverpool.

The Bromborough Society:

Mrs. A. Anderson, 17, Rake Lane, Bromborough.

Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society:

c/o Chetham's Hospital, Hunt's Bank, Manchester, 3.

Liverpool Geological Society:

John C. Harper, The Royal Institute, Colquitt St., Liverpool.

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:

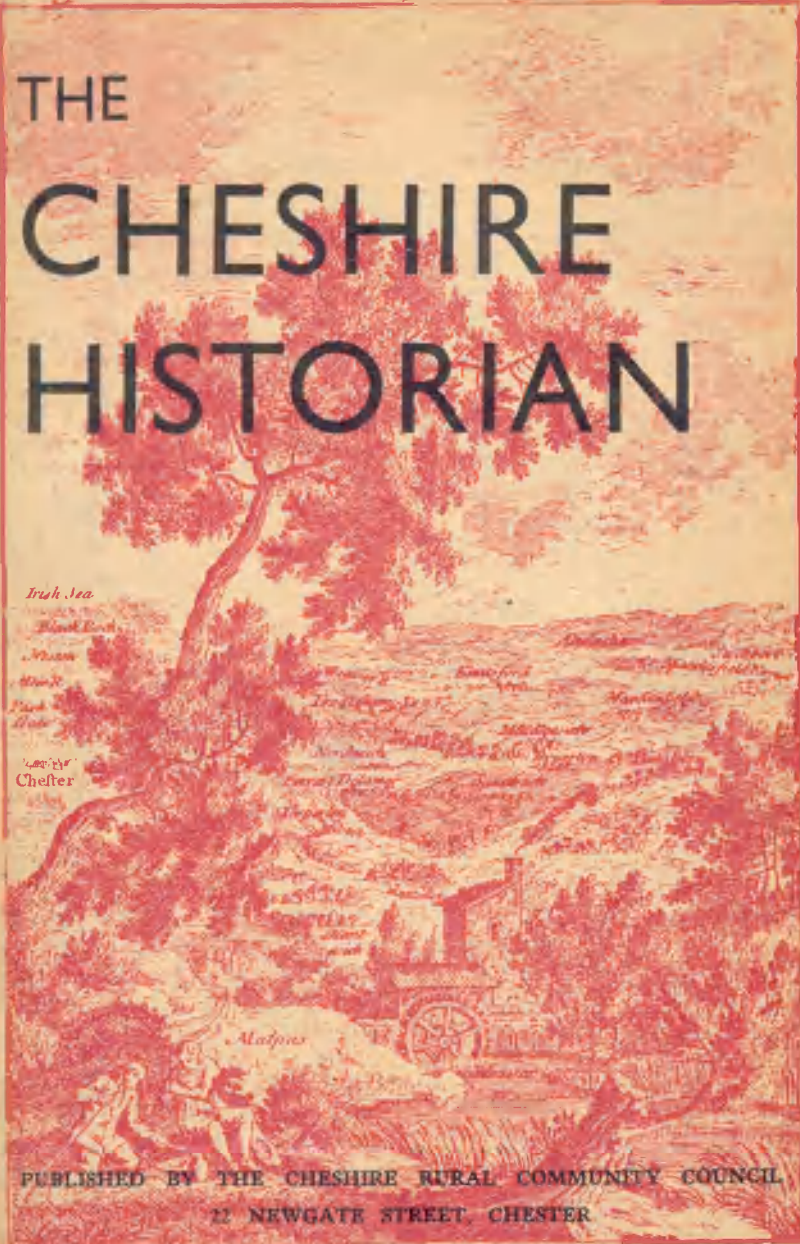
A. C. Wardle, Amelot, Macketts Lane, Woolton.

Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:

J. H. E. Bennett, Hillside, Circular Drive, Heswall.

A MAP of CHESHIRE North West from LONDON  
*Humbly Inscribed to the R<sup>th</sup> Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Earl of Chalmers, by Lord Sear of the County*

# THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN



*Irish Sea*

*Black Earth*

*Wotton*

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	PAGE
WIRRAL IN MEDIEVAL TIMES by ARTHUR OAKES, B.A.	1
CESHIRE MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES: No. 2. The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead, G. STRATTON, A.L.A. ....	14
THE ARCHAEOLOGIST IN THE FIELD (Part II): A. An Introduction to the study of Romano-British Coarse Pottery by GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A. A.M.I.C.E. ....	20
B. The Technique of Barrow Excavation by J. D. JONES, B.A., F.S.A. (Scot.) ....	28
EXCAVATIONS 1951—CHESTER ....	33
INTRODUCTION TO THE RECORDS OF THE CITY OF CHESTER by MARGARET GROOMBRIDGE, M.A. ....	34
MARLING IN THE MOULDSWORTH DISTRICT by S. JACKSON ....	41
LOCAL HISTORY SCRAPBOOK by WINIFRED M. COMBER	44
THE CHESHIRE CAT by GRAHAM WEBSTER ....	47
BOOK REVIEWS AND CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS ....	48
USEFUL AIDS FOR THE LOCAL HISTORIAN ....	51
LIST OF NAMES & ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES ....	INSIDE BACK COVER

493363

# Wirral in Medieval Times

BY

ARTHUR OAKES, B.A.



**W**AS there a particular social behaviour and manner of life of Wirral folk, that distinguished them clearly from the people north of the Mersey or east of the Gowy? The habits and speech of the dweller in the heart of Cheshire soon make themselves plain; the Welshman, the Yorkshireman, and the Cornishman leave no one in doubt as to their place of origin. Was the same true of the Wirral man?

Regions, like people, have a personality, that sum total of qualities which makes them a type, and sets them apart. Just as an individual's personality is the outcome of his heredity, his contacts, his social conditions, and his upbringing, so is that of a region the result of its physical nature, its nearness to or remoteness from civilisation, its accessibility, the nature of its soil and its type of climate.

Thus there must have been a Wirral type, for Wirral is a region unique in many ways, both geographically and historically. And yet the typical Wirral man is hard to discover, on account of the rapid and recent industrial development of the area round Merseyside with the consequent influx of outsiders, for whom Wirral is merely a dormitory. The newcomers had their roots elsewhere and are alien to Wirral soil, but they have been transplanted in such numbers that they tend to oust the native and supplant him.

The characteristics of the true native of Wirral have been submerged in the ever-growing tide of this residential invasion. Wallasey and Birkenhead of 100 years ago must have been very like Bromborough of 50 years ago, or Burton or Ince of to-day, and even the last two are already yielding to the allurements of the speculative builder.

Let us see, therefore, what factors have gone to mould Wirral and let us attempt to make a few deductions as to their effect on the lives and habits of the people.

## I. ITS ORIENTATION.

The first factor of importance in the moulding of Wirral is its position relative to the lands and seas about it. Naturally this is a changeable factor, and particularly with a peninsula like Wirral. Its sea coast often protected its inhabitants, but occasionally gave access to the invader, as it did in Prehistoric and Scandinavian times. Generally speaking though its situation was one of remoteness from civilisation and of inaccessibility. The marshes of the Gowy and the Broxton Valley proved difficult barriers to cross and the inhospitability of the Mersey Estuary was a deterrent to settlement. Wirral was thus an isolated backwater,

rarely disturbed by the successive tides of culture that washed the south and east of England.

Thus in Prehistoric times, Wirral was little influenced by the invasions of the Megalithic folk except on the coastal fringe. At Dove Point, near Meols, on Hilbre, and at the Red Noses, there were evidently habitation sites, but they only served as links between much more populous areas in the Bronze Age. Wirral was a sort of half-way house between Anglesey and Derbyshire; and between Antrim and the Yorkshire Wolds. The Megalithic Builders, the Axe Men, and the Urn-Burial Folk influenced merely the edge of the Peninsula, the marshy hinterland and the heavily wooded districts on the boulder clay being too inhospitable for habitation.

But it was into these desolate and isolated areas that the Celts were driven by the incoming waves of Roman civilisation. From the Celtic place-names in Wirral, one realises how the Celts took refuge in its remote fastnesses. To mention only one, Ince, is to obtain a graphic description of that settlement site — an island in a wilderness of marsh.

So though the Roman military station of Chester was so near to Wirral, the Peninsula's inaccessibility was such that it did not attract the Roman gentleman, and in consequence the culture of the Roman villa passed Wirral by. In spite of this there must have been some sort of a road leading to the Meols neighbourhood, where so many Roman finds have been made. It probably followed roughly the line of the present Parkgate Road, perhaps much nearer the coast in the upper portion of the Dee Estuary than now, with a branch via Willaston (Street Hey) to the Storeton Quarries. This western route into the Peninsula by land and water was to play an important part in the development of Wirral.

After the departure of the Romans, the remaining British were left in undisputed possession of the district until in the early part of the seventh century, when as a result of the victory of Ethelfrith of Northumbria at Chester over the Britons, the Celts of Wales were separated from their kinsmen of the North, and by the time of Edwin's expedition to the Isle of Man, Wirral must have become Saxon, with the exception of those uninviting "islands" Wallasey and Ince.

Some 200 years later the Scandinavians from Ireland and the Isle of Man invaded Wirral, their settlements taking place on the north coast and the neighbourhood of Deeside. The many place-names terminating in "by" representing a farmstead or dwelling, and in "ea" or "ey" denoting an island, e.g. Wallasey "the island of the Welsh," give clues to this. If, as some authorities assert the battle of Brunanburh in 937 A.D. was fought at Bromborough, then very bad news was quickly conveyed to the Norse Assembly at Thingwall.

Thus by the time of Edward the Confessor, the dweller in Wirral ought to have been possessed of the hardihood of the Celt, the agrarian and economic ideas of the Saxon, and the sea-roving instincts of the Norseman, though little of the constructive ability of the Megalithic or the Roman people.

## II. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE EARLS OF CHESTER.

By 1070 The Norman Conquest was complete as far as Wirral was concerned and the great shadow of the first Norman Earl of Chester, Hugh Lupus, the Conqueror's nephew, fell over the land. For some 200 years it was to shut out the light of peace and freedom from Wirral.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the great Earl's position was exceptional; his powers were immense; he was virtually a king in his own right, and therefore his territory was not subject to the Conqueror's law and government. Of this earldom, the chroniclers later wrote, "The King left Chester and returned to England." So, though physically a portion of England, the earldom of Chester was a separate political unit, and of this unit Wirral was the outlying portion. It certainly was not to bask in the suns rays of a beneficent king, but had to be content with the fitful moonlight of the Earl.

And why? Well, though the Earl was nominally subject to his over-lord, William the Conqueror, and though the Domesday Commissioners had surveyed Wirral and found its assessable value to William, the Earldom was a buffer state to secure the peace of England by preventing the predatory raids of the Welsh. It was to provide the troops to attack the Welsh or to receive the shock when they attacked. To lead these commandos was the Earl's task and because of its dangerous nature, he was given plenary powers and the right to add to his possessions by the sword as much land as he liked, provided it did not affect the holdings of the king.

Now Wirral was the part of the Earldom closest to Wales and would therefore be compelled to play a prominent part in these incursions into Wales and the inevitable counter thrusts. What an unhappy prospect for the Saxon in Wirral who had begun to appreciate the agricultural pursuits of peace.

As he made his way, say, up Townfield Lane, Lower Bebington, to cultivate his strip of land in the townfield and guide the eight-oxen plough, or tend his cattle on the common meadow, or his pigs on the wasteland, he could not have been at ease in his mind. "Why bother?" he would say, "to sow what others will most likely reap? I may have to go to war or my land may be harried by the Welshman." However, the body had to be nourished, the soldier fed, and in consequence, the main purpose in life was military. He owed service to his lord for the tenure of his land and this meant service in the Earl's army. His was Hobson's choice—work to supply the commisariat or active service. Yes,

the Earl meant business; he was building castles at Chester and Shotwick, as a de Lancelyn was soon to do at Poulton. The safety of the river Dee and the creeks of Shotwick and Bromborough Pool was essential.

When the Earl and his successors died, the last of whom, John Scot, left no male heir, the Earldom escheated to the Crown, and the King or the King's eldest son took the title and the lands. The County Palatine was clearly a valuable prize, and so it remained until 1536 when for the purpose of government it was merged into England and sent M.P.'s to Westminster.

### III. THE POWER OF THE LORDS ECCLESIASTIC.

As a result of the Conquest, the dweller in Wirral was soon to feel the authority of the ecclesiastic, the lord abbot or prior, as well as that of the lay lord. To secure the blessing of Holy Church on their adventures and to ease those twinges of conscience, the result of past misdeeds, the Norman Barons founded monasteries.

In 1093 Hugh Lupus ejected the secular canons of the church of SS. Peter and Paul in Chester and founded the Benedictine Abbey of St. Werburgh. In 1150 this act was imitated by Hamo de Masci of Puddington and Dunham with the establishment of Birkenhead Priory while a Cistercian brotherhood was founded in 1178 at Stanlow by John de Lacy, Baron of Halton and Constable of Chester.

The death of the lord of the manor, with no living male issue, frequently brought relief to his oppressed subjects for the property was transferred by marriage to another; sometimes it was split into portions and parts of it were sold to the tenants. My lord abbot on the other hand was like the king; he never died. His was a corporation and the land, in consequence, never changed hands through death. The monastic possessions grew and grew. By the fourteenth century, the Earl of Chester held only the manor of Shotwick in Wirral, the bulk of the rest of the Hundred being under the jurisdiction of the Abbot of St. Werburgh's. In fact, Woodchurch and Heswall were the only two churches the advowsons of which were not in monastic hands.

In addition, these lords ecclesiastic obtained special liberties in the Forest of Wirral and market rights, and in this way their pride became inordinate and their power immense. The inhospitality of the Mersey discomfited the monks of Stanlow and and its inundation of their buildings finally drove them to Whalley in Lancashire in 1294, but the monks of Birkenhead and Chester remained for nearly another two and half centuries. Yes it needed Anne Boleyn to dislodge them!

### IV. MILITARY SERVICE.

That the men of Wirral took part in the Welsh, French, Irish and Scotch campaigns is clear from the records, for where their

lords went their fighting men had to accompany them. Robert de Rodelent (Rhuddlan) was killed fighting against the Welsh in 1088, and there were several Wirral men in the "miracle" of the Constable Sands. A Massey was present at Crecy and Poitiers, and because of his prowess in the latter engagement, he was pardoned by the Black Prince for certain misdeeds. Soldiers of value to the Prince were frequently forgiven trespasses in the forest or even murders.

Sir John Massey and other Wirral Knights were in the rebel hosts of Percy at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, the former losing his life there. Another Massey distinguished himself at Agincourt. The Pooles and the Stanleys were equally gallant and brought trophies from Flodden Field. Sir John Troutbeck died at Bloreheath in 1459 losing his life in the Lancastrian cause: Thomas Clegg of Gayton and Henry de Bromborough espoused the Yorkist cause and conspired to seize 20,400 marks on their way to Henry VI, but were imprisoned in Chester Castle for the attempt.

Kings too, featured in the events in Wirral. King John set sail from Shotwick in 1210 on his Irish expedition; Edward I went via Wirral on some of his Welsh campaigns; and in 1399 Richard II accompanied by a body of 2,000 Cheshire Archers, to whom he paid the comparatively high wage of 6d. per day, and among whom were many Wirral men, embarked from Burton Point for Ireland, as William III was to do later from King's Gap, Hoylake.

The average Wirral man must have had a rather hopeless outlook when all he had to look forward to was to die in the campaigns of his lord or be maimed permanently in his service. Economically he was badly off, socially, he was a nonentity; only in the military sphere was he of consequence. And why was it that between the campaigning he was of no importance? He lived in a forest and that was no enviable habitation.

## V. THE FOREST OF WIRRAL.

The obstinacy of his character and his love of the freedom he had gained during Saxon times made him resent the oppression of his Norman overlords, but he had displayed his opposition to the new regime very strongly, and Randle, the fourth Earl, found it so vexatious that he declared Wirral to be a forest and therefore subject to forest laws. It was a sort of transformation from civil to military law that we can appreciate in these days.

It meant that the bulk of Wirral was a chase for the pleasure of the Earl and his favourites. The native lived there on sufferance; his economic prosperity was of no consequence. Many farmsteads were obliterated to improve the chase, and so Wirral became a sea of wooded and open heath country with villages dotted in it like islands. Village life still continued but

with the difference that agricultural development was restricted and personal liberty limited.

To those employed in and for the chase, the change must have been welcomed. Alan Sylvestre, appointed chief forester, was given the manors of Puddington and Storeton and a horn to blow, or cause to be blown at the Gloverstone in Chester in the early morning of every fair day. His under-foresters and others who went on the "regard" of the forest besides their fees, received many perquisites in kind, as did those later on in connection with the Cheshire Hunt. Indeed the Hunting Squire and Parson were the direct descendants of the forest lords lay and ecclesiastic, of the 12th and 13th centuries. The master forestership later passed to the Stanley family by marriage in 1280. Is it any wonder that the Grand National is run near Knowsley Hall and that the most important flat race is called "the Derby"? It was a member of the Stanley family who interested himself in the races at Leasowe in 1683 in which the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth was a jockey. Truly custom dies hard.

It would be the natural desire of the farmer to extend his arable land to provide additional food for the needs of his family, but if he "assarted" land, that is, encroached on the forest, he had to pay a fine for it. To keep out the deer or other straying animals of the chase he erected a paling or dug a dry ditch. but were the paling too high or the ditch too wide for the running deer to negotiate without danger to itself, more fines followed.

If the cold days of winter tempted him to trespass in the forest for fallen branches or turves, it was a dear and hazardous undertaking. An empty larder and hungry children must often have proved too great an incentive for him to let discretion warn him. He poached game, even the buck itself. We can picture the trepidation into which the family would be thrown on the appearance of an under-forester several days or so after the foraging expedition. Discovery meant a heavy fine or serious bodily mutilation or even death.

And should it be found out that the trespasser possessed a greyhound or other coursing dog, he was severely punished. Other breeds of dog he was allowed to keep, provided that they had been "lawed," that is three claws removed from each forefoot. This rendered the dog lawful, but useless to a poacher.

Great and small were compelled to respect these forest laws or pay the forfeit. Records show that the great abbot himself had to toe the line, but the great ones had a much more favourable chance of obtaining the liberty of the forest and exemption from the irksome restrictions and abuses of the chase, particularly the dreaded right of "putura"—a custom of feudal foresters to take food from the inhabitants within the perambulation of the forest. When he or his underlings were on their itineraries

through the forest, they could call upon the villagers for refreshment and accommodation for themselves and their horses. Bromborough and Eastham apparently were freed from this burden and other forest dues by a licence granted to the Abbot of St. Werburgh's for his manor of Eastham, and this privilege was certainly instrumental in promoting the development of these places.

## VI. THE BLACK DEATH.

Thus the people of Wirral had to bear like many other people in Cheshire grievous burdens additional to those which were general throughout the land, because of the forest. But they were now to be visited by that dreadful scourge, the bubonic plague, known as the Black Death, round about the middle of the 14th century. It was no respecter of persons; the only cure was apparently the "Quick, Far and Late" one. Whenever it occurred it was case of start quick, go far, and come back late. Naturally most were in a position that they could not try this cure. The Abbot of Chester, William de Bebington and the priests of Backford, Stoke and Woodchurch succumbed to the plague as did many others too unimportant to be mentioned in the records. Most likely Wirral suffered as did the rest of the country by losing a half or one third of its population. The remnant used their scarcity value to obtain alleviation from their lot by demanding an increase in wages and a decrease in irksome restrictions.

To the lords of the manor their demands appeared absurd, for they declared:

"The world goeth fast from bad to worse when shepherd and cowherd demand more for their labour than their master bailiff was wont to take. Labourers of old were not wont to eat of wheaten bread; their meat was of beans or coarser corn and their drink of water alone. Cheese and milk were a feast to them; their dress was of hodden grey; then was the world ordered aright for folk of this sort. Ha! age of ours, whither turnest thou?"

Nevertheless, the threats of the residue in Wirral were evidently no idle ones, for by the end of the 14th century the men of Cheshire were very lawless and out of hand.

## VII. THE LAWLESSNESS OF WIRRAL.

The monastic chroniclers refer to them as ruffians, turbulent, cut-throats, thieves, vagabonds, etc., and no wonder when they waylaid the Abbot of Combermere and played football with the head of a Vale Royal monk. Cheshire may have been "the seed plot of gentilitic" but it was no nursery bed of gentleness. The Wirralite would be no less a thug than the other gangsters of the county, for he must have had much tainted blood in him. The forest was not only the home of the lord's game; it harboured



felons and fugitives from the king's justice, and the offspring of such ruffians were not nurtured in the refinements of civilisation.

There is much recorded evidence of the brutality and savagery of the Wirral man and of his violence and indiscipline. Brimstage Tower was built in the latter half of the 14th century and was fortified by loopholes and machicolations. At the manor house at Ince is ocular evidence of the crenellation of that building, its strengthening by intermural passages, the outer wall of which was loopholed. This was at the end of the same century, in 1399.

This was the fateful year of Richard II, who was served so faithfully by his bodyguard of Cheshire archers. Adam Usk, an eye-witness of events at that time wrote, "in all places they oppressed his subjects unpunished, and beat and robbed them. These men whithersoever the king went, night and day, as if at war, kept watch in arms around him, everywhere committing adulteries, murders, and other evils without end. And to such a pass did the king cherish them that he would not deign to listen to anyone who had complaint against them; nay, rather he would disdain him as an enemy."

In the previous year a licence had been obtained by the Hulses to erect an oratory at Brimstage. This privilege would be craved because of the difficulty of travelling to Bromborough Church in bad weather over ill-conditioned ways, and because of the gangs of marauders about. The Hulses would not have been the first lords of the manor to have been molested on their way to mass.

Grievous though the legitimate forest taxes were, they became intolerable when an earl arose who regarded Wirral merely as a recruiting ground for his armed forces and a never-failing treasury for his wilful extravagances, as did the Black Prince. The peasant was prepared to pay the usual charge for the rights of pannage, i.e. when he turned his pigs into the forest in the Autumn to forage for acorns and beachmast; the customary charge was 1d. per pig up to 6, from 7 to 10, one pig, from 11 to 16 one pig and one penny, and from 17 to 20, two pigs.

This was no inconsiderable toll to pay for a pig to be turned out to fatten itself in the Autumn. Most peasants earned a penny a day so for half a dozen pigs it meant the forfeit of a week's wage. No modern farm labourer would enjoy giving up £5 15s. for a similar privilege now. And can't we easily imagine what a riot would be caused nowadays if this excessive charge were increased in order that the lord of the manor might have more income to spend on riotous living.

So the Wirral man's lawlessness in an acknowledged age of brutality was conspicuous. His military adventures and the condition under which he lived at home encouraged this hooliganism as did the lack of respect he was beginning to have for the lord ecclesiastic and the removal of the restraining influence of the

priests owing to so many of them dying during the plague: but the prime cause was the forest.

#### VIII. CHURCH BUILDING.

Roving bands of thugs preyed on the convoys of food to the army and on its pay wagons, as well as goods from the Decside ports in transit to Chester. It does not therefore come as a surprise to us that the citizens of Chester petitioned the Black Prince to disafforest Wirral towards the end of the 14th century, and of their joy at the granting of their petition by the Prince's father, Edward III, though Richard II, the Prince's son, a few years afterwards, fined Wirral 600 marks for the concession.

Probably this is an exaggerated picture of the banditry of Wirral, for records speak more of the wrongdoer than the law-abiding. There must have been some godfearing people in the Hundred, for if not, it is difficult to account for the church building and extensions that went on in the 14th century, not only at the abbeys of Vale Royal and St. Werburgh, but in the village churches. Gangs of masons were evidently available as they finished their assignments at the abbeys, but was the money? Yes, it was, but it did not come from the monks, who had appropriated so many of the Wirral churches. They were only responsible for the upkeep of the chancel, the rest of the fabric was the concern of the parishioners, and in particular the lay lords of the manor.

Building went on at Backford, Woodchurch, West Kirby, Shotwick, Thornton-le-Moors, Bebington and Eastham; the famous broach spires of the last two were built then. These churches could not compare in magnificence with those building at other places in the County of Cheshire, at Astbury, Audlem, Bunbury, Middlewich, Nantwich, Malpas, Tarvin, and Witton, nor with the "Wool" churches of East Anglia upon which so much labour and money were being lavished.

#### IX. WIRRAL AND THE WOOL TRADE.

Wirral like the rest of Cheshire did not benefit from the wool trade with Flanders. The City of Chester had applied to be given a licence creating it a staple port, but in vain. So Wirral bales had to be shipped to London for transit to the Flemings or had to be taken overland to the East Anglian ports. Thus the Hundred could not compete in this lucrative trade. Records show that the Abbey of Stanlow kept very few sheep and when we learn that only 200 bales of wool were collected in Cheshire by the Commissioners of Edward III against 1,500 bales from Shropshire, and at one mark less per bale than the Salop variety, we realise that the rest of Cheshire must have been similar to Stanlow. In other words, Wirral was not to grow fat on sheep, and this disability was seen in the inferiority of its church architecture. However, despite this, it is perfectly clear that Wirral was beginning to

engage in trade seeing that there was money available for church embellishment. Nantwich and other Cheshire towns got it from salt, but Wirral depended on its sea trade. Chester itself became more and more blocked with silt, and ports lower down the river engaged increasingly in wine from Gascony, slates, lead and millstones from North Wales, corn and cattle from Ireland, and timber and fish from Wirral. The port of Liverpool too was no longer an infant; it was some 150-200 years old, and the Mersey side of Wirral was benefiting from this, and particularly Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham; Burton was similarly benefiting from Deeside traffic.

#### X. GROWTH OF TOWNS, MARKETS AND FAIRS.

It is only natural that men should try to free themselves as soon as possible from the service they had to give to their lord, or commute it for a money payment. Trade and land utilisation brought this money and so Chester was the first to purchase freedom from this bond service, and the right of regulating its own trade, of establishing guilds to control both crafts and craftsmen, and of holding a weekly market, but not of controlling the three days' fair. This was the privilege of the abbots and the citizens' own business had to be suspended on those days and no ship was to be unloaded at the quay. All trade had to be done only at the stalls erected in front of the Abbey Gateway and the tolls for such concession went to the abbey exchequer — a great source of grievance to the Chester merchants and of profit to the Convent.

However, the citizens agitated for the transfer of the fair rights to the town and petitioned Edward I to bring this about. They obtained only a partial redress of their grievance. In 1288 the King granted them the right to erect stalls also and hire them to traders, provided they were set up some distance from the Abbey Square. This concession adversely affected the Convent's source of income, and as it must have been foreseen that the citizens' agitation for a partial transfer of fair rights would be successful one day; so the monastery chapter must have begun to look elsewhere for fair and market rights to make up the probable resultant deficiency in income. And where was so suitable as their manor of Eastham? Reports from Bromborough Court House clearly showed that trade up the Pool was flourishing and the abbey might just as well share in the profit.

Bromborough and Eastham's relief much earlier surely influenced their development and made them attractive places in Wirral. In the average manor there cannot have been much of what we know as trade, for it did not produce much more than its own requirements, and the inhabitants could secure their needs by barter. But as land was reclaimed and agriculture developed, there would arise a surplus and this could not be wasted. Hence a rudimentary but unlicensed market must have been held at

irregular intervals and these "Black" markets must have been reported to the Abbot.

What was easier then, when Edward I was several times in Wirral on account of the Welsh Wars and the building of the abbey of Vale Royal, for the abbot of Chester, who attended him when he stayed at the Court House and the abbot's manor house at Ince in 1277 to crave these market boons. Something like this must have occurred for the very next year the king, while at Dover, granted the request and handed to a monk of Chester a charter licensing a weekly market on Mondays and an annual three days' fair, and witnessed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Earl of Lincoln.

Thus began in the long days of June, the Bromborough Fair of Barnaby Bright, held on St. Barnabas's Day, the day before and the day after — three days that must have passed very quickly with all the excitement and bustle that took place round the market cross. No wonder Johnnie was so long at the fair, with the other yokels and lasses seeking new employment. The sale of cattle was interesting enough, and the busy-ness of the shops of the cobbler, the shoemaker, the saddler, the blacksmith, the wheelwright, etc. was something to wonder at, but most excitement of all was caused by the presence of strange traders, whose wares were as attractive as their tales. A year's thrill in three days with feasting and drinking at the inn. As late as 1561 there was only one inn in Bromborough and two in Eastham. Was the Bromborough one on the site of the present "Royal Oak" though it cannot have been called by that name in the 15th and 16th centuries? Was it the "Cross Keys" or "The Mitre" to please my lord abbot, or "The White Hart" for Richard II? It is very doubtful that it would be "The Red Lion" of John of Gaunt or "The Swan" of Henry IV, particularly in Wirral. This matter is worth some research. We cannot but doubt that one of the Eastham inns was then "The Stanley Arms."

Twenty years later in 1298, the same king granted similar concessions to William de Langton, Bishop of Lichfield to hold a weekly market on Thursdays and a three days' fair at the feast of St. James in Burton. This is an index of the importance of Burton in the 13th and 14th centuries then the chief port of Wirral possessing five inns. Yes, Burton and Bromborough were the busy B's of Wirral. How long these markets and fairs were held is not known, but they must have been allowed to lapse with the improvement of communications to Chester and Liverpool, and the development of Neston in the 16th century.

## XI. LAND RECLAMATION AND UTILISATION.

I mentioned previously that the surplus products for the markets came from increased sea trade and land utilisation. Land reclamation particularly after the disafforestation of Wirral, went ahead. After defeating the enemies of the realm and the forest

oppressions, the inhabitants began to attack nature herself. After uprooting trees, cutting down bushes, burning heather and bracken, and breaking up the ground with turf spades, it was ploughed by oxen. Its fertility was improved by spreading marl on the sandy soils; there was not sufficient farm yard manure available owing to the killing off of cattle before winter, so marling was resorted to, to stiffen the sandy soil. Marl pits abound in Wirral and were the scene of activity for hundreds of years, for when the abbot of Chester in 1296 was attacked by the Wirral foresters for digging marl pits without permission his answer was that his predecessors had had the right from time immemorial.

Draining work too was done by the abbots of Chester and Stanlow to reclaim the flooded land in the neighbourhood of the present Ellesmere Port. Thus more and more land was brought under the plough, the farmers' lands getting more and more farther from their farm houses. This accounts for the interesting feature of the Wirral farmhouses, being so frequently right in the villages and not in the middle of their acreage. An Inquisition Post Mortem of 1614 shows that John Poole, at his death was seized of several mills, both water and wind, 2,000 acres of land, 5,000 of meadow, 2,000 of pasture, 600 of wood, 1,000 of marsh and 1,000 of furze and heath on his manors in Wirral, and this is typical, though this is only one example of what was accomplished. The development of the land was general: the small-holder and the great landlord both did their share, in this land reclamation.

## XII. CHARACTERISTICS OF LATE MEDIAEVAL WIRRALITES.

His long and arduous fight with nature shows that Wirral man of the late Middle Ages was a sturdy and hard-working fellow; one not easily beaten by obstacles. Stubbornness was evidently one of his characteristics, and he could not be turned from his purpose easily. He was very jealous of his rights so dearly bought and perilously gained. His house was his castle and he was only too ready to fight for its security. A noteworthy example of this trait was seen in the affray that occurred at the manor house of Ince, after the Cottons had been granted the property at the Dissolution, and had sold it to the Cholmondeleys who had also received the spoils of Vale Royal. Sir Hugh Cholmondeley gave the tenant, Lady Maud Grosvenor, notice to quit, but she refused to do so. Though 60 men marched against the manor house in 1550 it was valiantly defended for four hours and the attackers withdrew leaving one of their party fatally wounded. The law stepped in and the Grosvenor party was tried for murder. Hans, the Gunner, a Dutch tinker, was hanged, but the Lady Maud was acquitted. Such was the ancestress of the Dukes of Westminster; she remained at Ince until her death in 1582.

The native of Wirral was evidently very conservative, not because he dreaded change, but because tradition made change alien to him, and poor communications kept new ideas from coming his way. John Balls and Wat Tylers there must have been in Wirral but they lacked the organisation that came from life in a free town, such as the salt towns of Cheshire that showed an organised independence of spirit lacking in Wirral. Bromborough and Burton, the two places that had developed in the Mediaeval Period were under the control of ecclesiastical landlords.

The Stanleys, the Pooles, the Masseys, and the Troutbecks adhered to the old religion long after the Reformation, and were staunch supporters of the Royalist cause during the Civil War. The Bunburies of Stanney were apparently the only ones who followed the Reformed Faith and the Cleggs of Gayton Hall the only ones to support the Parliament side. It was with the Cleggs of Gayton Hall that William of Orange stayed while awaiting a favourable wind to blow him to Ireland to quell the Jacobite Rebellion.

Culturally, the man of Wirral was very backward, for the refining influence of the Renaissance was long in reaching the Peninsula. He appears to have remained cruel and ruthless for some time; he was a fatalist himself and had little time for sympathy with the misfortunes of others. That is why many of the shore dwellers made profit from the deliberate wrecking of ships and thought as little about the morals of it as the general run of inhabitants of the Hundred did about their blood sports.

But it is time that I let them rest for like the Priory of Birkenhead they too have been claimed by Time and have crumbled into dust. They can say to their descendants equally proud of their achievements:

“We, in the ages lying  
In the buried past of the earth.  
Built Nineveh with our sighing,  
And Babel itself with our mirth:  
And o’erthrew them with prophesying  
To the old of the new world’s worth:  
For each age is a dream that is dying.  
Or one that is coming to birth.”

(ARTHUR O’SHAUGHNESSY.)

# Cheshire Museums and Art Galleries

## No. 2. The Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Birkenhead.

G. STRATTON, A.L.A., CURATOR,  
PRESIDENT, NORTH-WESTERN FEDERATION OF MUSEUMS AND ART  
GALLERIES.

I HAVE deemed it advisable, before entering forthwith upon a description of the Williamson Art Gallery and its contents, to donate a little of the space at my disposal to a brief survey of the position of Municipal Art Galleries in this country today. It is a liberty which I trust is not untimely. Those of my readers to whom these observations will come as new, will, I feel sure, not view with impatience thus being 'put into the picture.' On the other hand, those who are already acquainted or familiar with the general background, particularly the many problems with which the modern curator is daily confronted, will undoubtedly welcome my taking this opportunity to give further ventilation to the position and agree that it may possibly have a somewhat salutary effect.

The fundamental basis of art galleries and museums lies in that creed which grants to each and everyone the right to seek after knowledge and to attain culture. It is precisely this belief which constitutes likewise the basis on which is established the whole present day system of education for all. Thus there comes into existence a bond between the work of the teacher and that of the curator and it is not a little encouraging to find that today that bond has become generally accepted. It has been said that the visual arts are one of the manifestations of quality by which a nation is judged and no society can afford to dispense with their humanising influence. Modern educational theories have come to recognise the ever increasing importance of visual education and the necessity for the visual arts to be closely allied to both education and design if a full advantage is to be gained by the community.

Yet, although education, as a result of the various successive Acts of Parliament and their compulsory administration by local authorities, has been ensured of a certain national standard and has developed into what has been aptly described as a great force for betterment throughout the nation, we may look in vain for anything even approaching a similarity of development with art galleries and museums. Of these latter, we can but assert that theirs is a growth which, if at all, has been left largely to chance with the inevitable consequence that, apart from the National

Institutions, the provinces are left with a museum and art gallery service which is unequal in distribution, is mostly inadequate and is indeed quite often absent. Even with the closely-allied public library service there can be no comparison and presumably such a state of affairs exists because of the lack of Governmental interest and the absence of statutory obligations upon local authorities.

It is estimated that today there exists in the provinces some 620 museums and art galleries, no less than 160 having closed their doors since the last survey carried out in 1938. The reasons for the closing of these 160 institutions included occupation by national or local government departments and damage by enemy action but still there remains about 50 which were closed through lack of local interest or of financial support. Of the 620 now remaining open, a little over half are municipally maintained, i.e. derive their income from local rates, and very few of these can claim equal good fortune with Birkenhead in that they are able to house their collections in separate buildings. As it is, buildings are all too often bad or most unsuitable for their purpose being in many cases a legacy from the last century when the national taste, especially in matters touching the architecture of public buildings, was exceedingly poor. It is plain, of course, that the root of the evil is in the pitiful financial circumstances in which so many of the institutions are struggling. This observation may be further illuminated by the fact that in 1945 over 400 of the existing museums and galleries had incomes of less than £300 per annum, and if further emphasis is required for this entirely deplorable situation I submit the fact that the annual expenditure, omitting the National Institutions in London, is approximately 3d. per head of population or the price of one cigarette. Surely then, this constitutes an effective answer to those deploring the low standard of culture existent today — it is somewhat difficult to see how in the circumstances it could be otherwise.

However the entire history of art galleries and museums is interwoven with the stories of distinguished and discriminating patronage. It could safely be claimed that over 90% of the contents of all provincial art galleries and museums consists of donations, either from individuals, associations or private trusts. Poor indeed we would have been without such help although I must add that it is a moot point whether the art institutions in many cases have benefited overmuch in quality, especially with the legacies of Victorian England. But today the wealthy connoisseur is rapidly disappearing and it would appear that Government intervention and assistance alone can take his place.

The early years of the 20th century were to prove of good fortune to residents of Birkenhead who were keenly interested in the development of art and culture. In the year 1912 was established the town's first Art Gallery and Museum and this was situated in the then vacated Central Library in Hamilton Street.



During the first World War, Mr. John Williamson, J.P., a well-known shipowner, director of the Cunard S.S. Co., and former Commissioner for Birkenhead, died, leaving directions in his will that the sum of £20,000 should be transferred to the Corporation on the death of his son with the request that the Council, without imposing any legal obligation upon them, consider the advisability of applying this sum towards the erection of an Art Gallery and/or Museum. Mr. P. A. Williamson survived his father by only four years and in his will directed that a further £20,000 should be paid to the Corporation. Thus on the 1st December, 1928 the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum was formally opened to the public of Birkenhead by Dr. H. Nazeby Harrington.

The new gallery, designed by the Liverpool architects, Messrs. Hannaford and Thearle, represented the fruit of much thought and careful planning. In this respect, one can safely say that it was only with the advent of the 20th century that the architectural evolution of a building for the express purpose of displaying art treasures occurred. First impressions of the Williamson Art Gallery is of a building, simple, unassuming and pleasant, possessing precisely those characteristics which should mark such an institution. A one-storey, red brick and white stone building, surrounded by grass plots and flower beds, it stands at the corner of Slatey Road and Balls Road in a quiet residential area of the town not too far afield as to discourage visitors from other quarters. The interior, apart from administrative offices and storage rooms, consists of a Sculpture or Entrance Hall which is 'en suite' with the adjoining galleries. Of these, there are 14 in number which, for the possible benefit of such as delight in statistics, offer a floor space of approximately 15,440 square feet and a wall space of 1,650 linear feet. Special interest has been paid to the systems of lighting, natural and artificial; the method of 'top-side' lighting has the effect of bathing the pictures and exhibits in bright illumination whilst the onlooker stands in the lesser shadow of reflected light. The same principle guides the arrangement of the artificial in that here the points of light, aided by strong reflectors, are placed in positions such as to eliminate as far as possible reflections on glazed surfaces.

The policy of the gallery is to offer a service of efficiency and living activity as distinct from the all-too-prevalent static undertaking. To this end, great efforts are made to bring all branches of art to Birkenhead in the form of loan exhibitions etc. But these loan exhibitions and other activities would be incomplete in themselves and therefore for many years now, steps have been taken to build up a valuable permanent collection. Thanks to such efforts today we find displayed in the picture galleries examples of the work of many of our more famous British painters.

The development of English painting with examples from various schools constitutes the underlying principle governing the arrangement in two of the galleries given over to oil paintings.

The following represents but a brief selection from these works:—  
works:—

Richard Wilson.	WELSH BRIDGE and LANDSCAPE.
"The Grand Classic"	
George Stubbs.	LIONS AND TIGERS FIGHTING.
John (Old) Crome.	YARMOUTH JETTY and WHITLINGHAM IN NORWICH.
J. S. Cotman.	STANGATE CREEK and TREES AND BOAT.
James Stark.	MARLBOROUGH FOREST and LANDSCAPE.
George Vincent.	LANDSCAPE WITH CATTLE.
John Constable.	AFTER THE STORM and VALLEY OF THE STOUR.
William Etty.	TOILET OF VENUS.
Clarkson Stanfield.	COAST OF NORMANDY.
Sir Chas. Eastlake.	BRUTUS — LUCRETIA.

One feature which may prove of particular pleasure to both collectors and students of local art is our practice, whenever possible, of devoting one picture gallery to the painters of the Liverpool School. We are, when speaking of this school, customarily concerning ourselves with the artists of the period 1810—1867, in fact we might say that the Great Exhibition of 1851 saw this local academy at its best. With the exception of few, such as William Huggins, the animal painter, James Campbell, H. B. Roberts, most of the school were essentially landscape painters. Many found their inspiration in the local countryside and in North Wales. At a date long in advance of most schools, they paid little attention to the conventional canons of art and painted direct from Nature. This perhaps is the reason which, together with the realisation that so many of the scenes painted are of our own favoured beauty spots, warms so many visitors towards them. Our well-known work "MORTON BEFORE CLAVERHOUSE" by W. L. Windus, known and appreciated as a pre-Raphaelite figure painter, has just been on view in London at an exhibition staged by the Contemporary Art Society.

It might perhaps not be entirely inappropriate to digress somewhat chronologically and to mention here the activities of the present-day group of workers who may be regarded in many ways as the modern counterpart of the Liverpool School. I refer of course to the Wirral Society of Arts who, with their annual exhibition held at the Williamson Art Gallery, are definitely attracting the attention of Northern Art circles. The aims of these two schools (and I do not think that I anticipate unduly in thus referring to the Wirral Society as a school of thought), follow quite similar pathways for Mr. Will C. Penn, their leader and guide, has said but very recently, "Free of alien fashions, we wish to paint our own subjects in our own way, and we hope by a study of Nature and tradition (mostly the former) to find a road that will lead us to new pastures, delightful and natural to us and to a manner of execution that will express ourselves."

"THE MUSLIN DRESS" by P. Wilson Steer, the artist who, born in Birkenhead in 1860, was to be described as the greatest landscape painter since Turner and Constable, is yet another well-known work favoured by visitors and much admired by Steer enthusiasts. This, Steer's "tour-de-force," was bequeathed to the Corporation of Birkenhead by the late Lord Leverhulme, of whose generosity, interest and influence so much has already been admirably written.

The water colour collection, which has received special attention from successive curators, occupies 3 picture galleries and is arranged in chronological order. Among the well-known artists represented are Turner, de Wint, Cox, Sir D. Y. Cameron, Sir A. M. Callcott, Girtin, Sir W. Russell Flint, Kate Sargeant, Talbot Kelly and others. It can be safely claimed that the art and practice of watercolour painting has been carried out more fully and with a greater measure of success in England than in any other country: it is a branch still flourishing. While it is no doubt true to say that most of our English masters have won their world-wide esteem by virtue of their works in oils, yet so many of them were trained as water colour painters. Turner is just such a case. It was this water colour school that originated the forward movement in landscape painting that was to wield so great an influence over the art of the last century.

The collection in the Williamson Art Gallery is reputed to be among the finest of early British water colours. It is from this collection that the Empire Arts Loan Exhibition so freely choose when building up their travelling loan exhibitions to tour the countries of New Zealand and Australia.

Room IV quite possibly possesses an air of familiarity which is shared by no other portion of the gallery: it is an atmosphere which, presenting a certain nostalgic appeal to the old, at the same time awakens an intense interest among the younger visitors. But it certainly has a great attraction for all who know Birkenhead and the surrounding countryside for here will be found those exhibits illustrating the history, the growth and the development of Wirral. The prints and the etchings, the views of old Birkenhead, of old Tranmere, long before the days of municipal incorporation, provide a record of the town conducive to much musing and reminiscing. The many ship models, fascinating to young and old alike, are a constant reminder of the part played by Birkenhead in the developing of the world's sea-borne commerce.

Many visitors will no doubt be equally delighted with the numerous exquisite examples of the potter's art, particularly with those originating from the Town's own pottery, the Della Robbia Works. During the years 1894—1906, this factory, under the personal supervision of Mr. Harold S. Rathbone, was to become very well-known, receiving the support of a considerable number of the leading artists and architects of the day. The leader and originator, Mr. Rathbone, himself a pupil of Ford Madox Brown,

was greatly under the influence of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and the effects of his leanings may be seen not only in his own work but also in the designs of his fellow workers. Other special features in the ceramic collections are examples from the Liverpool potters of Herculaneum pottery and the work of Sadler and Greene. Other exhibits are of Wedgwood ware, Staffordshire lustre, with an excellent collection of early Staffordshire figure pottery, while from further afield there are specimens of Japanese, Persian, early Viennese, Venetian, Dresden and French pottery.

It seems inevitable that any attempt to describe or even to introduce an Art Gallery in terms no matter how general the result must resolve itself into a minor catalogue or guide and more particularly when the writer happens also to be the Curator, he must of necessity close his ears somewhat to the demands of a large section of his gallery's contents for attention. Because of this and because, equally cogent, of the limited space available, I can but briefly refer to the glass ware, the etchings and engravings, the natural history section and in fact the general museum side of our institution. The only amplification that I can offer is to each and everyone "Come and see for yourself."

I should like, however, to make one or two observations concerning the role played by the Williamson Art Gallery in making available for the public the excellent travelling exhibitions organised by the various organisations such as the Arts Council, the Art Exhibitions Bureau and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Modern art especially forms largely the subject of such temporary exhibitions so that the gallery displaying not only satisfies the ever present public interest in the work of the present day artists but also acts as the very necessary shop window for that artist. Enthusiasts interested in the work of the moderns may well like to note the following exhibitions and the dates of display.

ART EXHIBITIONS BUREAU. ROYAL ACADEMY (23rd March — 26th April, 1952).

ART EXHIBITIONS BUREAU. NEW ENGLISH ART CLUB (3rd — 31st May, 1952).

It is often in connection with exhibitions, such as the six that are forthcoming from the Victoria and Albert Museum, that special attention is paid to schoolchildren, when organised parties accompanied by teachers visit the Art Gallery. We have here the first steps towards educating the future general public to a higher standard of art appreciation and culture.

The hours of opening are as follows:—

OPEN WEEKDAYS 10 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. (April to September).

" " 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (October to March).

OPEN SUNDAYS 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

# The Archæologist in the Field

(Part II)

## A. An introduction to the study of Romano - British Coarse Pottery

By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E.

## B. The Technique of Barrow Excavation

By J. D. JONES, B.A., F.S.A. (Scot.)

### A.

THE excavator on a Roman site in Britain is usually blessed with an abundance of datable material. On a large scale project the very quantity is likely to cause grave difficulties in washing, repairing, sorting, drawing and publishing unless the excavator has willing and able helpers. The bulk of this material will be pottery and it is essential that all students of the archaeology of this period should familiarise themselves with this material.

Coarse ware is defined as any pottery found on Romano-British sites other than the red-glazed Samian ware. The name Samian is derived from a remark by the Elder Pliny that a red-glazed pottery was made on the Isle of Samos. Early antiquaries concluded that similar pottery, found in Britain, came from the same source. German antiquaries rejecting this false belief coined the term *Terra Sigillata* or "figured ware." As most of this pottery is not decorated this term is also incorrect and in Britain the name Samian has become so widely used and it is so unlikely that any mistaken idea as to the production centre will arise, that it continues in favour. Unfortunately the difficulties in the way of this study are considerable. This is due to several factors. Firstly the variety of type, shape and fabric of the vessels is so great that no synthesis has so far been attempted. The chapter by Collingwood in his book "The Archaeology of Roman Britain" has since proved to be much over simplified. Studies of the subject within recent years have shown that there are far greater local variations in production than has been hitherto realised and parallels should always be sought from the nearest excavated site.

A great quantity of pottery has been published in excavation reports but much of this information is useless as the material is not stratified and only complete or unusual vessels are illustrated. The most useful groups of pottery one can study are those from pottery kilns. Here one has a contemporary group covering probably a period of at most five to ten years if the kiln is an isolated one, but a cautionary note must be added. The potsherds found on these sites are wasters, i.e. pots which have broken or cracked in the kiln during firing and which the potter has rejected. Their shapes may be distorted and the sherds over-fired by their

contact with the hot ashes. In this condition the fragments may bear little resemblance to the finished product.

When the Romans conquered Britain they found that the quality of native pottery varied from the elegant wheel-turned products of the Belgic areas of the south-east to the crude hand-made wares of the less civilised parts some of which in the mountainous areas still maintained late Bronze Age culture. The position is complicated by the introduction of imported wares such as Arretine from northern Italy and Samian from southern Gaul in the course of trade before the invasion. These vessels as well as glass and metal ware are found in quantity in the south-east and a small quantity penetrated into the north and midlands.

The quantity and quality of native pottery was not sufficient to satisfy the Roman military needs. The legions set up their own depots and made reasonably good imitations of Samian ware and Terra Rubra and Nigra. This industry continued to the beginning of the second century. The native pottery industry with the probable introduction of Gallic craftsmen had developed by the time of Hadrian to the point when the supply of coarse wares was sufficient for the needs of the permanent garrison as well as those of the civilian population. A policy seems to have been initiated about this time of buying from these private concerns and the military depots ceased making pottery.

The position in the second half of the first century can be summarised as follows:

- (a) There was a greatly increased importation from Gaul not only of Samian but of mortars and probably many other wares;
- (b) distinctive legionary pottery made near the fortresses imitating Belgic and Gallic wares;
- (c) the native potters attempted as quickly as possible to adapt Roman provincial styles into which they grafted their own traditional forms.
- (d) Gallic potters of coarse wares, migrated to Britain to take full advantage of the new market and cut transport costs.

The result is a queer mixture of the fine products of South Gaul nestling with coarse black gritty pre-historic looking wares of native manufacture. By the end of the century these differences were being smoothed out and the second century sees a ubiquity of fabric and styles. Mass production gradually lowered the standards of the Samian pottery and at the same time the native and immigrant potters improved the quality of coarse wares. The styles and fabrics became uniform over the whole of the province and between say 80 and 160 A.D. one can use some types for dating wherever they are found in Britain, but there were many types which are only found in localised areas even in this period.

One of the most important developments was the introduction of black burnished wares with looped and latticed decoration.

In the form of dishes and cooking-pots they rapidly superseded the earlier wares in brown, red and grey fabrics and have become one of the main keys for the dating of second-century sites.

After the troubles at the end of the Antonine period and the *Pax Romana* seemed to be a fading reality, the position changed. Continental imports appear to diminish and almost cease. Towards the end of the 2nd century Britain endured several serious wars on the frontier culminating in A.D. 196 with the vain attempt of Albinus to gain the purple in the process towards which he stripped the province of troops. These difficulties may have had a serious effect on trade and caused the drying up of pottery imports but it might equally well have been a new fiscal policy introduced by Severus in his civil reorganisation of the province. It is doubtful if we will ever know: what is certain is that Britain in the 3rd century was forced to use home products. Under this stimulus the British potters and Rhenish immigrants rose to the occasion. It was natural that they should imitate the most up-to-date continental styles. By the middle of the 2nd century the red glazed Samian had become very coarse and barbarised and it is not to be wondered that it went out of favour. In the Rhineland round Neiderbieber and Trier there had developed a pottery technique of a different type, producing smaller vessels with thin walls with a dense metallic lustre decorated with white paint or a thick strip applied *en barbotine*, i.e. squeezed through a funnel like the decoration on iced cakes. This gave a greater freedom to the craftsmen than the applied reliefs or stamped decoration at that time used by the Samian potters. These Rhenish wares came first into Britain at the end of the 2nd century although they were being made in Germany much earlier and it is these vessels which the native potters set about imitating. The result was the so-called Castor ware. While there is no doubt that a considerable pottery industry existed in the Nene valley near the Romano-British town of *Durobrivae*, similar pottery was produced at other centres on the east side of the country. The distribution of this pottery has yet to be viewed critically but at present it does not seem to be very even and it demonstrates a process which had already become well established, the distribution was becoming localised. While examples appear on the northern frontier, few are found in Wales or Chester and it may eventually be discovered that the main use of this ware was confined to the Lower Province.

The early vessels in this ware are very fine, consisting usually of floral scrolls applied in a free style, but animals are also common and the hunting scenes show an aesthetic lithe vigour which is very satisfying (Pl. 4a). Attempts were made at human figures, in the form of gladiators but these are usually of clumsy execution.

The sudden, and apparently inexplicable appearance of these vessels has given rise to the theory of a Celtic Renaissance. The hunt cup and scrolls certainly show freedom of style greatly removed from the highly formalised classical motifs used by the

Samian potters but it is due entirely to the introduction of the barbotine technique in the hands of competent craftsmen inspired, maybe, with the prospect of an expanding market.

Second century developments can be summarised as follows:—

- (1) The legionary depots ceased production.
- (2) Many shapes and fabrics became ubiquitous over the whole country.
- (3) Burnished black fabric in cooking-pots and dishes introduced about the time of Hadrian.
- (4) Imported wares by the end of the century diminished in quantity and the quality deteriorated.
- (5) Fine thin-walled Rhenish beakers with a high metallic lustre were imported after c. 180 A.D.; at the same time, colour-coated wares with barbotine decoration were being made in the Castor region and probably elsewhere.

The production of fine Castor wares did not continue for very long, the absence of continental competition probably made the craftsmen slipshod and careless. The story of the industry of the third century like everything else of that period is obscure but it seems as if barbotine work gave place to paint as the only decorative feature (Pl. 4b). The technique of colour-coating the surface of vessels persisted and those wares with an almost metallic lustre in browns, chocolate and purple surfaces contrast strongly with those of the earlier centuries.

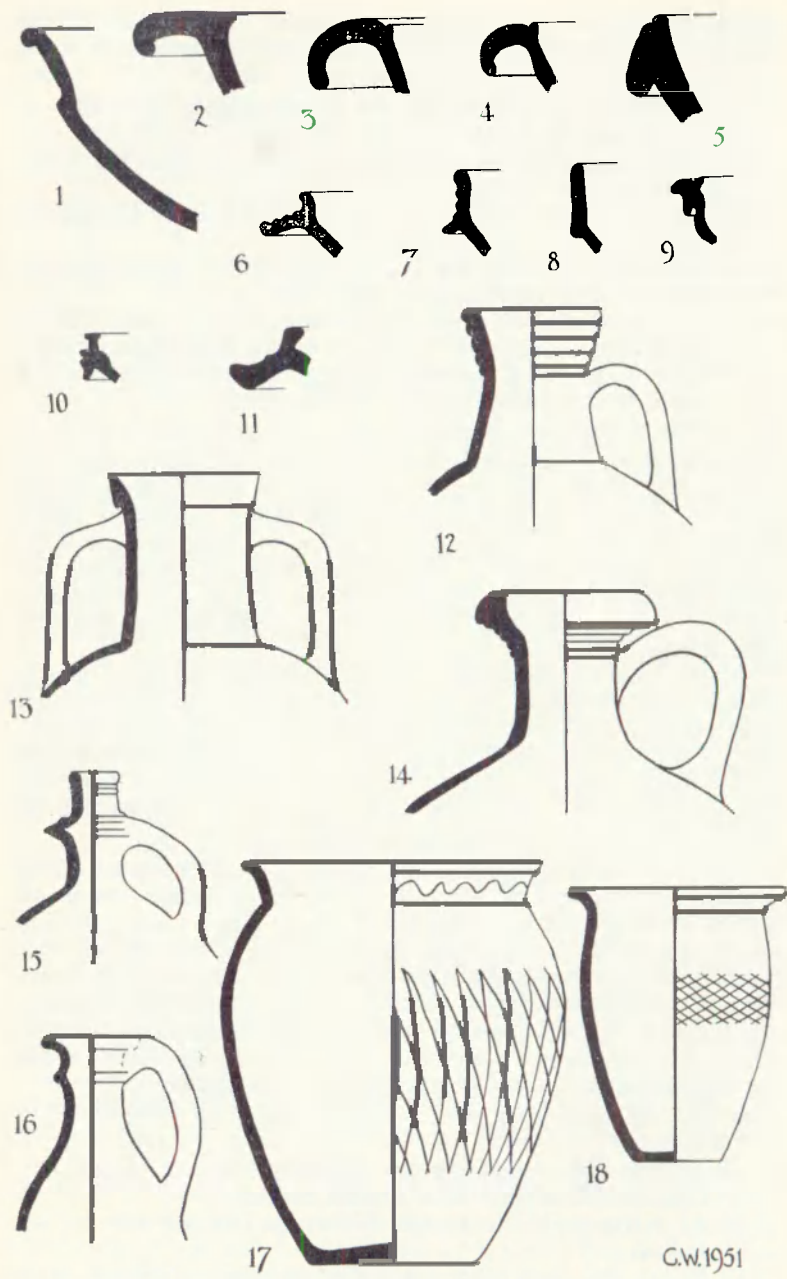
Apart from a perceptible thickening and coarsening of vessels there is little change in the products of the late fourth from those of the late third century. While there are no new types, except the heavy calcite-gritted cooking-pots which appear during the course of the fourth century, some forms tend to disappear. A tendency appeared for bowls and mortars to develop fantastic rim-formations and a heavy use of paint on internal surfaces.

The main centres of production appear to be such wastes as the desolate Yorkshire Moors and the New Forest where groups of potters worked together perhaps for safety, each family peddling their wares as far as their pack animals would take them. In these last centuries the regional characteristics became most marked and are apt to confuse a worker unused to the area. The New Forest products did not penetrate far north of the Thames and those of the Yorkshire kilns south of the Humber. There are probably other considerable groups in other parts of the country waiting discovery and until much work is done, it is difficult to gain a comprehensive view of the industry and its products.

Third century development can be summarised as follows:—

- (1) Continental imports cease almost entirely.
- (2) All wares tended to become thicker, coarser and were harder baked.
- (3) Paint and rouletting gradually replaced barbotine as a decorative feature.





G.W.1951

Fig. 1.

- (4) The counter-sunk handle and ring-neck flagon appear towards the close of the century.
- (5) Industries became established in the New Forest and in Yorkshire, supplying neighbouring areas and causing greater local variations in shape and decorative style.

The only way the archaeologist can come to know pottery types and fabrics sufficiently well to be able to date them, is by handling large quantities and studying the changes in form throughout the period. Published accounts give only the shape of vessels; fabric and surface texture and decoration are equally important. Visits to local museums are essential to see and if possible handle specimens, especially complete vessels for most excavations yield only sherds which cannot be identified unless the whole shape of the vessel is known.

Better still the beginner should undertake a small scale excavation and make himself responsible for publishing the results. In this way he will have to handle the pottery, draw it and find parallels. The best kind of excavation is undoubtedly that of a pottery kiln as this will give him an intimate knowledge of the local products at a particular period and also add to the sum of general knowledge, an important factor in our present state of ignorance.

## APPENDIX A.

*Notes on some types of Romano-British coarse ware. (Fig. 1).*

**T**HE *Mortar*, a heavy bowl used for pulverising food with the fingers and cheese making, was used throughout the occupation and undergoes a change of shape. It was thought at one time that these changes could be used within narrow limits for dating purposes. (*Wroxeter*, I and *Margidunum Ant. J.*, xxiv, 45). Unfortunately these early hopes have not been realised and it becomes increasingly clear that some types survived a long time after new forms had come into existence and the later vessels bear local characteristics. This short summary can serve only as an introductory guide to these complexities and perhaps illustrate the dangers for the unwary.

The first type illustrated (No. 1) was in use in the middle, but tends to die out before the end, of the first century. (*Camulodunum* Type 191 and *Corfe Kiln Ant. J.*, xv, 47). Contemporary with this is the hooked rim type which remained popular until the end of the second century. Some of the early varieties have a flat-topped rim (No. 2 from *Wroxeter*) and there is a general tendency in the second century for the bead to become more prominent (Nos. 3, from *Wroxeter* and 4 from *Balmuildy*). The Claudian—Neronian examples can sometimes be distinguished by the absence of grit on the inner surface which, instead, is roughened by horizontal rilling. At the end of the second century a new type of flattened hook with a predominant bead rim appears (No. 5 S. Carlton Kiln *Ant. J.*, xxiv, 139) a forerunner of the

fourth century wall-side type, but the hook rim was by no means finished. At some time in the 3rd century the rim tended to stiffen and it was decorated with corrugations to form the well-known hammer-head type which persisted to the end of the occupation (Nos. 6 and 7 from the same kiln — Swanpool *Ant. J.*, xxvii, 65). It is not difficult to see how these tendencies gave shape to the wall-side mortar of the fourth century (No. 8, *Lydney Park*) but there were also degenerate and perverse developments of the flange into angular forms which vary with the locality (No. 9 Yorkshire *Arch. J.*, lxxxix, 235; No. 10, *New Forest*, Pl. xa; No. 11, *Gt. Casterton* 1951, Fig. 9). A feature of these late mortars, wherever they are found in Britain, is the decorative use of paint in lines and splashes over the flange.

*Flagons.* A narrow-necked vessel for holding liquids also had extensive use during the occupation but there were several different types and the changes are not so clear. Several tendencies can be noted, for example, the so-called screw-necked type in the first century had a number of equal sized rings (No. 12 from *Camulodunum*) but by the middle of the second century the top ring became predominant (No. 14 from *Balmuildy*) and the others reduced to mere grooves. Some of the mid-first century vessels also tend to be pear-shaped, whereas later examples are usually globular in shape. Late third and fourth century examples show clear distinctions. Almost all flagons are in this period colour-coated, whereas the earlier vessels were in cream or red wares. There is also a tendency to decorate the body with floral scrolls in white paint (Pl. 4b). Vessels tend to become thinner in the neck (No. 16 from *Gt. Casterton*) and the ring-necked flagon appears for the first time (No. 15 from *Gt. Casterton* 1951). The shapes of some of these vessels are much akin to the pewter types of the period. The handles, which in the first century are more angular in form (No. 13), become curved by the second century (No. 14) and the fourth century types are often fixed to the top of the rim (No. 16) but this characteristic has first century predecessors (Holt 116, *Y Cymmrodor* XLI and *C.A.J.* 38, fig. 10. No. 10).

One of the most valuable dating guides is the cooking-pot with trellis decoration. Although vessels of this shape appear in Flavian deposits, the decorative feature does not appear to have been used until the beginning of the second century. The early types are on grey and red fabrics but by the middle of the century, the pots had a dense black burnish. In the valuable deposit dated to the end of the second century from *Corbridge* (*A.A.A.*, xxviii, 186) it is stated that the wavy line on the neck and dense black fabric are characteristic only of cooking-pots of the second and third quarters of the second century (No. 17 from *Wroxeter* is a post-Hadrianic context). The vessels underwent a change in the third century, the rim became more everted and its diameter exceeded that of the girth and the angle of the



(a)



(b)

THE WILLIAMSON ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM, BIRKENHEAD.

Reproduced by kind permission of Mr. G. Stratton, A.L.A., Curator.



(a) THE WILLIAMSON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM, BIRKENHEAD.  
Photo by kind permission of Mr. G. Stratton.



(b) EXCAVATION OF THE PRIMARY BURIAL PIT AT  
YSCEIFLOG BARROW, FLINTSHIRE.  
By kind permission of The Editor of *Archaeologia Cambrensis*



EXCAVATION OF A TWO-PERIOD BARROW NEAR ODOORN, HOLLAND.

By kind permission of Prof. Van Giffen and the *Nieuwedrentsche Volksalmanak*.



(a) A FRAGMENT OF A CASTOR WARE WITH A HUNTING SCENE  
*en Barbotine* FROM RICHBOROUGH.

By kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries, London.



(b) A LATE THIRD CENTURY VESSEL  
WITH PAINTED SCROLLWORK.

By kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries, London.

trellising was flattened (No. 18 from *Wroxeter*). These late types are not so common as those of the second century and the trellising tends to vanish by the middle of the fourth century, although the form persists (*Lydney Park*, Fig. 26).

## APPENDIX B.

As emphasised in the main article, it is important that comparative material should always be sought from the nearest sites and pottery from distant parts of the country used with discretion. For the benefit of the beginner wishing to make a preliminary study of the subject, the following are a few references to dated pottery groups.

Some large scale excavations have produced pottery of several periods. Among the most useful of these are the Research Reports published by the Society of Antiquaries (obtainable from Bernard Quaritch, 11, Grafton Street, New Bond Street, London, W.1.), especially *Richborough* I, II, III and IV, *Wroxeter* I, II and III and *Leicester*, this last report is rich in illustrated pottery.

### SPECIAL GROUPS.

CLAUDIAN—NERONIAN (c.40-70 A.D.)

*Camulodunum* (Research Report No. XIV, 1947) Corfe Kiln. *Ant. J.*, xv, 42.

Belgic and early pottery at N. Ferriby, *Yorks. Ant. J.*, xviii, 262.

Claudian Well at Margidunum, *J.R.S.*, xiii, 114.

The origin of the Coritani, *Ant. J.*, xxi, 323.

FLAVIAN (c. 70-100 A.D.) Caerleon (mostly legionary wares).

*Arch. Camb.*, lxxxvii, 265.

Chester (including Holt fabrics) *Liverpool Annals*, xviii, 113 and xxiii, pls. xiv, xv, xvi.

Caerhyn, *Arch. Camb.*, 1934, 37.

Holt legionary depot, *Y Cymmrodor*, xli.

TRAJAN—HADRIAN (c. 100—140 A.D.)

Brecon, *Y Cymmrodor*, xxxvii.

*Gellygaer*, by J. Ward, 1901.

ANTONINE (c. 140—190 A.D.)

*The Roman Fort at Balmuildy* (1922) by S. N. Miller.

*The Roman Fort at Cadder* (1933) by J. Clarke.

*The Roman Fort at Old Kilpatrick* (1928) by S. N. Miller.

S. Carlton Kiln, *Lincs. Ant. J.*, xxiv, 129.

Corbridge, *A.A.3.*, viii, 174.

Verulamium (Research Report No. XI) and *Ant. J.*, xxi, 271.

SEVERAN (c. 190—220).

Corbridge, *A.A.4.*, xxviii.

*Lincoln Race Course Kiln 1950* published by the University of Nottingham.

Birdoswald, *C. and W.A.A.* n.s. xxx.

LATE THIRD CENTURY.

Verulamium, *Arch.* lxxxiv, 213.



Lockleys, Welwyn, *Ant. J.*, xviii, 339.

EARLY FOURTH CENTURY.

Swanpool Kiln, Lincoln. *Ant. J.*, xxvii, 61.

Margidunum, *J.R.S.*, xvi.

*The Roman pottery at Norton, E. Yorks.* (Roman Malton and District Report No. 7\*).

*New Forest Potteries*, by Heywood Sumner, 1927.

LATE FOURTH CENTURY.

Yorkshire Signal Stations. *Arch. J.*, lxxxix, 203.

*Crambeck, Yorks.* (Roman Malton and District Report No. 1\*) and *Ant. J.*, xvii, 392.

*Throlam, Yorks.* (Roman Malton and District Report No. 3\*).

*Langton Villa, Yorks.* (Roman Malton and District Report No. 4\*).

*Malton, Yorks.* (Roman Malton and District Report No. 2\*).

*Gt. Casterton, Rutland*, 1951. published by the University of Nottingham.

*Lydney Park* (Research Report No. 9).

\*These Reports are obtainable from the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 10, Park Place, Leeds.

B.

**A**MONG the most striking prehistoric remains in the country are the burial mounds of the Bronze Age (c. 1800-500 B.C.) known as tumuli or barrows. Although we are confronted with an almost complete absence of the dwelling sites of this period, the distribution of its interments is extensive, and the map (Fig. 2) shows the many examples in Cheshire.

The form of these barrows varies with the locality, and with the ritual of the people who built them. The most common type is known as a bowl barrow; this is a circular mound of earth bounded by a ditch, and usually has a diameter of about forty feet, though this varies considerably. The primary burial is near the middle, often in a pit dug into the subsoil, but sometimes directly on the old soil surface. It may be enclosed in a cist of stone slabs or of timber, and covered with a pan of hard clay. In the earlier barrows (1800-1600 B.C.) the burial is usually by inhumation, but afterwards cremation becomes more prevalent.

Fortunately for dating purposes, the burials are usually accompanied by various objects, no doubt for use in future life. These take the form of pottery and personal ornaments, such as brooches. The pottery, in particular, forms a typological series datable with some accuracy, ranging from the well-fired beakers of the early Bronze Age to the crude cinerary urns which contained the cremations of the Middle Bronze Age. One of these urns, found recently at Kelsall, was illustrated on page 27 of the first number of the "CHESHIRE HISTORIAN."

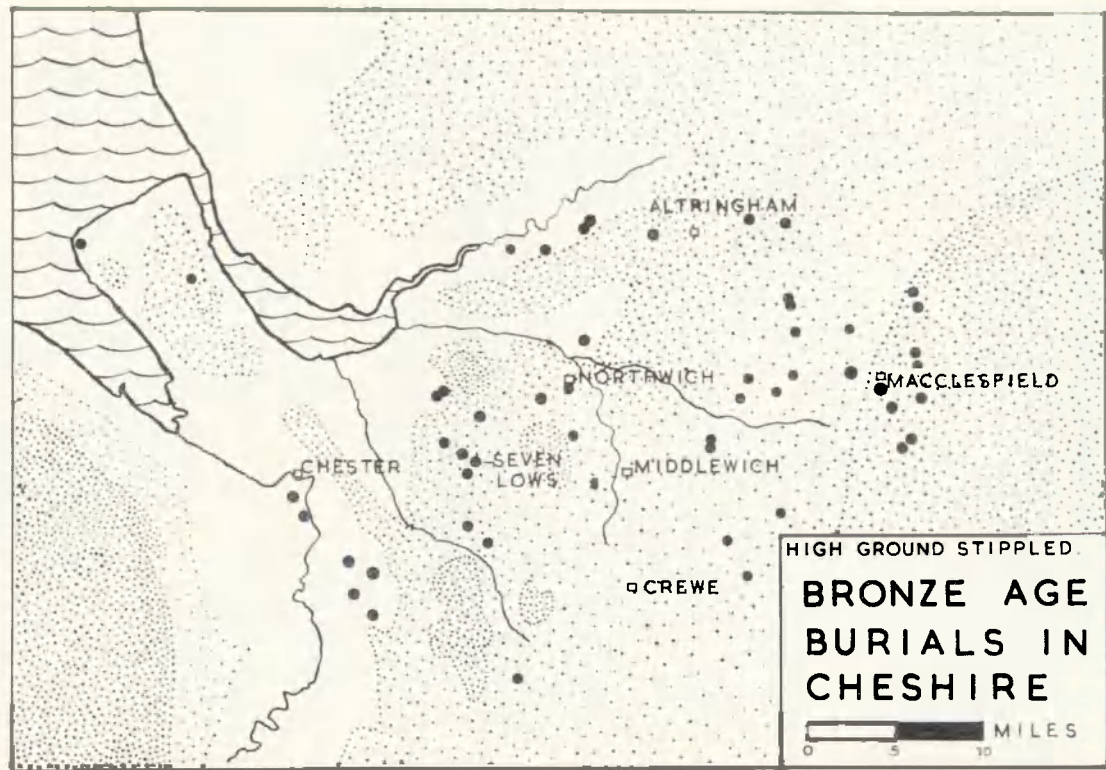


Fig. 2.

One variant of the burial mound is the bell barrow. This is identified by a distinct berm or bank between the mound itself and the ditch. Another type, the disc barrow, comprises a circular ditch with a low bank on the outside, enclosing a flat area with a small mound in the middle. This is usually found to contain a cremation.

*With the growth of interest in antiquities in the late 18th century it was natural that barrows should receive much attention. Those whose mounds had not been ploughed away were easily visible. Many lay in groups convenient for digging, such as those at Winterbourne Stoke near Stonehenge in Wiltshire, and the "Seven Barrows" at Lambourn in Berkshire (a group which numbers over thirty).*

The early barrow diggers used no finesse. Their whole effort was directed to the purpose of extracting the burial and its accompanying deposits from the middle of the mound, and they did this by sinking a vertical shaft from the top. This method was quick but inefficient, because it uncovered only a small area of the original subsoil, and often missed the primary burial by a few feet. Sometimes the burial that was recovered was a later insertion, with no relation to the actual building of the barrow. Often the directors would not appear on the site until the actual burial was reached, by which time the workmen might have shattered all the pottery. Grinsell, in "The Ancient Burial Mounds of England," describes the orgies of 18th century excavation, and quotes an account of Faussett's excavations on a site in Kent in 1759: "At the next stroke or two, part of a skull and a few vertebrae of the neck (all much decayed) were indiscriminately with the soil cast down into the pit, without the least care or search after anything. That concern, they said, they left to me and my servant at the bottom, who were nearly blinded with the sand falling on us, and in no small danger of being knocked on the head, if not absolutely buried, by the too zealous impetuosity of my honest labourers." Even at this early stage, however, Dr. Stukeley occasionally recorded the stratification of the mound. But not until the excavations of Canon Greenwell in the second half of the 19th century do we find a minute and careful record of work on barrows, and long before this the devastation was widespread. In many of our surviving barrows a cup-shaped depression in the top is evidence of the acquisitive operations of earlier diggers. Occasionally the mound was dug by driving in a tunnel from the side. This method was justifiably used on Silbury Hill, Wiltshire, which, standing 130 feet high and covering an area of five acres, is the largest prehistoric artificial mound in Europe.

With the elaboration of excavation technique in the present century, a careful method of barrow excavation has been evolved. Attention is directed not merely to the burial but to the entire mound. The aim is to expose the ground plan, while obtaining

as many sections across the mound as possible, for only these can show clearly the various stages of its construction. The ideal objective is to dig away the entire tumulus, as Sir Cyril Fox did at Ysceifiog, Flintshire, in 1925. The method he employed was to lay out two parallel lines, on either side of the barrow, marked with pegs at intervals of a foot. The pegs on one side were then joined by string with the corresponding pegs on the other, thus dividing up the barrow into slices of a foot in width. The first strip was then dug carefully down to the natural subsoil, maintaining a vertical face in front and throwing the soil behind. When this was finished the section was advanced, a foot at a time, until the primary burial pit in the middle was reached. The section near the pit was then worked forward a few feet so that the whole of the burial cist appeared in plan before it was dug out (Plate 2b). The advantage of this method was that a section was visible throughout the work, and the depth and position of finds was easily recorded.

Often, however, limitation of resources or the size of the site preclude such a complete treatment, and we have now to consider

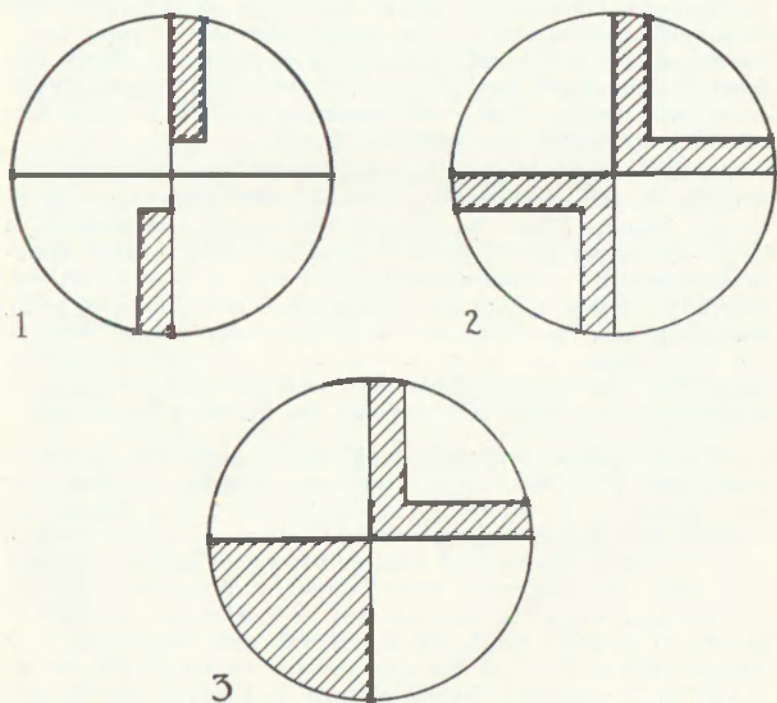


Fig. 3.

a method of excavation which gives the maximum information in a shorter time. There are several questions which the excavator must try to answer. For instance, does the barrow represent more than one period of building? Was the mound constructed as soon as the burial had been made, or after an interval? Were any secondary burials accompanied by an enlarging of the barrow, or were they simply dug into the original mound? Finally, is there any trace of timber or stone structure in the burial pit, a concentric ring of posts, or a palisade in the barrow ditch?

The minimum requirements to provide this information are at least one complete section through the middle of the mound, and the excavation of one quadrant. The first stage is to lay out two lines at right angles, intersecting at the presumed centre of the barrow. Trenches, about four feet wide, are then dug down to the subsoil on alternate sides of one line, to within a few feet of the intersection (Fig. 3i). These are then advanced slowly until they meet in the middle, by which time some part of the primary burial should be visible. The next stage is to dig similar trenches at right angles to the first pair. There will now be two complete sections across the middle of the barrow (Fig. 3ii) and the various stages of its construction should be visible, the old turf lines showing as dark streaks in the section. The area of the primary burial can then be cleared, and one quadrant of the barrow dug down to the old soil level (Fig. 3iii) to find any traces of post or or palisade settings. Finally at least one of the trenches should be extended out across the barrow ditch.

An interesting technique was used by Professor Van Giffen of Holland in the excavation of a two-period barrow at Eppie's Bergje, Odoorn (Plate 3). Having cleared the top levels of a large earth barrow, he found underneath it an earlier stone-covered mound. He continued digging down to the old soil level, leaving the stones in their original positions, on columns of earth. By this method he preserved the shape of the mound while at the same time elucidating its plan and removing the primary burial from the centre. The same procedure can be followed to retain secondary interments dug into the barrow from the top.

Modern barrow excavation is, by earlier standards, extremely meticulous. This leads to a disquieting thought; we should be over-complacent in regarding modern technique as definitive. For example soil analysis and radio-carbon dating are in their infancy, while the study of cremated remains has yet to be fully explored. Meanwhile the number of intact barrows is diminishing, and the archaeologist might be well advised to confine his excavations chiefly to mounds which are threatened with destruction from various sources. Most of the sites recently excavated did in fact belong to this category. Several of them in England and Holland were destroyed during the construction of airfields in the last war, and were previously excavated. The latest barrow group to

be dug in this country, at Stanton Harcourt in Oxfordshire, is at present threatened by gravel quarrying operations. With the extension of housing schemes and other public works, many more barrows may have to be destroyed. In such cases it devolves on the archaeologist to reach for his trowel and ensure that they do not go unrecorded.

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## Excavations 1951—Chester

**T**HE excavations organised by the Chester Archaeological Society have this year been curtailed by the serious labour shortage in the city. The two sites investigated, have been the work of volunteers under the direction of Mr. Graham Webster, the Curator of the Grosvenor Museum.

Early in the year attention was directed at the S.E. corner of the legionary fortress. The discovery of the Agricolan turf rampart on the west side, in the Linenhall Street excavation of 1948, had made it imperative to test the presence of this feature elsewhere on the known circuit of the Roman defences. Sections were cut both inside and outside the internal angle tower and the base of the turfwork was found in position. This defined the position of the Agricolan defences, as being coincident with those of Trajan at this point and it became clear that it is probable that the initial legionary fortress occupies the same area as that of the first stone period of Trajan. This has yet to be proved for the North Wall and as soon as labour is available, this outstanding point can be cleared.

It was possible to study in detail the relationship between the turfwork and the stone wall at the south east angle. Conclusions were reached that the stone wall had been inserted in the front of the turfwork but the front line of the defences had been preserved.

The second excavation was directed at the Infirmary field where it was hoped to find a Roman burial. The area investigated on the southern boundary of the field produced the foundations of a substantial Roman building, probably a military store house, but to date, there are no indications of burials in the ground explored.

# Introduction to the Records of the City of Chester

BY MARGARET J. GROOMBRIDGE, M.A.,

CITY ARCHIVIST, 1948-1951

IT is to be regretted that only at very infrequent intervals has anything been written about the records which the City of Chester possesses. The number of people who can be said to have studied the City's records closely within the last hundred years number less than a dozen, but all honour is due to these few who were prepared to penetrate the dust in which they were kept and gave to the world much of its present knowledge of the civic history of Chester. Amongst them mention must be made of Rupert Morris, Thomas Hughes, and Frank Simpson. The only misfortune is that more was not printed.

Chester probably has one of the finest collections of borough records in the country and its various classes of documents are remarkably complete. It has charters dating from the 12th century, while its court rolls begin at the end of the 13th century. It is not alone among boroughs in having records as old as this, but in comparison with many counties they are certainly older. To understand the reason for this one must realise that the county with its comparatively vast area often had changing centres for holding the Sessions of the Peace, the main source for its records, in order to suit the convenience of people living in various parts of the county. Therefore, one can hardly be surprised if the Clerk of the Peace, who was responsible for keeping these records, mislaid some in the course of centuries. The borough, on the other hand, occupied only a small compact area and so could have a permanent central meeting place where its records could be kept. In the case of Chester this was the Treasury Chamber, a room in the Pentice, a building constructed on to the south side of St. Peter's Church and used for many civic purposes. It may, however, be difficult for some to appreciate why Chester's records have been so little consulted in the past when so much has survived, but when there was no-one whose specific task it was to care for them, it was inevitable that the minimum amount of attention should be given to these documents and that research students should not be welcomed.

This state of affairs is reflected in the past history of the records. Until 1500 it was largely the charters, court rolls and a few Assembly orders that were preserved, but it would seem that about that time, a more conscientious effort was made to keep all documents which were produced in the process of administering the City and from the 16th century they began to be kept in

increasing numbers. By 1600, their accumulation must have already become something of a problem. Even in 1576, Henry Hardware, mayor in that year, had a book of parchment bought in which he caused to be entered all the records of note which he thought magistrates should know about, as he said that the originals were little looked at and that it took time and trouble to search for them. The first list of the City's records, however, was not made until 1654 when Randle Holme (Harl M.S.S. 2056) undertook this task. He was most thorough in his work and put dates on many documents which today are often used as a clue when the original has become very faded. For his work, which took a year, he was paid £20, but even this amount was not obtained without his petitioning the Assembly for recognition of his trouble and threatening to "disist from further medlinge and surrender up my trust." In 1700 the records were again found to be in a state of chaos, for it was reported in that year that "the Treasury Chamber over the Pentice of this Citty is extreamly out of repair for want of backs to several presses and boxes therein." and that "many of the ancient records of this Citty have been eaten or consumed with rats or otherwise perished." It was consequently ordered that the presses should "with all convenient speed . . . be well and substantially repaired." In the process of this work, Holme's arrangement must have in all probability been upset, but it was not until 1762 that Thomas Brock, the then Town Clerk, was given 20 guineas for "his care and trouble in looking after and fixing the same (the records) in a regular manner." The list he made then survives in a Property Book of 1763 and one gains the impression that the list was compiled in a very casual manner and that Brock's chief interest was leases. Possibly the confusion in which the records have remained within recent years commenced at this period and matters were not improved when a further list was made in 1806, it is believed by the Lancaster Herald, at a time when the records were moved from the Pentice to the Exchange. As everything was done in haste it was inevitable that errors should have crept in which are only now being rectified.

In the last hundred years the City's records have been the victims of more than one incident. Several were taken to London in the 1840's for the purposes of lawsuits and some nearly lost, including the 17th century Assembly Book. They were only rescued by the Town Clerk, John Walker, in 1866 so that the list of the records made in 1853 by G. Tibbits notes their absence. This list was made within ten years of the fire which destroyed the Exchange, but unfortunately the only damage the records suffered then was from water, though that was bad enough. As a result all the documents were moved to the City Gaol, then on the site of the present Queen's School. There they remained until the Gaol was closed down in 1874 before they were returned to the new Town Hall and listed by J. C. Jeaffreson of the Historical



Manuscripts Commission in 1878. This list is the only one of the City's records that has ever been printed and though it has now been found to be not strictly accurate, it does give a comprehensive idea of the whole collection. An end to the misfortunes of the records had, however, not yet been reached. Another fire occurred in 1897 which necessitated a further arrangement and the list produced in 1906 by Mr. Fergusson Irvine as a result, is the latest one that has been made. Mr. Irvine was the first to recognise the considerable amount of misnaming that had arisen and been perpetuated owing to the speed with which the 19th century lists were made. He urged then that something should be done, but owing to the 1914-18 War no action was taken until the late Mr. C. T. Lamacraft began the enormous task of repairing the records in 1935. This chapter of incidents could probably find its parallel in other boroughs, but Chester is fortunate that so much has survived these perils. The great need at the present time is to get order out of chaos and to carry on with the repair work so that the whole collection may be made easily accessible for all to consult as soon as possible.

Perhaps it was to be expected that some of Chester's records should have become better known than others. Chief in this category are the charters, about which more has been printed than any other of the City's documents. They consist largely of grants to the Corporation, but there is also a miscellany of other deeds relating to the City's privileges. The earliest is a writ of Henry II of about 1176 protecting the trading rights of Chester in Dublin, which were later twice confirmed by King John. The first to grant civic privileges, however, were given by the Norman earls of Chester in the early 13th century, as the earldom did not come directly under the Crown till 1237 on the death of the last Norman earl. Within two years of this resumption of the earldom, a Mayor is first heard of acting as witness to various deeds, though he is not mentioned in any charter until that of 1300, when Edward I granted the City considerable privileges. Further additions and confirmations of the City's rights continued to be sought and obtained throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, but it was only in 1506 that Chester gained its charter of incorporation from Henry VII. This charter laid down the full details of the City's constitution and mentioned for the first time, in several instances, privileges which had been enjoyed by custom for over two centuries already. So much did this charter merely write down custom, that where any variances occurred the Assembly considered itself at liberty to follow custom rather than the letter of the charter and it was not until the 18th century that this decision caused any trouble. The later charters were almost word for word confirmations of that of 1506, while the spate which came under Charles II and James II were typical of those granted by these monarchs to many other boroughs throughout the country and,

as elsewhere, were the cause of much dissension.\* Charters have always been valued by boroughs and consequently always well cared for, since on them were based all their rights and liberties. Through them could be obtained freedom from outside control, the right to levy their own taxes, to manage their own affairs and to elect their own officers. These privileges the Crown was not unwilling to grant as they were a means of gaining support and money. The case, however, was different if a local noble was the overlord of a borough, as he, being more on the spot, wished to exercise more control. Indeed, the considerable expansion of Chester's civic privileges came after Henry III took back the earldom into his own hands.

On these grants made in the charters hinge all the other main groups of records which have come down to us. Those relating to trade in the City are amongst the earliest. As I have mentioned above, the City's first royal grants were connected with this subject. Chester in the Middle Ages was one of the most important west coast ports, possibly second only to Bristol. Though it never achieved the greatness of some of the east coast ports which were nearer the European continent, nevertheless even the "Liber Luciani" written in the 12th century refers to ships coming to the City from the Baltic, Gascony, Spain, as well as from Ireland and the Welsh coast. Within the City itself, trade was early regulated by the grant of a Guild Merchant made by Earl Randle III about 1200, which controlled wages and the conditions of trading. This Guild, which had a common fund, was probably the negotiating body for the early charters and one of the first it is likely that it obtained, was the restriction of trade in the City to freemen except at the time of fairs. The mere fact that fairs were held in the City is a sign of its expanding trade and growth. By 1340 it was one of the towns under the Statute of Merchants where debts incurred by merchants of various towns could be enrolled to safeguard themselves and others. Later in the same century, the City was also given admiralty rights over the Dee estuary from Chester to Hoylake and so was enabled to regulate the shipping and collect customs from ships entering the port. The Wars of the Roses and the problem of silt in the River Dee affected trade in Chester rather seriously in the 15th century, but the Customs Entry Books do not give the impression that it was an idle port. In the following century, however, much money was spent on building a new quay at Neston. It was never a great success and during the course of the 17th century, there were several other schemes put forward for the better navigation of the river but nothing was done until 1732, when a new channel known as the New Cut was constructed diverting the main stream from the Wirral to the Flintshire shore. By then Liverpool had already become a dangerous rival to Chester and though

\*For further details about charters see the author's "Guide to the Charters, Plate and Insignia of the City of Chester."

ships continued to reach the City until the '80's of the last century, it was found that more money could be made from the land reclaimed in the estuary than from the shipping. The only people who in fact benefited from the treacherous state of the river were the smugglers, whom the 18th century files of Mayors' Papers show as landing wines, spirits, tea, coffee, Irish soap and so on, on the Wirral shore.

Another large section of the City's records are those accruing from the enforcement of order. There were at one time, in the 16th century, as many as five courts of law active in the City. The oldest is the Portmote Court which may have developed from the borough court of Norman times, the laws of which were mentioned in detail in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but from then there is a gap in our knowledge of over a century and only in the early 13th century are deeds again found mentioning the Portmote Court. During the course of this century, references to it become more frequent until in 1295 — not earlier as some authorities say — is found the first court roll. This court dealt with cases of debt and trespass and in particular with cases concerning real property and land. In the early days at least it was presided over by the Mayor and Sheriffs but as this court only met once a fortnight and every suit was protracted over several sittings, many cases were very prolonged.

The other early court is the Pentice Court, which took its name from the building where it was held. This court was, until comparatively recently, considered to be the oldest of the City's borough courts, but there is no evidence to support this. The only clue is a very fragmentary roll endorsed, probably by Randle Holme in 1654—10E.1. (1282). I have queried this date as the writing more closely resembles that of Edward II's reign and the dating on the Edward II rolls is very irregular and could easily be misunderstood. I would therefore give as the earliest surviving roll of this court that of 1297. The Pentice Court was probably formed during the course of the 13th century to relieve the Portmote of its numerous cases. Hence there was no rivalry between the two even though they dealt with the same type of case. As the Pentice Court, presided over by the Sheriffs, met three times a week and so could give speedy justice it was much liked, though cases concerning land were generally heard in the Portmote as there was less likelihood of error there. Those who have read Morris will note that he says the Portmote also dealt with cases "de pace ferenda" (keeping the peace). This information he probably got from the Mayors' Books but they were Crownmote, not Portmote, cases. The City had in 1300 been allowed by Edward I to appoint their own Coroners to try all crown pleas which had up till then been heard at the Castle before royal justices, but no Crownmote Court rolls survive till 1316. The only earlier references to these pleas are found in the occasional marginal reference "Corona" on the Portmote Court rolls. As the Portmote

and Crownmote are spoken of together in Henry VII's charter of 1506, it is probable that the sittings of these two courts were held together and hence the records were frequently combined. In this charter also, two new courts were formed, the Passage Court and the Court of Quarter Sessions. The Passage Court was for trial of cases of debt and has records surviving from 1540. It was held once every six weeks and was preceded by a feast known as the Passage Breakfast, which was the cause of much trouble later, as it was alleged that so much time was spent on the feast that the court never met. The Court of Sessions of the Peace, on the other hand, came in time to oust all the other courts in importance. It did not exist as early in Chester as in other boroughs in the country owing to Chester's position as a borough in a palatinate county, and therefore not entirely under the same government as the rest of the country until Tudor times. As the Justices of the Peace were all aldermen who had been mayors and included the then mayor, it was also necessary to have a man with knowledge of the law appointed as Recorder. Provision for this was therefore made in the 1506 charter, and according to it, the Recorder was to be chosen from amongst the Aldermen of whom he was one. Until after the Restoration his choice was left entirely to the City. At first this court dealt chiefly with minor cases and seems to have been largely concerned with presentments of non-freemen for selling ale and beer in the City, but later on cases of assault, public nuisances and irregular morals came within its purview. As various Acts of Parliament increased the duties of the Justices of the Peace, so the cases before this court became more and more numerous. The administration of the Poor Law, cases of bastardy, the administering of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and the registration of the rules of societies formed for social and economic purposes are but some of the matters with which they dealt. Thus the files of this court which survive from 1531 throw considerable light on life in the City, far more so than any other court records.

With regard to the general administration of the City, it is again to Henry VII's "Great Charter" of 1506 that one has to turn for a detailed list of the City's officers and how they were to be elected. The Mayor, who first appears as a civic official in Chester in the 13th century, seems in his early days to have held office for a considerable period, for in the first sixty years there were only four mayors. Even in the 14th and early 15th centuries it was not unusual for a Mayor to hold office for from three to four years and it was only later that it appears to have become the onerous duty which no man wished to hold for longer than one year at a time. From the 13th century at least, Chester has also had two Sheriffs appointed by the Assembly. Their duties in general resembled those of the sheriff of the county and Chester probably had its own, owing to its position as the capital of the County Palatine. This distinction it shared with other county

towns though today there are only fourteen boroughs in the country which still have their own sheriff. Both the Mayor and the Sheriff were assisted by a number of minor officials but there were other officers of importance such as the leavelookers, an office taken over from the Guild Merchant, the murengers, who superintended the repair of the walls and streets, and the treasurers, all of whom including the auditors, were chosen from among members of the Assembly. This Assembly, as the Council was then called, was composed of 24 aldermen and 40 common councilmen or councillors. It met generally on a Friday in the Common Hall of Pleas, which in the 17th century formed part of the present Music Hall Cinema, though on rare occasions meetings were held in the Pentice. It is difficult to generalise on how often the Assembly was held, as the intervals varied from a week to from two to three months. There was always a meeting on the first Friday after St. Dennis Day (October 9th), when the Mayoral election took place, but it was left to the discretion of the Mayor as to when others should be summoned. The Assembly Books, which begin in 1540 and continue down to the present day, throw considerable light not only on the civic administration of the town but also reflect the outlook of the Assembly. It reports not only the elections to vacant places in the Council and the appointment of various officials, the leasing of City property and the collection of money owing to the City, but also the more important decisions that had to be made relating to every aspect of City life, protecting the trade of the town, levying rates for the repair of the streets or walls and even laying down regulations for the prevention of the spread of plague. In the 17th century the Assembly was at the height of its power, but even then there was a tendency for membership to remain in the hands of a few families, a tendency which became more marked in the 18th century, when the Assembly became negligent of many of its duties and largely concerned itself with renewals of leases, admissions to freedom of the City, nominations to charitable trusts, and appointment of officials. Thus the growing needs of the town were left to be remedied by Acts of Parliament which authorised the establishment of committees, of which by the early 19th century there were two or three in being in Chester to deal with such problems as police, lighting, paving, and the River Dee, but it was not until 1835 with the Municipal Corporations Act that the Council was formed with its many Committees as we know it today.

It has only been possible here to touch on some of the City's records. From the beginning of the 19th century is found an enormous increase in the number of records as the number of social functions imposed on the Corporation increased, particularly in the fields of education and health. Much research work needs still to be done, however, before the information they contain is fully revealed.

# Marling in the Mouldsworth District

By S. JACKSON

**T**WO the man from the industrial areas the word 'pit' conveys the idea of a coal mine, just as to the actor it signifies the body of the theatre. In most parts of England a pond of water is . . . just a pond. But in Cheshire, where salt-mining has caused subsidence the ponds so-formed are called 'flashes,' and further west where there is no salt, but where every other field has its pond, these ponds are designated 'pits.' Originally they were marl pits which in course of time have filled with water. Before the days of artificial manure, this marl was dug and spread over the fields, and a good farmer, particularly on the light sandy soils, was keen on marling his land. For hundreds of years this custom prevailed, and as far back as the reign of Edward I in the 13th century, leases of land contained clauses obliging farmers to spread marl over their land.

The marl beds round Manley and Mouldsworth are in detached pockets, some small, some many yards in extent and in depth. The marl is a kind of clay containing calcium carbonate, potash, and phosphoric acid in varying proportions. Cases are on record where whole farms have been marled and the letting value of the land, as a consequence, has increased sometimes by as much as six-fold. As a general rule marl was spread over the fields in the immediate vicinity of the pit, but in some instances it has been carried for long distances.

Long ago marling was carried out by special gangs, generally about five in a gang, and these marlers had a most curious custom. One of the gang would be chosen as "Lord of the Pit" and he acted not only as leader but also in the capacity of treasurer. Visitors to the field in which they were working, or any passers-by, were expected to contribute something to the marlers. Holland, in his "Glossary" says that they did not ask for money and if that statement is correct, the marling custom was so well known that there was no need to ask; passers-by would know they were expected to give. But if they did not ask for money, they did the next best thing, for Dr. J. C. Bridge describes how when a passer-by made his appearance, the Lord of the Pit, carrying a marl hod on his shoulder, would approach the visitor, and usually he would receive sixpence or a shilling and in some cases even half-a-crown. Returning to the gang, the Lord of the Pit would then summon them together and they would form a ring. With great solemnity and in a loud voice the "Lord" would then announce the gift thus: "O Yes! O Yes! O Yes! This is to give notice that Mr. — has given us marlers part of a thousand pounds, and to whosoever

will do the same we will return thanks and shout." The men would then join hands and shout "Largesse! Largesse!" four times, and on the fourth shout they would give a lengthened and much louder shout letting the sound die away gradually. If the gift were sixpence the Lord would proclaim it part of a hundred pounds; if a shilling, part of a thousand pounds; and if half-a-crown should be given as long and as loud a shout as ever their breath would hold out. The Lord of the Pit kept the money until the next Saturday evening, when the gang would assemble in the nearest ale-house, drinking the healths in turn of all those who had given them money, when they once again renewed their ceremony of shouting.

Clearing the surface of a pit was known as "feying the pit," and the top layer thus cleared was termed the "fey." Spreading the marl was known as setting," and clearing out the mud and water from a pit was "ladling and slutching."

With the gradual but steady rise in wages and with the coming of comparatively cheap artificial manures, marling has gone out of fashion. There are still living a few of the older generation who can remember marl pits being worked, but some years ago I talked with one old man who had actually been a marler. He came of a marling stock, his father and his grandfather before him having been marlers. Over eighty years old at the time of our conversation, he told me he could remember how as a boy he had worked for his father who was foreman of the big government marling operation carried out at Organsdale, Houndslow, and the New and Old Pales, and for seven years at the Dark Ark Pit at Mouldsworth. He said his father had told him how many of the small pits dotted about in surrounding fields were dug out at the time of the French wars in "Boney's days." He knew all the details of the marling of over 248 acres of the Houndslow Farm and stated that nearly thirty thousand cubic yards were taken from the pit at the north corner of Castle Hill Wood.

Particularly interesting was his story of the origin of the Dark Ark Pit. When Mr. St. John Vigior Fox came to the Manley Estate, he was intrigued, one hot summer, to see on Peter Turner's farm a field where clover was growing. On this particular field the tenants of Manley Common Farm had previously never been able to grow clover.

"Then if that is marling," said he, "I'll marl the whole estate," and forthwith set to work. A large red and green marl patch was located at Dark Ark and in the next seven years or so, thousands of cubic feet of good marl were taken from this pit. When it was decided to marl Sunny Bank Farm, on Simond's Hill, a light railway track was laid down. At first the wagons were pulled by horses, but as the work proceeded these were superseded by a little engine called the "Firefly." Two enginemen worked the locomotive and several men were employed in "feying" and "getting" and "filling."

The man who gave me this information was a fine example of the hard-working, independent, self-reliant countryman of his day. I can see him now . . . his corduroy trousers tied with string at ankle and knee, his sun-browned face crowned with a well-worn picturesque old hat, his lips cleanshaven but his whiskers meeting under the point of his chin. When past his four score years he was still able to put in a full days work on a farm, and spend the long summer's evening scything his own little croft. When asked if he had ever heard any stories of the old-time marling gangs who used to elect one of their number as "Lord of the Pit," the old man beamed. "Why," said he in broad Cheshire dialect, "my grandfather was a Lord." Then he went on to tell details of his grandfather's life as a "Lord of the Pit." The old marlers were evidently a type of navy who prided themselves on their strength and their fighting ability. All their arguments and differences were settled by fierce battles and the Lord of the Pit was lord by virtue of brute force.

"You had to be careful," went on the old man, "what you said when you were working with a marling gang, or you would have to climb out and do battle on the top till one or other of you was beaten."

"And how did your grandfather get on in these fights?" I asked.

He gave me a look that plainly told me that I wouldn't have thought of asking such a question had I known his grandfather.

"Eh!" said he, "my grandfather was a big powerful man. Once Lord of the Pit he stayed Lord of the Pit and no one dare call him out." Then, ruminating a little, he struck another note with: "But they were big powerful men in those days, not like they are now, brought up on white bread." He attributed the "big powerful men" of his grandfather's day to the bread they ate, when, as he expressed it, there was "nowt taken out of it."

One of the last marling operations in the Mouldsworth district was carried out by the late Mr. Edwin Wright at Stone House Farm, now in the occupation of his son Mr. Bert Wright. At that time on the opposite side of the road, just below where the West Cheshire Water Works now stands, there was a common marl pit for use by anyone in the parish. Some seventy years ago Mr. Wright carted marl from this pit to spread on the Broad Oak Field and the Rose Meadow and we are given to understand that this was the last occasion on which marl was taken from this pit or from any pit in the district.



# Local History Scrapbooks

By WINIFRED M. COMBER

WOMEN'S Institutes are always encouraged to take an interest in the history, traditions and customs of their villages; several counties have already collected and published information obtained from members. Two years ago the Cheshire Federation inaugurated a "Village Scrap Book Competition" and issued suggestions on the kind of records required and where and how to collect them. Stress was laid on obtaining the personal memories of older people, on details of occupations and crafts as well as of interesting buildings, old documents and family traditions. The whole village could help in supplying material but the actual compiling and editing of the books must be undertaken by W.I. members only.

As a preparation for this competition, meetings held in Chester and Wilmslow were addressed by Mr. Arthur Oakes, B.A., Chairman of the Cheshire Local History Committee, Miss Anne Roper, F.S.A., Vice-Chairman of the Kent Local History Committee and Mrs. Davies, B.A. Copies of the questions issued by the Cheshire Committee to their local correspondents were also circulated to Institutes and proved most valuable. For the next twelve months those entrusted with the main responsibility for their respective Scrap Books were hard at work, visiting libraries or the Grosvenor Museum, inspecting church and parish records, interviewing anyone suspected of having a good story to tell. By the closing date of August 31st, 1951, no less than sixty-nine scrap books, many of them hand-bound, richly illustrated by sketches, photographs and maps and with letterpress amounting to several hundred pages, had been personally delivered at the W.I. County Office.

The problem of adjudication was solved by the generous offer of the Standing Conference for Local History to appoint a Panel of their members for this purpose. Final decision rested with Mr. P. D. Whitley, Chairman of the Executive, Mr. R. B. Pugh, Editor of the Victoria County Histories and the Hon. E. C. Corbett of the National Federation of Women's Institutes. They chose five prizewinners in the following order: Mobberley, Audlem, Barthomley, Lostock Gralam and Grappenhall; in addition Barrow, Nether Alderley, Prestbury, Brimstage, Great Budworth and Five Crosses were highly commended. All the Scrap Books were exhibited at the Annual Meeting of the Standing Conference in London and received high praise. The adjudicators have given their opinion that any amount of good material is available for publication. Some Institutes may decide on printed versions of their letterpress for local sale and the Cheshire County Executive is contemplating the issue of a small

volume with selected material from every scrap book. Exhibitions of the books, open to all W.I. members, are also being arranged.

In their historical researches many Institutes have traced their villages to the Domesday Book, Five Crosses has a dedication to the memory of Froda, a Saxon, the earliest known settler in this district (circa 908 A.D.); Grappenhall describes the finding of Bronze Age urns (1,000 B.C.): Delamere the discovery of a keeled dug-out Canoe on the shores of Oakmere and also the possibility of pile-dwellings of the early Iron Age having existed there: Lostock Gralam, in its history of Salt, goes back to the lagoon which once stretched from North Ireland to Staffordshire. Many pages are naturally given to churches and church registers: Barrow records rectors and curates from 1313: one was excommunicated by the Chancellor of Chester for never having taken any Services and yet continuing to hold office. In the churchwardens' accounts Barthomley found such characteristic entries as "to a poore woman that had her house burned 2s. 6d." and "For the heads of three hedgehogs 6d." Mobberley found penalties for failing to obey the order of burial in a woollen shroud and Prestbury the grant of licences to eat flesh in Lent on account of serious illness.

The search for the origin of Field Names has illuminated much local history. "Dead Man's Field" (Acton and Reaseheath) originated from an action in the Civil War, "Gambler's Field" (Audlem) was a favourite spot for cockfighting after that sport was made illegal.

Changes of occupation and the loss of village crafts are recorded in many books. Barthomley once had wheelwrights, tailors and shoemakers — one of the latter always said he lost 2s. out of every pair of shoes he made and when asked how he carried on said, "I couldn't if I did not make a lot." At Five Crosses when the Hiring Fair was held at dawn near the "Ring of Bells," orderly groups of weavers, shepherds, thatchers etc. assembled in appropriate costume carrying the tools of their trade, cowmen had a cow's tail or horns, cooks a long wooden spoon whilst a dairy-maid would be dressed in a blue gown, apron and bonnet and have a three-legged stool and bright milking pail. Poaching and salt smuggling added spice to life in Mobberley; on one occasion when foresters sought for a stolen buck the poacher's wife sat spinning and rocking a wooden cradle in which lay the buck covered over like a baby.

Old remedies include such gems as "For sore throat—apply to throat a piece of fat bacon and wrap round with a stocking that has been used the previous day" (Audlem), and "To stop bleeding hind round with cobwebs" (Minshull Vernon).

Well-illustrated nature notes form a feature of several books. There is something nostalgic in Grappenhall memories of nightingales round Undercliffe Lane Bridge and how "all kind of

transport came and blocked up the roads, from Wagonettes to Four-in-hands."

In the realm of sport pride of place goes to Audlem's account of Dr. Bellyse (b. 1783), the King of Cheshire's cock fighting fraternity. His picked birds were fed on eggs, bread, milk, butter and rhubarb. He recovered a stolen cock in Court because of its soothed behaviour in the hands of its real master and when he returned triumphantly with it to Audlem the church bells rang out.

The Bridgewater Canal has provided fascinating material for Grappenhall and Thelwall; before its construction cries of "River's rising, get your water" meant that inhabitants must rush out with buckets before flood water fouled their springs. One villager tells how her mother, determined to marry the man she loved, eloped by means of the Packet Boat on the canal.

Altogether this competition has revealed unsuspected literary and artistic gifts and stimulated local pride. Much unique information is now safely recorded and pages can be added with fresh discoveries and future happenings. Undoubtedly these scrap books will be treasured village possessions, giving infinite pleasure to readers of today and future generations.

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### CHESHIRE HISTORIAN No. 1

A very limited number of the No. 1 issue, Spring, 1951, of "THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN" at 2s. per copy, is still available, and can be obtained on application to The General Secretary, The Cheshire Rural Community Council, 22, Newgate Street, Chester.

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The Hon. Editor (G. B. Leach, Ashton, Chester) will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues. He wishes to express his thanks to all who have contributed articles or in any way helped him in his task, also to the Manchester University Press, the Manchester Public Library and the Chetham Society for the use of the cover block.

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CORRECTION. "The Cheshire Historian" No. 1, p. 38, eighth line of last paragraph. RICE should read PRICE.

## THE CHESHIRE CAT

THE problem of the Cheshire Cat is always likely to raise some interesting and imaginative speculations and suggestions. Mr. Oakes, in the last number, brought forward the idea that it originated from the heraldic bearing of the Norman Earls of Chester through the medium of the inn sign. It is true that lions and leopards often degenerate into cats but this is by no means peculiar to Cheshire. There is a "Red Cat" as far away as the Hague in Holland, while in England there are, or were, several similar creatures such as "The Cat" at Egremont, Cumberland, "The Black Cat" at Lancaster, and the famous "Cat and Lion" at Stockport. (Larboard and Hotten "*History of the Signboard*," 3rd ed., p. 197). One must seek an explanation more closely related to the county.

The simile of the grinning cat can be traced back to the late Middle Ages where the adjective was used in a more horrific sense than it is today and there was the implication that the person or creature referred to was showing his teeth rather than demonstrating a broad humorous appreciation. Shakespeare illustrates this point in Richard II (Act II, Scene II).—

" . . . . , for within the hollow crown  
That rounds the mortal temples of a king  
Keeps Death his count and there the antic sits  
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp."

It would be interesting and helpful to know just when the phrase was applied to the cats of Cheshire. The earliest reference noted by the writer is by Wolcott, (1770-1819) (*A New English Dictionary*)—

"Lo! like a Cheshire Cat our court will grin."

Perhaps readers can supply other and earlier examples.

The question concerning the origin of the phrase has been asked several times (*N & Q 1850, ii, 377 and Cheshire N & Q 1884, iv, 172*) but no satisfactory explanation has been forthcoming. It was stated in 1850, presumably by an inhabitant of Chester that—"some years since, Cheshire cheeses were sold in this town moulded into the shape of a cat, bristles being inserted to represent the whiskers." (*N & Q 1850, ii, 412*). This was suggested as the origin of the saying but it seems more likely that these cheeses were made, as a novelty, to represent the already notorious Cheshire Cat.

Curiously enough, another explanation based on cheeses has been made to the writer by an old inhabitant of Chester. He says that about fifty years ago there was a small cheese known as a "cat" and its size caused a shrinkage greater in proportion to surface area than in the larger cheeses. In consequence the cheese cloth became very wrinkled and gave the appearance of a grinning cat. This might have been possible if the cheese were round in shape like those still made in Holland. Unfortunately, inquiries in the cheese trade have so far failed to produce support for this interesting suggestion — it is now up to our readers. G W.

## Book Reviews

THE Grosvenor Museum and in particular its Curator, Mr. Graham Webster, are to be congratulated on having produced at the remarkably low price of one and six, "A Short Guide to the Roman Inscriptions and Sculptured Stones in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester." Its appearance fills a gap of long standing, for little has appeared in print to assist the student when visiting the Museum. Indeed until the great array of inscribed and sculptured stones had been sorted and better arranged, there was little to tempt the visitor to stay for long in the former gloomy, overcrowded gallery, even though Chester possesses one of the best collections of Roman material in the country. The new guide accompanies the great transformation which has taken place under Mr. Webster, notably during the past twelve months. The title is quite clear and the reader must not expect to find a printed catalogue of the Museum exhibits. It is in fact a much more useful and important document for the visitor because it presents the study of the Chester material against the background of its period. In several short, clearly described sections, Mr. Webster deals with the composition and organisation of the Roman Army and the dispositions of its units in Britain. A map of considerable interest shows the birthplaces of the legionaries of the Chester garrison. A further section deals with the growth and significance of Roman Chester. There follows an account of the different kinds of Inscriptions one might expect to find in Britain, such as altars, building dedications, tombstones, stamps and other official proprietary marks and *graffiti*. The last section gives an account of some thirty-three of the important inscriptions and sculptured stones in the Museum prefaced by a well tabulated list of abbreviations. The Guide is admirably illustrated with photographs and had it been twice the price it would have remained an outstanding bargain.

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MISS MARGARET GROOMBRIDGE the Chester City Archivist has written a "Guide to Charters, Plate and Insignia of the City of Chester" and it will certainly take its place amongst the guides which will remain of permanent value. Both price (1/6) and cover are attractive although the latter gives little indication of the nature of the contents to the uninitiated. Numerous charters and other manuscripts ranging from the 12th to the 19th century are listed with short descriptions, eight of them being illustrated in whole or in part. Part two is also illustrated and deals with the coats of arms, seals and civic insignia of the City, together with a short (too short) description of the City plate. It is in this section that greater detail would have been welcome for it is unfortunate that in an otherwise admirable guide no record is given of assay

marks on the silver. There are very few adverse criticisms to be made and the most striking are typographical. It is for instance unfortunate that the 17th century Done document (73) should have been post dated to the first World War.\*

\*This error has been corrected in the second edition now published.

NOTE. An Exhibition of the City Charters and Plate in the Town Hall will be open to the public every Thursday afternoon from 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.—Ed.

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The Journal of the Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society, has appeared in a new uniform and in step with the recent changes in format which have taken place in her neighbour the *Archaeologia Cambrensis* and her even older parent, the *Antiquaries Journal*.

Volume 38, admirably edited by Mr. P. H. Lawson, F.S.A., and printed by G. R. Griffith of Chester contains four articles of outstanding interest, though strangely biased towards the city of Chester. Indeed it is a considerable time since North Wales appeared in the pages of the journal, an omission which the Editor might do well to rectify in future volumes.

The four articles which appear are the outcome of careful and original research and are put together by persons of authority. With the generous support of the Council of British Archaeology, the report on the Excavations in Goss Street, Chester, two years ago by Prof. Ian Richmond and Graham Webster, has put on record the discovery of the origin and first developments of the Roman *principia* and established beyond further question the fact that the first *principia* and indeed the first Chester fortress was a wooden structure erected about the eighth decade of the first century and was not superseded by stone buildings until the first half of the 2nd century.

Graham Webster in the second article throws interesting light upon Chester in the Dark Ages and helps by inference to indicate in part why some five hundred years of history has left hardly any mark upon the buried foundations of our city. He makes no attempt to solve the many problems still attached to Saxon Chester but collates valuable material which one day may contribute to a solution of them. It is perhaps unfortunate that the find, whose preservation is due to Mr. Webster, of the Saxon silver coins etc., recently made near the Castle occurred too late to appear as an appendix to this account, it may do so in some future journal.

Archdeacon Burne continues his careful study of some of the most critical years of the history of the Church in Chester, the Marian period and the Elizabethan settlement as it affected the Cathedral and adds a valuable note upon the rape of the Cathedral lands. The very copious references to the Cathedral accounts, the main source of his material, add considerable interest and authority to an already detailed paper.

The final account is that by the former Vicar of Holy Trinity, dealing with the surviving transcriptions of the Church wardens accounts of his city church from 1532-1633, which span the important year of change, decay and restoration, providing us with important documentary evidence for the way in which state decrees influenced individual parishes in particular areas.

The volume which is wholly satisfactory and well illustrated, must please every member and should be a great incentive towards adding new members to a very excellent Society.

MAURICE H. RIDGWAY.

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The Effigy and Tomb of Sir Hugh Calveley, by C. Blair, B.A. No. 4. THE BUNBURY PAPERS, edited by Maurice H. Ridgway, Bunbury.

The high standard of these papers has been well maintained in this number. Mr. Blair has not only written a very full account of the finest mediaeval monument in Cheshire but has also given us a useful introduction to military equipment of the late 14th century. The account is illustrated with three views of the tomb and the Stothard drawings. A full-length modern view of the effigy from above would have improved the paper.

GRAHAM WEBSTER.

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CESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCS. AND CESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, 1949, vol. lxi.

CESHIRE BELLS, pt. ii, J. W. Clarke.

THE PRE-REFORMATION EFFIGIES OF CESHIRE, pt. ii, by C. Blair, B.A.

THE CESHIRE ACTIVITIES OF MATTHEW BOULTON AND JAMES WATT OF SOHO, NEAR BIRMINGHAM. 1776-1817. by W. H. Chaloner, M.A., Ph.D.

ASSESSED TAXATION IN ASHTON ON MERSEY IN 1820-21, by E. Ogden, B.A., and G. H. Tupling, M.A., Ph.D.

PROCEEDING.

WHEELED STOCKS, by Dr. J. T. D'Ewart.

COMMUNICATIONS.

A SAXON MONEYER'S HOARD AT CHESTER, by A. J. Hawkes, F.S.A.

RECENT FINDS IN THE WIRRAL PENINSULA, by P. Culverwell Brown, M.A., F.S.A.

# Useful Aids for the Local Historian

REVIEWED BY PROFESSOR R. F. TREHARNE, M.A., Ph.D.

(Professor of History, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth:  
Editor of HISTORY, the Journal of the Historical Association).

**I**N pursuit of its primary purpose, the fostering of the study of local history as part of the common heritage of all, the Standing Conference for Local History has planned its LOCAL HISTORY SERIES of brief, simple and cheap pamphlets, compiled with the help of some of our best scholars and bibliographers, and designed to assist anyone interested in local history, whether he merely wants to know the best book on his own locality or proposes to write the history of his parish or town or to study any other of the many varied aspects of local history. Despite present difficulties publication has been rapid, and already the series is becoming increasingly valuable as each new title reveals another element in the whole design. Ordinary readers for pleasure or personal interest, beginners in the art of writing local history anxious to make the best use of limited time and needing to discover quickly the best books and the likeliest sources of unpublished material, adult classes studying the technique of local history under the guidance of trained tutors, and even historians of experience and standing, will all find help increasingly from this steadily developing plan.

A PLAN FOR THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY (No. 1, April 1949, 11 pp., 6d.) describes the aims of the Standing Conference and its project of promoting the formation of County Committees to co-ordinate the efforts of all organisations working on or interested in the study of any aspect of local history, and shows how such committees can advance both the study and the writing of local history. THE COMPILATION OF COUNTY BIBLIOGRAPHIES (No. 2, December 1948, 8 pp., 6d.) sets out a simple but comprehensive outline plan for listing all printed books and articles which might be used for the study of the history of any country, town or village. A SELECTION OF BOOKS ON ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY (No. 3, February 1949, 16 pp., 9d.) the most useful title so far, offers a carefully chosen list of books which would help any student of local history, and would prove especially useful for beginners working either individually or in groups. Part I is a short list of general biographies, reference books, and books on research technique in local history generally: part II lists, county by county anything from four to fifteen of the most important books on each county and its principal towns. A DIRECTORY OF AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF LOCAL HISTORIANS (No. 4, March 1950, 11 pp., 6d.) is a helpful and practical list of such national organisations as are wholly or partly engaged in



local history work, government departments and other bodies working in fields related to local history, local government associations, county local history committees, and county archivists. NOTES ON THE RECORDING OF LOCAL HISTORY (No. 5, December 1950, 8 pp., 6d.) makes generally available a useful practical device which has been successfully employed in Berkshire, a model record form, with notes for use, for recording local history data. LOCAL HISTORY EXHIBITIONS (No. 6, March 1951, 12 pp., 9d.) is a strictly practical account of what can be attempted and achieved by a village history exhibition, and how it can best be organised: based on much direct experience, it should enable enthusiastic organisers to tap resources and to avoid pitfalls which they might not have imagined to exist until they read this leaflet.

The Conference has also in hand pamphlets on HOW TO WRITE A PARISH GUIDE (a much-needed lead in a popular field), an illustrated pamphlet on ROYAL ARMS IN CHURCHES, and others on THE LOCAL HISTORIAN AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (the first of a sub-series dealing separately with each century), on METHODS OF TEACHING LOCAL HISTORY IN SCHOOLS, and on THE RECOGNITION AND REPORTING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES (prepared jointly with the Council for British Archaeology). The authority with which each pamphlet is written or compiled, the simplicity of both language and plan, and the low price of the pamphlets should make them very useful in the spreading of sound standards over a wide field in the study of local history.

Copies of any of the above pamphlets and information about the wider services of the Standing Conference, may be obtained from the Secretary, The Standing Conference for Local History, 26, Bedford Square, London W.C.1.



LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF  
SOCIETIES.

---

The Cheshire Rural Community Council, 22, Newgate Street,  
Chester:

General Secretary, N. G. Cottam.

The Editor, Cheshire Historian:

G. B. Leach, Ashton, Chester.

The Standing Conference of Local History:

G. Dando, 26, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.

The Council for British Archaeology:

74, Onslow Gardens, London, S.W.7.

Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings:

Local Correspondent. The Curator, Grosvenor Museum,  
Chester.

Macclesfield and District Field Club:

A. J. Wood, 3, Brooklands Avenue, Macclesfield.

The Chester and N. Wales Architectural, Archaeological and  
Historical Society:

H. C. Wickham, 13, St. John Street, Chester.

The County Archivist, Cheshire Record Office:

Major F. G. C. Rowe, The Castle, Chester.

The City Archivist, Chester:

The Town Hall, Chester.

The Grosvenor Museum, Chester:

Graham Webster, Curator.

Workers' Educational Association:

Frank Garstang, 62, Hope Street, Liverpool.

The Bromborough Society:

Mrs. A. Anderson, 17, Rake Lane, Bromborough.

Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society:

H. Clegg, 10, Granary Lane, Worsley, Nr. Manchester.

Liverpool Geological Society:

J. C. Harper, Geological Dept., The University, Liverpool, 3.

Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:

R. Sharpe France, Lancashire Record Office, County Hall,  
Preston.

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:

G. Chandler, 202, Pitville Avenue, Liverpool 18.

Ancient Monuments Society:

L. M. Angus-Butterworth, Ashton New Hall, Ashton-on-  
Mersey, Cheshire.

THE CITY PRESS  
OF CHESTER

A MAP of CHESHIRE North Well from LONDON  
 Humbly Dedicated to the Most Noble the Earl of Chester and the Lord Just of the County

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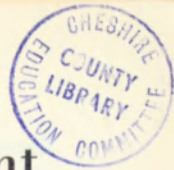
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210 CRCC PAGE

THE PRESERVATION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS by WILLIAM A. SINGLETON, M.A., Ph.D., B.Arch. ....	1
CHESHIRE MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES: No. 3. Vernon Park Museum, Stockport, by J. R. RIMMER, B.E.M., A.M.A., Curator ....	8
BOOK REVIEW: "TIMBER BUILDING IN ENGLAND"	12
THE ARCHAEOLOGIST IN THE FIELD (Part III): A. Roman Roads by GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.A. ....	13
B. The Hill Forts of Cheshire by J. D. JONES, B.A., F.S.A. (Scot.) ....	19
EXCAVATIONS, 1952— CHESTER: BUNBURY CHURCH ....	24
CHESHIRE COUNTY RECORDS by MAJOR F. G. C. ROWE, County Archivist ....	27
CHESTER MIRACLE PLAYS by MARGARET M. PRITCHARD, B.A. (Admin.) ....	34
THE CHESTER CIVIC SWORD by C. BLAIR, B.A. ....	39
"CHESHIRE VILLAGE MEMORIES." Review ....	43
THE SOUL CAKERS: An Old Village Memory by C. B. HUTTON ....	44
BUNBURY CHURCH REPAIRS by THE REV. M. H. RIDGWAY, B.A., F.S.A. ....	46
COINS OF THE CHESTER MINT by G. W. ....	49
CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS	50
WHY NOT FORM A LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY by ARTHUR OAKES, B.A. ....	51
LIST OF NAMES & ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES ....	INSIDE BACK COVER



# The Preservation of Ancient Buildings

By WILLIAM A. SINGLETON, M.A., Ph.D., B.Arch.

IT is stimulating to find amongst all sections of society a renewed realisation that this country contains a priceless heritage of historic architecture, which is not surpassed anywhere in the world. For example, nowhere else is there such a fine array of exquisite mediaeval parish churches, or such a rich collection of lesser domestic architecture. Nor is this heritage confined to the buildings themselves. Everywhere beautiful fittings and furnishings of historic significance, the craftsmanship of which can never be equalled, abound. It is a constant source of delight and pride to Cheshire folk that their county has a goodly share of these treasures.

The impact of the last world conflict, with its trail of destruction, has brought home very forcibly the value of this heritage. With this has come the realisation that many of these ancient and historic buildings are in an extremely bad state of repair, and in several cases, require urgent and drastic attention. In addition there is grave apprehension about the future amongst all those interested in the protection and repair of ancient buildings.

The realisation and subsequent fear has been responsible for the setting up of two important Commissions, whose reports have been published within the last few years. The first of these, generally referred to as the Gowers Report, published in 1950, deals exclusively with the very vast and complex problem of the Great Houses of this country. Although pressure is continually being applied in Parliament, no implementation of this Report has yet emerged. This is no doubt due to the present financial stringency, but further delay may result in the rapidly worsening situation getting completely out of hand.

The other Report, "The Preservation of our Churches" (June, 1952), is the outcome of the very earnest deliberations of a Church Assembly Commission concerned with the future of the country's 14,000 parish churches, of which about 9,000 are mediaeval.

From these Reports two main issues emerge, both of which are so fundamental that the whole future of our great historic buildings is dependent upon them. Finance is the primary consideration which exercises everyone's mind. How is the money required for even immediately necessary repairs to be found? This often repeated question is the real crux of the problem, but its solution is one of difficulty and complexity. It has to be treated urgently, vigorously, and on a nation-wide scale. The

Reports make very definite recommendations in this regard and already the Historic Churches Preservation Trust has been formed with Her Majesty the Queen as Patron and the Duke of Edinburgh as President. Thus the work of raising the £4 million required for the next ten years has started.

Much of these Reports and, indeed, much of what has been written generally, has emphasised the need for vast sums of money to meet the problem but the other equally important consideration has not been sufficiently stressed. This second problem is to find architects, surveyors, builders, and craftsmen with suitable experience and specialised knowledge in the field of protection and repair to carry out the work in the best possible manner. It is not generally recognised that the repair of old buildings must be entrusted to architects and craftsmen skilled in the techniques necessary for such work. To quote from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings' Annual Report (1951):

"The lack of such knowledge leads to irreparable harm being done and time and again the Society finds evidence of expensive, over-drastring and frequent reparations carried out by the ignorant and the inexperienced. The difficulties at present affecting the building trades intensified by the lack of skilled craftsmen contributes further to the problem and calls for constant and knowledgeable supervision by the architect."

Comparatively few such men exist, largely because during the past few decades very little conservation work has been undertaken, and therefore the opportunity to gain practical experience has been severely restricted. Making up this deficiency must be undertaken as a long-term project and all the various societies and public bodies concerned with this type of work are setting about tackling the problem with vigour and a real sense of urgency. The Ministry of Works (Ancient Monuments Branch), the National Trust, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Ancient Monuments Society and the Central Council for the Care of Churches are all working from their own particular angles towards the solution of this great problem.

Probably the most important step in the right direction has been taken by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, who have re-instituted their Lethaby Scholarship. This was originally instituted in 1930 by the Society, in memory of the late Professor W. R. Lethaby, to enable architectural students to study for six months the repair of ancient buildings under the guidance of architect members of the Committee. This endeavour has proved most satisfactory and is an ideal solution of the problem.

Another most valuable contribution is now being made by the Academic Development Committee of the York Civic Trust, who have set up a series of short residential courses called the York Courses on Protection and Repair of Ancient Buildings. These are

a development of the already well-established annual Summer Schools of Architectural Study, which they now supplement. The first course was held in York last September and was an unqualified success, drawing architects, surveyors and builders from all over Britain. A great expansion of these courses is planned for this year, with specialised courses on such subjects as the Care of Churches.

These courses have been organised in such a manner that architects and others, who wish to know more of repair methods, but who find it difficult to leave their appointments or practices for any length of time, can attend. Their duration is for a week or a fortnight, and the whole series can be taken over a period of one or more years to suit personal requirement.

The Bartlett School of Architecture at London University, on the other hand, has set up a post-graduate diploma course on the repair of ancient buildings on a part-time evening basis. Although this is admirable and extends for one session it is obviously suitable only for those working and living in or near London.

It is of the utmost importance that the right mental attitude to ancient and historic buildings should be developed. Every individual building in all its aspects must be studied and appreciated. Every building of any antiquity bears evidence of its structural evolution and development. The ways of life, beliefs and mental outlook of all its various builders and craftsmen are revealed to all those who take the time to look and study. Overlaid on this will be found the influence, probably the greatest single influence, of passing styles and fashions. Strange as it may seem, this factor is as much in evidence in old work as it is today.

Every building possesses certain fundamental physical characteristics such as length, width and height, but it also possesses a personality very much its own. Some architects refer to this quality as a fourth dimension, but, however it is viewed, it is a quality which that building alone possesses. Once it is destroyed or damaged it can never be re-created. It is impossible to restore this personality, and therefore any attempt to do so must be condemned, as the result at the best can be only "period-fakes." This personality which an old building has is bound up especially with the influence of the passage of time and can be likened to the appeal to one's senses in the face of an old friend, whose very features bring back memories and affectionate thoughts of the past.

It is this quality which blends together in old buildings the often otherwise incongruous work of different historical periods. For example, many of our early parish churches comprise perhaps a Saxon tower, a Norman nave, thirteenth century chancel and fourteenth century aisles with many later additions and alterations.



Thus the vigour of the Saxon, the detail of the Norman and the structural ingenuity of later periods are fused together in a harmonious composition. It is however difficult to define the sources of this "personality" and its attendant atmosphere, because its components included proportion, texture, colour and decoration, each of which is a study in itself, with the passage of the centuries to fuse them altogether.

From these few remarks, it is evident that the problems of protection and of repairing ancient and historic buildings are many and complex. There is however, only space here to consider a few of the main principles to be adopted.

The first essential is to have a real personal and first-hand contact with the structure and materials of the building and get within its "personality." This is vitally necessary in order to avoid its destruction and at the same time to repair it sympathetically. The second guiding principle is that of conservation and preservation. As it is impossible to re-create the atmosphere of individual buildings, it is therefore essential to preserve and protect as much of the original work as possible. Where repairs or replacements are necessary, these should be so contrived that they in no way result in conjectural imitations of the old work. New work should always be in harmony with the old, but subordinate to it. No one is able to place for example, a limb of a human being by an exact replica. An artificial one is used which has the same general size and shape as the real one, but obviously the two could not be confused. So it should be with old buildings. If it is necessary to replace a portion of a richly moulded oak roof-beam, the new portion to be spliced in would have the same general size and shape. In addition the main lines of the mouldings would be lined through but not imitated. Thus the harmony is preserved but without harsh copying or restoration.

Thirdly, the very common archaeological habit of exposing historical features, for no other reason than that they are historical, should be avoided. For example, many mediaeval timber-framed houses, particularly in the towns, have had their eighteenth century plaster facades removed. Thus depriving them of much of their "personality." Apart from the fact that many of these facades were very beautiful in themselves, often with fine decorative pargetting. In destroying them the whole chronological sequence and therefore their authenticity has been lost. In fact in several cases false Tudor windows have had to be inserted in an effort to restore some sort of appearance.

It was principles such as these that led, over seventy years ago, to the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings by William Morris, Ruskin, Burne-Jones, and similar kindred spirits. They aimed at restraining the Victorian method

of wholesale conjectural restoration, which was so rampant at the time. In 1877 Morris issued his famous manifesto which forms the historical basis upon which the Society works, and which is also printed in their Annual Reports. The second and third paragraphs of this manifesto read as follows:

“For Architecture, long decaying, died out, as a popular art at least, just as the knowledge of mediaeval art was born. So that the civilised world of the nineteenth century has no style of its own amidst its wide knowledge of the styles of other centuries. From this lack and this gain arose in men’s minds the strange idea of the Restoration of ancient buildings; and a strange and most fatal idea, which by its very name implies that it is possible to strip from a building this, that, and the other part of its history — of its life that is — and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point, and leave it still historical, living, and even as it once was.

In early times this kind of forgery was impossible, because knowledge failed the builders, or perhaps because instinct held them back. If repairs were needed, if ambition or piety pricked onto change, that change was of necessity wrought in the unmistakable fashion of the time; a church of the eleventh century might be added to or altered in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth or even seventeenth or eighteenth centuries; but every change, whatever history is destroyed, left history in the gap, and was alive with the spirit of the deeds done midst its fashioning. The result of all this was often the building in which the many changes, though harsh and visible enough, were, by their very contrast, interesting and instructive and could by no possibility mislead. But those who make the changes wrought in our day under the name of Restoration, while professing to bring back a building to the best time of its history, have no guide but each his own individual whim to point out to them what is admirable and what is contemptible; while the very nature of their task compels them to destroy something and to supply the gap by imagining what the earlier builders should or might have done. Moreover, in the course of this double process of destruction and addition the whole surface of the building is necessarily tampered with; so that the appearance of antiquity is taken away from such old parts of the fabric as are left and there is laying to rest in the spectator the suspicion of what may have been lost; and in short, a feeble and lifeless forgery is that final result of all the wasted labour.”

This statement, although written almost eighty years ago, sums up rather well the problems to be faced and the pitfalls to be avoided if our rich heritage of historic buildings is to be preserved.

There is another aspect of the problem the implications of which are not always fully realised. Certain buildings, which were built for a definite, perhaps rather special, purpose, occasionally become redundant. For example, the population serving a parish church might for one reason or another over the years leave the area and the church, which may be structurally sound. Or for reasons of finance, the great houses and halls, which form such an integral part of the countryside, often create difficulties for their owners. Not only were the houses built in the days of spacious living and are therefore unsuitable for modern needs, but death-duties and other taxes have taken almost all of the money needed to maintain the houses and estates. The problem therefore resolves itself into finding suitable new and alternative uses for many of these buildings. In the case of a church or similar structure, this is difficult. In one or two cases churches have been turned into museums of mediaeval or ecclesiastical art and sculpture; but obviously the times such a use could be tried are strictly limited, with the result that no suitable alternative use can be found. A church, by its very plan and structure, has limited possibilities.

The Great Houses on the other hand are more adaptable, and already many of these have found new uses as offices, residential colleges of all kinds, research centres and convalescent homes. Often they are well suited for such uses. For example, Burton Manor in Wirral, although not very ancient, has been turned into an admirable residential college for Adult Education. In the past five years of the college's existence, over ten thousand students have studied and have enjoyed its facilities and amenities. The fabric is thus suitably protected and the gardens well tended.

On the other hand, some great houses which are occupied or partly occupied, present a difficult problem. This has often been solved by the owners opening the house and gardens to the public at suitable times and at a small charge. In this way not only are funds made available for the upkeep of the estate, but also the public have pleasure in viewing these magnificent houses, their furnishings and their gardens. The nation owes a considerable debt to these owners, who generally at considerable discomfort to themselves, open their doors to interested sightseers. A Cheshire example is Adlington Hall, near Macclesfield, the home of Mrs. Legh.

Alas, many more are completely uninhabited and derelict. As such they are always ideal subjects for the attentions of fungal or insect attack. The words "dry rot" and "death-watch beetle" are all too common these days, and these empty ancient buildings succumb sooner or later to their ravages.

In this short article an attempt has been made to help readers to understand the value of ancient and historic buildings and to learn something of the principles of preservation. The accent has been rather on the negative, but if old buildings are saved from the wrong kind of restoration, much of the excellent craftsmanship still remaining will be preserved. It is always better to preserve than to restore!

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING.

"The Protection of Ancient Buildings." A. R. Powys. (Dent & Sons, 1929).

"Old Churches and New Craftsmanship." A. D. R. Caroe. (O.U.P., 1950).

Annual Reports of the Central Council for the Care of Churches. (Dunster, Somerset).

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Local History Committee thanks all those who have so kindly contributed articles or otherwise helped, also The Manchester University Press, The Manchester Public Library and The Chetham Society for the use of the cover block.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

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#### ERRATA

CHESHIRE HISTORIAN No. 1.

Page 23 line 12, for two read one.

CHESHIRE HISTORIAN No. 2.

A number of copies require the following—

Page 5 line 15, and page 13 lines 14 and 15, for Clegg read Glegg.

„ 8 line 34, for beachmast read beechmast.

„ 12 „ 9, for attacked read attached.

„ 12 „ 42, for 1550 read 1559.

„ 22 „ 21, for Neiderbieber read Niederbieber.

„ 35 „ 44, for unfortunately read fortunately.

„ 47 „ 22, for count read court.

# Cheshire Museums and Art Galleries

No. 3.

## Vernon Park Museum, Stockport

By J. R. RIMMER, B.E.M., A.M.A., CURATOR.

THE Municipal Museum, Stockport, is situated in Vernon Park close to the north-eastern boundary of the town. The view from its upper windows is still one of beauty, presenting a delightful expanse of country extending for miles over a luxuriant valley, and marred only to a minor degree by the encroachment of modern building estates. Towers and spires of distant churches, and several mansions embosomed amidst magnificent trees, add charms to the landscape, and the panorama has a fitting boundary in the surrounding hills of Cheshire, and the mountains of Yorkshire and Derbyshire, the windings of the river Goyt adding not a little to its attractions.

It is a substantial building of brick with stone facings, and the first part of it was presented to the Corporation in 1860 by the then Members of Parliament for the Borough, Messrs. John Benjamin Smith and James Kershaw. Soon after its opening, it is recorded that "so large were the number of works of art and science, along with objects of virtue and taste immediately presented, and so rapidly was the building filled, that in 1865 the Corporation considered it necessary to build a new wing as large as the original structure." From later records we are informed that the extension was filled by 1868. Phenomenal growth you might say! But was it in the right direction?

Like so many other museums throughout the country, the museum at Stockport was born of the interest in scientific discovery which was current in the mid-nineteenth century and which reflected itself in the many natural history and antiquarian societies, philosophical institutions and mechanics' institutes of the day. Except for the desire, nay even obsession, to collect almost anything which could be termed unusual, many of these early museums appear to have had very little idea of their function or purpose within their own area. Exhibition of all possessions was their aim, a policy which unfortunately resulted, all too often, in a distressingly monotonous similarity between so many of them.

Much of the heterogeneous material garnered by many of the enthusiastic, though often unqualified, early curators has suffered considerable physical damage from the primitive methods of preservation which were then considered adequate, or because of insufficient recordings of data concerning the date, place and conditions of taking, and is now of very little scientific value.

Stockport has however, also like many other museums throughout the country, realised of recent years, that the day of the museum as a general storehouse is over, and that to justify its existence, it must fulfil a clearly defined educational and cultural function within its own locality.

It has been said with much truth that museums, like human beings, are better for restricting their diet to what they can digest, for both readily show the signs of gluttony. In view of this, our museum has selected a target which it considers worthy, and at the same time capable of attainment. That of collecting, comprehending, conserving and presenting to the public only material which will illustrate, firstly, the geography and geology of the neighbourhood, secondly, the plant and animal life to be found in the local countryside and finally, the history of man in the area and his success in winning a livelihood from his surroundings. Although we are attempting to cover in detail an area with a radius of approximately fifteen miles from the centre of the town, no hard and fast rule is being made and specimens from other parts of the country which would be useful in illustrating any particular theme within our scope, are equally acceptable.

In order to form some sort of a background to our scheme, the whole area has been divided into sections and as complete as possible a pictorial survey of each section has been built up. Every available illustration, whether it be an old print, engraving, oil-painting or photograph connected with the area was sought, photographically copied and then enlarged to a standard size. This collection has proved invaluable in our work and is continually being extended by the addition of present day photographs.

Against this background, and similarly zoned or sectionalised, is being built our collection of local historical and natural history material.

Naturally much of the material already on exhibition fell completely outside the scope of our newly determined policy, and has therefore either been placed in storage or exchanged for material from other museums to the mutual advantage of both.

The work of transforming an old style general type of museum to one which is purely "regional" or "local" in character is necessarily slow, but much progress is being made and already important sections have been completed dealing with, the bird life, the origins of local government, the early industries and transport in the area, as well as the early history and development of the town of Stockport. Particular attention and care are being paid to the most adequate and up-to-date methods of preservation and restoration of all materials in our possession, and to the complete recording of all data concerning their origins, as well as full details of any treatment considered necessary.

The old idea that display should demonstrate possession and little more, has been changed for the more modern view that it should substantiate ideas. A happy medium between the old style overcrowded cases and the ultra-modern shop window methods, where a minimum of objects is shown, has been sought, and specimens have been carefully selected for the part they can play in the illustration of a particular theme or idea. Wherever possible, models, photographs and diagrams have been interspersed with actual specimens in the displays for the purpose of making the story more complete and intelligible.

Although there is much yet to be done, the museum is already proving more attractive and popular to a much wider public, and perhaps more particularly to students and the many schools within the town.

It is felt that all museums have their regular visitors and in order to meet the needs of this class as well as the casual visitor, the museum is endeavouring to stage frequent temporary exhibitions of a topical nature i.e. the "Then and Now" exhibition staged during the Festival Year; "Oil, its origin and uses" at the time of the Persian oil dispute; "Speed of Animals" at the time of the late John Cobb's attempt on the water speed record, and at present, preliminary work is being done for an exhibition entitled "Coronation Regalia and Personalities" to take place during the Coronation period. This introduction of topical exhibitions is not only attracting considerable attention to the museum, but also helps to avoid what possibly might be one of the dangers of a "regional" museum, that of being too specialised and having a rather one-track outlook.

Another problem arising from our change of policy was concerned with how best to impress on the public the new purposes of the museum and how to change the rather strange ideas linking museums with dust, must, static display and places to go into only when it rains—a legacy of our earlier museums—which undoubtedly it had. This problem has been tackled with considerable success in two ways. Firstly it was considered important, and incidentally far simpler, to produce a museum-conscious public by starting with the school children, whose views on museums were perhaps not yet deeply rooted. Every facility was made available to encourage their use of the museum service. This included, organised visits to the museums with a brief talk by the curator; visits were made to the schools to explain our new ideas; lectures were given to teachers' associations; articles were published in the local Youth Handbook; close co-operation was made with and advice given to local visual aid committees, and a carefully prepared School Loan Scheme or Service has been built up, based mainly on the requirements of the teachers, and linked closely with many of the extremely fine series of school broadcasts.

Because of the rather isolated position of the museum on the north-eastern outskirts of the town, the second group of people — the adult citizens — proved more difficult to approach, but considerable success has been attained through a comprehensive series of talks — over 200 up to the present date — given to the majority of the social and educational organisations throughout the town. In addition to this an attempt has been made to “take the museum to the people.” Some of the temporary exhibitions mentioned earlier have been staged in the centre of the town, and a number of small displays have been specially prepared for use in shop windows. This latter method has been particularly successful and has proved mutually beneficial both to the shopkeepers and the museum. A further method which has considerably helped us in this campaign and for which I have at all times been grateful, has been the regular publicity given by both local newspapers to our endeavours.

The results of our efforts in this direction are slow but sure. They are clearly reflected not only in our increased attendances but also in what is perhaps equally important, a considerably increased quality and more selective type of material being offered for our collections. The general public is certainly realising that the museum is no longer a repository for their unwanted possessions, and that it is indeed a privilege to have an item accepted either for our display or study collections.

Sections in the museum which are at present being reorganised to conform to the new policy and methods of display include:— the local mammals with an introductory case dealing with their evolution and anatomy; local industries with the stress on hatting, cotton and engineering; the evolution of modern firearms; amphibians and reptiles of the area; forms of punishment used in Stockport during the Middle Ages and local butterflies and their caterpillars.

If one had to choose one item only for which the museum is known both locally and throughout the country, it would undoubtedly be the famous window to be found in the north wall of the ground floor room. It is about six feet high by three feet wide and is composed of some 250 pieces of translucent fluor spar of the variety found in the Blue John Mines at Castleton, and was made and presented by the museum's first curator, the late Mr. John Tym.

Of recent acquisitions, the Echalaz Bird Collection, which consists of over 80 beautifully prepared habitat groups with painted backgrounds, is certainly the most popular with children and adults alike.



Our study collections, like the exhibition material, have needed much treatment, but with the addition of many recent acquisitions are now becoming a centre of keen interest. They include an herbarium, a fine collection of archives, bird study-skin, geological and zoological collections and a very recently acquired collection of lepidoptera.

Finally, the museum possesses a fine collection of paintings representing many of the early continental schools, which were originally on loan from the museum's earliest benefactor, Mr. John Benjamin Smith, but which were later presented by his executors.

The hours of opening are as follows:—

Open Weekdays.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (April to September).
"    "	10 a.m. to dusk. (October to March).
Open Sundays.	2 p.m. to 5 p.m. (April to September).
"    "	2 p.m. to dusk. (October to March).

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## Book Review

### “Timber Building in England”

By FRED H. CROSSLEY, F.S.A.

Although not dealing solely with a Cheshire subject, the attention of readers of “THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN” is drawn to the above book, published by Batsford, 1951 (Price 30s.) There are two main reasons for this: firstly, no student or admirer of Cheshire buildings can afford to do without it, and secondly, because its author is our greatest living authority on Cheshire buildings, and in particular the old Churches of the County. It is not surprising, therefore, that for the Cheshireman a good deal of added charm is found in its many references to Cheshire buildings, and in the magnificent series of illustrations which adorn the book. Apart from the one possible exception of boat building, the whole field of timber construction is dealt with from the earliest evidences of the art to the styles appearing at the end of the 17th century.

It is well that a book of this type should appear and be read at a time when through the action of misguided councils, hard-up landlords and indifferent tenants so many of our timber houses are disappearing from the Cheshire scene. May it, before it is too late, help to educate Cheshire people to appreciate and to preserve what they have so richly inherited.

M.H.R.

# The Archæologist in the Field

(Part III)

## A. Roman Roads

By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E.,  
A.M.A.

## B. The Hill Forts of Cheshire

By J. D. JONES, B.A., F.S.A. (Scot.)

### A.

ROMAN roads are justly famous in this country. They have become a byword on account of their straightness, in striking contrast to the tortuous lanes of the countryside which caused Chesterton to begin his famous poem — “The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English road.” The Roman road system remains the only major contribution Britain has received directly from that great civilisation, all other living trace of which was blotted out by the Anglo-Saxon conquest and settlement. It would be correct to say that the main road system of today, with London as the nodal point, is for the most part, on the lines laid down by the Roman engineers. There are of course new roads of the Turnpike era and many other diversions, while some considerable lengths of the Roman highways have almost completely vanished.

Although this subject is one of great interest, appealing strongly to popular imagination, it is curious how little field work has been carried out. Only one attempt has been made to bring the whole subject under single review, the book by a civil engineer, T. CODRINGTON, “*Roman Roads in Britain*” published in 1903 and running to three editions, the last of which appeared in 1918. It is very doubtful if anyone will ever repeat this task in detail as our knowledge has grown enormously since Codrington’s day. Modern methods of more critical examination and detailed study would make it necessary to devote a complete volume to a stretch of road only 50 to 100 miles long or to a small network such as that of the Cheshire Plain. Even a popular writer, Winbolt, found that he had sufficient material for a book on Stane Street (*With a Spade on Stane Street*), and more recently I. Margery has written the best modern study (*Roman Ways in the Weald*, 1948), covering part of Sussex.

Scattered through the transactions of the county and local societies are hundreds of notes on short sections of roads and the task of collecting these, alone, would be a most unenviable one. Much of this material has already appeared in the Victoria County History series but it is already considerably out of date.

The more one studies Roman roads, the more one realises that, as in similar cases, the subject is an extremely complicated one. Codrington, while recognising considerable variations of construction, appeared to work on the assumption that the whole system was laid out at one time for one single purpose — the rapid deployment of troops. In actual fact, the Roman road system is comparable to that of today where there are:—

- (1) Major roads classified under the code letter A.
- (2) Secondary roads under the letter B.
- (3) Unclassified roads, mostly local lanes and byways.
- (4) Private roads and tracks leading to houses, farms or fields etc.

This pattern was complicated in Roman times by the fact that the roads could serve either military or civil needs or be dual in character. In some cases, south of the Fosse Way, they started as military highways and later came under purely civil control. Furthermore, the wandering prehistoric trackways probably continued to be used during the occupation. We thus have Roman roads not only differing in width and method of construction but also in function. Their uses can probably be classed under the following headings:—

- (1) Military and Imperial.
- (2) Civil, used by Romanised Britons, linking towns and settlements.
- (3) Industrial, associated with mining etc.
- (4) Agricultural, associated with the so-called villas.
- (5) Trackways etc., associated with the native population in the villages, which remained hardly touched by the Roman civilisation.

In any district of Britain, the roads would tend to conform to this complex pattern, increasing in number and diversity with the population and degree of exploitation of the land or its mineral wealth. It is to be expected that the system would have also suited changing needs. As standards declined in the third and fourth centuries, so the maintenance would become less thorough, but as agriculture appeared to prosper at this time, there is little doubt that new roads serving purely local needs would have come into being.

In studying Roman roads, the questions one must ask are, for example, which points does this road join, for what purpose, and at which particular period? The answers might help to elucidate the problems of its structure. The intricate problems ensuing from this should not blind one to the comparatively simpler

questions relating to the main routes. These military or Imperial roads were probably kept at a high level of efficiency. Along them bodies of troops could move at a pace of about twenty miles a day, and the Imperial couriers, using post horses, could travel much faster. In the military zones there was usually a fort situated at every stage along the route i.e. at about every twenty miles. In the civil areas were the *mansiones* or posting stations at about the same distance apart and where the courier and traveller could obtain a change of horses. Around the *mansio*, which probably began life as a fort protecting a river crossing or similar point of strategic importance, would have grown up a small settlement. There are many of these little centres of 15 to 20 acres in Britain and their close study is one of the many tasks facing the serious student of the period.

These main routes were laid out originally as military roads and they have in common the straightness associated with them in the popular mind. This however has been much exaggerated. The roads are usually straight only from point to point. They were aligned from one high point to another and this factor is of considerable use to the student, as once the series of "high points" is found, it is usually possible to make an attempted alignment between them if the Roman road has, for the most part, ceased to be visible on the ground. The Roman engineers were by no means hidebound in this matter of straightness. Where there were natural obstacles to be avoided, the road duly took them into consideration. They were not daunted by marshes or rivers, but boldly crossed them by means of causeways and bridges. Up steep slopes the road was cut into zigzags to avoid an incline which would have been impossible for horse drawn carts.

The materials used in road construction were those available in the district, gravel, broken stone or even slag, spread on the site of the road and rammed down often in several layers, the profile when completed having a pronounced camber to throw off the rainwater. One of the universal characteristics of the first-class Roman road is the *agger* or embankment which was thrown up, in the level stretches, to carry the road. This was formed by digging ditches on each side of the alignment and heaping up the soil in the centre. This provided drainage ditches and raised the road surface above the normal level. In hilly country, which has not been intensively cultivated, one finds traces of Roman road engineering in the form of embankments and cuttings. In agricultural districts however, they have long since been ploughed away. Where the same length of road has been in continuous use, not only has the raised embankment gone, but its site is marked by a hollow way worn out by centuries of traffic. Where no surface indications are visible, in the form of varying levels, one can sometimes trace a road by the scatter of metalting after ploughing.

Field workers on this problem can receive much help from a study of parish boundaries and field names. Most of the former date from Saxon times when Roman roads were much in evidence and quite often the boundary continues to follow the line of the road, although all trace of it has long since disappeared. Field and place names can also be helpful. References to streets, causeways and pavements are not uncommon. The only certain Roman road in the Wirral goes through Street Hey Farm, while Stretton, near Malpas, marks the position of one of the main southern routes. There is a Wetfield pavement between Bunbury and Nantwich but this may refer to a mediaeval track. These names require caution in use. Much has been written about Windy and Cold Harbours, also about Pepper Streets but they are by no means infallible guides. It is indeed sad to recall that there has been much imaginative writing on this subject. The only answer to this is sound field work based primarily on accurate observation and painstaking enquiry supported by excavations at selected points. Students must not expect results from casual half-day excursions as only prolonged and persistent work will bring light to bear on this fascinating problem, but good and fruitful labour brings its own reward. Nor can we expect any startling answers from aerial reconnaissance in this area. The glacial subsoil of the Cheshire Plain is not suitable for the production of cropmarks.

#### THE ROMAN ROADS OF CHESHIRE.

VERY little study has been given this subject in Cheshire. The only comprehensive survey is that of W. Thompson Watkin in his book *Roman Cheshire* published in 1886. Those sections, which are based on Watkin's own field work are most useful if read carefully, but his book contains much second-hand information, most of which should be subject to critical examination. The significance of this book lies in the fact that many of the surface indications noted by Watkin have, in the eighty or more years since his day, been ploughed out of existence. The road, for example, crossing the fields north of the Abbey Arms between Kelsall and Northwich is described by him as "in embankment form with the *fossae* visible, though the road has been much reduced in height and the *fossae* much filled up, owing to marling and continual ploughing." Whereas today, nothing remains but a mere thin scatter of metalling which one can observe after ploughing.

The Cheshire Plain was never developed by the Romans to any extent. Its proximity to the military zone and its wet climate did not make it very attractive. To what extent the Romans exploited the salt deposits is not clear, but traces of civil settlements are evident at both Northwich (*Condote*) and Middlewich (*Salinis*?). The well drained, sandy subsoils of the Delamere and other areas, may have continued to support a native population

which has left nothing but a thin scatter of Romano-British material. The main centre of Roman influence was undoubtedly the great legionary depot at Chester (*Deva*) and this point was the focus of the main road system controlling the entry into Wales. The siting of the main roads crossing the county was governed by the river Mersey. The bridgehead was at Wilderspool, near Warrington, and there are probably at least three roads meeting at this point; one for Chester, another for Whitchurch (*Mediolano*) and a third from Northwich (*Condote*) along Kind (or King) street. Of these, the road from Whitchurch remains at present hypothetical. The other nodal point on the Mersey at Manchester (*Mamucium*), an auxiliary fort, must have connected with Northwich (via Stretford) and possibly with the south towards Chesterton.

There must also have been a main cross-route from the east, from Buxton (*Aquae*) towards Northwich but no trace of it has been properly established. Another road entered Cheshire from the south-east via the settlement at Chesterton, coming originally from Littlechester, near Derby, a point of great strategic importance, but this also is difficult to trace. A glance at the small scale map of the county (Fig. 1) shows how pitifully ignorant we are of the main routes, only Watling Street from Chester to Manchester is reasonably well established. The rest still await the patient study of the field worker. Traces, meagre no doubt, must exist here and there waiting the discerning eye.

#### BOOK LIST.

T. CODRINGTON. *Roman Roads in Britain*, 3rd ed. 1918.

I. D. MARGERY. *Roman Ways in the Weald*, published by Phoenix House, 1948.

W. THOMPSON WATKIN. *Roman Cheshire*, 1886.

S. E. WINBOLT. *With a Spade on Stane Street*, Methuen, 1936.

Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain 1928 (a new edition is forthcoming).

#### NOTES ON THE MAP (FIG. 1).

The information plotted on this map has been taken from the Cheshire set of 6 in. O.S. sheets on which all archaeological discoveries are plotted at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. It is not meant to be definitive but more indicative of the present state of knowledge. It shows at a glance how little is known about Roman Cheshire and in particular the eastern part of the county. There should be a route from Buxton into Cheshire, possibly using the Valley of the Dane, and one would expect also a north-south route between Manchester and Chesterton, but no positive trace of either of the routes has so far been recorded. Similarly the important link between Whitchurch and Wilderspool, which possibly follows modern roads for the greater part of its length, remains hypothetical.

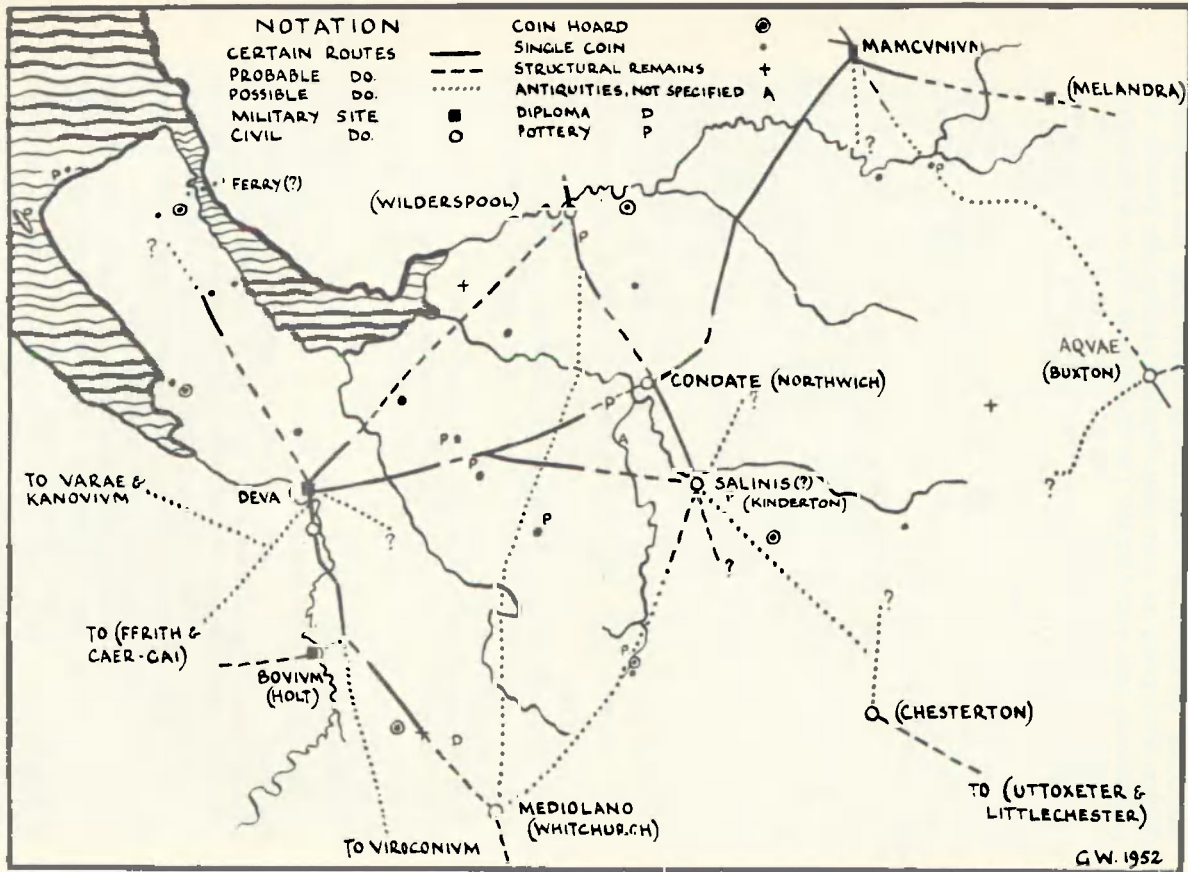


Fig. 1.

There has been a number of finds of coins in the county, but they do not necessarily signify nearby occupation. Pottery has not been so readily recognised and fragments have probably escaped notice.

The only structural remains, apart from those associated with recognised settlements or military establishments (i.e. at Chester, Wilderspool, Northwich, Kinderton and Heronbridge) are at:—

- (1) Halton — ditches and 3rd century pottery (*Annals*, xxiv, 165).
- (2) Malpas — “Roman implements, with coins and tessellated pavements.” (Watkin, p. 286, quoting Foote Gower, *Add. MSS., B.M., 11,338, Fo. 68*).
- (3) Winkle, near Macclesfield, a sepulchral mound (Watkin, p. 303).

Although Wilderspool is marked as a civil settlement it probably began as an auxiliary fort in the first century and may even have been a military works depot like Holt in Denbighshire.

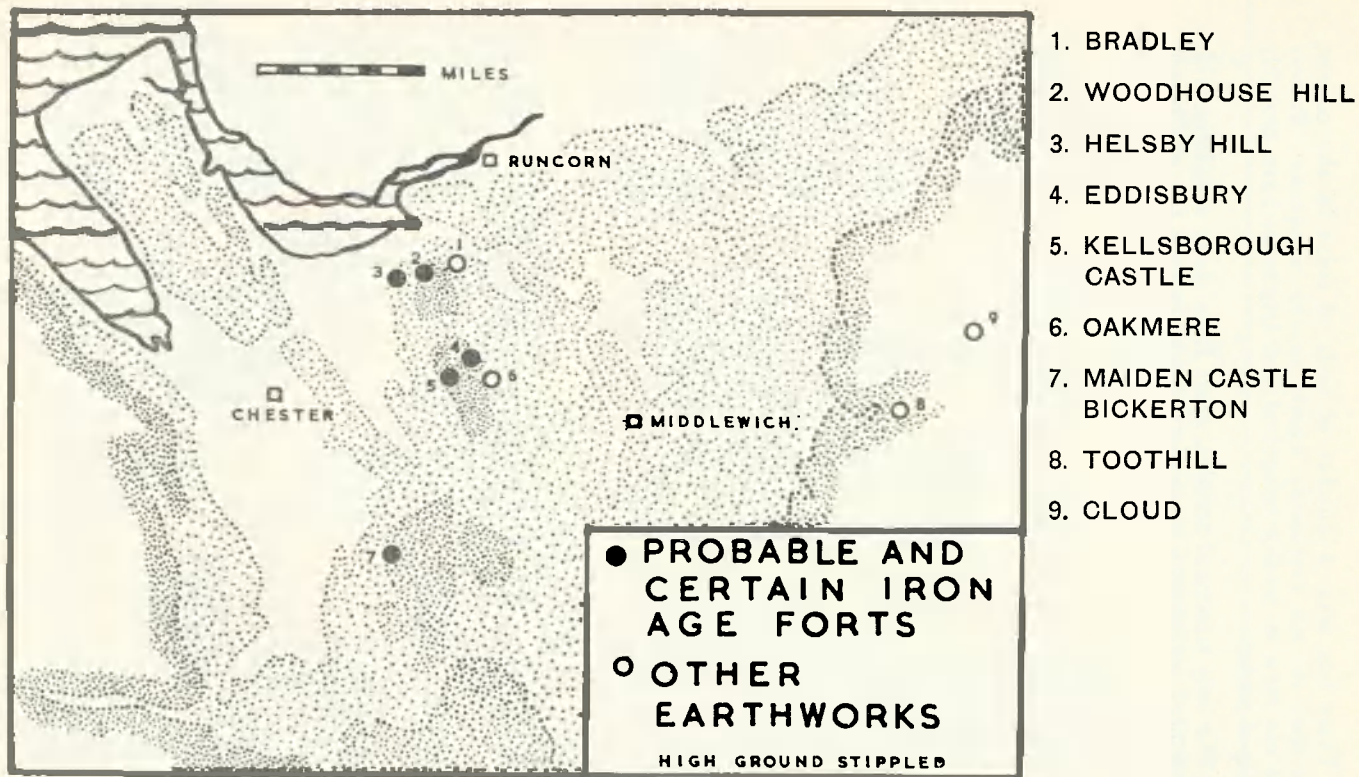
The place names follow the article by Prof. I. A. Richmond on “The British Section of the Ravenna Cosmography” (*Arch.*, 93) except that the writer feels that Kinderton has at present a greater claim to the name SALINIS than Nantwich. Although the latter has been regarded by many antiquaries as a Roman settlement, the only evidence, at present, consists of two finds of coins, one of which was a small hoard.

## B.

**A**N important feature of the archaeological map of Cheshire is the group of defensive earthworks which we call hill forts. A glance at the distribution map (Fig. 2) will show that these forts are built chiefly on the Central Ridge, which commands a good view of the plain on either side. This siting of forts along a ridge of high ground is part of a pattern which is repeated elsewhere — for example, along the Clwyd Valley in North Wales — and the forts themselves form part of a much larger network, which has been the subject of much recent investigation. A large part of this has been done by Professor Varley, who has carried out excavations on two of our Cheshire hill forts — Maiden Castle, Bickerton (7), and Castle Ditch, Eddisbury (4). The report on the latter, which has just appeared in the *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol. 102, 1950, has materially advanced our knowledge of this type of site.

The story begins in the south of England, in the region we know as Wessex, where some of the earliest forts were built about 250 B.C. These had a single earth rampart with a ditch outside,





(Fig. 2.) HILL FORTS IN CHESHIRE.

(Based on fig. 29 in Varley and Jackson's *Prehistoric Cheshire*).

and the entrances consisted simply of a gap in the rampart. From the pottery and other material found in them we know something of their occupants, who belonged to the culture group known as "Iron Age A." This type of structure gradually spread north up the Welsh Marches, branching off into North Wales and Cheshire, and it was about this period that the first real hill fort was built at Eddisbury (4) (although, as with some other forts, this was preceded by a still earlier set of palisade defences). This hill fort consisted of a simple rampart, following the contours of the hill but enclosing only part of the area of the top. The rampart was made up of earth, but was faced with stone on the outside.

As yet, Eddisbury was affected only by the first wave of fort building, emanating from the south of England. But soon another influence was felt, although only remotely, in Cheshire. At some time in the early part of the 1st century B.C., a wave of new immigrants reached the south-west of England from the area of Brittany, bringing with them a characteristic culture which we know as "Iron Age B." The most famous type sites of this culture are the lake villages of Meare and Glastonbury. This new immigration also had a pronounced effect on hill fort building, in the form of the multivallate fort. In this, the usual single rampart was superseded by a more complicated structure with two or more ramparts, of which the later phase of Maiden Castle, Dorset, is a well-known example. This increase in the depth of the defences was probably a reaction to the increasing use of the sling in siege warfare. The actual culture of the new invaders did not spread very far inland from the Severn Estuary, apart from isolated examples in the Welsh Marches. Some of its pottery was found in the hill fort at Oswestry, Shropshire, but in Cheshire the results were apparent in the structure of forts rather than the material culture. The fort at Eddisbury was reconstructed during the first century B.C., an outer rampart being added, and the timber guard cell at the south-eastern entrance being rebuilt in stone. It was probably in this period that the fort at Maiden Castle, Bickerton (7) was first built. Unlike Eddisbury, which comes into the class of contour forts, Maiden Castle was a promontory fort, one side of which was protected by a cliff face on the north-west, while a double rampart protected the other sides.

Both Maiden Castle and the reconstructed Eddisbury had a feature common to many hill forts of this period — the ramparts at the entrance were turned inwards to deepen the defences at this vulnerable point. We have already seen how structural changes outpaced the spread of material culture, and the military device of the inturned entrance is another example of this. Its obvious utility caused it to cut across existing cultural divisions and gave it a wide distribution, both in the south of England and the Welsh Marches, and also in another area in the north-east of England.

There are other features of these two forts, however, which raise some difficulties about their date. For the reconstructed entrance at Eddisbury, and the entire rampart at Maiden Castle, which were standing at the time of the Roman conquest and cannot have preceded it by a very long time, were built in a style which is characteristic of a supposedly early group of forts in Scotland. In these, the earth and stone ramparts were strengthened with vertical and horizontal timber beams. This type of fortification is sometimes called *Murus Gallicus* because in some ways it resembles a group of Gaulish forts so described by Julius Caesar. It seems evident that the ramparts of the Cheshire forts must be related in some way to those in Scotland, though it is uncertain at the moment which is earlier. The Abernethy group of forts, the Scottish prototype of this form of rampart building, was usually dated to about 250 B.C., in which case Professor Varley suggests that this form of construction in Cheshire must be a later derivation. Recently however, the early date of the Abernethy complex has been challenged, and the question remains an open one.

Another feature which provides a possible link with the north is the construction of a guard cell of timber or stone on each side of the inner end of the entrance. The original fort at Eddisbury, as well as the similar early fort at Almondbury in Yorkshire, had guard cells of timber, and in the later reconstruction at Eddisbury the cells were built of stone. Similar stone guard cells, built into the inturn of the rampart, are found in some of the neighbouring North Wales forts — Dinorben, Pen-y-Corrdyn, and Caer Drewyn — and were once thought to be derived from Roman military architecture. At Eddisbury, however, we have them in a purely prehistoric context. At the fort of Leckhampton in Gloucestershire they appear in an Iron Age B reconstruction of an earlier Iron Age A fort. Generally they seem to be an early feature, and may have some relation to the Scottish brochs, another product of the northward spread of Iron Age B culture from south-west England, which also often had guard cells on each side of the entrance passage.

While the Cheshire forts form part of the same complex as many of the North Wales forts in prehistoric times, excavations have shown that they came to a parting of the ways when the Romans established themselves in the north-west in the third quarter of the 1st century A.D. The Welsh forts, though they may have stood empty for a time, seem to have been extensively re-occupied in the 2nd century and later. In Cheshire, the forts seem to have been deserted after the Roman conquest. Eddisbury, within the area of influence of the legionary base at Chester, and actually overlooking a main Roman road, was put out of action as a fort. The ramparts were reduced and the ditches

filled up. Soon after this, the Yorkshire fort of Almondbury suffered similar treatment. Although no slighting seems to have taken place at Maiden Castle, that too shows no occupation at this period. There was a later Saxon occupation of Eddisbury but the history of the hill forts in this area was now virtually finished.

So much for Eddisbury and Maiden Castle. With the exception of one section dug on Woodhouse Hill (2) the other forts in the county have not been excavated; until more is known about them we can only presume, from their similarity to the excavated examples, that they too date to the pre-Roman Iron Age.

It is not known which tribes built these Cheshire forts. We do know that Almondbury was the stronghold, in Roman times, of the tribe known as the Brigantes, while the multivallate forts of the south-west were occupied by Celtic invaders from the Continent. But in Cheshire, Dr. Varley suggests that the occupants of the forts were the descendants of the native Bronze Age population, who adopted the structures of the new cultures without absorbing much of the pottery. After the Roman invasion the need for tribal forts largely ceased, and the inhabitants were assimilated into the wider culture of the Roman Empire.

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## Excavations, 1952

### DEANERY FIELD, CHESTER.

THE main effort of the year was directed at a trench through the northern defences in the Deanery Field in order to establish the presence or otherwise of the Flavian turf rampart (c. A.D. 70-75), previously discovered on the west side and at the south-east corner. In this, the excavation was successful; part of the turf rampart was found standing to a height of 7 ft., but its front portion had been cut away during the reconstruction of the north wall in 1887. The back too had been reduced by about 3 feet for the insertion of a building. This unexpected feature could not be fully explored within the limits of the trench but it is clear that its construction had removed the greater part of the primary levels in the tail of the rampart. The building, which was 28 feet wide, appears to be similar to others found on this side of the fortress and presumably was used for the storage of fuel and other combustible material. No evidence was recovered by which it could be dated, but it was clearly a secondary feature. The main result of the excavation was the discovery of the turf rampart, which now makes it possible to say that from c. A.D. 70 to 300, the enceinte of the legionary fortress appears to have remained in the same position.

### BRIDGE GATE.

A small scale excavation was carried out near the Bridge Gate in the yard of the Home Guard Club. The purpose of this was to make contact with the early mediaeval defences and if possible, to recover some examples of the pottery of that period. A heavy stone foundation was encountered and within the restrictions of the single trench, it was impossible to determine its limits or arrive at any conclusion as to its purpose. A quantity of interesting pottery was recovered of an entirely new local type. There is at present, some disagreement among authorities on this pottery but it seems probable that it belongs to the 13th century. The foundation may be an addition to the defences at this point, possibly under Edward I.

### INFIRMARY FIELD.

Efforts were continued during the year to locate a Roman burial but without success. The cemetery area must be considerably more confined than was previously imagined. Further work was done on the Roman building found last year.

### AMPHITHEATRE.

A short trench was excavated at the request of the City Engineer, to locate the outer wall of the amphitheatre, to enable the improvement line to be set out at this corner. No new information came to light.

C.W.

## BUNBURY PARISH CHURCH SANCTUARY, INTERIM REPORT

FOR some time, the Sanctuary flooring of Bunbury Parish Church laid in tile by Minton of Stoke-on-Trent in 1849 had shown signs of giving way and in view of the laying of a new floor it was decided that the cause of the subsidence should be found before new work was commenced. The grave slab of the Rev. Thomas Porter, one time Preacher of Bunbury (and of his wife) was found beneath the top step of the altar and recovered in good condition although smeared with cement. Marble edged steps had been laid upon the encaustic tiles and the grave slab covered a hole which had been dug through them to examine the floor beneath, presumably because of earlier subsidence. This had been due to a large lead coffin bearing, beneath a skull and cross bones the inscription, G.D. Esqr., Aged 45, 1727. (George Davenport of Calveley). Alongside to the north was another lead coffin without inscription and to the west a very large one (7 ft. 8 ins. in length) having a lead coffin plate to Richard Davenport, 1771. There were also three more leaden coffins within the sanctuary, only one of which was inscribed (beneath skull and crossbones) F.P. 1726, in the south-east corner of the sanctuary near the double piscina. Scattered through the soil over the whole sanctuary and disturbed at various times, presumably when the soil was dug into for burials in the 18th century, were numerous fragments of 14th century glass, mediaeval tiles and pieces of alabaster little larger than chippings. The glass, about 160 fragments, appears to belong to the lost Jesse window which formerly occupied the east window. The alabaster fragments probably came from the missing Calveley tombs. A large portion of one of these, a broken slab, quite plain, measuring 4 ft. 11 ins. by 3 ft.  $\frac{1}{2}$  ins. and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ins. in thickness, was found near the vestry door.

The most important result of the excavation was the discovery of a wall running parallel with the communion rail 12 ft. 6 ins. from the east wall. The wall was 4 ft. high and its top course was 1 ft. 9 ins. below the 19th century floor level. For 1 ft. 6 ins. the top two courses were of ashlar blocks mortared together and appeared to have been coated with a thin plaster as though older building material had been used. Beneath these were footings (on the south side) made up of nine moulded stones from a 12th century arch having a span of 6 ft. 8 ins., and one decorated voussoir of zigzag ornament with pellets, deeply cut. The footing of the south wall of the sanctuary (which had a well-built offset 12 ins. below the tile level) was also made up of earlier material, namely six large blocks of ashlar with a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins. chamfer cut on the square, and which also had received a liberal amount of thin plaster or whitewash. They were built well into this wall and the east wall of the chancel on the south end.

Moulded or carved stones were not found in the north wall, only in the newly discovered wall running parallel to the communion rail. Unfortunately the northern end of this latter wall had been greatly disturbed by grave digging and it was not possible to determine the relationship between it and the wall on the south side which continues westwards into the chancel parallel to the Ridley Chapel screen and into ground which could not be disturbed. There were no apparent signs of bonding however where the walls might have joined. In the angle so formed were the remains of footings and one large well-cut stone which might have formed part of a buttress set at right angles to the north-to-south wall.

It remains to indicate the importance of these structural remains, but it is impossible to draw definite conclusions for the evidence is tantalisingly insufficient. This however coincides with the evidence already to hand in connection with the history of 14th century building at Bunbury. How much did Sir Hugh Calveley build, and how much did he inherit, are questions to which there is no satisfactory answer. The facts to be considered are as follows.

Until the early 18th century the east window contained 14th century glass commemorating David de Bunbury together with the date 1343. The east window follows the style of this period and also shows signs of having been reconstructed. Hugh Calveley is credited with this work however, but if he built *de novo* the existing east wall and window (indeed the whole chancel) in 1387 (the date of the licence to build) one must account for the earlier glass having survived in a later frame and also believe that Sir Hugh was using designs about 40 years out of date. This is not beyond the bounds of possibility for there are one or two examples of architecture in Cheshire which seem to indicate that the county was a little behind the times. Bunbury east window has been quoted as one of these examples and it might be possible to explode the other evidence on further research. One more piece of evidence ought to be taken into consideration, that culled from documentary sources. The will of William Walsham (proved 1389) directs 'to the fabric of the Church of Bunnebury and the repair of the Chancel 20 marks.' An earlier will dated 1361 of William Ketell leaves 'for the fabric of the Church of Bunbury 4s.'

We can only leave the matter with the question, did Hugh Calveley then inherit a large Church of the time of David de Bunbury and enlarge the chancel, rebuilding the east wall (and window complete with glass) 12 ft. 6 ins. to the east in order to accommodate the canons of his new foundation, and also to provide a more dignified setting for his own alabaster tomb?

M.H.R.



MALTBY CHURCH, LINCS., 1940.  
Before Repair in 1940.



MALTBY CHURCH, LINCS., 1940.  
After Repair in 1940.

BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS.



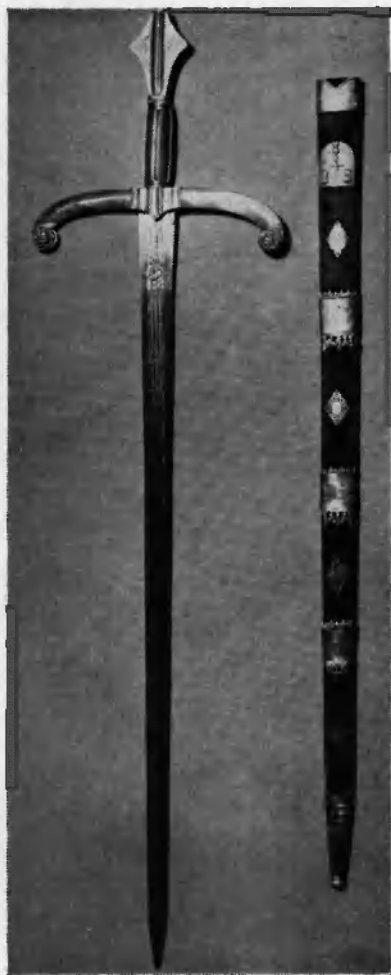


Fig. 1.

BLOCK BY COURTESY OF CHESTER CORPORATION.

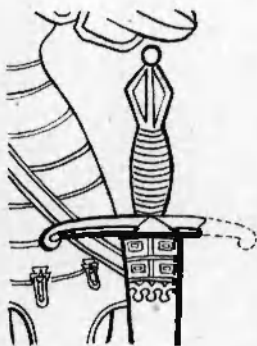


fig. 4



fig. 2



fig. 3

# Cheshire County Records

By MAJOR F. G. C. ROWE, COUNTY ARCHIVIST.

RECORDS, or archives, to many people mean nothing, and even if shown and explained to them are mentally consigned to the dust-bin or bonfire. Too often does one hear of some contemporary notes of happenings in bygone years, found in an attic, a cellar or in a bricked-up hole in a ruinous wall, being summarily consigned to the flames or sent to salvage. By this action, perhaps, the only true account of some event is lost for ever. This unwitting destruction has occurred not only in mansions but also in cottages and barns. Many a priceless document of the past has come to light in a sack in an outhouse.

In spite of ignorant or wanton destruction of records, it is to surviving records that one must have recourse when desirous of finding out "what really happened," as opposed to fanciful or pleasant legends. Records are not necessarily as dry as dust, for in many cases they are enlivened by quaint and humorous expressions; sometimes one comes across the impish opinion of an old-time clerk written in the margin of the document. Instances are to be found where the clerk has drawn unflattering sketches of men's faces against the entries.

Throughout the centuries prior to the establishment of County Councils, the Justices of the Peace, when assembled for Quarter Sessions, administered the counties in addition to their judicial functions, and during this time the records of their administration were incorporated with those of the bench. Since February 1889, the records of the administration of the County Palatine of Chester by its County Council have been kept apart from the records of the Quarter Sessions, still presided over by the Justices.

The records of the County administration, as well as those of the Sessions, are kept in the muniment room of the Cheshire Record Office, The Castle, Chester, under the immediate charge of the County Archivist. The latter works under the orders of the Records Advisory Sub-Committee of the Standing Joint Committee, as conveyed by the Clerk of the Peace. Lord Leverhulme, the Lord Lieutenant, is the Custos Rotulorum and is also Chairman of the Committee and Sub-Committee. In addition to these records there are the plans, deposited with the Clerk of the Peace under Acts of Parliament, of public utility undertakings, e.g. gas, electricity, turnpike roads, canals, etc. The Enclosure Awards of many manors and townships are kept with the official records. The judicial records of the Quarter Sessions which may be consulted by research workers, date from 1558 to a year one hundred years prior to the current year, the administrative records up to 1889, and other non-confidential documents as desired.

Besides the official records in the keeping of the County Council there are what are generally called unofficial records, i.e. those which have not arisen from the functions of the Justices or of the County Council but which have been deposited for preservation and for the enlightenment of posterity. Into this category fall such items as Minutes of defunct Local Authorities, the books and accounts of the River Weaver Navigation, and the collections of estate and private documents belonging to private persons no longer requiring them.

The Cheshire Record Office has been approved by the Master of the Rolls as an approved repository for manorial records, and the County Council has been similarly authorised by him to accept such records. As the Office is the only one in the County so approved, it is hoped that persons no longer requiring their collections of old documents and plans will deposit them at the Record Office, rather than destroy them or send them away from the County. The County Council is very willing to accept for preservation any collection, large or small. As an aid to the study of the past there is nothing so valuable as the combination of official and unofficial records.

Before passing on to give details of the records at the Cheshire Record Office, perhaps I may be allowed to give some hints on the preservation of documents which will be within the capacity of any holder of documents, but of which they may not be aware.

- (i) Store away in parcels or boxes in a room free from damp, fire or vermin. If damp, dry before storing or everything in the parcel will be affected. Inspect regularly.
- (ii) To dry wet or damp documents, whether of parchment or paper, proceed as follows:—
  - (a) Separate the documents carefully and open them out.
  - (b) Scatter small paper balls on a dry flat surface and lay the documents on them. This will ensure sufficient ventilation.
  - (c) Documents of two or more pages or membranes of parchment should be treated as in (b) above with small paper balls between the pages or membranes.
  - (d) Books can be dried as in (c) above.
  - (e) The natural warmth of any well-ventilated room is quite sufficient to dry any document.
  - (f) NEVER dry documents of any kind in front of a fire or upon radiators or warm pipes, nor iron them with a flat-iron.

- (iii) If in any doubt as to the disposal of documents, plans, engravings, etc., or before deciding to dispose of any of them (however unimportant they may seem), it is hoped that an owner or custodian will communicate with the Clerk of the County Council, St. John's House, Chester, or with the County Archivist, either of whom will give every assistance.

#### QUARTER SESSIONS RECORDS.

The largest mass of official records is that of the Quarter Sessions Records. There are 123 Quarter Sessions Books covering the period 1559 to 1938, which contain Indictments, Orders, Presentments, Recognizances and Minutes. The series is complete except for the years 1643 and 1644. Along with these books are the Quarter Sessions Files and, like them, have reference to the judicial and administrative transactions of the Justices of the Peace. This series is complete for the period 1559 to 1888 and average four files for each year, namely for the Epiphany, Easter, Trinity and Michaelmas Sessions. Included in the Files are Bonds to keep the Peace, Informations, Lists of Constables and of Juries, Presentments, etc. Since the formation of the County Council, the judicial side of these records has been kept separately, i.e., one series containing the records of the Justices and another series the records of the County Council.

Names of the Justices are given in a series of Commissions of the Peace from 1681 to the present time, 22 documents. By the Test Act of 25 Charles II any person who wished to hold any office under the Crown had to attend a Parish Church and receive Holy Communion, after which he had to subscribe to a declaration against Transubstantiation. The Minister of the Church and at least one Churchwarden signed a Sacramental Certificate to the effect that the person had partaken according to the usage of the Church of England. To this Certificate was added another, subscribed by two persons of substance, to the effect that all had been carried out properly and that the declaration had been made. This latter certificate was sworn to at the Sessions. Though the main bulk of these Certificates, i.e., from 1673 to 1768, are at the Public Record Office in London, we have here 11 files of them covering the period 1741 to 1827. The Test Act was repealed in 1828.

Allied to the Sacramental Certificates are the Rolls of names of subscribers to the Oaths of Abjuration, Allegiance and Anti-Transubstantiation. Of these Rolls there are some 35, covering the period 1673 to 1835.

On the other side of the house we have Nonconformists and Papists. In regard to the Nonconformists the records seldom make any distinction between the Protestant Dissenters; only in one or two cases are any persons designated as Quakers or as belonging

to the Society of Friends. In this group are: (1) Register of Places certified for Religious Worship, 1689 to 1853; (2) Declaration of Persons in Holy Orders or Pretended Holy Orders as to Articles of Religion — 2 Rolls, 1704-1732; (3) List of Dissenters, 1706-7; (4) Names and Addresses of persons who had taken the Oath of Allegiance, 1723 — 4 books. (5) Register of Persons proving at General Quarter Sessions of their reception of the Sacrament and subscription to the Oaths of Allegiance and Abjuration, 1782-1817.

In respect of the Papists the records are: (1) Register of Papists' Estates, 1717-23, giving names of owners and localities, together with miscellaneous papers and rough notes for compiling the Register 1714-1718; (2) Deeds enrolled. These relate to conveyances and leases of lands belonging to Papists and were enrolled under the Act of 3.Geo.I. There are 8 Rolls covering the period 1715 to 1759; (3) Letters of Attorney and Rentals connected with the Register [See (1) above], 1717 to 1743; (4) Enrolments of Letters of Attorney and Rentals — 3 rolls, 1717-1743; (5) List of Wirral Papists summoned to take the Oath of Allegiance, with four certificates, 1743-4; (6) List of Papists and Non-Jurors in Wirral, 13. Mar., 1743; (7) Certificate of refusal of Papists (names given) to take the Oath of Allegiance, 2. Apr., 1744; (8) Bundle of various papers, including some lists of recusants, 1714-1723. In the Register of Places certified for Religious Worship, mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are a few Papist Places named. In addition to the above there are four books containing the names and addresses of persons subscribing to the Oath of Allegiance, 1723, but no indication is given as to their religion.

#### ALE HOUSES.

One of the matters which concerned the Justices was the licensing of Ale-houses and the licensees. The records of this are: Licences, 1630-1650, 1 file; Register of Licences, 1747-1758; Lists of Ale-house keepers' recognizances, giving their names and sureties, under the headings of the County Hundreds, 1749-1844 (not all years are represented); Bundles of Ale-sellers' Recognizances, arranged as above, 1754-1828.

#### BADGERS.

These were registered travelling provision merchants who were licensed to buy corn or other victuals in one place and to sell them in another. Register, 1759-1772, 1 book.

#### BRIDGES.

By the Act of 1. Anne, supplementing that of 22. Henry VIII, the Justices were empowered to raise money by taxation to repair and amend bridges in cases where no person responsible therefor could be ascertained. The records chiefly consist of contracts for this purpose and consist of bundles covering the period 1708 to 1881.

## NAVIGATION.

The records concern the Rivers Dee, Irwell and Mersey, and Weaver. They concern minutes of meetings, appointment of Surveyor of Navigation, maps and agreements for land reclamation and appointment of Commissioners. Register of Vessels entering and leaving the Dee, 1740-1760. Accounts, Minute and Tonnage Books of the Weaver, 1733-1899. Register of Vessels using the navigable rivers, 1795-1812. Certificates of Registration of Vessels, 1795-1802.

## GAMEKEEPERS.

By the Act of 9 Anne, to improve preservation of game, one gamekeeper for each manor was allowed. He was allowed to kill game and his name was recorded with the Clerk of the Peace. Register, 1711-1825.

## DEPOSITED PLANS.

These are plans deposited with the Clerk of the Peace and begin in 1792 and continue onwards to the present. They are in respect of Electricity, Gas, Waterworks, Canals, Railways and Roads, and with most there is a book of reference. A charge of One shilling per hour for perusal of each document, or Two shillings per hour for making extracts or tracings, is made in respect of each document.

## MAPS.

Speed, Teasdale, Kitchin, Carey, Greenwood: 1673-1830.

## ENCLOSURE AWARDS.

The Record Office contains 74 Awards with their plans, either in originals or in copies, 1767-1898. (Note: There are no Tithe Awards in the Office).

## POLL BOOKS.

These are manuscript books and were used to record the votes of the electors at elections for Knights of the Shire. 1714, 16. Feb., 7 books; 1722, 4. Apr., 7 books; 1722, 4. Apr., names of Wirral electors, 1 book. These are most interesting as they show how each elector voted, i.e., before the secret ballot was established.

## EXTRACTS OF FINES.

These are extracts of Fines, etc. imposed or forfeited at the Sessions. There are many files and cover the period from 1560 to 1890.

## MILITIA AND YEOMANRY.

There are only a few bundles of papers relating to these and are of the 18th and 19th centuries. These have not been arranged as yet.

## ROADS.

These records are of contracts, etc., for maintenance of the approaches to and of the roads over bridges. They were made with private contractors, Highway Boards, Turnpike Trustees, etc. The Bundles cover the period 1833 to 1886, each contract covering a period of two to seven years.

## TURNPIKE ROAD TRUSTS.

There are twenty four books, chiefly consisting of accounts for the Chester to Tarvin, Chester to Frodsham, and Chester to Northop roads, and cover the period 1769 to 1883. One box contains the Mortgages on the Tolls of these roads, and others, covering the period 1767 to 1832. The Returns of Income and Expenditure on roads cover the years 1822 to 1886.

## VAGRANTS.

Certificates of Vagrants, Constables' Accounts and awards for apprehending vagrants, are contained in three files, 1701, 1773, 1783.

## CHARTISTS.

Correspondence relating to their trial and to a possible attempt to release them from Chester Castle, which latter caused the calling up of the Militia, 1839.

## UNOFFICIAL ACCESSIONS.

These accessions are so called because the records concerned do not arise from the judicial or administrative functions of the Justices or of the County Council. Some are deposited either as a gift or on loan by authorities and some by private persons. Naturally these accessions get the same care and attention as the official records.

## CHESTER WILLS.

The collection of Wills, Letters of Administration and Inventories is at present the largest unofficial accession. It consists of some 50,000 documents and covers the period 1545 to 1858. These documents concern people who were described as of a place in Cheshire only. As the Chester Probate Court covered a much larger area, the Wills, etc., when transferred from the Probate authority, were divided into counties. Those of places in Lancashire are kept at Preston, where the sorting out took place: those for Wales are kept at the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. Indexes have been published by the Lancashire & Cheshire Record Society for the period 1545 to 1820, and they can be obtained from the Lancashire Record Office, County Hall, Preston. A card-index has been started for 1821 onwards at the Cheshire Record Office for the Wills, etc., of Cheshire persons, kept there. Details in regard to fees chargeable in respect of the Wills, etc., can be obtained from the "County Archivist, Cheshire Record

Office, The Castle, Chester," on request. To avoid delay in producing documents, it would be of great help if persons so requiring them for inspection would kindly write or telephone their requirements beforehand. (Chester 20121).

#### PRIVATE DEPOSITS.

These are collections of documents deposited with the County Council and the Standing Joint Committee by private persons and by custodians of documents.

Concerning the larger collections mention may be made of that of the Lord Vernon, D.L., of Sudbury, Derbyshire, concerning the Middlewich area; Major-General T. N. F. Wilson, C.B., D.S.O., the Sandbach area; I.C.I., the Alderley Park Estate; the Earl of Shrewsbury, estates in Cheshire; British Records Association, estates in Cheshire; Brigadier E. C. W. D. Walthall, C.M.G., D.S.O., Wistaston estate. The depositing of the Cholmondeley Castle estate documents by the Earl of Rocksavage, M.C., has been started; this is a very large collection, and for the present only the documents calendared will be available to research students.

Of the smaller collections mention may be made of those of Major H. P. Oldfield, of Harrow-on-the-Hill, documents of the Kelsall and Oldfield families in regard to estates all over the county; Mr. T. G. Lilley of Bournemouth, Moreton Hall correspondence 1774-1825; Captain M. K. Mainwaring of Oteley, Salop, the Mainwaring estate at Bromborough; the Victoria & Albert Museum, a collection of 19 water-colours of well known Cheshire places by contemporary artists from "The 'Recording Britain Collection';" Sir E. B. Royden, Bart., estates in Frankby area; Salop County Council, Coppenhall area.

Most of all the above-mentioned collections consist of conveyances of land, estate management, rentals, etc., interspersed with the occasional household accounts, marriage settlements, etc., and are of great interest to students of the countryside and its economics.

In addition to the above the County has acquired the collection of the late Lady Annabel Crewe. This contains a fine copy of Glover's Visitation of Cheshire with many beautifully executed coats of arms by him, the long lost Cowper papers (as noted recently by Miss Tunstall in "Cheshire Life"), and a pedigree of the family of Warhull or Warrall of Newton-by-Middlewich from temp. Henry III to 1632. A few old engravings of places of interest in the County have also been acquired.

It is hoped that this article will give readers a good, general picture of the records in the care of the County. In such a short space it is impossible to give more than the bare outlines, but the County Archivist will be glad to give students any help in their researches.



# Chester Miracle Plays

By MARGARET M. PRITCHARD, B.A. (Admin.),

ASSIST. SECRETARY, CHESHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

IT was with great trepidation and cautiousness that the County Drama Committee of the Cheshire Rural Community Council first received the approach from the Chester City Council that it should undertake the production of the proposed revival of the Chester Miracle Plays for the City's part in the Festival of Britain. These plays which, until 1951, were last performed in 1600, form the earliest of the four surviving cycles of Miracle Plays which have come down from mediaeval times. The theme of these cycles was vast, ranging from the Creation of the World to the Last Judgment. When, during the 14th century, the responsibility for the presentation of the plays was taken from the clergy by the Guilds, each one took on, as far as possible, the play most suited to its own particular craft. The water-carriers of the Dee were responsible for the Deluge, and it became a deluge in which players, and some of the audience, were drenched, for these plays were always presented with the utmost naturalism.

It is interesting to note that the first approach to the County Drama Committee was only made at the end of September, 1950, and in less than nine months from that first tentative proposal the plays had been adapted so as to be in a suitable form for modern production, a producer engaged, over a hundred amateur players brought together from all over the county and the plays rehearsed and finally staged in a delightful mediaeval set with costumes specially designed and made for this production. Naturally, there were many obstacles to be surmounted ranging from such impressive matters as obtaining the Lord Chamberlain's permission to perform the plays, down to the none-the-less important details of arranging car park facilities for the actors. But, from the first, members of the Committee felt that if at all possible, the full performance of the Chester Miracle Plays should be given during the Festival year, although it was realised that it was quite a formidable task.

The first step, after the preliminary negotiations with the City Council, was to get the Plays adapted from the material available so that they could be easily performed and presented to a modern audience. This work was eventually accepted by the Rev. Joseph and Mrs. McCulloch of Warwick, and after carefully considering the material they reported that they anticipated telescoping the original twenty-four plays into six parts dealing with the Creation, Nativity and Resurrection equally. They felt that these six parts would perhaps take three nights to perform. Early in February the completed adaptation was received, and it was soon clear that

the aim of making the script easily intelligible without destroying the essential character of the work had been well achieved.

The whole cycle of the plays was now seen to have fallen neatly into three parts of more or less equal length — “In the Beginning,” “The Nativity” and “The Passion.” It was decided that the Plays should be performed on three successive evenings and it was on this basis that the selection of the groups to act in the Plays was eventually made.

About this time serious consideration was given as to where the Plays should be performed. Inevitably there were people who pressed for the full re-creation of the old method of presentation — on “pageants” or wagons, but for obvious reasons this was not practicable. The question then resolved itself into the straightforward one of either an indoor or an outdoor production. An approach had already been made to the Dean and Chapter, who had agreed to put the Abbey Green at the disposal of the City Council for this purpose. For an outdoor performance this was an ideal setting, but the usual pleas of inaudibility and the uncertainty of the weather were strongly pressed. The alternative was the Cathedral Refectory. Naturally, it was agreed that the final decision must rest with the Producer/Director when engaged, but it was decided to make further enquiries on both lines.

Events began to move so rapidly and so many things happened in so short a time that the work resolved itself, from necessity, into being done directly from the office with periodic meetings at odd hours during the day with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

On a recommendation of the Arts Council, an approach was made to Christopher Ede of London to undertake the direction of the Plays. After a preliminary visit to Chester and discussion with representatives of the City Council’s Development Committee and the County Drama Committee, Mr. Ede agreed in February, 1951, to undertake the production and general direction of the plays.

By now it was generally agreed that, although this production was primarily for part of Chester’s activities during the Festival of Britain year, it was hoped that, at the conclusion of the performance of the Plays, the City Council would have in its possession sufficient equipment in costumes and sets, to make the Plays’ further performance in future years a more practicable possibility.

It was, therefore, a complete picture of the preliminary work that was presented to the County Drama Committee at its meeting on the 24th February — the scripts were in the office. Christopher Ede had been engaged as Producer/Director and the Cathedral Refectory had been booked for the performance of the Plays to take place from the 8th—30th June, 1951 — the committee

was ready for the more detailed work. Although so much work had already gone into the project, time was moving swiftly and the actual production had hardly been put into operation. The Committee set out to consider the cast required, and as to how best the county might be divided into workable groups. From careful study it became obvious that each of the three Plays would have to be produced in three separate groups, though still maintaining the whole. The first approach was made to all known societies and groups by circular letter, giving particulars of the proposed production, and secretaries were asked to inform the office of the probable number of their members who would be likely to take part. By the end of March, 1951, the position was fairly clear and preliminary casting auditions were held in three centres: Frodsham, Acton and Chester. These meetings were only of an explanatory nature designed to ascertain what talent was available. Mr. Ede finally approved the casts on his visit to the County during the second week in April, when each play was read through and set. In his introductory talk to the cast, he made reference to the rules governing the performance in the Middle Ages when players were liable to be fined for late attendance at rehearsals or bad performance on the night.

The three sub-producers were then left with his instructions for carrying on until his next visit, with an assistant producer to oversee the whole in Mr. Ede's absence.

The costume designer, Miss Sheila Jackson, also travelled up from London that weekend and as far as possible took measurements of the cast. She brought with her the designs which she had made for the various characters. Miss Jackson and Michael Trangmar, who designed the set, bought many of the bits and pieces required for the costumes and props in London, and mention should be made of some of the receipts received for these articles — "leather for Devil's tail" and "pencil tops for the Devil's pitchfork."

From this point onwards the difficulties grew daily. The cast had a habit of changing rapidly, and this involved considerable difficulty with regard to costumes. The third play suffered particularly in this respect as finding twelve disciples as well as many other male characters was no easy task. Letters had to be written asking for some of the cast to be allowed to play in matinees; the programme had to be prepared with suitable programme notes; irons and a sewing machine had to be made available in the Refectory. Then, from the end of May onwards, hampers of unfinished costumes arrived from London, and unwilling casts had to grapple with the hemming of them. Somehow out of all this chaos, together with the other 101 tasks which are involved in any performance, and especially one of this size, order began to emerge. The Plays began to look like plays, and one could reasonably expect to see the same face in the same part

for two consecutive rehearsals. Memories of those last few weeks are more than hectic — the office began to look rather like a second-hand clothes dealer's — and the problems that confronted us became too numerous to record. Many of these concerned only small matters, but all needed time and patience to solve.

Apart from the principal characters, in each of the three plays there was also a crowd which played a part in each — pleading to be taken into the Ark, at Bethlehem and before Pilate. For the sake of economy, the same costumes for the crowd were common to all three plays, which may have saved the expense of having to make forty more costumes, but caused many a headache. To begin with, and not unnaturally, everyone would have liked to have had his or her own costume. It meant that the costumes could not be taken away from the Refectory, and after each performance I had to make myself thoroughly unpopular until I had successfully managed to get twelve women's crowd costumes folded neatly on one table and eight men's crowd costumes on another. Difficulty also arose from the wimples for the women — these, too, were common to all three crowds, and as they came into close contact with the grease paint, needed frequent laundering. But, with three matinees and six evening performances a week, they had to be done on the spot. Accordingly we had to organise "wimple-washing parties" of ladies in the cast who were able to spare an hour or two each day and who kindly came down to the Refectory to wash and iron the wimples. One day we ran into difficulties — I had gone up to the Refectory to see about some seating arrangements, and met the wimple-washing party with a pile of wet wimples ready to be ironed. In the whole of the Cathedral there appeared to be only one three-point plug. This was actually in the Refectory and the ironing was generally done there, but this particular afternoon there was a Bring and Buy Sale in progress and we were left with no ironing facilities and a performance in three hours! After searching around we did eventually find another plug for the iron in the workroom, and cleared out a carpenter's bench and sundry tools and set to work there.

Of the set and the props there is really little that I can say — its delightful mediaeval perspective has really to be seen to be appreciated and it is hard to describe its attractiveness. The actual plan of the set was discussed with Mr. Ede during March, it was designed by Michael Trangmer and built by Stage Decor, a firm in London. It arrived in Chester on Monday, 11th June, a week before the production opened. We arranged for a removal van to collect the set from the station and deliver it to the Refectory. The framework — tubular scaffolding — was erected and then little more could be done until Strand Electric had finished their work of fixing the lighting. Then the permanent part of the set—the archways each side and false proscenium which were common

to all three plays — were fixed, and the parts for the individual scenes stored in the Cloisters and the Undercroft. All this work took several men a good week to complete — yet it came down, with far less help, in a day and a half.

The plan of the set, allowed for a small raised platform which would be the musicians' gallery. Mr. Ede's original idea was that a group of eight or ten male singers, together with a group of oboe players, should take their place on this platform. Later, owing to the fact that the singers were required every night it was found more practicable to form a rota and this gave rise to even worse costume difficulties. In the end, the singers were heard from off-stage and the recorder players, with the Prompter, all three in costume, crossed the stage and took their place on the platform as the trumpet fanfare was sounding. Only a few days before the dress rehearsal was a trumpeter found to play the fanfare that began each play. This fanfare was played three times; once away in the Cloisters near to the Cathedral, and again nearer to the Refectory and the third time on the small flight of steps leading from the Cloisters to the stage in the Refectory. The house lights were dimmed between the second and the third fanfares and the musicians and the prompter took their places.

Dress rehearsals took place the weekend immediately prior to the opening night and, in retrospect, appear to be a confused jumble of a flurry of trying to wear wimples the right way, frantic exchanges of wigs, a confused mass of grease-paint, photographs, and trying to hear the players through a background of a visiting team of bell-ringers.

Of the actual fortnight of the production little can be said here — the Cathedral Refectory became a second home and one tended to forget that there was a life outside it. The milling crowds and the queues waiting in the hope of returned tickets faded once again when the lights went down and, with the sound of the first fanfare on the trumpet heard in the Cloisters and gradually coming nearer, we were taken back into the Middle Ages — the costumes and set designed so cleverly, with colours intermingling and their shades altering to the mood of the play — gay for Noah and his Ark and gradually merging into the sombre colours of the Passion. The music of the two recorders and the sound of the male voices from the background all became one with the splendour of the Story.

One could go on with the details of the mass of clearing up that had to be faced, the storing of the costumes, props and set and many other problems, but it is perhaps better to finish here at the culmination of the hard work and fun that went into this revival of the Chester Miracle Plays. We had barely finished the final packing of the costumes on their return from the cleaners when, in view of the outstanding success, the City Council decided to repeat the performance of the cycle in 1952.

# The Chester Civic Sword

By C. BLAIR, B.A.

“Soc longe as Chester huggs its Sworde and Mace,  
Soc longe shall Chester never knowe disgrace:  
But lett they baubles ffrom her breast be torne,  
Then shall that Citie straightly bee forlorne.”

OLD CHESHIRE RHYME.

THE sword (Pl. 4. Fig. 1) which forms the subject of this note is preserved amongst the Corporation regalia in Chester Town Hall, and is carried before the Mayor of that City on all important civic occasions. It is a large weapon (total length 47½ inches), of the type now usually classified as a bastard or hand-and-half sword, i.e. it is midway in size between an ordinary sword for use with one hand and a two-hander. The hilt is of iron covered with thin sheets of silver gilt, and consists of the following: lozenge-shaped pommel with a raised central rib; wooden grip, swelling slightly in the middle, and covered with fish-skin decorated with six thin longitudinal strips of silver, and encircled at each end by a narrow collar of the same metal; long (13 in.), flat, slightly arched quillons, their rounded tips, which turn upwards towards the blade, each being decorated on one side with a lion mask and on the other with a garb, both applied in silver gilt; fluted triangular *écussons* made separate from the quillons; narrow applied strips of silver gilt engraved with a herring-bone pattern mark-off the tips of the quillons and border each side of the *écussons*. The wide, tapering two-edged blade is of flat section and trebly grooved on each face for half its length: the 12 in. nearest to the hilt on both sides are etched and engraved with the following, against a diapered and granulated ground, (starting at at the top with the sword held point upwards): *Obverse*, (i) a shield bearing a version of the old City arms of Chester, *a sword erect between two* (instead of the usual three) *garbs*<sup>1</sup>: (ii) the blade-smith's mark, an orb and cross partly inlaid in copper; (iii) a shield bearing the arms of the local family of Bostock, *a fess couped*, quartering those of the Earldom of Chester, *three garbs*, and surmounted by a helmet with one of the Bostock crests, *an antelope passant*: (iv) a shield bearing the Bostock arms with the addition of what appears to be a cadency mark, (now indecipherable), and surmounted by a crested helmet as in (iii). *Reverse*, (i) a shield bearing the arms of the Earldom of Chester; (ii) as under (iv) above: (iii) bearded warrior dressed in Classical armour. The engraving at the bottom of the blade is partly covered by the *écussons*.

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(1) A similar version of these arms occurs on an impression of the Statute Merchant Seal of Chester attached to a document of 1589 in John Ryland's Library, Manchester (Rylands Ch. 1530).

The sheath is of wood, covered with red velvet trimmed down each side with silver galloon, (probably originally gold), and with silver gilt mounts; these consist of a chape, and four lockets set at intervals, one being at the mouth. They are engraved with the following, (starting at the mouth with the sheath held point upwards): Obverse (i), *Charles Earle of 1668*. Reverse, *Derby Maior 1668*. (ii) *Edward Oulton Esqr, Major (sic) 1687*. (iii) *John Minshull Esqr, Mayor, 1711*. (iv) *John Thomason Esqr, Mayor, Peace Proclaimed May the 12. 1713*<sup>2</sup>: (v) (*the chape*), *Pattn. Ellames Esqr, Mayor, 1781*, together with a volute of rococo foliage. In addition (ii) and (iii) have their edges cut into a series of fleurs-de-lys and (iv) is surmounted by a pierced crown. Between the lockets are small plates, also of silver gilt, all decorated with piercings except that between the first two which is engraved *Robt. Morry, Wm. Wilson, Treasurers (sic) 1669*; below this last is a silver gilt shield bearing the old arms of the City, (*a sword erect between three garbs*), in relief. On the reverse side of the sheath, near the mouth, is a silver plate engraved *Carried as the Sword of State at Carnarvon Castle, 13 July, 1911, before King George V & Queen Mary at the Investiture of the PRINCE of Wales (Earl of Chester). D. L. Hewitt, Mayor*.

As it now exists the sword is composed of elements of various dates, the hilt, minus its decoration, being the only surviving portion of the original weapon. This belongs to a group of swords, all with the same distinctively shaped pommel and quillons, and all apparently made within about fifteen years of each other.<sup>3</sup> An example almost identical in size and form to the Chester sword is borne behind King Alexander III of Scotland in an illustration to a manuscript *Scotichronicon* of c.1435-50 in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge<sup>4</sup> (Pl. 4. Fig. 2), while slightly smaller specimens are shown on the brasses of Roger Elmebrygge Esq. (d. 1437) in Beddington Church, Surrey (Pl. 4. Fig. 3), and of Thomas de Saint Quintin Esq. (d. 1445) in Harpham Church, East Riding (Pl. 4. Fig. 4.). In addition the civic swords of both Newcastle-on-Tyne and Kingston-on-Hull are of the same type, and there can be little doubt that the second of these is the weapon made for the city in 1440, (the year in which Hull was first granted the privilege of having a sword), the account for which still survives.<sup>5</sup> From the above, therefore, it seems that this group of swords, and with them the hilt of the Chester sword, may reasonably be assigned to the period c. 1435—c. 1450.

(2) This refers to the peace of Utrecht which terminated the War of the Spanish Succession.

(3) This group was first identified by Mr. C. R. Beard, *Connoisseur*, June, 1923.

(4) Abp. Parker's MSS. The manuscript can be dated fairly accurately by the costume shown in the same illustration.

(5) Ll. Jewitt and W. H. St. John Hope: *The Corporation Plate of England and Wales* (London, 1885), vol. 2, p. 517.

The blade originally fitted to the hilt would have been much stouter and heavier than the present one, which is of a type found on 16th and early 17th century swords, e.g. that on an early 17th century bastard sword in the Royal Armoury, Stockholm, signed PETER MUNSTEN, LONDON. The orb and cross mark indicates that it is probably German in origin, large quantities of blades having been imported from that country at this period. When it was substituted for the original, however, is by no means certain; the fact that it does not fit the hilt properly and also that part of the decoration is obscured by the quillons suggests that it was not made specially when a new blade was required, but was simply used because it was a convenient size, possibly being removed from another sword in the process. The coats of arms (which may have been added after the rest of the decoration), give no assistance. According to the *Heralds' Visitation of Chester*<sup>6</sup> of 1580, Hawise, daughter of Hugh Kyvelioc, Earl of Chester, married Warine de Bostock as her second husband early in the reign of Henry II, and this would account for the quartering of the family arms with those of the Earldom. There appears, however, to have been no official connection between a member of any of the several branches of the Bostock family and the City of Chester at any time during the 16th and 17th centuries, and the presence of their arms on the sword is therefore something of a mystery. It is possible that when a new blade was required by the City (perhaps in 1668 when the sheath and mounts were made), it was presented by one of the Bostocks, but in the absence of further evidence no definite conclusion can be reached.

On the 20th September, 1644, during the siege of Chester, both the civic mace and sword were captured by the Parliamentarians and sent up to London, not being returned until 1647 after the fall of the city. The two objects no doubt suffered in the process and it is probably for this reason that Charles, 8th Earl of Derby (d. 1672), on becoming Mayor in 1668, presented the City with a new mace.<sup>7</sup> The silver decoration on the sword apparently also belongs to the same period and it seems very probably, therefore, that the Earl, in addition to presenting the mace, had the sword refurbished, decorated (or redecorated), and fitted with a new sheath. In this connection it is significant to notice that the earliest inscription on the sheath commemorates the Earl's mayoralty.

We have seen that the Chester sword consists of a 15th century hilt allied to a 16th or early 17th century blade, and with decoration and sheath almost certainly added in 1668. It remains only to establish the date when the original weapon was first

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(6) *Harleian Soc. Publications*, vol. 18, (1882), p. 28. See also G. Ormerod: *History of Cheshire* (Helsby's Edn. of 1882), vol. 3, p. 253.

(7) T. Hughes: *The Corporate Maces etc. of Cheshire* (Chester, 1872), p. 16.



acquired. The earliest of the municipal charters to mention a sword is that given by Henry VII in 1506 which provides that "the mayor of the said city, and his successors for the time being may have their sword which we gave them, or any other as may please them borne before them . . ." This clause has led to the belief that the existing sword is that referred to as having been presented by the King.<sup>8</sup> Henry VII was renowned for his parsimony, but it seems unlikely that even he would give a sword that was over fifty years old to an important city. That Chester was in possession of a sword as early as 1458-59 is shown by a payment of eleven shillings made in that year by the City Treasurer to one Hugh Dutton, "sword-bearer" (*gladifero*).<sup>9</sup> There can be little doubt, in view of its date, that the sword of which the present hilt formed part was that carried by Dutton, and from this it follows that it was probably obtained by the city at the time of its manufacture, i.e. between c.1435 and c.1450.<sup>10</sup> The citizens of Chester presumably preferred their old sword to that presented by Henry, the fate of which is unknown, unless it is the one dating from c.1500 (now in the British Museum), which bears on its blade a spurious inscription attributing it to Hugh Lupus, the first Norman Earl of Chester.

I should like to express my gratitude to the following for assistance in preparing this article: A. R. Wagner, Esq., Richmond Herald; Graham Webster, Esq., Curator of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, Miss Margaret Groombridge and Miss S. Bailhache, successively City Archivists at Chester; Miss Blanche Byrne for drawing Figs. 2, 3 and 4.

#### GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS USED.

**CADENCY MARK**, any one of a number of small devices placed on a coat of arms to distinguish different members or collateral branches of the same family.

**CHAPE**, metal terminal, usually pointed, of a sheath.

**ECUSSONS**, small shield-shaped projections in the centre of the quillons of a sword.

**FESS**, an heraldic term for a broad band extending horizontally across the centre of a shield. A **FESS COUPED** has a short piece cut off at each end.

(8) Jewitt and Hope, vol. 1, p. 60.

(9) *Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Historic Mss.* (1881), Appendix, Pt. I, Section II, p. 367b. For other references to Dutton see Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 13, where mention is also made of a city sword carried before Henry VII when he visited Chester in 1494.

(10) There is a tradition, unsupported by any evidence, that a sword was presented to Chester by Richard II in 1394 (*Ormerod*, vol. 1., p. 232); if so, it was presumably replaced by the present one. It is not impossible, however, that some confusion has arisen between this date and that of Henry VII's visit in 1494 referred to in the previous footnote.

GARB, an heraldic term for a wheatsheaf.

LOCKET, a metal band encircling a sheath, including that at the mouth.

PASSANT, an heraldic term describing an animal walking with its head in profile.

POMMEL, the termination of the hilt of a sword or dagger serving to counter-balance the blade.

QUILLONS, the guard in the form of a cross-bar on a sword-hilt.

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### “Cheshire Village Memories”

**T**HIS is the title of an attractive and well-bound book of 128 pages, just published by The Cheshire Federation of Women's Institutes. It consists of alphabetically arranged accounts of seventy-four Cheshire Villages and is a representative selection from the “Village Scrap Books” that were produced by the Federation to commemorate the Festival of Britain in 1951.

Its contents will have a wide appeal for it tells about Cheshire folk of the past, particularly those of the 18th and 19th centuries. The many references to old customs and folk lore make it easy for the reader to re-live the past and to realise what a loss this sophisticated age has sustained by its “progress.” All Cheshire folk should read it and find out how many treasures the County still possesses. May the book stay the hand of the despoiler and arouse a greater veneration of our old buildings.

Twenty-three beautiful plates, three sketches and a handsome map that serves as end papers, add to the attractiveness of the contents. It is unfortunate that a punctuation error in the title scroll of the map mars so excellent a piece of cartography.

It is a book about Cheshire folk, the eccentric, the simple, the generous, the shrewd, the industrious, the high, the low, the rich and the poor. It brings the countryside to your fireside; Cheshire meadows, fields, lanes and buildings are spread before you. You may walk down Pig Nellie's Lane, or attend service at Buttermilk Church, meet Button Hall or Cradle Jimmy, find a railway engine stuck in the mud, purchase a “nail” and a “cabbage” of cloth, and feel the need for a draught of “dragon's blood” after the chilling passage of Cheshire's many ghosts.

Miss Clive may have found “that there were thirteen good reasons why she should not marry” the Rev. Sir Thomas Broughton, but she would have been unable to find one why she should not read this book.

The publishers are to be congratulated upon a splendid achievement. The price is only 7/6d.

A. O.

# The Soul Cakers

## An Old Village Memory

By C. B. HUTTON

"Here's one or two or three good-hearted lads,  
We're all of one mind,  
For this night we come a Souling;  
We hope you'll prove kind.  
If you gi' us nowt, we'll snatch nowt,  
But wish you good cheer,  
And we'll come no more a Souling  
Till this time next year."

**S**O ran the first verse of our own Cheshire village Soul Caking Song, which up to half a century ago we were wont to hear at October ending in the dark, misty evening, heralding the Soul Cakers' Play. The song continued with an inviting reference to the household cellar full of "Ale, brandy, whiskey, and all sorts of wine," and ended with a blessing upon the Master and Mistress of the house, and all the little children. It was a somewhat doleful dirge, if sung slowly, as it usually was, but quite in fitting with the eerie atmosphere of Allhallows Eve, October 31st., with its Old Folks' tales of devils and witches, or the Eve of All Souls, November 1st., when once the Dead were supposed to re-visit their former earthly abodes. For these ghostly visitants it was once the custom to leave refreshments at night in the form of small spiced cakes, called Soul Cakes, and the Soul Cakers formerly came around begging for these spiced morsels. Of course we village youths of half a century ago, knew nothing of these origins, nor did we ever see a Soul Cake. The old custom to us was merely a convenient way to get money for fireworks on Bonfire Night, November 5th.

The Soul Cakers' Play, with which patrons were entertained, was just one of the several versions of the old Christmas Mummers' Play, but with the characters and words almost unrecognisably altered through ignorant, oral transmission down the centuries, for it seems that the play originated in the ancient, pagan fertility rites connected with the dying year, the central theme being a death and a rising again.

The chief characters in our (Frodsham) village play were King George, and the Violent (Valiant?) Soldier, who indulged in mortal combat, the Soldier being slain, but restored to life again by the Doctor on the intercession of the mysterious Old Woman. Evidently King George and the Soldier were changes topically due

to the Napoleonic Wars. Before then, they were St. George and the Saracen Warrior, these dating from the Crusades. Earlier still they may have been the Norse Gods of Light and Evil, Baldur and Loki. Then there was the uncanny Horse's Head, a horse's skull, tarred, and with reddened teeth. It was mounted on a stout stick, and manipulated by a player hidden under a cloth behind. This property was highly treasured, the "uninitiated" not being allowed to handle it. It was "summat yo' munna do," an ancient taboo. This Horse's Head may date back to the time when a horse was sacrificed to Odin. The Driver of the Horse had to be something of a wag, using the evergreen old country jokes, such as the one of the man, who made his nag wear green spectacles to make wood shavings look like grass; and the other about the stingy owner, who had almost got his donkey to live upon nothing a day, when unfortunately it died. Some radio comedians still use these jokes, when hard up.

Other characters were Dairy Dout, which can have many interpretations, and Belsher Bob (elsewhere Belsie Bob). He was of course Beelzebub, an addition from some old mystery play of the Middle Ages. Belsher Bob carried a clog on his shoulder. One Authority tells us this clog was originally a club, another instance of the errors through oral transmission. Then there was Little Box, who declared "My box is of the finest wood. A copper or two will do it no harm. A shilling or so will do it some good." Open the Door is self-explanatory, but this part was not a favourite role, being given to the daftest, and thickest-skinned posteriorly, for some householders did not like their clean kitchens invaded by a mob of muddy-footed tatterdemalions.

For the players' costumes, coats were turned inside out, and adorned with numerous strips of coloured rags or paper pinned on. The Doctor wore a top hat and long coat in imitation of the travelling Quack. His "wizardry" had become the recitation of a string of many syllabled comic nostrums, and diseases. Other treasured properties were a red soldier's tunic and helmet. Soot or burnt cork, chalk and red raddle from a hillside quarry were the "greasepaints."

When rival gangs of Soul Cakers met, there would be dirty work at the crossroads. A fight between two Belsher Bobs could be a bloodsome affair. It would be a terrible disgrace if the Horse's Head were captured, for it meant disastrous ill-luck. Each year, after the Play, the Head was secretly buried again.

We still have our mince pies, and even hot cross buns and Simnel Cakes, but the recipe for the making of Soul Cakes has gone, although the old custom of providing ginger bread or parkin on Bonfire Night may furnish a likely clue.

# Bunbury Church Repairs

By THE REV. M. H. RIDGWAY, B.A., F.S.A.

CONSIDERABLE interest has been shown during recent years in the repairs which are being done to Bunbury Church after the severe damage caused by a landmine in 1940. It is therefore, not out of place to indicate some of the main features of the damage and of the repair work so far carried out.

In 1950, when the official Restoration Committee was first set up, the church remained as it appeared nine years earlier. The services of the eminent architect, Mr. Marshall Sisson were secured, and the full extent of the war damage was assessed. An appeal for an estimated figure of £20,000 was then launched. Work was started immediately as further delay would have had serious consequences. The two main contractors for the work are William Browne and Son of Castle Street, Chester, and Henry Harding and Son of Nantwich, both firms of long and notable experience in this difficult work.

The most obvious damage, for example the shattered windows including the stone tracery, was not the most serious. The whole fabric had been severely shaken and a close examination revealed that the north-east corner of the north aisle was dangerously insecure, and that the nave and chancel roofs, the former Victorian and the latter mediaeval, were very badly damaged. The principals of the nave roof had been temporarily shored up as part of the original first aid shortly after bombing, but more serious damage had been overlooked. For example, one of the main camber beams above the effigy of Hugh Calveley in the chancel had been split almost in two, with a crack at one place seven inches wide. This might have given way at any time. It was therefore essential to run up steel scaffolding immediately to prevent its collapse. Although both roofs were in immediate need of attention, work was started on the chancel roof. This called for the removal, repair, cleaning and re-erection of every timber and the complete reconstruction of the outer roof.

At the end of 1951, when this work was half done, the nave roof began to give way. The action of the architect and committee in ordering the work on the chancel roof to cease and to be switched to the nave, has been fully justified. Had the roof collapsed, the slender pillars of the nave arcade might have been seriously damaged. Although winter lay ahead, the badly damaged beams of the roof were lowered to the ground and by February, the nave was roofless. The new roof was designed to be more in keeping with the character of the early 16th century nave. The impossibility of getting timber of the scantling required for such a roof, combined with the necessity for the walls to be tied together

to prevent any further thrust outwards, called for the erection of a steel frame roof with oak casing, re-inforced steel joists forming the cores of the ridge, principals, intermediates and wall plates. Around these has been built the new oak roof of considerably lower pitch than the previous one. By unblocking a fourteenth century opening in the tower, access can now be given both to the outer roof and also to the inner roof for inspection purposes. This was not possible before. There has been an avoidance of any over-elaboration in the roof, a pleasing effect being produced by the boldness of the mouldings and the occasional coloured bosses, nine to each bay. The bosses, with one or two obvious exceptions, are the patera and bosses from the earlier Victorian roof painted and gilded. At the time of writing (August 1952) this work is nearing completion.

The first work undertaken by the masons was the repair of the chancel windows, into one of which has been incorporated a small panel of 14th century glass. It had originally come from this window. Another chancel window on the north side awaits new coloured glass by Mr. Evetts of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and replaces two destroyed windows which commemorated members of the Dutton family. The glazing of the east window is in the competent hands of Mr. Christopher Webb. Sometime in the 19th century this window had been partly blocked. The original dimensions will be restored. The glazing of the clerestory windows, twelve in all, has been undertaken by Weir's of Stoke. These were formerly glazed in gaudy colours upon quarry backgrounds. The tracery lights on the south side alone remain. Two motifs, stripped from their badly damaged surroundings and repaired, have been placed against clear glass backgrounds further powdered with surviving undamaged quarries from the former windows. This gives a most pleasing effect. In all, twenty-four coloured glass windows were destroyed. Twelve crates of fragments, swept from the floor and collected from the churchyard, have been sorted and examined in an attempt to salvage any interesting features. Very few (and then very limited) reconstructions were possible. None of these windows was earlier than about 1865. Four were by Frampton, two by Shrigley and Hunt and others were reported to be by Wailes and Hardman. A Kempe window, though damaged, can be repaired. With the exception of the clerestory, the general policy respecting the clear glazing of the windows is that the 'lozenge' squares will appear in the 14th century windows and small rectangular panes in the later windows. The cast iron frames introduced in the early 19th century will not be returned to these windows.

The Royal Arms board, for long relegated to a dark corner in the choir vestry, has been rehung above the chancel arch after thorough but careful cleaning. The removal for cleaning of the wrought iron hanging for the mid-18th century candelabra,

showed that originally it had been painted blue. This colour has been retained but with the addition of touches of gold and red upon the terminal flowers. The angels supporting the wall posts of the roof, now carry shields bearing the arms of the eight families connected with the eight townships of the parish.

Quite apart from the Restoration Fund, a memorial bequest is making possible the refurbishing and repair of the Baptistry. When removing the Victorian base to the font it was found that it lay upon a foundation of incised mediaeval tiles. Beneath these was a deposit of late mediaeval glass. The 1663 font cover, for many generations painted with successive coats of brown paint, was most carefully cleaned and after careful research, it was found that the original colouring had been indian red, black and gold. The repainting in these colours was carried out by Bridgeman's of Lichfield. The freestone effigies and grave slabs which formerly 'adorned' the Baptistry have been moved to the north aisle where they are to be set up on low frames to make their inspection easier.

Much still remains to be done. Almost £13,000 of the original £20,000 has been collected, and if the full programme can be carried out, there will be at Bunbury in years to come a church of extreme beauty and interest.

#### A SHORT GLOSSARY.

**BOSS**—A carved piece of wood planted upon the intersections of the timbering of a roof.

**CAMBERED BEAM**—A beam which rises towards the centre from the wall posts to support the ridge and purlins of a roof, so designed to prevent sagging.

**CORBEL**—A projection in stone from a wall designed to act as a footing to the wall post.

**INTERMEDIATES**—i.e., intermediate rafters. The more important rafters used between the principals of a roof. They extend from wall plate to ridge.

**PATERA**—Literally 'plates,' a name given to ornamental pieces of wood planted on to the hollow of a mould.

**PITCH**—The angle or slope of a gable roof.

**PRINCIPALS**—The main rafters of a roof.

**QUARRY**—A diamond shaped piece of glass, sometimes called 'square.'

**SCANTLING**—The dimensions of a piece of timber with regard to its breadth and thickness.

**WALL PLATE**—The timber placed along the top edge of a wall.

**WALL POST**—The upright post placed against the wall, to take the thrust of the roof further down the wall. These usually rise from corbels.

# Coins of the Chester Mint

RECENTLY the Chester Archaeological Society has acquired for the sum of £1,443, raised by public subscription, the Willoughby-Gardner collection of 652 Chester minted coins. Generous grants were received from the Chester City Council, the Pilgrim Trust and the National Art-Collections Fund. This collection will be housed in the Grosvenor Museum, which will then have the finest provincial series of early English coins. It is particularly fitting that this collection has been purchased instead of being dispersed, which is the fate of so many similar things today. Coins of this period are becoming increasingly difficult to acquire; this is due to the stricter application of the law of Treasure Trove (see note in *Cheshire Historian*, vol. 1). Fifty or more years ago when hoards were found they often became dispersed and many coins passed into the hands of collectors. Nowadays, the coins go into national and provincial museums and, as the source of these coins is almost entirely from hoards, the number available for purchase is constantly diminishing. Anglo-Saxon coins are thus gradually acquiring a scarcity value which makes it all the more difficult for a small provincial museum to obtain particular specimens.

Chester, from the early 10th century, was an important trading centre and under Aethelstan (A.D. 925-939) was allowed eight moneys. Coins were used almost entirely as bullion by the merchants, and the King allowed approved members of this class to mint them with dies which he sold to them for a handsome fee. The dies appear to have been changed every year and so the King enjoyed a considerable income by farming out the mint, at the same time a strict watch was kept on the quality of the silver and if the standard dropped, the moneyer was punished by mutilation and the loss of his right hand, sometimes remitted by a heavy fine.

On the obverse of the coin was the King's name and titles, usually REX and sometimes with the addition TOT(IVS) BRIT(ANNIAE) (the whole of Britain). The centre of the obverse is usually blank except for a small cross but a small percentage of coins bear a portrait of the King. The reverse carries the name of the moneyer together, in some cases, with the name of the town in which the coin was minted. In the case of Chester this appears as LECE (CEASTRE).

The importance of these coins for any historian, for the economic, political, social or artistic aspects of the period, need hardly be emphasised. Quite recently, a system of privy marking on Saxon coins has been noticed which previously was thought to date from the Norman reorganisation of the mint. From the artistic aspect,



one can trace the degeneration which came at the end of the Saxon period and which the Normans did nothing to arrest. The names of the moneyers help to assess the extent of Scandinavian influence in different parts of Britain. These are only a few of the important results of a study of the numismatics of early England.

This important collection will be available to students for study and research and it will be of inestimable value to future historians.

G.W.

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### CESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS.

JOURNAL OF THE CHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Vol. 39, 1952.

EXCAVATIONS AT HERON BRIDGE, 1947-48, by Brian Hartley.

EXCAVATIONS ON THE LEGIONARY DEFENCES AT CHESTER, 1945-52 (Part i), by Graham Webster.

THE BLACK FRIARS OF CHESTER, by J. H. E. Bennett.

THE HISTORY OF CHESTER CATHEDRAL IN THE REIGNS OF JAMES I AND CHARLES I, by The Ven. R. V. H. Burne.

THE CITY GUILDS OF CHESTER, by Margaret J. Groombridge.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE, 1950, vol. 102:—

EXCAVATIONS OF THE CASTLE DITCH, EDDISBURY, 1935-38, by Prof. W. J. Varley, M.A., D.Phil., F.S.A.

THE HEAD PORT OF CHESTER; and LIVERPOOL, ITS CREEK AND MEMBER, by Rupert C. Jarvis, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

THE LESSER CHAPELS OF CHESHIRE, by Raymond Richards, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

1951, vol. 103:—

THE EARLDOM AND COUNTY PALATINE OF CHESTER, by Geoffrey Barraclough, M.A.

LANCASHIRE COAL, CHESHIRE SALT, AND THE RISE OF LIVERPOOL, by T. C. Barker, M.A., Ph.D.

# Why not form a Local History Society ?

By ARTHUR OAKES, B.A.

**I**N 1932 six people met together to discuss the formation of a Local History Society in Bromborough which was as recently as 1914 a village: its population in 1910 was very little different from that of 1810, but at the end of the First World War, this village was scheduled for development and a start was made of the erection of some 1,000 Council houses, and this process went on uninterruptedly until 1939. The private builder also kept pace with the Council, and Bromborough, which we still call a village, became an urban district and is now part of the Borough of Bebington. Very little of the village is left and to see it as it was in 1910 needs a great effort of imagination.

A handsome row of stone Tudor cottages was demolished, the Manor Farm, another stone treasure, disappeared to make way for Irwin's shop, and later the Manor House itself followed suit and a hall associated with that illustrious Cheshire family, the Mainwarings, is no more. High Street passes through its garden and the space formerly occupied by its two great salons is a wilderness of weeds and brushwood awaiting shop and civic development. Therefore to attempt to arrest further rapid destruction and consequent decay caused this band of half a dozen people to sound the feelings of the community. From our knowledge, we were convinced there was sufficient evidence to show that the desire for such an organisation existed. A public meeting was called and the case put before the audience.

In this way, the Bromborough Society was formed, some thirty of those present enrolling as members at an annual subscription of one shilling. The subscription remained at this figure for over ten years, for the Society was fortunate in having a meeting room at the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, put at its disposal rent free.

From such simple beginnings, the Bromborough Society has grown and now numbers 302 active members. Since the year 1933 it has arranged a series of lectures, six in number each winter session, and in the summer from four to six field meetings annually. It maintained this programme during the War years, several of its lectures being disturbed by air-raid warnings and the consequent gun fire, etc.

Its objects are

- (1) To encourage an interest in the past history of the locality and its present and future development.

- (2) To preserve the records, relics and amenities of the district.
- (3) To make a survey of the antiquities of the neighbourhood.
- (4) To collect material for a folk museum.
- (5) To compile a record of the outstanding transactions of the Society.

Now what has the Bromborough Society accomplished? First of all the tangible things. It has been instrumental in saving from the scrap heap several valuable sculptured stones that graced the room in which King Charles stayed at the Manor House. It rescued from oblivion a gift-fountain presented by a generous benefactor of the past, and had placed in a position of safety the Ass's Head, the crest of the Mainwarings, and the headstone of the Bromborough Market Cross of 1278. When Stanhope House, a sandstone Stuart Building dating from 1693, was about to be razed to the ground to make way for a housing estate, the Bromborough Society intervened and was able to stay the demolition. The building now houses the local library.

The Society has made an extensive collection of photographs, newspaper cuttings, etc. of things of the past; it has amassed a great number of reference books and has in its possession, the nucleus of a folk museum. The Annual Report of its proceedings increases in volume each year.

Of the intangible results of the efforts of the Society, the chief are:—

- (1) The joy it has given to people who were no longer active enough for strenuous outdoor pursuits by providing them with another interest.
- (2) The curiosity it has aroused in them about the things around them which has encouraged them to make a study of some field of local history so that many of them have become real masters of the subject.
- (3) Through a common centre of interest it has developed an organisation where snobbishness and cliquishness are non-existent and where disparity of social position and age is forgotten.

Has it been a worthwhile undertaking? Yes, it has. Why not start one in your locality?



LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF  
SOCIETIES.

---

The Cheshire Rural Community Council, 22, Newgate Street,  
Chester:

General Secretary, N. G. Cottam.

Chairman, Local History Committee: A. Oakes.

Editor, Cheshire Historian: G. B. Leach.

The Standing Conference of Local History:

G. Dando, 26, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.

The Council for British Archaeology:

10, Bolton Gardens, London, S.W.5.

Regional Secretary: W. A. Silvester, 4, Claremont Road,  
Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire.

Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings:

Local Correspondent — The Curator, Grosvenor Museum,  
Chester.

Macclesfield and District Field Club:

Miss F. M. Chapman, 68, Chester Gate, Macclesfield.

The Chester and N. Wales Architectural, Archaeological and  
Historical Society:

H. C. Wickham, 13, St. John Street, Chester.

The County Archivist, Cheshire Record Office:

Major F. G. C. Rowe, The Castle, Chester.

The City Archivist, Chester:

Miss S. L. Bailhache, The Town Hall, Chester.

The Grosvenor Museum, Chester:

Graham Webster, Curator.

Workers' Educational Association:

Frank Garstang, 62, Hope Street, Liverpool.

The Bromborough Society:

Miss J. D. Norris, 35, Bebington Road, New Ferry.

Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society:

H. Clegg, 10, Granary Lane, Worsley, Nr. Manchester.

Liverpool Geological Society:

R. G. C. Bathurst, Dept. of Geology, The University, Liverpool, 3.

Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:

R. Sharpe France, Lancashire Record Office, County Hall,  
Preston.

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:

G. Chandler, 202, Pitville Avenue, Liverpool 18.

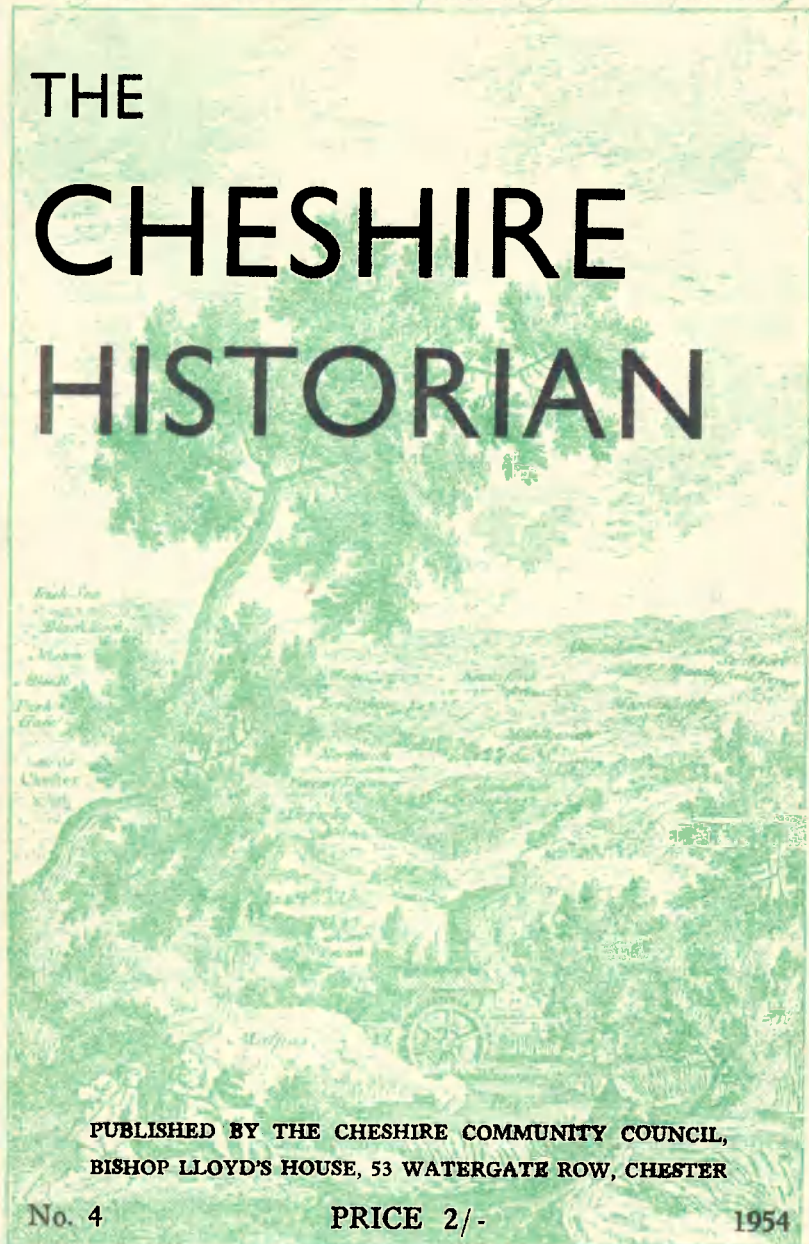
Ancient Monuments Society:

L. M. Angus-Butterworth, Ashton New Hall, Ashton-on-  
Mersey, Cheshire.

THE CITY PRESS  
OF CHESTER

A MAP OF CHESHIRE North West from LONDON  
*Humbly traced to the R. Hon. the Earl of Cholmondeley Lord-Lieut. of the County*

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
HISTORICAL STUDIES by THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE ....	1
CHANGE IN NAME OF CHESHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL ....	11
THE HISTORIC CHESHIRE CHURCHES PRESERVATION TRUST. An Appeal ....	12
CHESHIRE MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES:	
No. 4. The Grosvenor Museum, Chester by GRAHAM WEBSTER ....	15
BOOK REVIEW by G.W. ....	18
THE ARCHAEOLOGIST IN THE FIELD (Part IV):	
A. Roman Coins by GRAHAM WEBSTER ....	19
B. Prehistoric Trade in Cheshire by J. D. JONES ....	26
CHESTER EXCAVATIONS, 1953 by G.W. ....	30
CHESHIRE WORTHIES:	
No. 1. The Poets by P. CULVERWELL BROWN ....	31
THE COLLECTION OF ENGLISH FOLK-LORE by H. A. LAKE-BARNETT ....	36
WIRRAL SHORE AND CHESTER WATER by G. A. CARLYLE TAIT ....	37
CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS	43
THE HALF-TIMBERED HOUSES OF CHESHIRE AND THEIR THREATENED DESTRUCTION by M. H. RIDGWAY ....	44
SONGERING by S. JACKSON ....	48
LIST OF NAMES & ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SO <sup>C</sup> ....	INSIDE BACK COVER

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# Historical Studies

By THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE, M.A., F.R.Hist.Soc.

## No. 1. What happened at the Reformation?

THE Reformation is generally represented in the history text-books as a series of legal enactments or royal injunctions which changed the religion of the country, but what we want to know and what the books so seldom tell us is what happened when these were put into force. How were they received? How far were they obeyed? Did the people realise the change that was taking place? These are important and vital questions which can only be answered after an examination of the records of individual parishes or churches in those cases where the records go back far enough, and such cases are few. It is all the more important, then, that where the records are extant they should be made public in order that enough evidence may be accumulated to enable a judgement to be formed.

The Cathedral church shares with the churches of S. Mary-on-the-Hill and Holy Trinity in Chester the distinction of possessing accounts which cover the Reformation period, and from these accounts, fragmentary though they are, it is possible to gain some idea of how the Reformation affected at any rate one church in Chester. Our story must begin with the dissolution of S. Werburgh's Abbey on January, 20th, 1540. We associate the Dissolution of the Monasteries in our minds with the beginning of the Reformation, but there was no thought of that at the time. The excuse for dissolving the monasteries was their conduct, not their beliefs; it was a matter of morals, not of doctrine: and the reason, as distinct from the excuse, was of course the greedy desire of Henry VIII to possess himself of their wealth. A proof that there was no suggestion of any change of doctrine is to be found in the personnel of the new cathedral into which the abbey church was transformed. The last Abbot, Thomas Clarke, became the first Dean, as is well known. But what is not so well known is the fact that of the six prebendaries four were S. Werburgh monks and one, William Wall, was the ex-Warden of the Grey Friars in Chester, which leaves only one whose origin is unknown to us and who may have been a secular. The reason why Henry appointed so many monks to his new cathedrals was of course to save himself the expense of providing them with pensions. One of the S. Werburgh monks was the Prior, Nicholas Bucksey, who was to prove a veritably Vicar of Bray as we shall see. Another one, John Huet, was reported to the Government for concealing from the monastic plate "a censor of silver gilded of 106 ozs. of silver of the value of £16." Huet is described as the "Kitchener of the Monastery" and one hopes that he appropriated this censor



for future use in the cathedral and not with intention of selling it for private gain, but it must have seemed to the monks a righteous and laudable thing to do to save anything they could from the clutches of the Crown officials, whatever use they made of it afterwards.

Besides the six prebendaries there were in those days six minor canons on the cathedral staff, and no fewer than five of these came from the monastery. Also the school master became the first cathedral organist, one of the monastery's porters remained in the porter's lodge all through the dissolution and one of the Abbot's servants became one of the cathedral cooks. There is no suggestion of any Reformation here. Yes, there is one tiny suggestion. Dean Clarke died a few months after the change over, and when they came to make an inventory of his goods they found in a black chest lying between a "shurt" and 12 yards of linen cloth an "English Bibel." This was in September, 1541. An order for the purchase of a bible for every church had come out the previous May and no doubt the Dean had bought one and was waiting for a staple and chain to be made before putting it into the cathedral. This was done in November at a total cost of 3d.

Just as there was practically no change in the personnel of the church, so there was (as far as we can judge) no change in the services, which continued to be mediaeval in character as long as Henry VIII lived. Though the accounts which have survived for this period are fragmentary we find in them mention of silver censers and albs and "an angel for the sacrament," which means the carved figure of an angel to surmount the pyx containing the Reserved Sacrament which hung above the altar. Then there is mention of ringing on All Souls night, of wafers, (called "singing bread") and of the elaborate services in Holy Week, which included a procession on Palm Sunday when one of the choir boys was dressed up as "the prophet" and received a pair of gloves and his breakfast as a reward. Gloves and breakfast cost 3d. each. This was followed by a feast of cakes and ale on Maunday Thursday. There is also mention of holy oil, the paschal candle and two altars, one dedicated to S. Peter and one to S. John. There was emphatically no change in the services in Henry's lifetime and one can only dimly conjecture what that monarch's reaction would have been if he had been informed that he had "founded the Church of England." What a subject for a humorous artist!

It was of course in the reign of Edward VI that the real change began, for it was in his reign that the English Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 superseded the Latin Mass books, and the churches were swept bare of all ornament, movable wooden tables were substituted for permanent stone altars and all the ornaments of the church, now made illegal, were confiscated by the Crown. The best of the Cathedral vestments, were sent to the King's wardrobe and the remainder sold for £5 11s. 3d. One of the three bells which Abbot Birchenshawe had placed in his new belfry

at the south-west end of the cathedral was missing and it transpired that the Dean and Chapter had sold it in order to pay the stipends of the "Ministers of the said church." It was sold to Mr. William Aldersaie and Sethe Rosomgreve for £34. and from them it found its way to Conway church where it still is. The correct inscription on it, copied by Mr. J. W. Clarke in August, 1949, is

AVE FIDELIS AIA WERBURGA SANCTISSIMA FELIX CHORO  
VIRGINUM ORA PRO NOBIS DOMINUM JOHES BYRCHYNshaw  
ABBAS CESTRE.

Mr. Clarke says that the mark of the Nottingham foundry shows the bell was cast in 1510, which agrees very well with the building of the belfry, the foundation stone of which was laid in 1508.

The removal of the stone altars was no easy task as the accounts show.

Dec. 6, 1550. Paid to Richard Hasilwell and his servant and for III berers (bearers) of stones from the altars for III days and half after Vd the day. Vs. VIId, ob.

Dec. 13. Paid to Turner for making the table in the quere for V days. IIs IXd.

Itm to Hasilwell the mason helping the laborers to ley the greate alter stone IIIId.

Itm for thride to the vestre and mending the vestments IIIId.

The mention of vestments comes as rather a surprise.

Here surely we have the Reformation in full swing and now would be the time for the Henrician clergy, some of whom had been monks and friars, to show their disapproval by resigning. But at the Cathedral *not one of them did*. The ex-friar, William Wall, and the ex-monk, Nicholas Bucksey, among others managed to square their consciences and carry on. Perhaps they thought that the changes would only be temporary, for Edward VI was in poor health and might not live long. He did not. He only reigned six years and was succeeded by his half-sister, Mary. Back came the old religion in full force, and now occurred the only change in the Chapter on conscientious grounds during the whole of the Reformation. Two of the prebendaries out of six, or out of seven if you include the Dean, resigned or were dismissed. At any rate they disappear, and we conclude it was on account of Mary's changes. The rest, although they had accepted the changes made under Edward VI, were apparently quite willing to return to the "Old Learning" and the rule of the Pope. The Bishop, John Bird, was dismissed because he had incautiously availed himself of the permission given by Edward VI to the clergy to marry, and although he was quite ready to give up his wife if he might retain his see, he was not allowed to do so and had to retire with Mrs. Bird to the parish of Great Dunmow in Essex. His place was filled by one of the prebendaries, George Cotes, whose lot it was to condemn George Marsh to be burnt to death for continuing to hold the doctrines which, said Marsh at his trial, "all you present did acknowledge in the time of the late King Edward VI."

Mary only reigned five years and then came Elizabeth with her famous religious settlement. Its difference from that of her sister's cannot have seemed very great to the Dean and Chapter of Chester Cathedral, for *not one of them resigned*, although four of them had been appointed by Mary. The other two were old friends, William Wall and Nicholas Bucksey, whom nothing could disturb. A scrap of information about the latter has turned up in some extracts (preserved at the British Museum) made by one of the Randle Holmes from a folio book belonging to the Dean and Chapter, but not now extant. This information has nothing to do with the Reformation but is of sufficient human interest to be recorded here. The fact is the poor old man was made the Receiver for the year 1561 and *lost his account book*. A kindly Chapter passed the following resolution on October 22 of that year,

"It is agreed that Nicholas Bucksey being Receiver of the Rentes and having lost his books and accmpts whereby if extremity should be used he might come to damage, therefore we do acquitt him and his Executor of all suites . . . touching the same."

The Cathedral accounts at this point are more fragmentary than usual, but we know from other sources that Elizabeth republished the Injunctions of Edward VI which included those ordering holy tables to be substituted for stone altars and all shrines to be destroyed. If S. Werburgh's shrine had not already suffered, it could hardly fail to escape this second order. In 1561 the accounts contain an item of 1/2 for the setting up of a table of the Ten Commandments. This was also in obedience to Royal instructions issued in January of that year: these stated that they were not only for edification, but "to give some comely ornament and demonstration that the same is a place of religion and prayer." A most revealing comment on the bareness to which our churches had been reduced by this time. However, Elizabeth differed from her brother in allowing copes, for we find this item in 1563.

For reparying of the coupes in the church in buckerram and rybban VII. VIII d.

In 1567 Bucksey died and was followed to the grave by William Wall in 1573. These two men stand for continuity in an age of change, but so do all the Chapter. In all the changes we have examined, only two of the Chapter lost their places, voluntarily or involuntarily. This may be attributed of course to worldliness and self-seeking, but it may also indicate that the changes which seem to us so great may not have appeared in the same light to those who were alive at the time.

## No. 2. Bishop Gastrell's Account Book

**T**HERE is in the muniment room of Chester Cathedral an account book bound in vellum, quarto size, which contains an account of such part of the Bishop's income as was handled by the Deputy Registrar, Mr. Edward Roberts. It begins in 1721

and continues to the Bishop's death in 1725. It then deals with Bishop Peploe's accounts in the same way down to the year 1738. Then come Mrs. Gastrell's accounts from 1735 to 1745, when we may presume that Edward Roberts resigned or died, and her accounts are continued by Hugh Speed from 1756 to 1765. There are no episcopal accounts extant, as far as is known, to cover the gap 1738-1754, but the accounts for the latter year and down to 1809 have recently been recovered by Mr. Raymond Richards and are now in the possession of Mr. J. F. E. Bennett, who has dealt with them in the Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancs. and Cheshire. Vol. 98, 1946. We are concerned here only with those concerning Bishop Gastrell, and as there is necessarily much repetition, six months' accounts will suffice to give an idea of their extent and subject matter.

[RECEIPTS]

1721 EDW. ROBERTS TO MY LORD, debtr.		£	s.	d.
Dec. 21.	To half years rent due at Martinmas last from ye Vicar of Bolton.	13	0	0
	Institution money from Mr. Chancellor for Eccles and Childwall.	2	0	0
Feb. 10.	One years rent due at last Martinmas from ye Archdeacon's house.	1	6	8
19.	Half years rent from Over due at Candlemas.	4	8	6
1722.				
Mar. 26.	Half years rent from Weverham due yesterday.	8	6	8
Apr. 3.	Half rent due from my Lord Warrington the 25th inst.	25	0	0
24.	From Timothy Wilson of Wallissey half years rent due at Michaelmas last.	8	0	0
25.	From ye Vicar of Bolton half years rent due this day.	13	0	0
2.	One years rent from Little Budworth due at Martinmas last.	12	13	4
May 29.	One years rent from Backford due at Martinmas last.	12	13	4
June 17.	To a years rent due from Mr. Bouchier and Mrs. Crompton at Christmas last.	3	0	0
	To a years rent due at L.D. last for ye Registry.	6	8	
1721	Arrears of procurations by Mr. Commissary.	1	14	10
	more recd. by me as by particulars.	2	15	9
		<hr/>		4 10 7

	Pensions of 1721 recd. as by particulars.	15	6	8
	Mortuaries.			
	Acton.	6	6	0
	Liverpoole.	3	0	0
	Prestbury.	4	10	0
	Rochdale.	8	8	0
		<hr/>		
		22	4	0
1722	Pensions of 1722 recd. as by particulars given.	3	14	10
	Procurations & Synls. received for 1722 in part.	62	11	4
		<hr/>		
		200	7	5
		£	s.	d.
	To Balance of ye last acct.	100	0	2½
	To half year's Rents from ye Rural Deanery due at Ld. Day last.	50	0	0
June 21.	To Eccles mortuary from Capt. Ashton.	6	6	0
	To Institution Money from . . . dlc.	1	0	0
		<hr/>		
		157	6	2½

There is a good deal here that calls for explanation. To begin with, it is evident that only a portion of the Bishop's income is dealt with in this book, for we have his own statement in his *Notitia Cestriensis* with which to compare it, and we find that whereas in the former book his income for the year 1722 adds up to £677 13s. 1d., the Bishop in the *Notitia* computes his annual income to be 1294 13s. 6d. This is made up as follows.

Rents.	842	19	4
Deanery Rents.	101	14	0
Procurations and Synodals.	70	0	0
Pensions.	80	0	0
Mortuaries (say).	20	0	0
Fines for renewal of leases.	180	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£1294	13	4

It seems strange to find the Bishop receiving rent for *the* Archdeacon's house, but the fact is that the Bishop *was* the archdeacon to all intents and purposes, for he paid those two dignitaries £50 each to stand aside and let him do the work and take the proceeds of the office, which apparently included the rent of the house in Chester. This house stood by S. John's church.

*Procurations* were payments made to the Archdeacon or Bishop at his Visitation. They were originally a payment towards the expenses of his entertainment, but by this time had become a fixed sum. They are still paid by the churchwardens at the Archdeacon's Easter Visitation, but now form part of the emoluments of the Diocesan Registrar.

*Synodals* were dues of not more than two shillings a year paid by the parochial clergy to the bishop. They were called *synodals* because they were usually paid when the clergy came to the diocesan synod.

*Pensions* were payments charged on certain parishes. Their origin is long forgotten but the payments still go on, if not to the Bishop, at any rate to the Cathedral, which still today receives a pension rent, averaging about £2, from fourteen parishes.

The *mortuaries* received by the Bishop are very interesting, for I think we have stumbled here upon a piece of history which has been lost sight of; viz. that in Cheshire, and in Cheshire alone, the clergy followed the custom prevailing in the Welsh Dioceses and paid a mortuary to the Archdeacon, or to the Bishop when Cheshire became a separate diocese and the Archdeacon's rights and perquisites passed to the Bishop. (Usually, of course, mortuaries were paid by the laity to their parish priest on the death of a parishioner). This must have increased the unpopularity of the Archdeacon, who was already unpopular enough, living as he did on the fees he levied in his court. The evidence for this is to be found in the Act for the Limitation of Mortuaries, passed by Henry VIII's famous Reformation Parliament in 1529 (21 H.8. c.6) where it is provided "that it shall be lawful to the Bishops of Bangor, Landaff, St. David's and St. Asaph and likewise to the Archdeacon of Chester to take such mortuaries of the priests within their dioceses and jurisdictions as heretofore have been accustomed." This meant that the Archdeacon of Chester had for a mortuary after the death of every priest dying within the archdeaconry of Chester the best horse or mare, his saddle, bridle, spurs, his best gown or cloak, his best signet or ring. (Phillimore's Ecclesiastical Law. Vol. I. p. 876).

Mortuaries were abolished throughout the land in 1755 (28 Geo.2.c.6) and the Bishop of Chester was given the benefice of Waverton in compensation.

Under the heading of rents must be included the rents from the Rural Deaneries, which amounted to £100 a year. As the Rural Dean held a court, his office was a lucrative one and it was the custom for the Bishop to lease it to whom he would. At this time the Deaneries of Chester Archdeaconry were leased to Dr. Arthur Fogg, one of the prebendaries of the Cathedral. He is mentioned later on in these accounts.

1721	[EXPENDITURE]	Cr.
Oct. 8.	By Sir Joh. Werden's rent for Cartmell & Childwall due at Michaelmas last.	5 7 8½
Nov. 1.	A Quarter's contribution to ye blew Boys the like to ye Girls	1 5 0 1 5 0
Dec. 19.	To Mr. Hulton half year's rent for ye stable.	4 0 0
	To the Poor at Christmas.	5 0 0
	To the Bellman.	1 0 0

	23.	To Coulson the Plaisterer a bill.	1	10
	25.	To the Keeper of the Rood Eye.	2	6
Jan.	5.	The Third quarter's land tax for ye Palace.	18	0
		To Ledsham ye Slater for work done at Mrs. Jackson's and the Garden House.	8	2
		To Litherland ye Taylor for Adam Chadwick's coat.	11	6
		To ye Water Steward for one quarter due ye 15 Dec.	7	6
		(Note in margin). Half a crown of this pd. for the stable. See June, 1726.		
Feb.	1.	To Hugh for nails for ye Court.	1	6
	10.	Allowed taxes out of rent this day recd. from ye Archdeacon's house.	4	0
		To ye blew Boys ye 2nd instant.	1	5 0
		To ye blew Girls.	1	5 0
	19.	Taxes allowed of ye rent from Over.	8	0
	1722			
Apr.	3.	Taxes allowed my Lord Warrington.	1	17 6
	24.	Taxes allowed Timothy Wilson of Wallisey.	1	4 0
		The fourth quarter's land tax for ye Palace.	18	0
	27.	To Mr. Mapletoft.	15	0 0
		To Mrs. Bennett's wages to Lady Day last.	3	18 0
May	1.	To ye blew Boys.	1	5 0
		To ye blew Girls.	1	5 0
May	1.	By Archdeacon Stratford for a—(?)	25	0 0
	23.	For four bushell of oats.	1	5 6
	29.	Taxes allowed out of rent this day pd. from Backford.	1	16 0
		For two measures of beans.	4	6
June	2.	For six thrave of straw.	5	0
		From Mr. Wilmott of Oxford.	15	0 0
		Sent by Mr. Aubrey to ye Clergy Meeting at Warrington.	5	5 0
	15.	For two loads of sand for ye Court.	2	0
June	16.	To Dunbavand for Glazing.	13	6
		To Ledsam for new pointing ye Gardin House.	1	1 0
	17.	To ye City Ringers.	1	1 0
		To ye City Music.	5	0
		To ye three City Drummers.	3	0
		To ye two Castle Drummers.	2	0
		Allowed out of Mrs. Compton's rent for taxes.	4	6
			<hr/>	
			100	7 2½
			100	0 2½
			<hr/>	
			200	7 5

	By Archdeacon Thane, salary due at Lady Day last.	25	0	0
	By Archdeacon Stratford.	25	0	0
June 21.	Half year's rent to Mr. Hulton for ye stable due Lady Day last.	4	0	0
	By ye Chancellor's fees & Registers for 3 Institutions to wit Walton, Sephton and Acton.	3	0	0
21.	By 40 Guineas paid my Lord.	42	0	0
		<hr/>		
		99	0	0
	Due to Ball.	58	6	2½

I delivered my Lord a copy thus far.

### NOTES

"The blew Boys" refers of course to the Blue Coat School which Bishop Stratford had taken a large part in founding in 1700. The similar institution for girls was founded by a committee of ladies shortly afterwards. Bishop Gastrell gave an annual subscription to each.

Mrs. Bennett was the Bishop's housekeeper.

The last item of "40 guineas paid my Lord" shows the way in which the Bishop drew from Mr. Roberts the cash he required and when he required it. One could not cash a cheque in those days and it must have been necessary to keep a good deal of money by you, locked away in the house, unless you had someone at hand to produce the money at short notice. This is what Mr. Roberts had to do, and moreover the Bishop never gave him a receipt and there must have been one occasion when he forgot that he had had it. Nothing else will explain the pains Mr. Roberts was at to describe in detail in his accounts the time and place when he handed over the money, and it is these details which give the accounts their human interest.

1724. June 6. This day after Evening prayer I brought my Lord 50 guineas he counted them in his study himself.

June 23. This day just after Morning Service my Lord ordered me to bring him 50 guineas wh. I immediately brought him, Whittle Schoolmaster of Hoole the same time came there. (In the margin is written "no receipt.")

Aug. 1. Being the Saturday after my Ld. return from Middlewich. After Evening prayer I brought my Lord (the Commissary giving me notice from him so to do) 50 guineas and delivered 'em to him in his study.

Sept. 3. By 50 guineas paid my Lady in the great Dining room. The Bishop of Man and Mr. Walker being then at ye palace. I delivered her a copy of this Acct. Nobody but herself was present wth. me in the Dining room. (In the margin, "no receipt.")

The Bishop of Man would of course be the celebrated Bishop Thomas Wilson, whose birthplace was Burton in Wirral.



1725. May 29. The same morning Adam came to me for some paper and pens and ink for my Lord and to tell me my Lord would have me bring him some money and after Morning Prayer I went up with him and paid him in the Little Parlour in gold 50 guineas.

Mr. Roberts would wait in the cathedral to meet the Bishop coming away from the service and would accompany him down the nave to the stairs which in those days went up to what is now S. Anselm's Chapel. What is now the Baptistry was walled up and incorporated into the palace. In a plan of 1867 there are two rooms over the baptistery marked "Study" and "Small Study" respectively. This latter may have been the Little Parlour to which the Bishop and his Registrar "went up."

June 22. To my Lord this day 50 guineas. I sent it by Arthur Fogg who gave it to Mr. Mills and he came down and told him he brought it my Lord. He left the purse, a leather one, with the money.

(Arthur Fogg was one of the prebendaries, son of the late Dean, Laurence Fogg.)

July 26. Lent my Lord at his going to dine at the Deanery 2s. 6d. (A tip for the butler?)

Aug. 2. I gave the Coachman before my Lord and by his orders at Kendal 5 guineas and

Aug. 14. In his study at ye palace he ordered me to make this up 50 guineas wh. accordingly I did and brought and paid to his Lordships hand immediately 45 guineas more, his Lady and Mr. Aubrey present.

Aug. 19. To my Lord 20 guineas more on Thursday after Morning prayer, it being the Mayor's Venison Feast Day and same day Chancellor Wynn dined with my Lord.

Sept 2. By 50 guineas in cash brought to his Lordship and delivered to him in the room called his study just before dinner on this day (Thursday). Mr. Lambert and his son Le Tourcey, Mrs. Brack (?) and Dr. Bavand and his brother dined there, at the same time I brought an account of the triennial procurations in writing and he delivered me a letter from Mrs. Tourbull (?) the Lessee of Wallizey begging £5 to put her son apprentice.

Mr. Roberts certainly took every means in his power to remind his Lordship that he had received the money he asked for. The most difficult occasion was on June 22 when he was unable to hand the money to the Bishop himself, but had to do it at third hand. He gave it to Dr. Fogg, Fogg gave it to Mr. Mills and Mr. Mills gave it to the Bishop. Mills was evidently the steward; Adam, whose surname was Chadwick, seems to have been the Bishop's factotum. His coat (livery?) in January, 1722 (N.S.) cost 11/6. He evidently went on messages for the Bishop as the following extract shows.

1725. Sept 14. Paid Adam Chadwick more than wht.

Mr. Mills paid him, 11/-. He was out 16 days at 2/- per day. Mr. Mills paid him a guinea and 1 ye remainder. 10 6

In 1723 the Bishop replenished his cellar, purchasing "10 dozen and two bottles of wine" for £16 9s. 6d. Some light is thrown upon Abbey Square in those days, or Court as it was called, by these two items:

1724. May 14. For an iron scuffler for the Court. 1 6  
 For a rowling stone. 5 0

from which we conclude that the Square in those days was gravelled and required to be scuffed and rolled, but it is possible that Mr. Roberts is referring to the Bishop's court in front of his palace, now the King's School playground. The Bishop did his own brewing, as did most large houses in those days.

1724. May 14. To a mason for half a day's work at ye brewhouse. 9

June 15. Mrs. Plumley her bill for malt. 13 17 0

1725. Oct. 22. To Mrs. Bennett a bill for hopps and brewing. November. 1 11 10

In the margin under 1725 is written "my Lord ye 14th died."

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### CHESHIRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

You will note that since the last issue of the Historian there has been a change in the name and address of the publishers. At the Annual Meeting of the Cheshire Rural Community Council held in September last, it was agreed that, in view of the services now being undertaken by the Council throughout the County, a more appropriate title would be "Cheshire Community Council." This in no way reduces the Rural aspect of the work but will, in fact, increase its value by providing a closer connection between Town and Country. The Local History Committee of the Council has never functioned purely as a Rural Committee, its work has been throughout geographical Cheshire.

In October the Council removed its headquarters from Newgate Street to Bishop Lloyd's House, 53, Watergate Row, Chester. This move has provided a more suitable headquarters for the organisation in one of the famous buildings of the City. Bishop Lloyd's House was built early in the seventeenth century, restored late in the nineteenth century and the frontage has one of the richest examples of carved timber work in the City; its panelled front bearing scenes from sacred history and a series of animals including a bear with ragged staff, a dolphin, an elephant and castle also a lion. George Lloyd was Bishop of Chester from 1604 to 1615, his eldest daughter's first husband was Thomas Yale, the grandfather of Elihu Yale from whom Yale University takes its name.

From such historical headquarters this council will endeavour to extend its functions.

# The Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust

## *An Appeal*

**T**HE ancient Diocese of Chester is particularly rich in a superb heritage of noble churches, and in these venerable monuments every style of architecture has been preserved. Many ancient parishes have records of continuous existence dating from Anglo-Saxon times, and the history of bygone centuries is written in their monuments. They have survived wars, they have stood firm against the weathering of centuries, and generations of parishioners have worshipped within their hallowed walls.

Many of our Cheshire parishes were venerable when the first Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, and the monarchs of England from Norman times have been well acquainted with the much loved Cheshire Scene. With the changing economic circumstances of our times, the powerful manorial lord, or the rich squire to whom the church in former times looked for financial assistance has gone, and those who have taken their place, although giving generously cannot be expected to bear the whole responsibility alone.

To assist parishes where a venerable church is urgently in need of repair, The Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust was launched in July of this year.

We hope to raise £100,000 to augment the splendid efforts of parishes who have shouldered the burden of maintenance and the raising of money unaided for so long.

Many noble Cheshire churches are in serious danger, and if we are to prevent them falling into irretrievable ruin, there is urgent need of skilled and loving restoration. As may be expected, after the weathering of centuries, the native Cheshire sandstone has decayed, much of the old masonry has become defective, and with wind and rain penetrating the roofs, much lovely timbering has been seriously damaged.

To complicate matters further, for over ten years, following the outbreak of war in 1939, the old churches of the Diocese stood without anything being done to arrest the ravages of time and weather, and in consequence beetle infestation and decay still further increased. Times are now greatly changed, the arrears of maintenance have to be paid for at the increased prices of post war wages and materials, and a vast sum of money is needed.

To mention but a few of the lovely old churches needing urgent financial assistance, the following are representative of the Diocese as a whole:

**CHESTER. St. JOHN THE BAPTIST.**

Occupying the site of an Anglo-Saxon church, the present building contains some of the finest Norman architecture in the country. The great cylindrical piers of the nave date from the early 12th century, and in a comparatively recent restoration of the mediaeval Chapter House Crypt the remains of carved crosses and stonework of Saxon times came to light. In a great church dating over a thousand years a good deal of restoration work is now necessary, if this remarkable monument is to be preserved from further decay.

**CHESTER. St. Mary-on-the-Hill.**

This noble mediaeval church, standing in close proximity to Chester castle, is constructed almost entirely of native red sandstone, and this, having weathered very badly, is in urgent need of substantial repair. Although founded in Norman times, the oldest parts of the existing fabric are the 14th century arches of the chancel and the tower. The church is rich in old monuments and pre-Reformation wall paintings, and its great glory is the wonderful camber-beamed panelled roof, dating from the time of Edward IV.

**BUNBURY. St. Boniface.**

A noble parish church, dating entirely from the 14th and the 15th centuries. Architecturally it is one of the most important examples of its period in Cheshire, and the fabric possesses much rich carving of exceptional beauty from mediaeval times. Unfortunately, the church was seriously damaged by enemy action in November 1940, and although a War Damage Compensation payment will materially assist in the repair of this building the sum received will be quite inadequate to overtake the arrears of maintenance which have accumulated over the centuries.

**NANTWICH. St. Mary.**

This church is one of the great architectural treasures of the county, and its fine octagonal tower is a feature of the Cheshire scene for many miles around. Constructed entirely in the 14th and 15th centuries, the style is a combination of the Decorated and Perpendicular periods. The church throughout is planned on the grand scale, and the chancel, erected about 1380, is possibly the most beautiful portion of the fabric, while the twenty magnificent quire stalls of late 14th century workmanship are the finest in the Diocese. As a result of being built of the friable native sandstone, and the site of the church being subject to subsidence, a vast sum of money is necessary for the repair and preservation of this exquisite example of pre-Reformation ecclesiastical art.

**MIDDLEWICH. St. Michael & All Angels.**

Dominating the old salt town of Middlewich, the parish church is a notable survival of an ancient church, dating in part from the 12th century. The building has fared badly through the centuries of its existence, having participated in the Civil War when it was used as a place of sanctuary by the Royalists. The church, as it exists today, is mainly Perpendicular in style, with some notable Jacobean woodwork. Considerable repairs are necessary to this ancient edifice, particularly the securing of the embattled parapets and the crocketed angled pinnacles. Middlewich church is a typical example of the style of ancient ecclesiastical architecture which graces so many old Cheshire towns.

**BADDILEY. St. Michael.**

Hidden away at the end of an old country lane near Acton, St. Michael's at Baddiley is possibly Cheshire's most obscure village church. The interior is "quaint" in every way, with old box pews, the charming old furniture in the chancel, and the unique pre-Reformation screen and tympanum. The nave roof is of camber-beam construction, probably dating from the late 15th century. This roof is now in need of repair and, if it is to be preserved from further decay, urgent restoration is necessary.

**HANDLEY. All Saints.**

Occupying a conspicuous position on the main Chester—Whitchurch road, the dominating feature of this ancient building is the fine West Tower, upon which is recorded the date of its erection in 1512. Recently serious fissures were discerned in the old masonry, and very substantial repairs have been necessary to preserve this ancient edifice from disintegration. Much yet remains to be done, and considerable financial assistance is necessary for this charming old church, having a total parish of little over 300 souls.

**GREAT BUDWORTH. St. Mary & All Saints.**

Consternation prevails about the survival of this noble mediaeval church, dating from the 14th and 15th centuries. Standing on a hill, its imposing and handsome features are a well-known and much loved feature of the Cheshire landscape. Following a recent architectural survey, it has been established that much of the old masonry is insecure, and that the wonderful roof has beetle infestation which will necessitate a good deal of expensive repair. First estimates from architects indicate that a minimum of £10,000 will have to be expended.

**GAWSWORTH. St. James.**

The incomparably beautiful setting of Gawsorth church is unique in Cheshire, and one of the most attractive features of the precincts is the rare Elizabethan wall at the East end of the old churchyard. After the weathering of over four centuries, much pointing and repair work is necessary if this lovely old wall is to be preserved. A modern replacement, if disaster overtook the old Elizabethan structure, would be unthinkable.

And so the picture goes on, a wonderful heritage of beauty which must be preserved for generations yet unborn. It is to be hoped that many will assist in this compelling task of raising money to restore our precious and lovely churches. In a changing world, the true centre of spiritual strength is still the House of God, and our ancestors have indeed left us a goodly heritage reminding us of our duty to God and His church.

Will you support this repair fund? To every man and woman, young or old, to every firm or industrial concern this appeal is commended. Address your gifts to The Bishop's House, Chester, and they will be gratefully acknowledged.

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Local History Committee thank all who have so kindly contributed articles or otherwise helped, also The Manchester University Press, The Manchester Public Library, and The Chetham Society for the use of the cover block.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

# Cheshire Museums and Art Galleries

No. 4.

## The Grosvenor Museum, Chester

By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.A.

THE Grosvenor Museum came into being largely through the munificence of the first Duke of Westminster. In the original scheme the Museum played only a small part in the multifarious functions of the building. Typical of its period, although rather later than most, the building was intended to provide for education in the broadest sense of the word. It was an ambitious project; there was not only a Grammar School but a School of Art and Evening Institute where young apprentices could be taught their crafts. Provision was made for the two local societies, the Chester Society for Natural Science, Literature and Art — an all-embracing view of culture — and the more specialised Chester Archaeological Society. The latter had already a library and a number of antiquities which were now given a home where they could be adequately studied. At the first meeting of this Society in its new home, on 7th September 1886, its objectives were clearly defined:

- (1) The collection and publication of Archaeological and Historic information relating to the City and County of Chester and the neighbourhood.
- (2) The preservation in a permanent Museum of the remains of Antiquity and other objects of interest in the City and County of Chester and neighbourhood.

It was about this time that the Society received a great impetus through the discovery in the north wall of the city of the large collection of Roman tombstones which is now such an important asset of the Museum. After the initial enthusiasm which had set the Museum going had died away, the two societies found it increasingly difficult to maintain the building; the Museum was never adequately staffed and most of the best work was done by voluntary effort.

In particular, the late Prof. R. Newstead must be remembered. After he had retired from his chair of entomology at Liverpool University, and at an age when most men settle down to a sedentary life, he took up his lifelong hobby of archaeology with tremendous zeal and devoted all his time and much of his substance to a painstaking study of the Roman remains of the City. The results of his excavations were passed on to the Society and gradually its collection grew in bulk and significance.

The rapid increase in educational facilities over the past few decades caused the project, so notable in 1885, to become less and less adequate for the needs of the city. Gradually this expansion involved the removal of some departments and the

functions of the building have, step by step, been removed from the control of the voluntary body and taken over by the local Education Committee. The City Grammar School moved to new premises in Handbridge and more recently the Evening Institute, or as it later became, the Technical College, went to form part of the new College of Further Education. Now only the School of Art remains and eventually this also will, it is hoped, depart to larger and more convenient premises.

A crisis in the affairs of the Societies was reached in 1936 when they offered the whole of the building and the Museum to the Corporation on the condition that they could hold meetings there without charge. The Grosvenor Museum then became the responsibility of the Education Committee and a sub-committee with two representatives of each of the Societies was appointed to manage it. Deliberations as to how this should be done were still under way when war broke out and the whole matter was deferred. Professor Newstead, although by now an old man, was still remarkably active and able to keep the Museum going with the help of his brother Alfred, who had devoted much of his life to the Natural History collections.

The Professor died in 1947 at the age of 87. The following year the writer was appointed as the first full-time Curator and was asked to prepare a report on the reconstruction of the Museum and its collections.

Inadequate finances over many years and the neglect of the war years had by now reduced the exhibitions rooms to a sorry condition and a decisive plan of campaign was needed. After careful thought, the following four-point scheme was presented to the Education Committee:

- (1) The large gallery housing the fine collection of Roman inscribed and sculptured stones was to be devoted entirely to Roman epigraphic material set in appropriate groups and given a proper architectural context. All extraneous matter, which so covered the floor space that it was difficult for visitors to enter and move about, was to be removed.
- (2) The so-called Art Gallery was to illustrate the Roman Army with special reference to the Chester fortress, using the valuable range of archaeological material available.
- (3) A Georgian house at the rear of the Museum was to be converted into a period house with rooms illustrating bygone crafts and, as far as possible, the later history of the city.
- (4) The lecture theatre originally designed for children was to be modernised and equipped with plush tip-up seats suitable for adult use.

The Committee so whole-heartedly agreed to the scheme that it was decided to embark on all four schemes at once. Progress has inevitably been slow but steady and the present position is that:—

Scheme 1—The gallery has been cleared and about one-third of the stones adequately displayed.

Scheme 2—The Newstead gallery was fully opened on 14th October by Professor I. A. Richmond.

Scheme 3—The main work of restoration has been completed and the case work and interior furnishings are at present under construction and will be completed in the next few months.

Scheme 4—This work has been completed and the theatre has been in use for the last eighteen months.

At the same time all the galleries have been relit with fluorescent fittings and a new and more efficient heating system installed.

The most notable of these achievements has been the completion of the Newstead gallery devoted to the Roman Army. This is a new type of gallery and has been built round a theme, using the material as illustrations. The older and more usual method has been to provide a gallery with cases and fill them with available objects according to their classifications. But the mere objects by themselves are not enough and the gallery is supplied with information panels which provide the visitor with the links and general background. Use has also been made of models, especially of buildings, and the main feature of the last bay is a large diorama showing the legionary fortress in relation to the local topography. Starting with the individual soldier, of which a full-size model is to be seen, the visitor is taken through the organisation of the legion and can contemplate the fortress and its buildings, and from there to a consideration of the defences of the province of Britain, while a final panel shows the whole Empire and puts Britain in its proper setting, a small and insignificant island on the extreme western limits of a large civilised area.

When these schemes have been completed, further developments will be considered, such as:

- (a) A small exhibition of English pottery, showing the development of technology from the Middle Ages until the 19th century;
- (b) A reorganisation of the prehistoric collection;
- (c) A display of arms and armour with special reference to the siege of Chester in 1645;
- (d) The building-up of a collection of topographical drawings and paintings of Chester, of which a considerable nucleus has already been obtained.

It is unfortunate that these schemes, as wide and ambitious as they are, do not cater for two important aspects. Natural History and Art. There is an existing Natural History gallery but its exhibits, excellent as they were fifty years ago, are now faded and need replacement. The Education Committee wisely decided to concentrate on the archaeological side of the Museum which



is of such outstanding importance. When more space and staff become available, a start can be made on the Natural History section. The modern conception of such a subject is no longer that of static groups, but more lively displays with plants, birds, fish and small mammals; nothing can be better than the living organisms and creatures themselves with associated models and diagrams to illustrate their life and habits.

Pictures need a special gallery with natural overhead lighting. There is little need in Chester to build up a permanent collection of pictures with such notable galleries as those at Manchester (City and Whitworth), Liverpool (Walker) and Port Sunlight (Lady Lever) so near. Indeed the great cost of first class pictures today makes it virtually impossible for a small authority like Chester, without any endowments, to build up a good collection. There is, however, a need for a small gallery for the display of loan or travelling exhibitions which are so readily available today through such agencies as the Arts Council and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Occasional exhibitions of this character are held at the Town Hall where conditions are far from satisfactory. A place in any future development scheme should clearly be made for such a gallery.

If a Museum is to be alive it must be the active centre of research into local history, archaeology and natural history. The mere task of collecting, storing and exhibiting material, important though it is, is not enough. The Grosvenor Museum now has the makings of a small but excellent Museum, and no doubt conditions will remain favourable to the attaining of these objectives during the coming years.

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## Book Review

### “ A Scientific Survey of Merseyside ”

Edited by Wilfred Smith. Published by the British Association by the University Press of Liverpool 1953. Price 21s.

This book, published on the occasion of the visit of the British Association to Liverpool in 1953, contains 29 articles by different authors on the varied aspects of Merseyside.

The first part deals with the natural features, the second with the development of industry and the third with the archaeological and historical background.

In this book there is much that will interest the local historian in all three sections, from an all too short summary of the pre-history of the area by T. G. E. Powell to the history of the industrial revolution and its immense effect on Merseyside.

The articles, as is to be expected in such a compendium, vary in quality but the sum total of knowledge they contain and their brevity, which make for readability, should appeal strongly to the general reader with wide interests.

G.W.

# The Archæologist in the Field

(Part IV)

## A. Roman Coins

By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.A.

## B. Prehistoric Trade in Cheshire

By J. D. JONES, B.A., F.S.A. (SCOT.)

### A.

**T**HERE are many valuable books about Roman coins ranging from the extremely detailed and erudite catalogues of the British Museum, the classic work of reference "The Roman Imperial Coinage" by Mattingly and Sydenham, now nearing completion, to the recently published "The Coinage of Roman Britain," by Gilbert Askew. To these and other volumes the archæologist must always turn for accurate information about the coins he discovers. For this purpose these books, designed primarily for the numismatist poring over his collection in a secluded study, are, apart from the last mentioned, too bulky and detailed. These few notes are intended to give the beginner some simple clues to enable him to arrive at an identification which may help in the problems posed by the excavation. The coins will naturally, we hope, be subjected to detailed study by a competent numismatist at a later stage.

First, consideration must be given to the value of coins as archaeological evidence. The very fact that a legible coin gives an absolute date, as opposed to other objects about which there may be uncertainty, creates in the mind of the excavator a greater certainty of its value than really exists. The more the experience of archaeological work of this period the less becomes one's faith in the history of Roman Britain as interpreted by coin evidence in past excavations and in particular the period after A.D. 150. There are difficulties of two different types to be faced.

The first and more important is in relation to the deposit in which the coins are found. Stratified layers can be one of two kinds, (1) a layer of debris which has accumulated in the process of human occupation in or near a living site or (2) a layer of material spread over an area to build up to another level or to form part of a structure, like a rampart or the clay backing of a water tank.

In the first of these deposits the objects found will be contemporary with the occupation and the only dating problem will be that of deciding on the duration of the period involved.

In the second kind of deposit a more difficult question arises. Coins and potsherds may be found in the layer contemporary with its deposition, reaching it while it was being laid but many

more may be from earlier deposits in the material itself. A single example of this is the building of a rampart, say at the end of the second century on a Roman settlement which has been occupied since the middle of the first century. The body of the rampart will be formed from the ditch cut in front of it. Any occupation material in this area will be removed and incorporated into the rampart itself and as it will be in the first loads received, it will tend to appear at the bottom of the rampart. Coins found in this structure will thus not necessarily date the building of the rampart but the earlier occupation nearby. This illustrates the discretion required in assessing the date of stratified layers of this kind. Coins can be used only in conjunction with the pottery and other dateable objects. It would be quite possible to find that only about 10 per cent or less of the pottery was contemporary with the building of such a structure and one would require at least ten coins to give evidence of similar value. This is not the place to enter into a discussion upon stratigraphical problems associated with the disturbance of earlier levels, it is sufficient to indicate that the character of the deposits must be considered in relationship to the material it contains and that coins can not always be used at mere "face value" for dating purposes.

The second kind of difficulty lies in the coins themselves. All money by its very nature passes in circulation from hand to hand and may at some stages become part of someone's savings for a considerable period. One has to consider how long the coins have been in existence before they were lost in the deposit in which they have been found. Any handful of loose change in one's pocket today will contain coins minted up to sixty years ago. Generally speaking the older the coin the more wear it will show and one has usually the difficult task of assessing the degree of wear. There seems no reason why this could not be put on a scientific basis. It is true that the Romans used at different periods many kinds of alloys for their base metal coins but the hardness of the main types could be measured and a comparison made with average coins of today. Results of this kind would be a great help to the archaeologist for at present it is a matter of guesswork.

There are other factors to be considered. The Romans had no banking system as elaborate as ours and there was a tendency to hoard coins, which would naturally prolong their life without causing any wear. The history and development of Roman coinage also had considerable effect, for example a wealth of issues in one reign followed by a dearth in the next would tend to lengthen the life of the earlier coins as there would be no others to use. This is offset to some extent by Gresham's Law by which bad money drives out the good. The coinage, like the Empire generally, was on the decay and the coins, in spite of several attempts at reform, were becoming smaller and baser all the time. (Collingwood devoted a valuable chapter to this problem in his "*Archaeology of Roman Britain.*")

These difficulties apply more particularly to silver coins. It is common, for example, to find Republican silver in the late first century levels and *denarii* of Mark Antony in use well into the second century. It has been argued that Roman coins took an average of thirty years to pass from the mint to the Northern frontier (Foord, "*Last Age of Roman Britain*") but this has been clearly demonstrated to be a false assumption (*J.R.S.*, xv, 114, etc.). Coins offer valuable dating evidence but require care in use and the later the levels the more residual material there is likely to be and correspondingly greater thought should be given to these difficulties.

The general appearance of a coin can tell us a great deal. The base metal issues of the first and second are much larger than those of the third and fourth centuries and in general coins became smaller and smaller. The *minimissimi* of the late fourth century are so tiny that fifty can be placed on a modern half-penny without overlapping (*Report on Lydney Park, Glos.*, pl. xxxvi). As soon as a coin is found it should first be carefully logged in the record book and an envelope made ready for it. A little judicious cleaning on the site can be undertaken if it is necessary to have a rapid appreciation of its evidence. The soil and corrosion can best be scraped off with a matchstick and with a gentle rubbing between the finger and thumb the characteristics will soon appear. In some soils however, the corrosion is such that even this gentle treatment might be disastrous. The first thing is to distinguish the obverse, i.e. the side on which the head appears and then one can concentrate on that part of the legend in which the Emperor's name is usually given. Sometimes the portrait itself tells us all we want to know, especially the Emperors' and their consorts of the early centuries. No one can mistake the thick wrinkled neck of Vespasian with his knobby chin, nor can one be deceived by the curious straggly beard of Marcus Aurelius. In identifying other faces one needs experience in handling a large number of coins. (The plates at the end of Collingwood, "*Archaeology of Roman Britain*" can be a great help to the beginner). The crowns and wreaths round the head are also a useful guide. In particular the radiate crown with its long spikes is as characteristic of the third century *Antoniniani* as the diadem is of the fourth century.

If we fail to identify the Emperor by his portrait we must attempt to read his name, which will usually appear immediately over his head, rarely is the name on the right hand side. Some first century coins have legends which read outwards. The legend on the obverse will contain not only the Emperor's name but his titles, and some knowledge of these is necessary in order to separate them from the name itself. A list of the more common ones with their meaning and purpose is given in Appendix I. One of the unfortunate difficulties for the beginner is to discover that some of the Emperors' names appear in unfamiliar guises. For example,

Caligula was known officially as Gaius and appears on his coins as C. Caesar. Trajan by adoption added the name of Nerva and likewise Hadrian appears as Traian Hadrianus. A number of Emperors bore the name Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius, Caracalla and Elagabalus are all known as M. AVREL ANTONINVS.

Another pitfall for the unwary is the issue of family portraits. many Emperors' minted coins bear their wives' names, a few their mothers' and one his grandmother's. It was usual also to issue commemorative coins after death, these are distinguished by the words DIVVS for a man and DIVA for a woman. To help the beginner a list of the Emperors' names and those of some of their families is given in Appendix II.

Two final words of warning. Never try to clean a coin by chemical means, only use gentle physical persuasion with something softer than the metal and leave the detailed identification to a numismatist. Increasing knowledge and experience will eventually enable an excavator to make an approximate estimate of its period sufficient for the purposes of the field work in hand but when it comes to publication, the final word should be that of a competent authority.

## APPENDIX I.

### IMPERIAL TITLES

#### AVGVSTVS

The title bestowed on the first princeps and used by all his successors. The feminine form AVGVSTA was taken by the Emperor's consort.

#### CAESAR

The *cognomen* of the *gens Iulia*, and thus borne by the great Julius whose heir was the first princeps. Thereafter it became an adoptive relationship used by all the Emperors. It was also given to the sons of the Emperors and became in effect a junior title. It appears as NOB(ILISSIMVS) C(AESAR) on coins following the formation of the Tetrarchy by Diocletian in A.D. 293.

#### IMPERATOR

A title originally confirmed by acclamation by the Army after a victory and used by Emperors in their capacity as C.-in-C. of the Army. This recognition and support by the Army became an important factor in Roman politics after the first century.

#### PONTIFEX MAXIMUS

Chief priest with control of religions and the auguries. This was a position of great importance in a superstitious community.

#### CONSVL

The chief magistrate of the Republic, held jointly with a colleague for a year, a period which was reduced under the Empire. Emperors held the consulship several times but not always regularly. The numbers following COS on coins help to date them but only with reference to tables.

#### TRIBVNICA POTESTATE

A Republican title with powers of veto over the Senate. This was regarded by Augustus as one of the main pillars of his authority. It was specially granted by the Senate and gave him the powers of a tribune of the plebs with control of the Senate. His successors adopted it with greater regularity than the consulship and on coins it thus has greater dating significance.

## PATER PATRIAE

Father of his Country, a title held by the Emperor by which he is accepted as the actual head of the great citizen family.

## CENSOR PERPETVVS

A title taken by Domitian giving him complete control over membership to the Senate and the aristocratic orders. Earlier Emperors had adopted this power only at intervals when it became necessary to check the senatorial roll.

## DIVVS

A title conferred on some Emperors after their death by a decree of the Senate. It signifies that they had become gods. The feminine form DIVA was used for the Imperial Consort or members of the family similarly honoured. Coins of this type show the head of the deceased, veiled.

## PIVS FELIX

Titles meaning dutiful and fortunate used by the Severan dynasty and later Emperors as a link with their earlier and well-remembered predecessors. The title PIVS is a typical Roman conception embodying the idea of duty as between members of a family and its head and the converse responsibilities. FELIX means fortunate in the sense of having the gods on your side.

## DOMINVS NOSTER

Our Master, a title used in the sense of ownership and which replaced IMP. CAES. in the fourth century. It was a symbol of the increase of autocratic control by the Emperor and the establishment of an oriental despotism.

## APPENDIX II

This is not a complete list of Emperors but most of those likely to be found on a British site are given. The names appearing in the list are the most expanded forms found on coins, in most cases there are a number of variations consisting in contractions and omissions. The dates given are those during which the Emperor actually claimed to be *Augustus*. Many coins were issued for members of his family including sons who later became Emperor, they are usually referred to as Caesar. (in the 4th century *Nobilissimus Caesar*).

Augustus	..... 27 B.C.—A.D. 14	AVGVSTVS (coins of Augustus continuing in the Republican style bear the names of the three moneyers responsible for minting them).
Tiberius	..... 14-37	TI. CAESAR.
Drusus	..... died 23	DRVSVS CAESAR.
Agrippa	..... died 12 B.C.	M. AGRIPPA (commemorative issues in the reign of Tiberius).
Germanicus	..... died 19	GERMANICVS CAESAR (also issued under Caligula).
Caligula	..... 37-41	C. CAESAR.
Claudius	..... 41-54	TI. CLAVDIVS
Nero	..... 54-68	NERO CLAVDIVS.
Galba	..... 68-69	SER. SVLPICIVS GALBA.
Vitellius	..... 69	A. VITELLIVS.
Vespasian	..... 69-79	VESPASIANVS.
Titus	..... 79-81	TITVS VESPASIAN.
Domitian	..... 81-96	DOMITIANVS.
Nerva	..... 96-98	NERVA.
Trajan	..... 98-117	NERVAE TRAIANO.
Plotina (his wife)	..... died 129	PLOTINA.
Hadrian	..... 117-138	TRAIAN HADRIANVS.
Sabina (his wife)	..... died 137	SABINA.
Aelius (Caes. 135)	..... died 138	L. AELIVS.

Antoninus Pius	138-161	ANTONINVS (AVG PIVS) (Pius is actually only a title).
Faustina (his wife)	died 141	FAVSTINA.
Marcus Aurelius	161-180	M. AVREL ANTONINVS.
Faustina (Jnr.) (his wife)	died 175	FAVSTINA.
Lucius Verus	161-169	L. AVREL VERUS.
Lucilla (his wife)	died 183	LVCILLA.
Commodus	180-192	L. AEL. M. AVREL. COMMODVS ANTONINVS (AVG PIVS).
Crispina (his wife)	died 183	CRISPINA.
Pertinax	193	P. HELV. PERTINAX.
Albinus	193-197	D. CLODIVS ALBINVS.
Severus	193-211	L. SEPT. SEVERVS, PERT.
Julia Domna (his wife)	died 217	IVLIA DOMNA.
Caracalla (Caes. 196)	198-217	M. AVREL ANTONINVS (PIVS).
Plautilla (his wife)	202-205	PLAVTILLA.
Geta (Caes. 198)	209-212	P. SEPTIMVS GETA (PIVS).
Macrinus	217-218	M. OPEL. SEV. MACRINVS.
Diadumenian (his son) (Caes. 217)	died 218	M. OPEL ANTONINVS DIADVME- ENIANVS.
Elagabalus	218-222	M. AVR. ANTONINVS (PIVS).
Paula (his first wife)	219-220	IVLIA PAVLA.
Aquilia Severa (his second wife)		IVLIA AQVILIA SEVERA.
Annia Faustina (his third wife)	221-	ANNIA FAVSTINA.
Julia Soaemias (his mother)	died 222	IVLIA SOAEMIAS.
Julia Maesa (his grandmother)		IVLIA MAESA.
Severus Alexander	222-235	M. AVR. SEV. ALEXANDER (PIVS).
Orbiana (his wife)	224	SALL. BARBIA. ORBIANA.
Julia Mamaea (his mother)	died 235	IVLIA MAMAEA.
Maximin	235-238	MAXIMINVS (PIVS).
Maximus (his son) (Caes. 235)		IVL. VERVS. MAXIMVS.
Gordian III	238-244	M. ANT. GORDIANVS (coins of the first two Gordiani are rare and distinguished by the title AFRI and portraits).
Tranquillina (his wife)		SABINA TRANQVILLINA.
Balbinus	238	D. CAEL. BALBINVS.
Pupienus	238	M. CLOD. PVPIENVS.
Philip I	244-249	M. IVL. PHILIPPVS.
Otacia (his wife)	died 249	MARCIA OTACIL SEVERA
Philip II (Caes. 244)	246-249	M. IVL. PHILIPPVS (his portrait is that of a young man).
Decius	249-251	C. MESS. Q. TRAIANVS. DECIVS.
Etruscilla (his wife)		HERENNIA ETRVSCILLA.
Herennius Etruscus (his son)	(Caes. 250) died 251	Q. HER. ETR. MES. DECIVS.
Hostilian (Caes. 250)	251	C. VALENS HOSTIL. MES. QVINTVS.
Gallus	251-254	C. VIBIVS. TREBONIANVS GALLVS
Volusian (Caes. 251)	252-254	C. VIB. AF. GAL. VEND. VOLVSIANVS.
Aemilian	253-254	M. AEMIL. AEMILIANVS (PIVS).
Cornelia Supera (his wife)		C. CORNEL. SVPERA.
Valerian	254-260	P. LIC. VALERIANVS (PIVS).
Mariniana (his wife)	died 254	MARINIANAE ( <i>Consecratio</i> types only).



PLATE I

BUNBURY CHURCH

PHOTO BY COURTESY OF THE CHESTER CHRONICLE



PLATE 4



VERNON'S COTTAGE, BUNBURY HEATH

PHOTO BY COURTESY OF THE CHESTER CHRONICLE



BROOK HOUSE FARM, CLOTTON, 1939

PHOTO BY MAURICE H. RIDGWAY

Gallienus	.....	254-268	P. LIC. GALLIENVS (PIVS).
Salonina (his wife)			CORNELIA SALONINA.
Valerian (his son) (Caes. 255)		died 255	P. COR. LIC. VALERIANVS.
Saloninus (his second son)			
(Caes. 259)	.....	died 259	P. COR. LIC. SALON. VALERIANVS
Claudius II	.....	268-270	M. AVR. CLAVDIVS.
Quintillus	.....	270	M. AVREL. CL. QVINTILLVS.
Aurelianus	.....	270-275	I. DOM. AVRELIANVS.
Severina (his wife)			SEVERINA.
Tacitus	.....	275-276	M. CL. TACITVS.
Florianus	.....	276	M. ANNIVS. FLORIANVS.
Probus	.....	276-282	M. AVREL. PROBVS (PIVS).
Carus	.....	282-283	M. AVR. CARVS.
Carinus (Caes. 282)	.....	283-285	M. AVR. CARINVS.
Magna Urbica (his wife)			MAGNIA VRBICA.
Numerian (Caes. 282)	.....	283-284	M. AVR. NVMERIANVS.
Diocletian	.....	284-305	C. VAL. DIOCLETIANVS.
Maximian	.....	286-305 & 308	M. AVR. VAL. MAXIMIANVS.
Constantius I (Caes. 293)	.....	305-306	M. AVR. VAL. CONSTANTIVS.
Helena (his wife)			FL. IVL. HELENAE (only issued 308-337).
Theodora (his second wife)			FL. MAX. THEODORA ( do. )
Galerius (Caes. 293)	.....	305-311	GAL. VAL. MAXIMIANVS.
Galeria Valeria (his wife)			GAL. VALERIA.
Flavius Severus (Caes. 305)	.....	306-307	FLA. VAL. SEVERVS.
<b>GALLIC EMPIRE</b>			
Postumus	.....	259-267	M. CASS. POSTVMVS (PIVS).
Marius	.....	268	M. AVR. MARIVS.
Victorinus	.....	265-270	M. PIAVVONIVS VICTORINVS.
Tetricus I	.....	270-273	C. P. ESVVIVS TETRICVS.
Tetricus II (his son) (Caes. 270)			C. PIV. ESV. TETRICVS
Carausius	.....	287-293	M. AVR. M. CARAVSIVS.
Allectus	.....	293-296	ALLECTVS.
Maximin Daia (Caes. 305)	.....	307-314	GAL. VAL. MAXIMINVS.
Maxentius (Caes. 306)	.....	307-312	MAXENTIVS.
Romulus (his son)	.....	died 309	ROMVLO ( <i>Consecratio</i> types only).
Licinius	.....	307-324	VAL. LIC. LICINIVS.
Licinius (Jnr.) (Caes. 317)		died 323	VAL. LICIN. LICINIVS IVN.
Constantine I (Caes. 306)	.....	308-337	FL. VAL. CONSTANTINVS (as Caes.)
Fausta (his wife)	.....	-326	CONSTANTINVS MAX (as Aug.)
Crispus (his son) (Caes. 317)		died 326	FLAV. MAX. FAVSTA.
Delmatius (do. Caes. 335)		died 337	FL. IVL. CRISPVS.
Constantine II (Caes. 317)	.....	337-340	FL. DELMATIVS.
Constans (Caes. 333)	.....	337-350	FL. IVL. CONSTANTINVS (IVN as Caes.)
Constantius II (Caes. 323)	.....	337-361	FL. IVL. CONSTANS.
Magnentius	.....	350-353	FL. IVL. CONSTANTIVS.
Decentius (Caes. 351)	.....	died 353	MAGNENTIVS.
Constantius Gallus (Caes. 351)		died 354	DECENTIVS.
Julian (Caes. 355)	.....	360-363	CONSTANTIVS.
Jovian	.....	363-364	FL. CL. IVLIANVS.
Valentinian I	.....	364-375	IOVIANVS.
Valens	.....	364-378	VALENTINIANVS.
Gratian	.....	367-383	VALENS.
			GRATIANVS.

Valentinian II	383-392	VALENTINIANVS (he is sometimes distinguished from his father by the title IVN).
Maximus	383-388	MAG. MAXIMVS.
Flavius Victor	384-385	FL. VICTOR.
Eugenius	392-394	EVGENIVS.
Theodosius	379-395	THEODOSIVS.
Flaccilla (his wife)	383-395	AEL. FLACCILLA.
Honorius	393-423	HONORIVS.
Arcadius	395-408	ARCADIVS.

## B.

IT was about 2500 B.C. that the first farmers of the new stone age began to settle, with their crops and livestock, in the lowland areas of the south and east of England; here at first they remained, deterred by the difficulties of settling in the more barren and mountainous areas of the Welsh hills and the Pennines and the dank midland forests. Their influence however, certainly did spread, together with that of another culture movement, the megalith builders, whose chambered cairns and stone circles on both sides of the Irish Sea show the path of their expansion through the west of Britain.

What was new about the new stone age, to distinguish it in this country? One notable characteristic was the first use of pottery. The earliest pottery, introduced into this country by the first neolithic farmers, consisted of coarse, round-bottomed, leathery-looking bowls, usually without any decoration. Another feature was farming itself. Hitherto the sparse population in this country had lived by hunting and fishing; now, with the domestication of animals and the sowing of crops, communities tended to become more settled. Finally — and this is the important change in relation to the present subject — the more certain supply of food allowed people to develop techniques for the making of implements, and to make these tools in such quantities as to produce a surplus above their own needs, which could be traded to other communities. Now at last there was specialisation, and this in turn led to commerce.

That technology was eventually bound up with the new farming will be apparent when we consider the nature of the countryside at this time. A picture of this can be built up, partly by the actual evidence of palaeobotany, and partly by inference from our knowledge of the surface geology and its influence on vegetation. The retreat of the glaciers at the end of the Ice Age was followed by a period of cold, dry climate with decreasing snowfalls, in which the landscape would have been rather barren steppe, supporting only a limited vegetation. It gradually became warmer, and forests of birch and pine followed the amelioration of the climate. Then a further change developed; while conditions remained warm, the amount of rainfall increased and this produced, on heavy soils, a dense impenetrable forest of oak, alder, and elm. Thus the first farmers settling in this country

found that the chalk downs and gravels of the lowland zone supported fertile grassland which provided good grazing for their herds. To the north and west the oak forest seemed to present a barrier to settlement. Most of the Cheshire plain was covered with a sheet of clay with occasional mounds of sand and gravel deposited by glacial action in the Ice Age, and on this heavy, badly drained subsoil the courses of the rivers would be lined with marshes, with dense woodland on the slightly higher ground. The archaeological evidence tells its own story; the population of the Cheshire area at this stage was scanty. Only in the succeeding metal age did settlement really begin, and not until the Roman occupation was any land clearance undertaken. To the south-west of these forests lay the bleak moorlands of the Welsh highland area, now gradually being settled by people of the megalithic tradition; to the north-east were the Pennines, also largely moorland, sparsely peopled by the descendants of the mesolithic hunters.

Meanwhile in the south, the neolithic farmers began to face the problem of living space. Though the population was still small, their primitive methods of farming were making increasing demands on areas of easy settlement, and inroads would have to be made on the thinner woodlands of the Midland plain. Some land could be cleared by burning, but a new technology also came to their assistance. In the old stone age, men had chipped their axes from lumps of flint, which could be flaked to a good, sharp edge. This primitive industry was now developed on the flint-bearing chalk lands. Mines were sunk, and in the gloomy galleries, lit by oil lamps, flint seams were dug out by the use of picks made of deer antler. In addition to this systematic expansion of an existing flint industry, a new type of axe was now produced. This was roughly chipped out of the harder, igneous rocks found in the highland zone, and then ground down with sand and stone to a polished surface. The factory sites where the preliminary chipping was done are usually found high up among the scree on mountain sides; the final grinding and polishing was apparently left to workers on less inhospitable lowland sites. These hard, polished axes were not only more shapely than those of chipped flint, but they have been proved by experiment to be more efficient for tree-felling.

Two important factory sites near Cheshire were at Graig Lwyd, Penmaenmawr (Caernarvonshire) and Great Langdale (Cumberland.) It is clear from the stray finds of axe heads that the products of the various factories were carried by traders across the country over certain more accessible routes. To some extent it is possible to identify the products of each factory by their shape; recently, however, a more efficient technique has been developed, by means of which the story of the earliest British trade is being pieced together.

In "THE CASE OF THE FIVE ORANGE PIPS" Sherlock Holmes

deduces that a client has come from the south-west by the distinctive clay and chalk mixture on the toe-caps of his shoes. This use of geology for detection has recently been exploited for archaeological purposes. Most people know that there are in the Wiltshire Stonehenge a number of stones foreign to the neighbourhood, and which have been traced back to Pembrokeshire. The methods used in finding this source were interesting, and their effects far-reaching. They are based on the fact that the rocks outcropping in various parts of the country, though falling into several distinct general groups, also have minute local variations in their mineral constituents, which are apparent on microscopic examination of a thin section. The Geological Survey of Great Britain has compiled a fairly complete set of rock samples from all over the country. By comparison with these a slice of stone can often be assigned to a locality, its precision being determined by the area of known outcrop of that particular type of rock.

The application of this technique to neolithic stone axes was quickly exploited by the south-western group of Museums and Art Galleries, which since 1936 have been tracing and examining axes found in their area. The next step was taken in 1945, when the Council for British Archaeology put the survey on a national basis, organised in regions.

The first step in each survey is the laborious one of tracing all the stone axes (other than flint, which is not included at the moment) known to have been found in the area. With museum collections the task is fairly simple, but some axes are in private hands and these may be difficult to trace. A standard record card is used, on which a drawing with information about each axe is entered, only the exact identification of the rock being left blank. This work of recording is still in progress for Lancashire and Cheshire, and private owners of stone axes would greatly assist the survey by communicating with the local secretary, Mr. W. Tobias, at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.

The next step after recording is the slicing of selected specimens, with the permission of the owners, for microscopic examination. This is necessary for exact identification: by examining the outside of the axe with a lens, the geologist can at best only ascribe it to a general group, without the small variations of mineral constituents shown on a microscopic slide, which give a clue to its locality. Moreover the outer crust of the implement may have been so changed by weathering that even a general identification is not possible. The slice, which is cut out of the side of the axe, is usually about  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick and  $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep (to penetrate any area of outer weathering). It is then ground down to an extreme thinness and mounted on a slide for examination. When restored with plaster and coloured, the cut in the axe should not normally be visible.

These examinations are making it possible to plot on a distribution map the products of the various factories, and the result is startling in the light it throws on the scope of commerce

and transport at this early stage of British prehistory. Distance was evidently no obstacle to trade. Products of the Graig Lwyd factory appear in Wiltshire, Dorset, and on the south coast near Bournemouth and Southampton. Moreover there are near the Hampshire coast axes of a rock very similar to Graig Lwyd type — though not from that factory — which can be exactly matched in Jersey and Brittany, thus indicating that the trade was carried a stage further, across the Channel. Indeed the sea must have been a ready means of transport, for the Great Langdale factory in Cumberland was selling its axes not only in the south of England, but in the Isle of Man and further north on the coast of Galloway.

While this maritime traffic must have been considerable, there is evidence from the trail of stray finds that overland routes were also used. Cheshire seems to have been at the junction of two main trade routes — one east from Graig Lwyd through the Dee estuary to the Pennines and Yorkshire; and one south from Cumberland to Wiltshire. Only gradually, however, was this overland route opened up, for as we have seen, what might have been an inviting gap between the Welsh hills and the Pennines was in fact barred by forest and swamp. Such traffic as did get through seems to have followed the river estuaries and then proceeded inland over the higher ground of the Malpas and Peckforton hills, which would be relatively clear of forest. The distribution of axes along the coast of the Wirral suggests where the cargoes were unloaded from both the Cumberland factories and their rivals at Graig Lwyd. One such axe, found recently on the beach between Caldy Blacks and Thurstaston, was found by slicing to belong to the Lake District, as was a similar implement from the other side of the Wirral, found at the foot of Helsbv Hill. On the other hand one found at Ashton by Mr. G. B. Leach proved to be a Graig Lwyd product, and another specimen from Tarporley is almost certainly of the same rock. Cheshire, then, was at the crossing of these two main trade streams. There may have been a third, for a factory at Tievebulliagh Hill, north-east Ireland, was getting its products over to the prosperous reception area in Wiltshire, and some of these may well have come in through the overland route by the Cheshire gap. This was a route which was to grow in importance with the development of the gold and copper deposits in the north of Ireland.

There is no definite evidence of the methods of land transport. Of wheeled vehicles there is no trace as early as this, and the earliest traders must have carried their small loads themselves or used oxen as beasts of burden. We may picture one of these early merchants plodding into a settlement and unpacking his small stock of new Graig Lwyd axe heads from a leather bag, anxiously wondering whether a traveller from the Cumberland factories has got in first to spoil the market, and fluently reciting the merits of his own merchandise. Commercial travellers have

a technique peculiar to themselves, which can have changed but little through the ages.

Definite evidence so far is slight, as slicing in this area has only just begun. Work on the Cheshire survey is continuing however, and as it progresses we shall be able the more easily to understand the conditions of trade in this county some four thousand years ago.

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## Chester Excavations, 1953

**T**HE annual excavation carried out by the Chester Archaeological Society was this year directed at a building east of Trinity Street and south of Matthew Henry Chapel.

A trench across this building in 1950 produced evidence from which it was decided that there may have been a barrack block there, facing another found abutting the intervallum road in 1949 (*C.A.J.* xl).

This year's trenches were very disappointing. The Roman levels had suffered such serious interference that only a few fragments survived. The walls revealed clearly demonstrated that the building was not a barrack block but there is at present insufficient evidence to establish its purpose. The most interesting find, apart from some new legionary tile stamps, was a considerable amount of glass and pottery from a pit datable to the first half of the 18th century. It included an interesting series of plain Delft toilet utensils and adds yet another dated group to the valuable collection in the Grosvenor Museum.

The building of the Telephone Repeater Station in Foregate Street beyond the Bars produced a large quantity of Roman pottery of the second and third centuries. It was not possible to make a full examination of this site but within the area explored, no structures were found. The Roman material was packed under layers of gravel and stone, having in some places the appearance of a courtyard or platform. The site was and had been waterlogged since Roman times as pieces of timber were removed intact. It is possible that the remains represent an attempt to raise the level of the site for some purpose now difficult to understand.

A commercial excavation in the yard of Carlux Electrical Services Limited, between Nicholas Street and Weaver Street, cut through the western Roman defences including a rampart building and at the time of writing, a section is being completed which may add to our knowledge of the defences.

### HERONBRIDGE

An excavation was carried out this year at Heronbridge under the direction of Mr. B. R. Hartley. Evidence was obtained of the presence here of a Roman dock built in the first half of the second century. It possessed several features of interest but further work will be necessary before it is possible to arrive at its dimensions and method of operation. G.W.

## The Poets

By P. CULVERWELL BROWN,

Hon. M.A. (Liverpool), F.S.A.

CHESHIRE unfortunately has never produced an outstanding poet. One of the earliest Cheshire poets was JOHN BROWNSWERD (1540?-1589) his actual place of birth being uncertain. After graduating at Cambridge, he became master of Macclesfield Grammar School, a post he occupied until his death. Whatever claim he may have to fame, rests on his *Progmuasmata Aliquot Poemata*, a book of Latin Verse. He died on April 15th, 1589, and was buried in Macclesfield Church. A contemporary of Brownswerd was Geoffrey Whitney, (1548?-1601?), born at Coole Pilate near Nantwich. He went to school at Audlem proceeding to Oxford and later to Magdalene College, Cambridge, but left the University without taking a degree. He adopted the legal profession, and was for a time under-bailiff of Great Yarmouth until 1584, when he went to Leyden, where he published his *Choice of Emblems* in 1586. It had the distinction of being published from the press of Christopher Plantain. Dibdin states that this was the only book in English from the Plantain Press, but this is not so, as there are at least five other works in English from this Press. Ormerod gives a specimen of Whitney's verse entitled "To my Coutremen of the Nantwiche in Cheshire."<sup>1</sup>

His sister Isabella Whitney, was also a writer of verse, her principal work being "A Sweet Nosegay or Pleasant Posye" published in 1573.

A forgotten Cheshire poet is Laurence Bostock, who was known as "The Antiquary"; principally for his work that now forms part of the Harl.Add.M.S. at the British Museum. The exact date of his birth and death are unknown, but he was known to be living between 1570-1600 as some of the papers are marked with these dates. He was the great-grandson of John Bostock (b. 1440 d. 1482).

His poem "The Earls and Barons of Chester" consists of 135 verses dealing with the lives and deeds of seven of the Earls, and the 8 Baronies. Various copies of this poem are in existence, all of varying lengths. The *Palatine Note Book*<sup>2</sup> states that the poem consists of 62 stanzas and is believed to be by Richard Bostock.

The copy used by Halliwell, in his *Palatine Anthology*,<sup>3</sup> consists of 54 verses only, and is preceded by a note, that "This copy was preserved by Cole, which was sent to me out of Cheshire by my friend, Mr. Allen of Tarporley, and senior fellow of Trinity

<sup>1</sup> Vol. 3. p. 437.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. 1. p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Pub. 1850.



College, Cambridge." Another copy, and the most complete, which at one time was in the library of Cholmondeley Castle was purchased by Mr. Egerton Smith of Liverpool about 1823. He printed the whole 135 verses in his weekly paper "The Kaleidoscope" for September, 1823, and this was the first time it had appeared in type as far as can be ascertained. Shortly afterwards he presented this copy to the Liverpool Athenaeum where it is now in their Library. According to the publication of the Historical M.S.S. Commission,<sup>1</sup> there is a copy of this poem — which may be the original — in the library of Tabley House, together with an eighteenth century copy.

The poem is of very little literary value, but is of curious interest to those who are interested in Cheshire records.

The seven Earls dealt with are Hugh Lupus, Richard, Randulph 1 & 2, Hugh 2, Randulph 3, and John. The Baronies are Halton, Hawarden, Nantwich, Shipbrooke, Malpas, Dunham, Kinderton, and Stockport. Why Bostock undertook to write this poem might be explained in the four verses relating to the Barony of Shipbrooke.

"Then Swarine Varnon after him,  
Of Shipbrooke, next created hee;  
The heires of whom have Barons bin  
For five Descents continually.

The last deceased then it came  
To Littlebury and Willburham  
And Stafford, by his sisters three,  
Who unto those three married bee.

And after this it scattered was  
Amongst their heires full many a day;  
Till at the length it came to pass  
The greatest part thereof did stay.

With Sir John Savage, to whose name  
By marriage and descent it came,  
From Bostocks daughter, maiden bright,  
Whose Grandsire was a worthy Knight."

These verses will give some idea of the whole poem as a work of art.

Under Stockport Barony he refers to the Building of Chester Monastery:

"The year One thousand ninety three  
Hee built West Chester Monasteery;  
And five and forty years compleat  
He did enjoy that famous seat."

<sup>1</sup> Hist. M.S.S. Commission. Vol. 1. p. 47.

later on under Randolph 3 he writes:

“The first year of his Dignity  
An Abbey fairer hee helpt to found  
Whereto Hugh Malbancke devoutly  
Gave all the Scite and other ground.  
Called the Abbey of Combermaire  
Endowed with Livings good and faier,  
Whereof two Lordships of great worth,  
The said Hugh Malbancke did tread forth.”

The poem later describes the deeds of the Cheshire Barons in the Crusades under Coeur-de-Lyon.

(SIR) JOHN BIRKENHEAD (1616-1679) was a man of some note in his day, but a decidedly minor poet. The son of Randall Birkenhead, saddler, of Northwich, where he was born on the 24th March, 1615-6. He became a graduate of Oriel College, Oxford. Charles I appointed him Reader in Moral Philosophy to the University, a position he lost along with his Fellowship at the time of the Reformation. At the Restoration he was created a D.C.L. of Oxford, made a Master of the Faculties and became member of Parliament for Wilton. He became a member of the Royal Society, and received a knighthood. He died December 4th, 1679 and was buried in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

One of the most distinguished of the County's poets was WILLIAM BROOME (1689-1745) who was immortalised in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets." He was born at Haslington near Crewe, and was baptised on May 3rd, 1689. He was, as is so often the case with poets, of poor parentage, but later in life became a wealthy man. He was educated at Eton and St. John's College, Cambridge, and was an excellent Greek scholar. His first work was a prose translation of the Iliad in collaboration with Ozell and Oldisworth. By some means he attracted the notice of Pope, whom he later assisted in the translation of the Odyssey. The two poets quarrelled, with the result that Broome received unflattering notice in *The Dunciad*.

“Hibernian politics, O Swift, thy doom,  
and Pope's translating for whole years with Broome.”

His Odes of Anacreon were published in the *Gentlemen's Magazine*. In April, 1728, he was made an L.L.D. of Cambridge and died at Bath in 1745, being buried in the Abbey there.

REGINALD HEBER (1783-1826) was born at Malpas rectory on April 21st, 1783. Educated at Whitchurch Grammar School and Brazenose College, Oxford, he was ordained in 1807, and presented to the family living at Hodnet. It was while at Hodnet that in 1822 he was offered the Bishopric of Calcutta.

His first poem "Palestine" won the Newdigate prize. This, together with his other poems are now forgotten, but as a hymn writer he has taken high rank. "From Greenland's Icy Mountains" is still a popular hymn. He died at Trichinopoly on April 3rd, 1826.

ROWLAND EYLES EGERTON-WARBURTON (1804-1891) was born at Moston, near Chester, on September 14th, 1804 and was educated at Eton and Corpus Christi, Oxford. He lived at Arley Hall which he rebuilt, and in 1833 was High Sheriff of Cheshire. A noted follower of hounds he wrote hunting songs for the old Tarporley Club Meetings: his best known is "Stags in the Forest lie, hares in the valley O." In 1846 he published "Hunting Songs and Miscellaneous Verses," which ran through more than eight editions. He also published several other volumes of poems. He died at Arley Hall on the 6th December, 1891.

JOHN BYRNE LEICESTER-WARREN (LORD DE TABLEY) (1835-1893) was born on April 26th, 1835 at Tabley House. His childhood was spent in Italy and Germany with his mother, later he was at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. His first volume of poems, entitled "Ballads and Metrical Sketches," was published in collaboration with George Fortescue in 1860.

During the succeeding fifteen years he published several volumes of verse, most of his work being written under the pseudonyms of George F. Preston, or William Lancaster, though in 1873 a volume appeared under his own name. It is as an Antiquary and Botanist that Warren is better known, as well as being the author of the first book in English dealing with the subject of Ex. Libris. Lord de Tabley died on November 22nd, 1895, and is buried at Lower Peover.

It was a Cheshire man, DR. HENRY BIRKENHEAD, who in 1707 founded the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford. No doubt he was a descendant of John Birkenhead mentioned previously.

Another poem of interest is by SPENCER MADAN THOMSON, on Birkenhead Priory, and published in 1817.<sup>1</sup>

It is a very pleasing description of the ruins of the Abbey at that time, of the wild flowers growing in the vicinity, and the lovely prospect of the surrounding country and the river Mersey, then just beginning to be spoiled by the smoke of the steamship.

"Now hastening to the Mersey's slippery side,  
My boat was launched into the silver tide;  
How grand the scene! what prospects met my view,  
How blest are Englishmen, their joys how true!  
See yonder bark, by steams impetuous force,  
'Gainst wind and tide impels her rapid course;  
Blackening the air with clouds of sulphurous smoke,  
While her firm wheels strike with respondent stroke  
The briny flood: old Ocean's monarch stands  
Amazed, confused! and from his trembling hands  
Lets fall the trident; blustering Boreas tries  
In vain to check her speed; onward she flies,  
Exulting in her power, nor heeds the shout  
Of Tritons, and Sea-nymphs, that sport about  
Her foaming stem."

1 Birkenhead Priory. A descriptive poem in two parts. Liverpool. James and Jonathan Smith. 1817.

This poem was published three year after Lieut. Colin Watson had introduced steam vessels to the Mersey. Later Cheshire poets include John Buxton, M.A., who was born at Bramhall in 1912, and after being educated at Malvern and New College, Oxford, became lecturer in English at New College in 1946. His published work includes "Such Liberty," "Atropos" and other poems, "Westward" and "Judas." G. S. SWINDLES of Birkenhead, and G. W. MATTHEWS of Wallasey. C. F. ELIAS of West Kirby, who wrote the words of the school song for Caldý Grange School and other poems, and R. LANCELYN GREEN of Spital, are others.

J. G. LLOYD who was born in Wallasey, published in 1926 a book of verses<sup>1</sup> from which—with his permission—I give the following.

#### THE MERSEY

##### Sunrise.

"Over the city gaunt and grim.  
Over the buildings cold and grey.  
Over the smokeless chimney pots,  
I watched the wakening winter day:  
The sun was rising, slowly rising,  
Turning crimson, ever crimson,  
Bathing roofs and sky and river,  
In its blood red misty ray.  
Over the Liver's wide spread wing—  
Over the city gaunt and cold,  
Over the Mersey's mighty docks,  
I watched the winter sky unfold,  
As it was changing, ever changing,  
Turning golden, ever golden,  
Teaching soulless souls such beauty  
In a sky of beaten gold."

#### CATHEDRAL STONES

"With thy skeleton of scaffolding around thee,  
For thy strength thou hast stolen me and bound me,  
Thou has felt and proved my worth,  
Thou has cut me from the earth,  
And put me where the hurricane shall pound me.  
And the hurricanes and rot of years shall lock me  
In their fight try to weaken me and rock me,  
And if I prove unsound  
I shall bring thee to the ground  
And the architects and masons they shall mock thee.  
For thy solitude of sombreness shall raise thee,  
And thy grace neither frighten nor amaze me,  
And they who made thee stand,  
Shall be buried in the land,  
Where in wonderment the multitude shall praise thee."

<sup>1</sup> Verses. G. L. Lloyd. 1926. Liverpool. Edward Howell.

In various books of reference, the following have been at one time or other given as Cheshire poets. For what reason I am at a loss to understand, for they were neither born, nor did they reside in the county: MICHAEL DRAYTON, DR. THOS. PARNELL and SAMUEL ROGERS.

Whether WILFRID OWEN could be classed as a Cheshire poet is a debatable point. He was born at Oswestry on March 18th, 1893, his parents shortly afterwards moving to Birkenhead where he was educated at the Birkenhead Institute, later proceeding to Oxford. Blunden has described him as the next best war poet to Siegfried Sassoon. Owen was killed on November 4th, 1918, and in that year his poems were published.

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## The Collection of English Folk-Lore

The Folk-Lore Society is hoping to inaugurate a scheme for the collection of folklore throughout England under the direction of the President, Dr. Margaret Murray.

As a preliminary, it has circulated a questionnaire to a number of the learned societies throughout the country asking for replies to the following questions:—

1. Has your society a section devoted to folklore: have its records ever been published, and if so, where?
2. Are any members of your society already collecting the folklore of your district?
3. Do you think that any of your members would be prepared to co-operate?

Information on these points from societies, colleges, and individuals interested in the collection of folklore will be gratefully received by the Hon. Secretary, The Folk-Lore Society, c/o University College, London, Gower Street, London, W.C.1.

The object of this enquiry is to form a central record of what work is in hand, and of what material has already been collected. This information will be collated with that already in the possession of the Society both in its extensive library, and in the publications it has issued in the last seventy-five years, all of which are at present under review. Unlike other countries, England makes no government grant for folklore research so the extent and progress of the work depends on the amount of voluntary help obtainable.

In the meantime this record of what work has already been done and where its results may be seen, should provide a useful basis for further action.

H. A. LAKE-BARNETT,  
HON. SECRETARY, THE FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

# Wirral Shore and Chester Water

BY A. CARLYLE TAIT

**E**ACH inhabitant of Wirral has a Wirral of his or her own. So has each group of its people, the farmers, the soap-workers, the shipwrights, and so on. In the present sketch of a neglected aspect of the past and future of the peninsula, one man's outlook at least deserves mention on our way; the naturalist would tell us not to forget the birds and the wild life of the water-side, a free enjoyment for anyone who will approach in the right spirit.

The title incorporates the ancient name for the whole tidal area around Wirral, Chester Water. To all seafarers the Thames is still London River. Likewise those who came by sea, to our creeks and beaches made their landfall from Chester Water.

It is strange that the coast-line of Wirral has been so disregarded, for it has a length five times the width of the peninsula. Wirral people have almost forgotten that they have salt water around them on all sides but one. No doubt the reason is that neglect and misuse have despoiled the shores of their old attractions. There are no coastal roads and the surviving ferries are now run at a loss. Once a long belt of woods overhung the low sandstone cliffs of the Mersey shore: a Cromwellian parliament agreed to the felling of the trees, and their only survival is the ragged little wood at Eastham. Forty years ago it contained a few large trees and in winter had that black look characteristic of ancient forest. Wirral, contrary to common belief, had fewer trees in the Middle Ages than the rest of Cheshire. Not here could we apply that magical couplet of Pryde's on a waterside nook of old Liverpool, Maidens' Green,

“Where, through a screen of summer trees,  
One caught the sparkle of the seas.”

Birkenhead children can only hear the waves slapping and lapping when they are on the landing stage. Even the ancient fishing villages turn their backs on the sea. The only waterfront is at Parkgate, where three or four Queen Anne houses, with a hint of Dublin about them, give the place distinction, but Parkgate is really an extension of Neston. When enterprising Welshmen reclaimed Sealand, several square miles were thereby added to Flintshire, though on the Wirral side of the Dee. At its seaward end Wirral is slowly sinking: the Dee estuary is silting up by no means slowly, in spite of the winter storms which gnaw the shores. It is, in fact, the debris from the shores which has been the chief cause of the shoaling. At one time it seems probable that Wirral was an island. Ormerod, in the second volume of his great county history, p. 351, says that a tide not many feet higher than present

spring tides would flood the whole valley between Wirral and Chester.

Geography, in the hands of an expert like Mackinder, can be made a fascinating study. There is glamour in the pebbles on the beach and in the sands of the shore, whose quartz grains are almost indestructible. The Mersey carries down much sand from the Pennines: it is difficult to imagine that in the Carboniferous period the sea was there, while great rivers flowed in the *reverse* direction where the valleys of the Mersey and Dee are now, draining a great land mass which extended far beyond Ireland, under tropical conditions, amid sandy deserts and salt lagoons. The pebbles we see have been washed out of the boulder clay which covers the underlying sandstone in the greater part of Wirral. Sometimes the boulders are of formidable size. Between Parkgate and Dawpool there are, or were, four, measuring in their largest dimensions from five to seven feet. Two were of Criffel granite, eroded from mountains in the south of Scotland, and carried here by the glaciers, hundreds of feet in thickness, which ground down Wirral into its present hills and valleys, carrying with them enormous quantities of rocks crushed to a brownish wet dust, which is now our clay. Most of the local boulders came from the Lake District, but there is one rock, Gabbro, which has travelled here from Mull. In the Recreation Ground at Crosby, near Liverpool, there is a truly gigantic boulder, much larger than any recorded for this side of the Mersey.

It is fitting that the earliest relics of man in Wirral should be associated with stones, flint implements, of which great numbers were found at the Red Noses, New Brighton. These flints came from Antrim and we can only guess at what peril a craft, little better than a large coracle, brought the precious flints to our Neolithic ancestors. The "submarine" forest near Meols fits into the story here. Forty years ago many tree stumps were to be seen on the shore at low tide: some of them did not seem to be very old, but in 1636 they were already one of the sights, thus described by James, in his *Iter Lancastriensis* as "the Stocks in Werrold."

'tis wonder to relate

How many thousands of these trees now stand

Black broken to their roots, which once dry land

Did cover.

In Roman days the Dee estuary was busy with shipping. At Dove Point, Meols, (Celtic *dhuw*, black) numbers of small Roman and mediaeval relics have been found at low tide: these are described in the Rev. A. Hume's book of 1863, "ANCIENT MEOLS": the series of late Roman coins is impressive.

The local story of a visit of St. Patrick to Bromborough lacks support, although St. Germanus was in Britain in 447, and they might have arranged to meet. There is a possibility that Shodwell, the site of the great electric power station, may mark the place where St. Cedd landed in 654. He is often confused with his brother St. Chad, whose apostolate in Mercia in the previous year is

believed to be commemorated by the two ninth century crosses at Sandbach, the most remarkable Anglo Saxon monuments south of Northumbria. St. Chad was soon called away to East Anglia, and it is highly probable that he then asked his brother, at that time in Ireland, to take his place in Mercia. Wirral can regard St. Hildeburga, who has given her name to Hilbre, as its patron saint. Unfortunately nothing whatever is known about her.

The Norsemen from Ireland, who colonised north-west Wirral, under Ingimund (an event dated 902 in an Irish chronicle), probably settled in a district ruined by terrible Viking raids some twenty years earlier. From Wirral the great Olaf Tryggvason sailed to become King of Norway in 995. Heavy fighting gave the Normans only a doubtful hold on Wirral and about 1150 the Earl of Chester made sure that the ferry from Birkenhead to Liverpool should be under supervision by making De Masci's monks responsible for it. About 1230, a hospital was built at Denhall, mainly for the relief of shipwrecked seamen. But having mentioned one of the last sea-ports of the Dee shore, it is time to glance at all of them, beginning at Shotwick Ford, the old means of communication between Wirral and Wales, now spanned by the Queensferry Bridge.

Chester was a naval base under the Romans and after the legions had left, St. Patrick protested against Cunedda's son using the former Roman fleet for reprisals against Ireland. In 1200 the tides covered the Roodee every day. During the reigns of the three Edwards Chester enjoyed its greatest prosperity, and was then the head port of the whole coastline stretching from Barmouth to the Scottish border and Liverpool merely a small fishing village, officially designated as "a creek in the port of Chester." There were, in fact, three jurisdictions. The citizens rightly claimed dues at the series of quays they erected at place after place on the coastline of Wirral, to keep the navigation open, Shotwick, Denhall Neston, Parkgate, Gayton, Hilbre. The Chamberlain of the Earl of Chester collected *prisage* throughout the estuary as far as an island called Arnold's Eyre: The Point of Air is probably near its old site. Then there were the King's customs at the rate of two shillings on each tun of wine, collected by a royal official in Chester. This appointment was given in 1348 to William of Doncaster, of whom a good deal is known. Originally an importer of wines from Bordeaux, he extended his trade to corn and wool, lead and tin. We can ascribe to him the finest of the Chester merchant crypts, still used by Messrs. Quellyn Roberts for the storage of good wines.

Larger ships could no longer discharge at the quays under Chester walls after 1400. A petition of 1486 speaks vividly of "the vehement influx of sand and silting-up of gravel." This has continued ever since. The last attempt to make use of the mouth of the Dee as a haven was the Wirral Dock scheme of 1827, drawn up by the three great engineers, Telford, Stevenson and Nimmo: the docks would have been entered from the Dee by a ship canal. The survey was rejected mainly because of the absence of good roads in Wirral.



Shotwick was the first of the new ports. Although now a long way inland it is possible to imagine the busy quays on both sides of a creek. The famous ford had been secured by a castle of the Chester earls. Edward I replaced it by a castle which was his base for the conquest of North Wales. It resembled Rhuddlan, though no doubt its moat was filled with sea water. Only the foundations can now be seen, but probably the revetment walls of the moat are still there, under the grass. The excavation and preservation of Shotwick Castle would add a site of great interest.

Denhall came next, now little more than a name. Any attempt to recall its mediaeval appearance would be vain, for the shore-line has changed. We find sea-cliffs among meadows at Burton, while Neston has lost the ness which sheltered its harbour, still notable in Defoe's time. Denhall is now best remembered for its colliery on the shore, with workings extending far under the Dee. Wirral housewives used Neston coal during the 1914-1918 war. Across the estuary the Point of Air colliery continues to flourish. This odd little coalfield is a reminder of the great geological rift which gives Wirral its sandstone base while Flintshire is all limestone.

Charles Kingsley was a canon of Chester, and among his many books is "GLAUCUS": or "THE WONDERS OF THE SHORE." His "SANDS OF DEE" is a classic. It was upon these grey misty beaches that he heard the tragic story. "The cruel, crawling foam" is still a peril of the wide, wild sands, with their deep gullies through which a millstream of seawater rushes after the turn of the tide. Kingsley mentions that the idea of the poem came more directly from a graphic watercolour of a gathering storm over the sands, by Copley Fielding. One wonders where the drawing which made such an impression on Kingsley, is now.

"The New Key." This was the most ambitious of the landing-places, a brick quay and handsome custom-house, facing a deeper part of the river, called Lightfoot's Pool, between Denhall and Parkgate. It was intended also to serve as a lodging for the royal messengers and people of distinction on their way to or from Dublin. For this scheme collections were taken up in the parish churches, under Queen Mary in 1557 and Queen Elizabeth in 1560. The full accounts are extant, and include the cost of a treadmill worked by women. The house survived until a few years ago, the very ideal of a haunted house, inspiring a novel "THE HOUSE OF THE SPANIARD," and photographed for the cinema film adapted from the book. It is a pity that our cinema-centred age saw the house only as a piece of melodramatic scenery: it should have become a national monument. Its last tenant of importance was the novelist Samuel Warren, author of "TEN THOUSAND A YEAR." To the end it retained a look of forlorn grandeur: the pool of a fountain could be traced, and there were in its garden walls recesses once adorned with statuary.

Parkgate is the most interesting place on Wirral Shore. It has been little modernised and could make a very attractive waterside

town. The more one knows of Parkgate the more one feels it ought not to be pulled to pieces by the so-called "progress" to which we continue to sacrifice so much. Parkgate's visitors make its history. We have to drop Handel, who after seeing the storm-swept Dee, made his headquarters at the Golden Falcon in Northgate, Chester, where the rehearsals for the "MESSIAH" were held. He ultimately went to Dublin via Holyhead. On the other hand we find Mrs. Fitzherbert an admired resident, and a host of Georgian notabilities walking down its jetty or lodging in the tall houses which face the water. In 1784 Mrs. Hart, the future Lady Hamilton, lodged with a Mrs. Darnwood for the sea bathing at two guineas a week. She cured a skin eruption on her knees and elbows by applications of the local "tangle" or fingered seaweed, applied each night on her resting. The house is still pointed out. The Parkgate fishermen evolved a small useful type of boat, the hobby, still to be seen, but the recent remarkable growth of samphire and other sea plants on the mud-flats have obliged the fishermen to anchor nearer the mouth of the Dee.

Gayton had a big old inn, but was scarcely a port. It had a ferry across the Dee, as also had Hoylake, and both survived until the days of steam. The nearer we approach the Irish Sea the more we are reminded of the shipwrecks in past years. H. K. Aspinall, in "BIRKENHEAD AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD," describes the dreadful tempest of Sunday, January 4th, 1839, when five fine ships were wrecked on Hoylake shore with great loss of life; the "St. Andrew," "Brighton," "Lockwood," "Pennsylvania" and "Victoria." The Hoylake pier was washed away and every boat sunk or dashed to pieces upon the beaches. An old Bromborough resident, Ald. A. J. Pugh, had heard the story of this terrible storm from his father. A roaring wind for days heralded its coming, causing him to barricade his windows with mattresses backed by large tables.

The pebble pavement with the word "Nelson" at Parkgate does not commemorate our hero, but is a memorial of a lad of great promise, drowned more than a century ago.

Hilbre has been so well described by Mr. Brownbill and the naturalists as to need little mention, except that at low tide it generally provides one of Wirral's surprises, seals, basking on the nearby Hoyle Sand.

West Kirby never was a port, but its name is a reminder of the Norsemen from Ireland who colonised north-west Wirral. The dedication of the Church to St. Bridget may suggest that they sent to Ireland for their first priest.

Hoylake is a modern name derived from the High Lake or Hoyle Lake offshore, in which there was good anchorage for ships of the largest size, except with an unusually high tide and a strong nor-west wind. "At such times," says Carlisle's "GAZETTEER" of 1808, "there will be a great sea and hard riding." The Hoyle Sand broke the force of the billows, even in stormy weather and there was excellent sea bathing at Hoylake. The shore was then clean sand, free from shingle, as far as New Brighton. The Royal Hotel

has a very respectable ancestry, having been built by Sir John Stanley for the sea bathing as long ago as 1798. It was then very difficult of access, but, like Port Meirion in our own days, it soon attracted distinguished visitors. There was a race-course, which became the golf links in 1869, and as such has been famous ever since.

The northward end of Wirral has for its chief landmark a disused lighthouse. For centuries the solitary towered dwelling built by the Stanleys at Leasowe was seldom inhabited except for the races. At other times, securely locked up, the tramping fraternity named it Mock-beggar Hall. The sands at Leasowe perpetuate the name as Mockbeggar Wharf. There is something sinister about the names of the sandbanks around Liverpool Bay—Wild Road, Mad Wharf, Angry Brow. The racecourse at Leasowe, where the first "Derby" was run, has long since been worn away by the sea. It seems likely that the Fender brook, which now finds its way with difficulty to Birkenhead, used to run into the sea near Dove Point, before the formation of the sand dunes, the *meals* or *hoes*.

Birkenhead and Liverpool must have only brief mention here, except to recall the roaring seamen who sang and rioted through the most lawless of English seaports, and their secret hide-outs on Wirral shore where unlicensed but potent liquor could be had. "Mother Redcap's," now an entirely respectable place, is the only relic of these, an important link in its time with the smugglers of Bidston Marsh.

Although Birkenhead had been ferrying travellers to Liverpool for at least eight centuries, it is possible that until after the Roman period the estuary existed only as a marshy valley, with its outlet at the other end of Wirral. Old maps, no longer extant, but used by the first printers of the "GEOGRAPHIA" of Ptolemy, show the Dee and even the Alt, but not the Mersey. The haven may not have been of importance until widened by inroads of the sea. Birkenhead was a mere hamlet around its Priory, and Aspinall could remember when its only shops were in Tranmere. But he also speaks of a shore with golden sands, and a family swimming bath at the foot of the garden, cut out of the rocky foreshore. "The dear old river looked very delightful, and boating was then safe. The surface of the water, once as clear as around the Isle of Man, is now broken and thick. The beautiful seaweed which once covered the beaches from New Brighton to Eastham has given way to mud and dirty grass. Shellfish and shrimps have almost disappeared from the Mersey."

Wirral's greatest undeveloped asset is her shores. Obviously the Dee estuary presents opportunities for development on a national scale, too large a question to be considered now. Along the best seaward side of Wirral natural beauty of any kind has been destroyed by a ponderous promenade. If better counsels prevail when the shore south of West Kirby is developed we may have a coast road as good as the one at Lytham, with ample greensward

between the houses and the sea. Whatever the government planners do, may they spare us the marvellous mile of open beach and dunes which stretches north from West Kirby. To walk the sands there gives a unique exhilaration. Does not its charm induce us to strive for a Wirral shore we could take pride in? There is skill enough and money enough in the country to bring all who delight in the open air to a new pleasure ground. Seaside experts, scientific architects, scenic planners who know what other countries have done, while holding on to what is best in English tradition would be eager to co-operate in a national scheme. Certain fundamentals would need to be agreed first. Particularly, converting sewage into fertilisers for the land instead of dumping it into the sea. Clean waters, safety afloat, golden sands and happy children playing on them should be our aim for the next chapter in the history of Wirral Shore.

How many pictures it can recall. The landing of the Irish Missionaries. The embarkation of King Olaf. A fleet of gaily-painted Gascon wine-ships sailing into the Dee, their great sails adorned with castles, lilies and oriflammes. Spenser and Raleigh at the New Key. Young Monmouth riding at Leasowe, his curly hair tossing in the wind. Stern, resolute King William on Hoylake beach, busy with ships and soldiers for the Boyne campaign. But if most of us were granted one clear glimpse of Wirral history we would probably choose a certain summer's day on the front at Parkgate, when we could have seen Britain's greatest naval hero walking with the most beautiful woman in our history, Horatio, Lord Nelson, and Emma, Lady Hamilton.

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#### CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS

THE CHESTER AND NORTH WALES ARCHITECTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC SOCIETY. Vol. 40.

"EXCAVATIONS ON THE ROMAN LEGIONARY DEFENCES, 1949-52," by Graham Webster.

"CHESTER CATHEDRAL AFTER THE REFORMATION," by The Ven. Archdeacon R. V. H. Burne.

"THE GENTLEMEN BELLRINGERS OF ST. JOHN'S," by J. W. Clarke.

"TRANSACTIONS OF THE HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE," vol. civ.

"OPEN FIELDS IN WEST CHESHIRE," by Vera Chapman, M.A.

"TRADITIONAL HOUSE-TYPES IN RURAL LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE," by William A. Singleton, M.A., Ph.D., B.Arch., F.S.A., A.R.I.B.A., A.M.T.P.I.

"THE LESSER CHAPELS OF CHESHIRE, PART II," by Raymond Richards, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

"THE 'RED BOOK' OF THE ABBEY OF ST. WERBURGH, CHESTER," by Antonia Nightingale, B.A.

# The half-timbered houses of Cheshire, and their threatened destruction

by

MAURICE H. RIDGWAY, B.A., F.S.A.  
(VICAR OF BUNBURY)

**T**HE scenery of any country consists of natural shapes moulded and added to by man, animal, vegetation and climate. The first has no control over the last, a limited control over the effects of the remaining two but presumably an immediate responsibility for his own contribution. His greatest contribution perhaps lies in the buildings which he has erected, allowed to remain, or destroyed down the centuries. Today we inherit in our scenery the result of this process and inasmuch as its future character is never predestined, it is of the utmost importance that whilst we have time and opportunity we should be trained and encouraged to preserve what is good and interesting in order to ensure that the component parts of future scenery are of beauty and interest.

We are not always aware of the speed at which change can take place, and it is because of this that we are constantly called upon to exercise the greatest possible vigilance to arrest spoliation of the country's buildings as they form an essential part of the glory of the countryside.

The threat to our buildings is no new thing and we should take immediate steps to safeguard them. Of the thousands of xiv century timber houses in which our forefathers lived, none remains with certainty and there are few which can claim a xv and early xvi century date. If the present rate of destruction continues it is no exaggeration to say that in fifty year's time there will be few timber houses in our country of xvii century date either, with the possible exception of the few obvious show pieces. A casual survey of one Cheshire township, where small timber houses are a much admired feature, reveals that of the twenty-one timber houses of xvii century date remaining in 1943 ten have already been demolished or are empty awaiting demolition. This is by no means an exceptional example, and it may be added that unless action is taken immediately few if any of the original twenty-one houses will be standing in 1963.

These little homes are the cinderellas of the big schemes of preservation. They are not vast show places but they form a far more important part of the countryside than many of the larger homes for which preservation schemes are usually forthcoming. Their fate is left entirely in the hands of the owner who in turn is now (by the Rent Restrictions Act) deprived of any power to check the destructive forces of unsuitable tenants. Such houses are at present still fairly plentiful but their individual existence

is usually unknown to the general public. Their value both on historic and aesthetic grounds will presumably be fully appreciated only when they have disappeared. Most people will agree that this should not be allowed to happen. It is right therefore that we should examine some of the facts connected with what is an obvious problem to which there is no easy solution.

Foremost among such facts is the one that many early houses of great antiquarian interest are incapable of meeting xxth century demands. Not all condemned houses belong to this group, and many small cottages, whilst unsuitable for families could be preserved as 'widows' houses.' In many cases however they have become the victims of the Rent Restrictions Act, for landlords are prevented from increasing absurdly low rents (the only reasonable way of meeting the cost of average repair) and far too many tenants in spite of the advantages of low rents, do nothing to the houses they occupy whilst the landlords cannot replace them by more suitable tenants. Any proposal to preserve these as museums when they fall empty is wholly impracticable. Nor is the desire to preserve these distinct house types best served by allowing them to fall into the hands of well meaning persons who 'do them up' and by so doing often destroy their best features, substituting too often quaint ideas culled from national journals on home management. We are indeed tired of black lines on whitened brick, and false chimney breasts adorned with modern horse brasses. The Scandinavian idea copied by the National Museum of Wales at St. Fagans of re-erecting cottage types in a natural setting can hardly be advocated as a sound principle, although it serves a purpose in preserving at least one of each type which would otherwise be destroyed. The process is costly and preserves only limited features.

We ought not however to underestimate the concern of those in authority to safeguard buildings of architectural or historic merit. Representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government have been engaged for about seven years in compiling lists of such buildings for the whole country. But there are obvious weaknesses in such a scheme. A list preserves only by name on paper and as every county has for long been covered by at least one antiquarian society, the lists are often found to be redundant and incomplete.

Such lists are subdivided as follows.

A. PROVISIONAL LIST.

Each building has a brief description, and its position is marked on a map. There are three grades.

Grade 1. Buildings of such importance that only the greatest necessity would justify their removal.

Grade 2. Buildings which have a good claim to survival.

Grade 3. Buildings of all types which should not be destroyed without careful consideration.

This Provisional list is circulated to local authorities and other interested public bodies.

B. STATUTORY LIST.

This is compiled from the above provisional list and contains a hand picking of the best of the above. Owners and occupiers of such property are notified and two months' notice of any intended works on buildings incorporated in such a list must be given to the planning authority. Most of the buildings come from Grades 1 and 2.

C. SUPPLEMENTARY LIST.

Buildings culled from Grade 3. This list has a reference value only, the owners are not notified of such listing.

Sections 29, 30 and 100 of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 show that machinery exists which will do much to safeguard indiscriminate demolitions, but since they have no power to secure maintenance or repair of the buildings concerned, the evil day is often merely postponed for a short while.

Much more can and should be done by individuals and local authorities. Many Societies and Groups exist having large membership and sometimes considerable financial backing, which should be enlisted in any attempt to preserve a threatened building of merit. Local feeling can be aroused through the press, especially the local press. Experience shows that they are usually extremely co-operative. The listing of houses should be undertaken by persons having a keen interest in and knowledge of the district and such lists should be submitted through the Parish Councils to the Rural District Councils. The lists so compiled ought to be of the nature of a catalogue or schedule, every building photographed (from at least two angles) with measurements and description of any interesting features. An admirable scheme for this has already been drawn up by Dr. Singleton of Manchester University and might be used in all areas to ensure uniformity, and to prevent the omission of easily overlooked details. Location and the orientation of the building are also important. If the interest of the occupier is aroused, the future preservation of the cottage is very often safeguarded, the approach to the owner or occupier is therefore very important. Gradual decay brought about by the genuine inability of the owner to pay for repairs, might quite easily be arrested by the joint action of a public spirited community working through the Parish Council.

If all efforts fail to preserve a cottage from destruction for whatever reason, a complete record ought in any case to be made and the record deposited in the safe keeping of the County Museum or Library, special care being taken to record any finds made during the demolition, for example, interior wall decoration, inscriptions, dates, etc. At the same time, to make such a survey as complete as possible, early photographs of buildings ought to be

rescued and preserved with as much detail about them as possible for they often show features now obliterated or wholly destroyed. In this way should the sad day ever come when old cottages have all been rooted from the land and the face of Britain shaped by a newer hand, it will still be possible for those who loved the traditional English countryside to browse among the records of a past age and still find instruction and enjoyment.

The writer wishes to draw attention to an excellent pamphlet published by the Council for British Archaeology, 10, Bolton Gardens, S.W.5. entitled 'THE PRESERVATION OF BUILDINGS OF HISTORIC INTEREST,' price 6d., which contains a wealth of important and interesting material, and to which he is greatly indebted.

NOTE.—The attention of all who are interested in the preservation of our early buildings, is drawn to a statement which has been made in the BRITISH FARMER No. 10 since the above was written, which reads as follows.

“The power of local authorities to apply to the County Court to revoke in certain circumstances a demolition order made in respect of a house, has been restored by a Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act which came into force on 14th August, 1953.

Section 2 of the Act provides that where a demolition order became operative before 1st January, 1946, the present owner of the house can request the local authority which made the order to revoke it. Such a request must be made in writing before 14th July, 1954, to the local authority, who may, at their discretion, then apply to the County Court to revoke the order.”

It is a further indication of the desire to preserve as much as possible, and the onus now lies with those who take the trouble to use the machinery provided. The author hopes that all local historians will avail themselves of every opportunity to bring this information to the notice of the owners of such buildings.

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48)

always lent them his horse and cart to take the corn to the local mill and bring back the wholemeal flour.

After the farmer had gathered his potatoes, out came the family again with the sacking round their waists, and the little potatoes and often the bigger ones, left in the ground after the forking, were songered and carried home in the sacks.

“Oh, there were no fancy dishes,” the old lady’s voice was touched with pride, “but we were never hungry and there was always plenty to eat.”

I left the old countrywoman leaning over the gate, her eyes following the harvesters, with her thoughts on the vast changes that the mechanical revolution had brought to the countryside during her lifetime, and the century old customs that neither she nor any of us are likely to see again.



# Songering

By S. JACKSON

OVER twenty years ago, I had a conversation with an old lady who had just passed her eightieth birthday. We were watching the men and the machine in a harvest field.

After the usual comments on the weather and the crops, she began to talk of her childhood days. Her mother had raised a large family on a farm labourer's wage that had once been 9/- a week and never more than 16/-. She herself had brought up nine children on her husband's wage of 18/-. But it was not quite as bad as it sounded, she explained, for money went a long way in those days, and though the farmer was not too keen on raising wages, the family was never in want for milk, eggs, potatoes, or even bacon. They could always get from the farm as much milk as they needed, potatoes for the asking, food for the pig and the poultry which they always kept; and as for bread, the "songert" wheat and oats lasted them through the winter and well into the spring.

"Songert" was a new word to me, and in answer to my question she pointed to the harvest machine and said, "When that's done the job there's not much left except for the poultry to scratch among." She explained that cutting the corn with a sickle and binding the sheaves by hand, as was done in her younger days, was a wasteful practice, and the field was well worth songering.

"Gleaning, it is called in the Bible," said I.

"Songering, we always called it," retorted the old lady, and continued to tell how as soon as she could toddle she joined the whole family, each wearing a piece of sacking round the waist, and helped to songer each field immediately after the corn had been led. The "songert" wheat was carried home, dried sometimes in front of the hearth, thrashed with a flail, winnowed, and taken to the mill to be ground.

The thrashing was done with a flail, an unwieldy affair consisting of two stout holly-wood sticks, one being the handle of about four feet in length, the other the blade measuring two feet. These two sticks were loosely joined together with a flap of raw hide fastened to one end of each with eel hide and wooden pegs. The instrument was swung over the head and brought down on the ears of corn.

At one time the winnowing was done by four children each holding a corner of some sacking or a cart sheet and tossing the wheat into the air, but this required a windy day, so eventually her father managed to get a pair of hand-bellows.

There was never any difficulty about grinding: the farmer

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 47)



LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF  
SOCIETIES

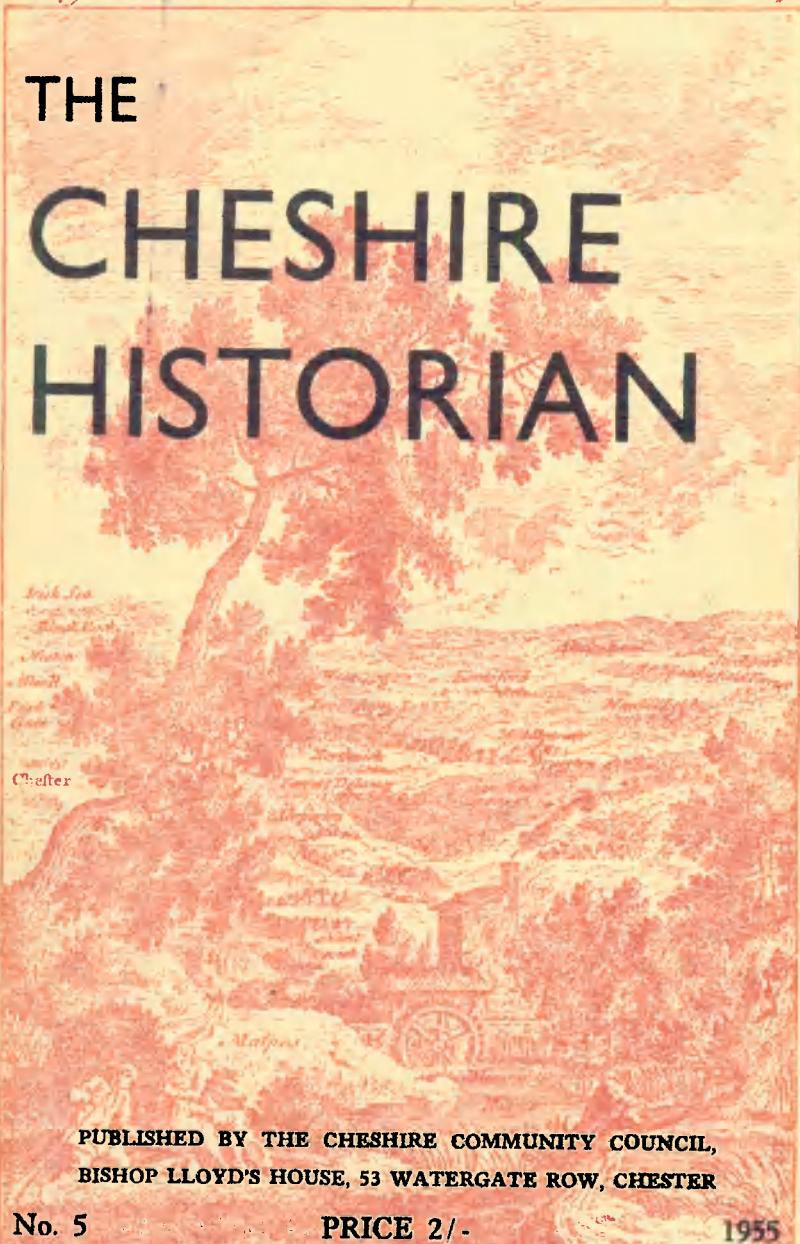
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- The Cheshire Community Council, Bishop Lloyd's House, 53,  
Watergate Row, Chester:  
General Secretary, N. G. Cottam.  
Chairman, Local History Committee: A. Oakes.  
Editor, Cheshire Historian: G. B. Leach.
- The Standing Conference of Local History:  
26, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.
- The Council for British Archaeology:  
10, Bolton Gardens, London, S.W.5.  
Regional Secretary: W. A. Silvester, 4, Claremont Road,  
Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire.
- Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings:  
Local Correspondent — The Curator, Grosvenor Museum,  
Chester.
- Macclesfield and District Field Club:  
Miss F. M. Chapman, 68, Chestergate, Macclesfield.
- The Chester and N. Wales Architectural, Archaeological and  
Historical Society:  
R. E. Ball, 21, King Street, Chester.
- The County Archivist, Chester, Cheshire Record Office:  
Major F. G. C. Rowe, The Castle, Chester.
- The City Archivist, The Town Hall, Chester.
- The Grosvenor Museum, Chester.  
Graham Webster, Curator.
- Workers' Educational Association:  
Frank Garstang, 62, Hope Street, Liverpool.
- The Bromborough Society:  
Mrs. J. D. Jones, 6, Western Avenue, New Ferry.
- Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society:  
H. Clegg, 10, Granary Lane, Worsley, Nr. Manchester.
- Liverpool Geological Society:  
R. G. C. Bathurst, Dept. of Geology, The University, Liverpool, 3
- Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:  
R. Sharpe France, Lancashire Record Office, County Hall,  
Preston.
- Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:  
G. Chandler, 202, Pitville Avenue, Liverpool, 18.
- Ancient Monuments Society:  
L. M. Angus Butterworth, Ashton New Hall, Ashton-on-  
Mersey, Cheshire.
- English Church History Society:  
Hon. Secretary, Francis Goodacre, Lime Tree House, Aughton,  
Ormskirk, Lancashire.

THE CITY PRESS  
OF CHESTER

A MAP OF CHESHIRE North West from LONDON  
*Historically described to the 13<sup>th</sup> Cent<sup>y</sup> by the Earl of Chalmersley Lord Sheriff of the County*

# THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN



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wich 20, Congleton 30, Northwich 18, Frodsham 23, Northwich 16, Knutsford 22, Sandbach 25,  
Macclesfield 32, Nantwich 22, Macclesfield 14, Seven Hundreds, Buxton, Nantwich, Macclesfield,  
Sandbach, Northwich, Warrington, Congleton, according to a leaflet from G. B. B. 17, 24*

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	PAGE
THE CHESHIRE ACRE, By H. ROBINSON . . . . .	1
I WONDER, No. 1, By ROBIN ALLEN . . . . .	7
CHESHIRE MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES. No. 5:	11
The Ashley Cheetham Art Gallery, Stalybridge, By J. W. MARCH, LIBRARIAN AND CURATOR.	
The Cheshire Regimental Muscum, By CAPTAIN MARSHALL, CURATOR.	
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Runcorn Reference Library, By MARJORIE KNIGHT, LIBRARIAN.	
TRADITIONAL LIFE IN CHESHIRE, By R. U. SAYCE . . . . .	15
CHESTER EXCAVATIONS, 1954, By G.W. . . . .	20
THE ARCHÆOLOGIST IN THE FIELD (Part V):	
Romano-British Inscriptions, By GRAHAM WEBSTER . . . . .	21
THE HISTORIC CHESHIRE CHURCHES PRESERVA- TION TRUST, By RAYMOND RICHARDS . . . . .	30
CHESHIRE WORTHIES. No. 2:	
Some Cheshire Artists, By WILLIAM PRITCHARD . . . . .	34
CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS . . . . .	39
REMINISCENCES OF ASHTON ON MERSEY BANK, By L. M. ANGUS-BUTTERWORTH . . . . .	40
THE CHESHIRE CAT . . . . .	46
THE PRAYER BOOK OF THE REV. GEORGE TRAVIS, By ANNE ANDERSON . . . . .	47
CHESHIRE FOLK SONGS, By DOROTHY FURBUR . . . . .	49
REVIEW OF BOOKS, By A.O. . . . .	51
LIST OF NAMES & ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES . . . . .	INSIDE BACK COVER



# The Cheshire Acre

By H. ROBINSON, M.A., D.P.A.

TO many of us our system of weights and measures—officially known as 'The Imperial System of Weights and Measures'—is chaotic and utterly unreasonable. In point of fact this criticism is far from true, for whilst it is true that our system (if we may be allowed to use that word for the moment) is complex and has little of the artificial simplicity of the Metric System, it is nevertheless what might be called a 'reasonable chaos'. The Metric System was a complete system created at one time, the Imperial System has its roots far back in our history and if it is possible to assign a date to things which evolve over a period we can say that the Imperial System looks back a thousand years, the Metric System for little more than a hundred. It is probably not too wide of the mark, however, to say that every one of our units came into being in response to some definite practical need, a need of the moment arising from some particular local circumstances, and the unit was conditioned accordingly. Clearly a range of units of weight and measure which is called into being as a result of independent and unrelated needs will bear the characteristics of anything that is *ad hoc*—ideally adapted to one purpose but related with difficulty (if at all) to other aspects of the same problem. Behind the odd relationships of our system, the 5½s, the 22s and so on, lies the early development of our economic life.

Before we consider the size of and reasons for the 'Cheshire Acre' we must first consider how our units of land measure came into being, how they developed and what relationships they bore to each other. Once this is understood it is very easy to understand why the Cheshire should be one on its own, unique in particular, in that it was the biggest of all the acres.

We are today so accustomed to measuring one object in terms of another—the whole concept of modern comparisons of size—that we may find it difficult to project ourselves mentally backwards in time to an age when little attention was paid to measuring as we know it: but this we must do if we are to understand anything of the origins of weights and measures. Particularly is this true of the measurement of land, and here we might note parenthetically that both linear and volumetric measurement tend to precede weighing in the developing life of the economic man. The size of all our modern land measures is defined by statutes. These measures are arbitrary, they are so many times bigger or smaller than some other unit or they are equal in area to so many times the square on the standard unit; they are, in fact, conceptual. This view of size is as far removed as possible from that of our forbears. To them area hardly existed apart from a particular piece of land; to them it was not the size of the land that

mattered in the least, it was the crop that the land yielded that counted and even when size of land measures began to be recognised, an acre was not at first any piece of land containing so many square yards, it was a piece of land of definite length and breadth, of fixed proportion.

The acre as a unit then, is a latecomer, and if we are to explain it at all we must refer to other land measures, some now long-forgotten save in the history books. There seems little reason to doubt that the word 'acre' implied originally simply a field. It is significant that 'acre' is not given in our earliest Anglo-Saxon laws whereas 'hide' is frequently mentioned. The origin and development of the acre are well illustrated in the succinct history of the unit that forms one dictionary definition: "Originally, unenclosed land, Then tilled, closed land, A piece of definite size, A land measure." The word is, of course, cognate with the Latin *ager*. We must, however, take it that references to the various land units in Domesday were not merely the scribes' version of the jurors' answers, they were references to actual land units in use at that time. Moreover, when we remember that for many centuries English social life and character were based on the manorial system, including the two or three-fold rotation system, we can well appreciate the landsman's vital interest in the size of the field. That superficial area was still a relative matter is evidenced by the fact that both Walter of Henley and Fleta reckon 180 acres to the plough land in the three-field system and 129 acres to the plough land in the two-field system, a statement which is incomprehensible on any basis of numerically-standardised size. The acre, therefore, could be thought of in two ways—(1) as any piece of land which would yield a specified crop or (2) as a piece of land of specified size. As regards the former, it will be well appreciated that variations in fertility of different soils, location, accessibility, the extent to which it had been used and drainage would all influence yield. If the yield were to be constant for different acres, their size would have to differ greatly. As to the latter concept, whilst it is one which is obvious to us today it was by no means obvious to our forefathers: to them equality lay in the quantity of food necessary to sustain existence, hence their concern with output, the functional approach. It was only by degrees that the first concept gave way to the second and even when size was the criterion, at first it was not mere area, it was a shape of such a length and such a breadth that was an acre. Gradually other lengths and breadths were specified, ultimately to be replaced by any land of whatever shape and dimensions as long as the total area was so much. It is generally recognised that the first conscious effort to determine the physical size of the acre was by regarding the acre as the amount of land which would be ploughed by a man with a *full* ox-team in a day. In this connection, however, it must be remembered that the medieval working day was shorter than ours to-day and that the oxen were

turned to pasture 'a noune'—roughly, mid-afternoon with us.

When the acre did come to be measured it gave immediate rise to two other land measures, this time units of length: the acre's length or 'furlong' and the acre's breadth, nowadays called the 'chain.' The acre was thus ideally a rectangular strip of land having a ratio of 10:1. The word furlong or *furrow-long*, at the formative stage was in use both to indicate the furrow itself and the length of the furrow which marked the length of the acre strip. The acre's breadth, perpetuated as the length of the cricket-pitch, was first called the 'chain' by Professor Gunter of Gresham College, (the birthplace of the Royal Society) in the seventeenth century and was then divided into one hundred 'links' to facilitate surveying and land measurement generally (approximately one hundred and fifty years before the French adopted the Metric System). These two measures are essentially part of the acre, they came into being because the acre had to be measured objectively instead of subjectively. In origin they were to determine the size of one acre; they were intended for nothing else. Nowadays, of course, they have been handed down as ordinary linear measures.

Another measure closely related to the acre is the rod, pole or perch. It is, just to confuse us, as much a square measure as it is a measure of length. As a measure of length it harks back to width of the furrow and the manner of ploughing epitomised for us in the old Welsh word *hyreu* meaning both *the long yoke* and the *measure of one rod or sixteen feet* (a difference of half a foot in sixteen feet, i.e., from 16½ ft., being nothing in those times). As a measure of area it is simply the square on the linear measure, the context serving to indicate which measure is intended. Thus there are one hundred and sixty rods, poles or perches in one acre but only four roods. 'Rood' as square measure simply means a 'quartered' acre. The mode of origin, down from the acre in one case and up from an *ad hoc* measure of length in the other causes the confusion.

Despite all this, however, the acre was not the earliest measure of land: it is the 'hide' which claims priority in age and importance. It was well understood that when the Anglo-Saxons referred to the hide they meant something more than a certain quantity of land: they meant land, some arable, some pasture, land where there was right of estovers, with dwellings; all sufficient to maintain a certain type of family. Primarily they were interested in assessing a man's worth for purposes of taxation and at the beginning they included the messuage with the meadow. The hide was regarded as the typical holding of a numerous class, one presumably calculated to give a certain taxation yield, hence the concern over their assessment.

In the course of time the dwelling place came to be omitted from calculation of the hide and size in terms of acreage was then of great significance. It is of course from its very nature impossible to give a precise ratio between acre and hide but the general



average was from 100 to 120 acres to the hide. The name itself is Anglo-Saxon in origin, its Latin equivalent being *carrucate*, later English equivalents being the *ploughgang* or *ploughland*.

There were two subdivisions of the hide, the quarter hide, quarter lot or *virgate* and the eighth hide or *oxgang*. The quarter hide was also known as the *yardland* or *yard of land*, the use of 'yard' as square measure continuing down to at least A.D. 1450. The *yardland* is looked upon as the amount of land ploughed by a *villein* in a year just as the hide was the amount ploughed by the influential *churl* in a year. The *oxgang* or *bovate*, as the eighth of a hide, is logically named in that the full *oxteam* that ploughed the hide had eight oxen.

Now the basis of all these measures which are related to the hide is the minimum amount of land and produce required to support a given type of family. As the basis of manorial organisation, production for subsistence, gave way to production for market, the need for such measures clearly no longer existed and so they died out. Of the original measures of area, the acre alone, which it will be remembered was rapidly being defined in terms of size and not of 'output,' remains *and for that reason*. It will thus be observed that our early measures of length and area grew up out of the particular use to which the land was put—they are the product of our economic environment. Hence they are more 'practical' than the corresponding metric units, being empirical; for the same reason, however, they are more complex and unsystematic.

It is therefore not difficult to understand why it is that although a nineteenth-century statute defines our measures of area as follows—"The rood of land shall contain one thousand two hundred and ten square yards according to the imperial standard yard, and the acre of land shall contain four thousand eight hundred and forty such square yards, being one hundred and sixty square rods, poles, or perches"—we can still find echoes of those distant times and units. It is still possible to find remnants of the curious variations in some encyclopædiæ and books of reference and even in the early years of this century a popular weekly paper was complaining about the confusion in weights and measures and pointing out that there were in the United Kingdom seventeen different 'acres' in use, nine in England, four in Scotland, three in Wales and one in Ireland and that of these, the Cheshire acre was the largest being just over two and one tenth of a statute acre whilst the Leicester acre was the least being about half a statute acre—all this at least thirty years after the statute just mentioned!

We are now ready, in the light of what has been said, to discuss the Cheshire Acre itself—what is it, what is its size and why do all these local acres vary so greatly in size?

The Cheshire Acre is just one of those very many local units of area which are unrelated the one to the other. Where weights

and measures were in use for trade there were natural economic forces at work tending to make the units uniform; at the same time there were strong local forces as well as motives of self-interest acting in the opposite direction and exercising a disintegrating influence. Few, if any, of the forces which make for uniformity of weights and measures, (remember that the acre is, as it were, 'endemic,' and certainly indigenous) it was most certainly not imposed from above by the central authority), operated in the case of transfers of land. There were, in short a hundred reasons why these local 'acres' should each be different from their neighbour for every one why they should be the same. Uniformity is necessary when there is an economy of exchange and is effected when there is a strong central direction to impose unity. Now as every reader of this magazine well knows it was not until after the effects of both industrial and agrarian revolution had been worked out and the mode of government had been adjusted accordingly that these conditions were satisfied. Instead, therefore, of being surprised that the Cheshire Acre, like every other 'acre' differed from its fellows we should really be surprised that there is one acre in use now—there certainly is one statute acre which no doubt forms the basis of all sales of land and on which any taxes depending on acreage are charged but we should not be surprised if here and there lurk traces of local measures; certainly they are still to be found in fairly recent editions of some works of reference.

The size of the Cheshire Acre in point of fact is 10,240 square yards as against the 4,840 square yards of the statute acre, i.e., about two and one-ninth times as big. The curious thing is that this size has remained, within the limits of accuracy of measurement appropriate to agriculture, fairly constant. There is at the County Records Office, The Castle, Chester,\* a survey, being part of the Baker-Wilbraham Collection, the relevant details of which are as follows:

Rode ff A Survey there taken the 22th Day of March 1624 of the Demesne grounds of Randull Rede Esqr usually occupied with the Hall of Rode & measured and rated according to the large customary acre of Cheshire of eight yards in length and 8 yards in bredth to every roode or perch as followeth viz:

Then there is set out the detailed area in terms of "Acres, Roodes, Daywork, Perches" as well as the value, of eight parcels of land, including the hall itself. Finally there is a very illuminating footnote:

Note 8 yards in length & 8 yards in bredth make a perche, 4 perches make a day work, 10 day worke make a roode, or quarter of an acre, and 4 roods make an acre

per me Ran: Wilson

\* I am much obliged to the County Archivist and to the donors of the manuscript for permission to examine and transcribe this document.

Here then is the key to the problem of the size of the Cheshire Acre: it was one of those measures of land which was 'subjective' in nature: it depended on the personal capacity of individuals. "a day work." It was not 'objective'—so many square yards irrespective of the conception of the work of persons and irrespective of fertility or contours or part of the country.

We are still left with the problem of why the Cheshire Acre should be more than twice the statute acre yet the Leicester Acre is only half a statute acre, a ratio of 4:1. Obviously all the factors which have been mentioned (locality, soil fertility, climate, accessibility, topography, personal capacity) which go to determine output will vary from place to place and in part account for local variations but not for variations of the order four to one. We have seen that one of the factors in the subjective measure is the 'day work.' Now there were still in use at that time that the acre was 'settling down' at least two kinds of plough—the *carruca* and the lighter plough, the *aratrum*. (The breast plough hardly touched this controversy). It is then to the differing types of plough and consequently differing outputs that we must look for the explanation of the greater variations in the size of the old county acres. The lesser variations are due to the local factors as outlined above.

So Cheshire had the largest of acres: nor was this expansiveness apparently confined to land measures for even as to measures of capacity there runs an old Cheshire proverb—

Maxfelt mezzur, up-yeped and thrutch'd (Macclesfield measure, heaped up and, presumably, running over).

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### EDITORIAL NOTES

The History Committee of The Cheshire Community Council desire it to be known that authors alone are responsible for opinions and statements which are made in their articles.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

# I Wonder

No. 1.

By ROBIN ALLEN

(The author feels that it is presumptuous to expect that he will be overwhelmed with letters protesting at certain statements or suppositions, or that people with local knowledge will trouble to write and explain a point of wonderment; nevertheless, should these things happen, nobody will be more delighted than he. It will all add to interest and to knowledge of the history of our County, and is the object of "I Wonder").

THE EDITOR.

SOME 10 or 15 years ago Cheshire Lines Committee issued a railway poster portraying the County as a Cheshire Cat, with the head in the Wirral and the tail up the Longendale Valley. I have always wondered why that strip of land tucked in between Lancashire and Derbyshire, and reaching up to the Yorkshire border belonged to Cheshire.

Some reasons can be suggested. Cheshire formed the north-west border of the Kingdom of Mercia, the 'March-Lands,' the border lands, and the middle Angles had joined themselves into a loose kingdom by about 550 A.D. although Chester itself was still in British hands until 613, and even then was captured not by a Mercian king but by Aethelfrith of Northumberland.

Incidentally, I wonder how he got to Chester. Of course, he may have sailed round the north of Scotland or even the south of England, but I doubt it; I fancy he marched over the Pennines and down the Valley of the Etherow and across the Cheshire plain to Deva, to give Chester the name by which it was known in Roman times. Clearly, this track has always been of considerable—in fact—immense strategical importance. The Iron Age people built a fort at Buckton, and the Romans constructed their fort at Milandra to guard the pass. In 1069, William the Conqueror marched his troops over Yorkshire to 'hold his Christmas in Chester;' I wonder if he came via Slack, Castleshaw and Manchester or down this Valley to Stockport, and so followed the lines of his predecessor, who was also making for Chester, some 450 years earlier.

A map of 910 A.D. shows the tail of Cheshire as belonging to Mercia, with the Danes in Derbyshire and the Danish Kingdom of York to the north, where they possessed the whole of the north of England from Blackpool to Bridlington. Perhaps the answer is a simple one; the Mercians held on to all that they could and were fortunate in that the land on either side of the Valley was so wild and bare that nobody wanted to bother about taking it. On the other hand, the "Lady of the Mercians" thought her land

was worth holding. I wonder what the "Lady of the Mercians" was really like. Undoubtedly, a very remarkable woman. She was the daughter and the eldest child of Alfred the Great, her mother being a Mercian princess. The girl was christened Aethelflead and married to Aethelred, the Ealdorman of Mercia, and she and her husband had a busy life defending their lands against the Danes. They put into operation Alfred's scheme of Burghs; fortified centres to act as garrisons and rallying points in times of special trouble, and as a start they cleaned-up and re-built the fortifications of Chester. Chester had been taken in 893 by Hastings, the famous Danish leader, but since Alfred and the northern 'fyrd' or 'home guard' had driven him out, Chester was an invaluable base, not only against the Welsh but also as a barrier between the Danes who had settled in the Kingdom of Dublin and their cousins in Northumbria and middle England.

Listen to what Oman says of her. "Her importance came not only from the fact that she was a princess of royal blood but from her energy and masculine spirit which enabled her to take Aethelred's place, not only in peace but in war, after his death. She was evidently as capable as her brother Edward, more so perhaps when we consider the disabilities of a woman in those troublous times. The Welsh and the Irish annals usually call her Queen, and the power which she and her husband exercised was indeed more than that of mere governors. As long as one of them survived Mercia was still practically a vassal Kingdom, allied to Wessex, rather than a mere province of it."

In 910 was fought the battle of Tottenhall in Staffordshire where on the Danish side were killed three 'kings,' two 'great earls' and six or seven 'lands,' (these were the lesser noblemen who held land in the Danish part of England) and Aethelred was completely victorious. Although no mention is made of the fact in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, I wonder if Aethelred took hurt in this battle, for very shortly afterwards he died. His widow was left to guard her homeland, and she set to work to complete the pattern of the burghs which she and her husband had planned or started. She built some along the Severn to guard her western marches, but what really interests us are her burghs in Cheshire at Eddisbury, at Runcorn and at Warburton.

In the Anglo Saxon Chronicle Runcorn is called "Rum Corfa" and the name of Runcorn has often been the subject of wonder because, at first sight, Run-corn is foolish. However, if we go back to "Rum Corfa" we find that in the Mercian dialect it means the "large pits" or "caves." Now this describes Runcorn, particularly "Higher Runcorn," magnificently. There were, less than 50 years ago, immense holes, quarries in fact, where the red sandstone had been taken out for all purposes in Cheshire, certainly along the northern border. Halton Castle was made of it and, while it is doubtful if Aethelflead built her burgh of stone, the later Norman Castle which was built at the "narrows" of

Runcorn was certainly made of stone taken from "Rum Corfa." Although nothing remains of Aethelflead's burgh at Eddisbury, the Iron Age Camp which goes back more than 2,000 years is very well worth a visit. Varley's work on Pre-historic Cheshire is invaluable for this subject, but in a general way any Iron Age Camp of the hill-top type is attractive, and a visitor is struck by the curious ability of the Iron Age people to pick superb sites with magnificent views. In actual fact I have little doubt that they did not choose them for the views: they chose them so that their women, their cattle and what you will could be put into some form of guard, and the guardians could see all round, and note when and from what direction they were going to be attacked. But to return again to our Heroic Lady; she was the terror of the Welsh. She led her Mercian troops to war herself, mounted on the proverbial white horse of Wessex, whether this was coincidence or deliberate gesture I don't know, but her father's white horse was famous, and the Welsh people along the border on the other side of Offa's Dyke dreaded to hear that "the queen on the white horse" was out again with her armies.

She died at Tamworth on the 12th of June, 917 and left one daughter. In 918 this girl was 14, and of a marriageable age in those days, and her uncle, Edward, by this time King of England, put her into a nunnery. He appeared to have collected a good deal of odium for this act, but we have no evidence whether she wanted it herself or whether she was forced into it. I think there is little doubt that if she had been a boy Edward might have had a considerable trouble about getting Mercia under his direct control. It is always possible that he wanted her out of the way so that he could become the undisputed King of England without any fear of this trouble. Edward himself actually came to Cheshire. He was on the Mersey about 918; he built a burgh at Thelwall; incidentally, he lodged there, and he also built a burgh at Manchester.

Anglo Saxon is not an easy language, and unless one has an English translation of The Anglo Saxon Chronicle and of Domesday Book, many of the early named places in Cheshire are difficult to establish. The problem of the dialect in Cheshire is also one of considerable interest. Firstly, we have to remember that something like 150 years after the Romans left, we, in Cheshire, remained British, presumably talking Welsh, which would be the indigenous language of the people of that time, and naturally a number of the Celtic words remain with us. With the coming of the Angles, who, as mentioned above, formed the first Mercian Kingdom, their dialect of Anglo Saxon appeared, and this in turn received considerable impact from the Danes, the Wirral being the best example, of course, with its Danish place names of West Kirby, Irby, Greasby, Helsby, etc.

An interesting case of wonderment arises in regard to four villages around about the mouth of the River Weaver where it

meets the Mersey. Here there are Weston, Sutton (Weaver), Aston and Norton (Priory). Clearly, straightforward Anglo Saxon 'tons' or village names and, equally clearly, west, south, east and north. But of what? All sorts of suggestions have been made, but the most plausible and reasonable one is that they are four points around Stockholm. Now Stockholm lies on the high ground after the road has climbed up from the Weaver Valley towards Warrington, and yet Stockholm, at the present time consists of nothing whatsoever, save one farm house, and short of aerial survey probably nothing ever will be found. But "Stockholm" is pure Danish, and here certainly one can wonder. Are we to suppose that a Danish war galley worked its way up the Mersey to the Weaver, and that the Danes settled themselves at Stockholm. Aliens in an alien country; surrounded by four Saxon villages, possibly outposts. Stockholm must have been sufficiently important for the villages to bother to orient themselves about this point yet Stockholm has completely disappeared, but the four villages still remain. I wonder what the real reason for all this is. Is it that after the Danes could hold their establishment no longer they were swept away by the Mercians; their stockaded home razed to the ground, and all signs of them wiped away? All that remains to remind us of what may have happened 1,000 years ago is one long finger post which says: "Stockholm ½ Mile."

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#### ERRATUM

THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN, No. 4. —

Page 35, line 8, for MATTHEWS read MATHEWS.

# Cheshire Museums and Art Galleries

No. 5.

## The Astley Cheetham Art Gallery, Stalybridge

By J. W. MARCH, A.L.A., LIBRARIAN AND CURATOR

THE foundation of this art gallery was the result of an unexpected bequest in 1931 of a collection of 63 pictures received from the executors of the late Miss Agnes Cheetham to be known as the "Cheetham Collection." The Cheetham family—a local one—were noted for their benevolence. Miss Cheetham's brother, the Right Hon. John Frederick Cheetham, P.C., M.P., J.P., who had made this collection, presented to the town in 1901 the present Central Library in which the art gallery is now housed, and partly endowed it. His wife, Mrs. Beatrice E. Astley Cheetham, performed the opening ceremony, the building being named after her.

For several years prior to 1931 small exhibitions of contemporary art had been held in the public library. These had aroused much interest. This latest gift made possible the formation of the present art gallery which was formally opened on Saturday, 11th June, 1932, by Mrs. E. B. Wimbush, and given its present name to commemorate the family whose generosity made its establishment possible.

The "Cheetham Collection," consisting of oil paintings, water-colours, drawings and engravings, includes a beautiful triptych of the Crucifixion by Buffalmacco and examples of the Italian, German, Flemish and Spanish Schools of the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. Other oil paintings worthy of notice are "Road by Common" by David Cox, "Near Rouen" by R. P. Bonnington, "Sheep at Rest" by John Linnell and G. F. Watts' "Sir Perceval." Among the water-colours, mention should be made of Samuel Prout's two views of "Venice," Clarkson Stanfield's "Falls of Schaffhausen" and Edward Duncan's "Snowden." Drawings in this collection include three by Samuel Prout and one by Sir Edward Burne Jones.

In 1950 it was found necessary to demolish Eastwood House, the home of the Cheetham Family. This house had been given to the town in 1931 together with its grounds which are now used as a public park. As a consequence, a further collection of pictures and sculpture which had been kept there, was transferred by the Park Committee to the art gallery. These include another water-colour by Edward Duncan "Mumbles Road," an early etching by Sir Francis Seymour Haden, "Shere Mill Pond" dated 1860, and two pieces of sculpture—both marble—John Gibson's "Hebe, Fairest of Goddesses" and an example of the work of B. E. Spence.



In the acquisition of additional pictures, acknowledgement must be made of the invaluable help which has been given by the National Art-Collections Fund and the Contemporary Art Society. Amongst the gifts received from the Fund are Samuel Prout's "Tenby" and J. M. W. Turner's "Aske Hall," both water-colours. Of the gifts received from the Contemporary Art Society, mention must be made of an oil painting by Duncan Grant, "The Harbour, King's Lynn," Sir Muirhead Bone's "Lower Thames," a pen and wash drawing on vellum, a pencil drawing "Head of a Boy" by P. Wyndham Lewis, and Mark Gertler's "Daffodils." This last picture—an oil painting—is from the "Sir Edward Marsh Bequest" to the Society.

Although only of comparatively recent foundation, this art gallery can fairly claim to possess the nucleus of a valuable permanent collection. Much yet remains to be done in the building up of this collection. Nevertheless, the policy adopted by the Art Gallery Committee to acquire, as opportunity offers, only the best examples of the work of deceased and living artists, should, in time, achieve this aim.

The year 1953 saw the completion of the first twenty-one years of its existence. To mark this event a special exhibition of the finest pictures from the permanent collection was arranged, including Turner's "Aske Hall" to which reference has already been made. This is one of Turner's early works executed before 1820 and was a gift from the National Art-Collections Fund made specially to commemorate this event.

Included in the art gallery is the "Radcliffe Collection of Egyptian, Greek, Roman and other Antiquities," presented in 1932, together with the cases in which the exhibits are displayed, by the late Mrs. M. Radcliffe in memory of her husband, Mr. B. N. Radcliffe. Numbering 135 items, the exhibits were from the Amherst, Hilton-Price, Grenfell and other well-known collections.

#### HOURS OF OPENING

MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY—

10.0 A.M. — 4.0 P.M.

WEDNESDAY— 10.0 A.M. — 1.0 P.M.

SATURDAY— 10.0 A.M. — 5.0 P.M.

Special Exhibitions— OPEN MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY  
UNTIL 8.0 P.M.

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY AS ABOVE

Closed— SUNDAY, NATIONAL AND LOCAL HOLIDAYS

## The Cheshire Regimental Museum

BY CAPTAIN MARSHALL, CURATOR

The Cheshire Regimental Museum is situated in the Agricola Tower at Chester Castle, and houses many relics of the

Regiment gathered over the last 250 years. In this post war era, the Museum is being enlarged and particular attention paid to the collection and exhibit of Military Uniforms and medals.

The following are some of the more interesting exhibits.

#### THE MINIATURE COLOURS.

A small replica of the Regimental Colour of the 1st Bn., worked by the ladies of the Regiment in 1911. This was carried into action at Mons in 1914 by a drummer, who when he saw that the situation was hopeless hid it in the care of the Curé of Audregnies. It was bricked up in the garret of the girls' school at Audregnies from 1914 to 1918 when it was recovered.

#### THE AMER'S CHAIR.

A beautiful marble chair or throne presented to General Sir Charles Napier by the Indian Princes after his conquest of the Province of Scinde in 1843.

#### BALUCHIE STANDARD.

A portion of the Baluchie Standard captured by the Regiment at the Battle of Meeanee in 1843.

#### COLOUR PIKE CARRIED AT MEEANEE.

The butt end of the Colour Pike of the Regimental Colour carried at the Battle of Meeanee in 1843.

#### THE FIRST GOOD CONDUCT BADGE, 1820.

These badges were worked and presented by Lady Gough to men of the Regiment in recognition of their exemplary behaviour while serving under Col. Sir Hugh Gough.

#### ORDER OF MERIT 22ND REGIMENT.

These medals in 3 classes were introduced in 1795 on instructions from King George III when the Regiment was stationed at Windsor on return from New York. On July 1st, 1795, the King himself was "graciously pleased to accept a medal for the 1st Class of the Regimental Order of Merit." The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal was not introduced by Queen Victoria till 1840.

In addition to the above there are many interesting exhibits of Arms, Uniforms, Weapons, Helmets, Medals, etc.

## West Park Museum and Art Gallery, Macclesfield

BY WALTER ISAAC, TOWN CLERK

The Museum was presented to the town with an endowment in 1898 by Miss Marianne Brocklehurst "with a view to affording educational advantages and giving instructive recreation to the people of Macclesfield."

The Egyptian collection at the Museum is of some importance. It contains, amongst other things, Demotic writings; Gilt mask of a mummy—Greek period; Bronze figures, including one of Isis and infant Horus, 26th Dynasty; Mummy case of Sibet Mut; Ushabti figures, 800 B.C.; and stone Stellæ and Scarabs.

The collection is now being re-arranged by the Honorary Curator (Lt. Col. Charles P. Brocklehurst) with the assistance of Mr. Burton Brown of Manchester University.

On the Zoological side the stuffed Panda shot by Captain H. C. Brocklehurst in 1934, and presented to the Museum in 1941, is a rare specimen.

The oil paintings and water colour drawings include sketches by Landseer, and oil paintings and sketches by the local artist, C. F. Tunncliffe, A.R.A.

Loans from the Victoria and Albert Museum are exhibited approximately four times a year and include paintings, etchings, embroidery, glass, etc. by contemporary artists and the old Masters.

In the exhibits specially connected with Macclesfield is a rare example of a scold's bridle, last used in the middle of the 19th century, for the correction of habitual scolding women and women slanderers; also a rare example of a girdle, with leading chain attached, used for parading vagabonds and violent disturbers of the peace.

## Runcorn Reference Library

By MARJORIE KNIGHT, A.L.A., LIBRARIAN

Although books are the main interest, the Library possesses three pre-historic implements worthy of note:—

1. A perforated Axe-hammer,<sup>1</sup> 9 in. long and 3 in. wide at the blunt end, excavated at Weston Point.

2. Bronze-Age looped palstave,<sup>2</sup> excavated at Weston when the Manchester Ship Canal was being built. Plaster cast only, original sent to Manchester.

3. Bronze-Age socketed 5-ribbed-axe,<sup>3</sup> discovered in the Ince Section of the Canal.

The Library is also fortunate in having on its wall several pictures of local interest. The River Front over a century ago when the town was a health resort, is shown in scenes so idyllic that they would be impossible to visualise without the unknown Artist's assistance. The Old Mill of our present "Mill Brow" is preserved for us in a delightful water-colour, and a view of the Canal, near Preston Brook where the Bridgewater and Shropshire Union Canals join, displays the peaceful atmosphere of an age now gone.

Finally, we possess a charmingly worded "theatre bill" of a conjuring and other "illusory" entertainment of early last century—"in Mr. Wilson's large Room," still known to us as Wilson's Hotel.

<sup>1</sup> Shone, p. 37, "PREHISTORIC CHESHIRE," Varley & Jackson, Schedule II.

<sup>2</sup> Shone, Fig. 32 (2), "PREHISTORIC CHESHIRE," Varley & Jackson, Schedule III.

<sup>3</sup> Shone, Fig. 32 (1), "PREHISTORIC CHESHIRE," Varley & Jackson, Schedule III.

# Traditional Life in Cheshire

By R. U. SAYCE, M.A., M.Sc.

WE are in the full flow of the greatest and most rapid revolution that has ever affected the material equipment of farming. The old, comparatively simple implements, made locally of local material, are being every day cast aside; in their place we see large and extremely complicated machines, generally made in distant factories. Instead of the fair field full of folk, we see a few men with a combine-harvester. Many of us can remember the teams of men swinging rhythmically with their scythes, and the women with their hand-rakes and sun-bonnets in the hay-fields. The electric milking machine has replaced the milk-maid's stool and pail, and her milking songs; and the separator has made obsolete the old bowls and skimmers, though it too is already going out of use where the milk is all sent away to the creameries or milk-bars. With all these material changes, there must be radical changes in the mental outlook. In the old harvest fields, notwithstanding the hard work, there was often much fun and jollity; and when all was safely stored in the stacks or barns there followed what could well be called the thanksgiving of 'harvest home.'

Very much that has survived from early centuries until now, and with little essential change, is rapidly passing away before our eyes. Its passing need not be regretted if the new implements and methods enable us to produce more and better food with less arduous labour. It would, however, be a tribute of respect to our forebears, as well as a service to future historians and scientists, if we tried to gather and store fully representative series of the old tools and utensils, before they have entirely disappeared and passed out of memory.

For the historian there are books and manuscripts containing records of the past. It is a richly rewarding occupation to study them, and to learn what we can about the lives of those who preserved the country's heritage in their day, and handed it down for us to enjoy and preserve. We know a good deal about the churches in which our ancestors worshipped, about the houses in which they lived—at least after c. A.D. 1500—and a fair amount about the fields they cultivated. A manorial record, which tells us that a certain person was fined for allowing his cows to stray into the corn, or for ploughing a furrow too much, and thereby taking a slice of his neighbour's land, gives us a glimpse of living people, and is full of interest; but may not the wickerwork grig used for catching cels, the scythe or the sickle with which they cut the hay or the corn, or the actual backstone on which some mother baked the cakes for her family be equally interesting.

It is one of the pieces of great good fortune which befell our nation that almost countless written records escaped the

ravages of wars. We are conscious of their value. It would cause deep regret if large numbers of the manorial and parish records had to be left to moulder away, because there was no place in which to keep them. How curious it is, then, that we should have been so long in seeing our duty to preserve examples of the very things which men and women used to make their houses and clothes, and to produce and cook the food necessary to keep them alive. It is not easy to understand why we should have been so slow in extending care, similar to that which we have given to written records, to the actual objects made and used by our forebears; or why we should have lagged so badly in this respect behind nations no better endowed than we are with the means to perform the task, or with the richness and variety of the surviving material waiting to be made safe for the pleasure and instruction of those who will come after us.

The main reason for our apparent lethargy is perhaps a semi-conscious feeling that things, with which every one is familiar, can be of little interest to anyone. There might be some grounds for such a feeling if we lived in one of the long tranquil reaches of our history, though even then quiet, if almost imperceptible, change was taking place; but we are now living among the cataclysms and cascades of progress. Objects, belonging to types that have been used, quite literally, for thousands of years, are being thrown on to some old scrap heap, or lie hidden away in a dark corner of a barn. They will soon moulder or rust away, and no one will remember exactly how they were made and used, or indeed what objects were used in various occupations. How did the maids carry home the milk? Was it all done with the shoulder-yoke, or was the pail ever carried on the head; and, if so, what sort of pad protected the head? How many kinds of traps and snares were formerly used for catching stoats, or partridges, or larks, or moles? How many people know the taste of birch-sap in the Spring, or of a hot glass of elderberry syrup on a winter's night, or have worn a pair of boots made by the village boot-maker?

People who have been born and brought up in a county so rich in historical associations as Cheshire cannot fail to have a strong sense of the presence of the past, and to understand the great debts which we owe to preceding generations, as well as our responsibility to those who will follow us. Would it not be fitting, therefore, for Cheshire people to make a serious effort, now, while there may yet be time, to gather together collections of the everyday things that have passed out of use, or are rapidly doing so, and to provide for their preservation. How we should have appreciated it if our mediæval ancestors had thought of leaving for us a complete set of implements which they used in the fields and in tending their animals, or the complete furnishings of one of their houses! How many specimens does the county possess of the long bow and its accessories that the Cheshire archers

carried on many a famous field? Yet, in a hundred, or even in fifty years, another generation will probably be thinking of us as being as quaint, perhaps even as romantic, as our mediæval ancestors may appear to us: and they will probably be full of wonder at the things by means of which we somehow contrived to make a living.

It will, of course, not be enough to collect the objects and to put them in some sort of a museum. We shall be responsible for recording as much as possible of the information connected with them. What were their local, old fashioned names, and what were the names of their several parts? These sometimes reflect much past history, as when we find, as we do in the northern counties, that many of these names are clearly Scandinavian words.

Then, again, it will be necessary to record the materials of which all the parts are made. Two kinds of wood were required for a flail, one for the hand-staff and another for the swiple or swingel; and there were several ways of fastening the two parts together—as with a whang, wooden loops, or iron links. In the making of the body and the wheels of a waggon or cart, the craftsmen were guided in their choice of woods by experience accumulated during hundreds of years. Is this knowledge being put on record for Cheshire?

There is much detailed lore to be collected about the varieties of materials. It is more intimate than merely the differences between one species of tree and another. Conditions of soil, ground-water, drought, frost, and wind vary within short distances; and the local craftsman knew that an oak grown in one field might well produce different timber from that of an oak grown in a field nearby. No one but the men of the district can have this knowledge.

Nor must we overlook the importance of old beliefs. Was it not formerly the custom to incorporate a piece of rowan wood in the body of a churn or in its dasher? To what uses might elder wood be put, or not be put? What other woods had about them an aura of attraction or repulsion?

The uses to which tools are put may often vary in small ways from one place to another. Hedges may be of hazel, holly, or hawthorn. They may vary greatly in height; and there are various regional methods of trimming them. These variations may help to explain the great variety of billhooks used in different parts of the country. The men in a given region also tend to acquire a certain knack in handling their tools, and this, too, stabilises the local variety of a tool; and it can be a very conservative influence. Ironmongers have told me that a man accustomed to one kind of billhook would not accept another kind as a gift. These local peculiarities have forced on our modern industrialists, whose natural desire is for standardisation, the need to produce forty or fifty—or even more—kinds of billhooks, which are based on shapes evolved by the local hedgers and the local smiths.

Some of these shapes are quite old, and can be matched by those of specimens made in Britain and Gaul about two thousand years ago.

Moreover, billhooks are only one item in the long list of traditional artifacts. We ought to be carrying out similar studies of scythes and their sneads, of sledges and wheeled vehicles, churns and milking-stools, house thatches and house plans, breads and cakes, of beehives, of methods of protecting the feet of animals, and of all the many things around us, which we have hitherto taken so much for granted. A little acquaintance with these studies will teach us to be more observant, will lead us to a more intimate knowledge of much that lies close at hand, and will give us a greater satisfaction and a deeper pleasure in our home district: and we shall never exhaust its potential interests. It might also be an opportunity to learn how much we lack of the rich lore that formerly belonged to country craftsmen.

There may be, in some quarters, a suspicion that, if we give too much attention to our immediate surroundings, we may become narrow and uncooperative in our outlook. This would, however, be a serious mistake. If a plant is to adapt itself to its habitat, it must get its roots well down into the local soil. One of the widespread troubles of the present day is that so many people have a sense of being uprooted, and this leads to a feeling of loneliness and insecurity, with its attendant illnesses. As we begin to study the everyday things about us, and to think about their origin and history, we shall find that the evidence will lead us very far afield. Half-timbered houses are not confined to England. We find them also in France, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, and south Sweden. Some of our customs connected with cattle and milking can be followed into Mediterranean lands, and far down the east side of Africa. The familiar story of William Tell is found among many Aryan-speaking peoples, as well as among Turk and Mongol groups in central Asia. There is an English version of it included in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, with the scene set in and around Carlisle, the actors being yeomen who held unconventional ideas about ownership of the King's deer. All this is very far from being parochialism. A tree may spread its branches far and wide—provided it has healthy roots.

These wider distributional and historical studies can not begin until each district has done its own local collecting and recording. It has been a common experience at international conferences to be asked when information will be made available about England, and then to realise that none of us knows how many kinds of scythes, milking-stools, etc., have been used in this country; information about the African tribes is often more accessible.

Fortunately active work is now being done by museums and societies in our own country—in Hampshire (Alton), Lancashire (Rufford Old Hall), Yorkshire (Shibden Hall, Halifax), Inverness-shire (Kingussie), Forfarshire (The Old Manse), in Caernarvonshire (Bangor), in Cambridge, Bristol, Hereford, Tickenhill (near Bewdley), and Shrewsbury. Two centres are working on a national scale—the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan's, and the Museum of English Rural Life (Reading). Will Cheshire play its part, and study the life and culture of its own kinsfolk? In one respect the task would be comparatively easy. Billhooks, sheep-shears, churns, etc., do not require expensive glass cases; they would look incongruous in them. A fair sized room with plenty of wall space and floor space would suffice. It need not even be in a modern building near a crowded city centre. It might be possible to find a suitable old house, or a part of one, or a fine old barn that would serve the purpose admirably. There is no strong reason why districts such as the Wirral, and those about Macclesfield, Tarporley, Delamere, Marple, and Nantwich—and Chester itself—should not build up good regional collections. In Norway and Sweden there are many of these local museums; in some provinces almost every parish has its own, and the people make and maintain the collections themselves. Very often, the building that houses the exhibits becomes a social centre where local societies like the Womens' Institutes and the Young Farmers' Clubs can hold their meetings and enjoy a meal in very pleasant surroundings.

When a committee begins to accept gifts for its new museum, it may happen that, for a time at least, the result is a mixed assemblage of unrelated things, e.g. a few agricultural implements, some kitchen utensils, a beehive or two, and some fishing gear. It might be better to start from the beginning with systematic collecting, and to concentrate first on one industry and then, when that is fairly represented, to move on to others. Indeed, if space should be limited, it would be advisable to illustrate one occupation well, and to be satisfied with that. Let us suppose that it has been decided to make a start with cattle-keeping and dairying. It would be easy to make a list of the objects to be looked for, starting with those associated with the birth, feeding, and weaning of a calf, and then with its various experiences through life. The following are some of the objects that we should expect to find in such a collection.

Objects used in feeding a calf. What was used to make a cow take to a strange calf. Ways of weaning a calf.

Objects used to prevent cattle from straying. Cattle marks. Milking tethers for cows, indoors and out: spancels to prevent kicking: milking stools of different kinds; milking pails. Carrying the milk—yoke or head-loads.

Dairy: milk-strainers; coolers; setting-pans of wood, earthenware or metal: skimming ladles.



Butter-making: various kinds of churns and their use: wooden bowls for working the butter; butter-workers: salting the butter: Scotch hands: butter moulds and prints; tubs for storing butter for winter; kinds of woods used to make these objects.

Cheese-making: souring the milk; breaking up the curd: cheese-presses, etc.

The expansion and completion of the above list can safely be left to the people of Cheshire, as, it is greatly to be hoped, can the collecting and safe storing of the objects. When this work is well advanced, attention can be given to other occupations, such as those of the shepherd, ploughman, wheelwright, blacksmith, bootmaker, huntsman, and poacher. In building up fully representative collections for Cheshire, a committee would be rendering yeoman service to the study of British, and of European, traditional life.

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## Chester Excavations, 1954

Two excavations have this year been carried out by the Chester Archæological Society. One at Heronbridge, directed by Mr. B. R. Hartley, was aimed at the dock found the previous year. Unfortunately the wet weather and high water table prevented this and instead attention was directed to the earthwork which appears to encircle a site along the river. Two sections were cut through this bank and a thick occupation layer found underneath it produced third century pottery and a coin of Claudius II (A.D. 268-270) showing that this bank and the ditch associated with it are late Roman or possibly even post-Roman. Its further function remains obscure since there are no known buildings inside the defenced area.

The second official excavation was a trench at the rear of Messrs. Richard Jones' shop in Bridge Street. The purpose of this was to investigate the possibility of late Roman levels and the pre-legionary phase. There appear to be good prospects of the former in this area but there was no sign of the latter. The trench revealed a third century stone-paved floor, one of the stones of which was a re-used square pilaster capital from a building of some architectural pretensions.

A commercial excavation at Crypt Court off Commonhall Street enabled, with the kindness of the Directors of the "Cheshire Observer," an excavation of a pair of granaries. Interference in this area has been so intense that only fragments of foundations have been found but sufficient to recover the basic elements of recovered but a few tile stamps were found, including a new variety.

G.W.

# The Archæologist in the Field

(Part V)

## Romano-British Inscriptions

By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.A.

**B**OTH from the historical and archæological aspect the most important discoveries of actual remains in the field of Romano-British studies are those of dedicatory inscriptions since these often enable the investigator to date a structure with precision and occasionally also to identify its function.

It was the custom of Roman builders to place these large stone slabs above the principal entrance or at some other conspicuous place. They are found mainly, as one would expect, on official government buildings. The overwhelming proportion of inscriptions of this character found in Britain are from military sites. Whereas in a fort even of an auxiliary unit almost every building would have a dedicatory tablet, they are comparatively rare in towns. Silchester, a typical cantonal capital and the only town in Britain to have been completely excavated, yielded only some half-dozen fragments. The principal buildings such as the Forum and Public Baths might have had inscriptions but not so the main private houses and the lesser civic buildings. In towns the degree of Romanisation would have been a considerable factor. Silchester, for example, must have been inhabited almost entirely by Romanised Britons, whereas in a more civilised spa like Bath which was patronised by army officers and government officials, one would expect, and indeed finds, a greater degree of sophistication, both in sculptured remains as well as inscriptions.

A small fragment of cornice bears the lettering VES VII CO[S] on a moulded frieze, dating a building or shrine to the seventh consulship of Vespasian (i.e. A.D. 76). This clearly tells us that Bath developed early in the history of Roman Britain.

The finest civic inscription found in Britain is that from the Wroxeter forum (pl. 1a). It was found in 1924 lying in 169 fragments where it had fallen when the building was destroyed by fire about A.D. 160. This remarkable tablet measures 11 ft. 9 ins by 3 ft. 9 ins and contains five lines of lettering, reading with expansions between curved brackets:

IMP(ERATORI) CA[ES(ARI)] DIVI TRAIANI PARTHI  
CI FIL(IO) DI[VI N]ERVAE NEPOTI TRA  
IANO H[A]DRIANO AVG(VSTO) PONTIFI  
CI MAXIMO TRIB(VNICA) POT(ESTATE) XIII[I CO  
(N)S(VLI) III P(ATRI) P(ATRIAE)  
CIVITAS CORNOV[IORVM] \*

\* The square brackets indicate that these letters are missing on the inscription but can reasonably be inferred.

This means: "To the Emperor Caesar Trajanus Hadrianus Augustus, son of the deified Trajanus Parthicus, grandson of the deified Nerva, Pontifex Maximus (i.e. Chief Priest) holding the tribunician power for the fourteenth year, consul for the third time, Father of his country, the community of the Cornovii (erected this building)."

The two most important things about this inscription are firstly that it can be dated between 10th December A.D. 129 and 9th December A.D. 130, and secondly, it records the status of the town. It has no municipal rights but is a tribal capital of the *Cornovii*, the exact form of which was previously in doubt.

The rarity of civil inscriptions of this type make it difficult to assess the degree of Romanisation in this country. For example, very few theatres have been found in Britain (not to be confused with amphitheatres). Up to a few years ago the only one known was at *Verulamium* (St. Albans) and it could have been argued that in Britain one might expect such buildings only in the largest and most civilised towns. But in 1936 a most surprising inscription was found during an excavation at *Petuaria* (Broughton-Humber). At this small and apparently undistinguished settlement on the fringe of the civil zone, a commemorative tablet records the gift by one Marcus Ulpus Ianuarius, an aedile of the *vicus* of *Petuaria*, of a stage (*proscenium*) which can refer only to the local theatre. Curiously enough, a soldier of exactly the same name is recorded at Chester on a tombstone (No. 51) and would, according to Haverfield (1910 Catalogue), have been of the same date. If a small *vicus* like this had a theatre surely one would expect one in almost every cantonal capital. Since the war, excavations have revealed remains of another at Canterbury.

The difference in quantity between civil and military dedicatory inscriptions is most remarkable. Their discovery has enabled historians to unravel with some certainty the tangled skein of events on the northern frontiers, while the historical background of the civilised south still remains highly conjectural. By comparison and correlation one can trace new works and reconstructions over large areas of the military zone. It was known that the two legionary bases at *Cærlon* and York were reconstructed early in the second century when their original timber buildings were dismantled and replaced by stone. This is attested by inscriptions, one at each depot. Similar activity at Chester, suspected from excavations, was proved when Professor I. A. Richmond recognised a small fragment of a large inscription on slate in the Grosvenor Museum which can be matched with those at *Cærlon* and York. Thus Chester falls into line with an overall provincial reconstruction. The difficulties in the history of Hadrian's Wall and the long controversy over its original builder was at length resolved by inscriptions. Slabs from mile castles and turrets give the name of Emperor Hadrian and his

governor, Platorius Nepos, as well as the unit responsible for the particular section:

IMP CAES TRAIAN  
HADRIANI AVG  
LEG II AVG  
A PLATORIO NEPOTE LEG PR PR

from Milecastle 38 (Hotbank), now in the Blackgate Collection.

Similar slabs from the Antonine Wall tell the story of its building in A.D. 142. The fine distance slab found at the east end of it at Bridgeness has interesting reliefs at each end, one of them depicting the religious ceremony and sacrifices with which the wall was dedicated. The inscription reads:

IMP. CAES. TITO. AELIO  
HADRI ANTONINO  
AVG. PIO. P. P LEG II  
AVG PER M P IIIIDCLII  
FEC

After reading the names and titles of the Emperor Antoninus Pius it gives the distance 4,652 paces constructed by the Second Legion Augusta (that based on Carleon).

Building inscriptions not only help to fix a date for their erection but sometimes refer to its function. For example, a tablet from Chesters on Hadrian's Wall reads:

AQVA. ADDVCTA  
ALAE. II. ASTVR  
SVB. VLP. MARCELLO  
LEG. AVG. PR PR

This tells us that the resident unit, the second Ala of Asturians, built the aqueduct under the provincial governor, Ulpius Marcellus, who is dated to A.D. 177-180. Quite a number of governors are known only from inscriptions of this kind, since the Roman histories after Tacitus give very scant attention to the distant province of Britain. Often one feels that inscriptions conceal serious damage by the enemy—as for example the Severan dedication from High Rochester which refers to PORTAM CVM MVRIS VETVSTATE DILAPSIS . . . . A SOLO REST(ITVIT), i.e. a gate and walls, decayed through age, restored from ground level.

Dedicatory inscriptions are not confined to stone slabs on buildings. The most important example in the Grosvenor Museum is on a lead watermain which was originally laid along the side of the *via principalis*. It reads:

IMP(ERATORE) VESP(ASIANO) VIII T(ITO) IMP(ERA  
TORE) VII CO(N)S(VLIBVS) CN(AEO) IVLIO AGRICOLA  
LEG(ATO) AVG(VSTI) PR(O) PR(AETORE)

“To the Emperor Vespasian in his ninth and Titus in his seventh consul year. Cnaeus Julius Agricola, governor.”

The consul years date the pipe to A.D. 79 but whether this means that the original legionary fortress was built at this time

is uncertain. The laying of this watermain may well be a later refinement. This is the only inscription recording the famous governor of Britain whose exploits are so well known to us from his biography by Tacitus.

A type of dedicatory inscription forming a class of its own is the milestone, of which nearly a hundred have been found in Britain. From observations in North Africa it is clear that at every mile along a main road in Roman times, one might expect to find a small group of milestones put up by different Emperors who evidently found this to be a suitable way of publicising themselves. Whether they ever carried out reconstruction or repairs to justify the setting up of these stones is a debatable point. Occasionally late emperors would use earlier stones and inscribe their titles on the crased face of the earlier inscription. Such a palimpsest can be seen in Lincoln Museum where Victorinus has used what may have been a Hadrianic milestone. One of the finest is the Cærhyn stone now in the British Museum which reads: IMP. CAES. TRAIANVS. HADRIANVS AVG P.M. TR.P. P.P. COS.III A KANOVIIO M P VIII. After the honorific titles of the Emperor Hadrian one learns that it is eight Roman miles to *Kanovium* (Cærhyn). These stones are sometimes very useful in identifying names of forts and towns.

Another class of inscription found associated with building construction is the centurial stone. This gives merely the name of the centurion whose unit completed a particular length of walling. There are several in the Grosvenor Museum, the most elegant being one by the century of Ocratius Maximus of the first cohort. The letters L.M.P. at the end may refer to a length, possibly 950 paces or feet. These stones enabled an inspecting officer to apportion to the right unit blame or praise according to the quality of the work.

One of the most interesting types of inscription is that on altars. The Romans took their religion very seriously and thought that their deities were capable of influencing all their actions. They considered it necessary to come to terms with them and strike a bargain. A merchant about to undertake a difficult and maybe dangerous journey would make a solemn vow in front of witnesses and probably with the assistance of a priest. If his journey was successful and profitable a new altar would be provided and suitable sacrifices made. The gods could thus be propitiated and their assistance gained in return for the sacrifice of a cock, a goat, a pig or even a bull, according to the importance of the occasion. The altar was a square-shaped column, with a dish carved at the top supported by two bolsters which represented the original bundle of faggots of the sacrificial fire. Token libations were poured into the dish, prayers said and the sacrifice duly performed. The inscription is on a panel at the front and on the sides are usually reliefs of the sacrificial implements, a knife, axe, dish and jug, or the head of an animal. The name of the deity

is usually given, followed by that of the donor, and at the end the formula *votum libens solvit*—‘the vow is willingly fulfilled.’ The importance of these inscriptions lies in the names of the deities given, for not only are there the usual examples from the classical pantheon like Mars, Minerva, Silvanus, or Apollo, but strange Celtic and Teutonic gods not otherwise known. The Romans, while adhering to their own divinities, nevertheless felt that they had to come to terms with the local spirits, likewise the Romanised inhabitants accepted those imported from the continent. This gave rise to the practice of combining names when a local god was identified with a classical one. A typical concretion is Jupiter Tanarus, which appropriately connects the greatest of the Roman gods and his powerful thunderbolt, with the Celtic god thunder. From these inscriptions we know the names of many native deities such as Cocidius, Mogons, Maponus, Belatucadrus and Vitiris, which appear in the area of the Wall. There were often occasions when the Romans were unable to discover the names of local deities; then they put up altars, like the two tribunes from Samosata at Chester, to the *genius loci*, i.e. the spirit of the place. The belief in animism was very strong and most objects, places, seasons, kinds of work, etc., had presiding *genii* too insignificant to have names or be ranked with those of the classical pantheon but powerful enough to cause annoyance if they were not adequately placated.

Altars are also useful in giving names of persons and army units. An example from Auchendavy on the Antonine Wall, now in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, reads: GENIO TERRAE BRITANNICAE M COCCEI FIRMVS > LEG II AVG—‘Marcus Cocceius Firmus a centurion of the 2nd Legion Augusta dedicated this to the Genius of the land of Britain.’ This altar is one of a group of five found buried in a pit in 1771, four of them and possibly the fifth dedicated by the same centurion. Another placated Mars, Minerva, the *Campestres* who were the deities presiding over the games, Hercules, Epona (a Celtic horse god), and Victory. Yet a third altar he dedicated to Jupiter, Victory and the health of the Emperor, and the fourth to Diana and Apollo. This multiplicity of altars and dedications may seem strange but other similar collections from Maryport and Newstead suggest that new altars may have been dedicated at regular intervals or on special occasions and represent the combined sentiments of the whole garrison rather than the eclectic tastes of one individual.

For information about the inhabitants of Roman Britain there is no better source than their tombstones, although only the barest facts are usually given. The remarkable collection at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, by its very size throws a considerable light on the recruitment of the legionaries. The birth-place, or rather the place where a person registered his citizenship, was usually given as part of the name. It is thus possible to note the areas from which the soldiers were drawn in the early part of

the occupation, since this interesting information is not usually forthcoming after the edict which extended the franchise to most of the inhabitants of the Empire at the beginning of the third century. Citizenship by then had ceased being a privilege and matter of pride. A typical military tombstone is that of the Spaniard Cadarus (pl. 1b) which reads: C(AIVS) LOVESIVS PAPIR (IA) CADARVS EMERITA MIL(ES) LEG XX V.V. AN(NOR VM) XXV STIP(ENDIORVM) IIX FRONTINVS AQVILO H(ERES) F(ACIENDVM) C(VRAVIT). His birthplace was Emerita, the modern town of Merida in Spain. He was 25 years old and had served for eight years. One of the finest tombstones in Britain is that from South Shields of a freedman Victor, a Moor whose master was trooper in the First Asturum Horse (Pl. 1c). Another stone from the same place shows a freedwoman Regina, with her jewel box and sewing basket; she was a Catuvellaunian, i.e. a member of the British tribe whose capital was *Verulamium* (St. Albans) and was the wife of Barates, a Syrian from Palmyra. He was an officer in the *auxilia* and his tombstone has been found at Corbridge. These two random examples serve to show the cosmopolitan character of some of the inhabitants of Roman Britain. Perhaps the most important tomb in Britain is that of Julius Classicianus, the procurator (chief financial officer) to the province. These precious fragments, found at different times in the Roman Wall of London, are now in the British Museum and remain for ever a monument to a great administrator whose humane treatment of the Britons after the Boudiccan revolt drew such contemptuous references from Tacitus whose main interest was in military prowess.

The groups of inscriptions which can be classed as "proprietary marks" include some useful and interesting examples. They take usually the form of imperial titles, as for example on the pigs of lead, over sixty of which have been found in Britain. Mining was an imperial monopoly and the lead was merely the waste product after the silver had been extracted.

Some authorities have considered that the stamp EX ARG (ENTARIIS) means that the silver had been taken from the metal but in some cases analysis shows that this was not so and it is now taken to mean "from the silver works." A typical pig, found in 1886 during excavation for a gasholder by the river Dee and now in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, bears a raised inscription IMP VESP AVG V T IMP III [COS . . . . . It is dated by its reference to the fifth consular year of Vespasian and the third of his son Titus, i.e. A.D. 74, so we know that by this time the exploitation of the surface lead veins in North Wales was well under way and a wharf had been built on the river side to unload the pigs. We know that it is North Wales because on the side of the pig there are raised letters DECEANGL, which, as Tacitus the Roman historian tells us, was the name of the tribe inhabiting that area. Some of the mining was leased to private speculators such



"QUIET OCCUPATION" by P. W. Steer

*Reproduced by kindness of William Pritchard.*





Plate 1a.

*Reproduced by the kind permission of the Librarian and Curator, Shrewsbury.*



Plate 1b.

*Photograph - Grosvenor Museum, Chester.*



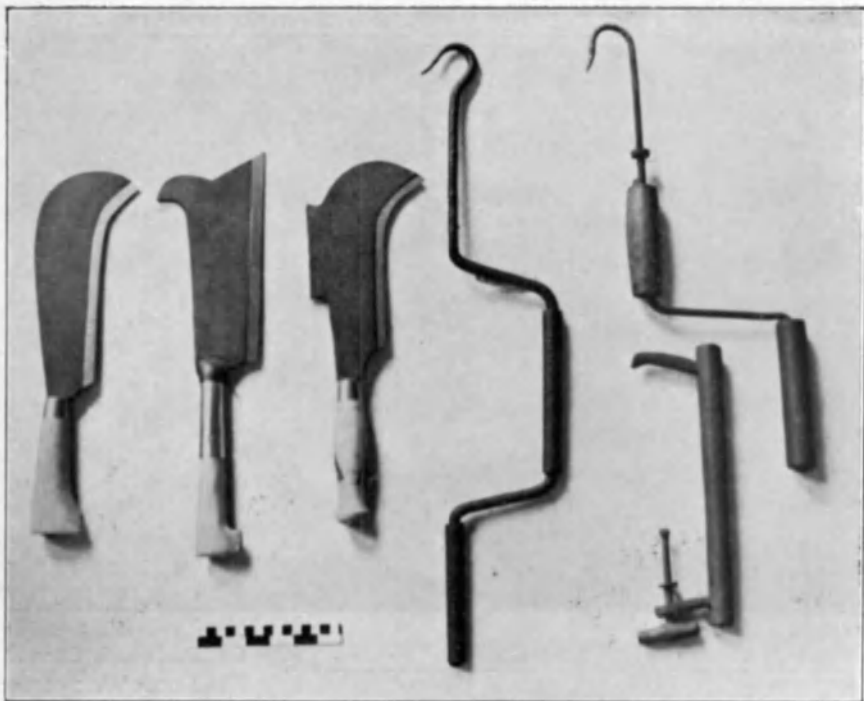
#### Gt. Budworth Church

The North West corner of the nave roof before all the new timber has been completely turned in with the old. The scarfed joint across the principal beam can be noted on careful inspection, as well as other new timber nearer the Camera



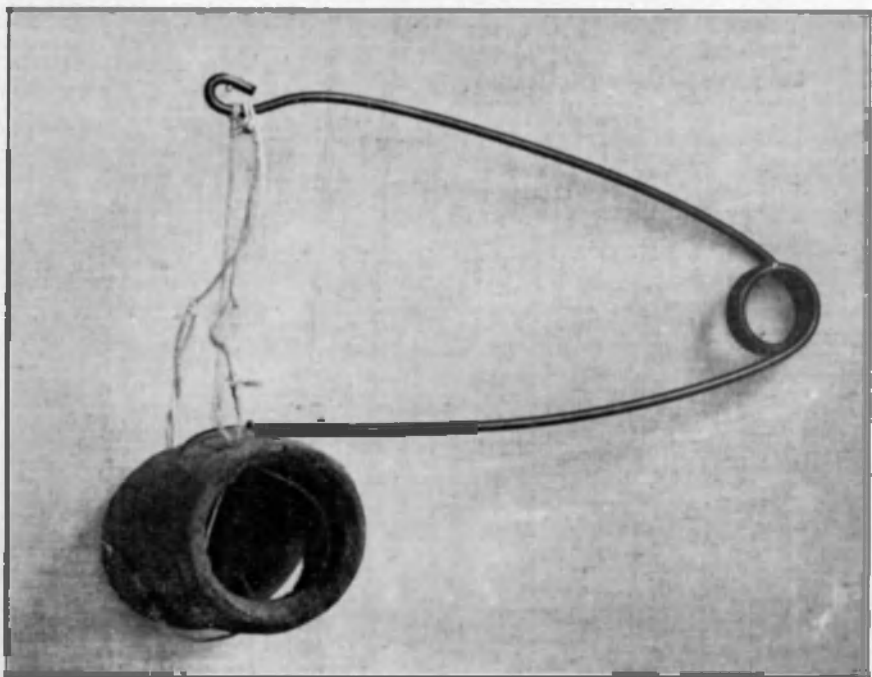
Plate 1c.

*(Reproduced by the kind permission of the Town Clerk, South Shields)*



**Regional Differences.**

**Billhooks** - 1. Shropshire; 2. Herefordshire; 3. Staffordshire. What types are used in Cheshire?  
**Rope-twisters** - 4. Peover, Cheshire; 5. North Wales; 6. Sevenoaks, Cheshire.



**Mole Trap - Cheshire**  
 "Traditional Life in Cheshire" Photos by kindness of R. U. Sayce.

as those stamping pigs from Derbyshire, P. Rubrius Abascantius and L. Ariconius Verecundius. Ingots of other metal were also stamped, such as those of silver in the British Museum, with the inscription EX OF(FICINA) PATRICI, i.e. "from the factory of Patricius" and the tin blocks from Cornwall with a fourth century stamp, evidence of the late development of pewter. In rather a different category are the stamped lead seals, from goods and packages, found on military sites like those from Brough, Westmorland, of the second legion.

In a well ordered society one expects a universal system of weights and measures. Roman weights are fairly common in Britain; they are small, flat, round, cheese-shaped and made of lead, having numerals stamped on them denoting the *unciae* they represent, mostly with reasonable accuracy.

There is a very large group of proprietary marks in the form of tile stamps. It was customary for the tile-making units of the army to stamp their names on the large flat roofing tiles. These stamps are very useful in providing evidence of the presence of a particular regiment and the German archæologists have used them in this respect on the Rhine frontier to elucidate the movement of troops. In Britain, where the garrisons were more static, this kind of evidence is not so valuable. At the time when it would help us most with information about early dispositions of the legions in the middle of the first century, there were far fewer tiles in use. They were, in fact, made only for the bath-houses, all other buildings being in timber. To complicate matters, several examples appear to be strays from later sites. If it becomes possible ever to date the various dies of these stamps, the information on a site like the legionary fortress at Chester would be extremely useful. Most tile stamps are legionary but the fort at Castleshaw has produced examples of a stamp COH III BRE, which appears to record the third cohort Breucorcum, which is not otherwise known in Britain. Then there are also the tiles of the British fleet, stamped CL(ASSIS) BR(ITANNICAE), found on coastal stations like Dover. Stamped tiles on civil sites are much more rare; some from London read P.P. BR. LON. which may refer to imperial officials such as the *publicani* (tax collectors), or *portitores* (customs). Stamps found elsewhere consist of three letters which may be the initials of the tile manufacturer, although some from Gloucestershire may refer to the local government of the area.

Proprietary marks include also stamps on pottery which are almost in the class of trade marks. This is much too large a subject for this short article but they deserve mention. The red glazed Samian ware, made mostly in Gaul, has, especially on the plain vessels, the potter's stamp on the inside of the base. These names, which run into the thousands, are very useful in dating the vessels. Decorated bowls are not so commonly named but occasionally the stamp is found among the figures and floral

scrolls. Often the potters signed their names in the mould in cursive script below the decorative panel; it appears on the bowl, of course, in reverse and very often obliterated by the foot ring. *Amphorae*, large globular wine or olive oil jars which brought those precious liquids from Spain and the Mediterranean, often have on their two handles two different stamps, one of the manufacturer of the pottery and the other the wine or oil merchant. Large numbers of these stamps have been found in Monte Testaccio outside Rome. This little hill is an artificial mound made solely of fragments of broken *amphorae*. Britain made its own contribution to this series in the stamps that local potters put on the rims of mortars they made, imitating their Gallic counterparts. These stamps can be very useful in studying the distribution of the individual potter's wares but at present we know far too little about their centres of production.

Makers' stamps are also found on metal and glass vessels and help us to understand a little of trade in imperial times. A rather special kind of stamp was that used by the makers of eye ointments which were sold in small cakes. Examples of the original dies are sometimes found with the inscription in reverse. In the British Museum, carefully cut on the four edges of a small, flat, square stone, are inscriptions which give the purpose of the mixtures, i.e. DIOXVM AD RHEVMATICA, a vinegar lotion for running eyes; STACTVM AD CALIGINEM, a salve for dim-sightedness; DIAGLAVCIVM POST IMPETVM LIPPITVDINIS, a preparation of poppy for inflammation of the eyes; and MIXTVM AD CLARITVDINEM, a mixture for clearing the eyesight.

A type of inscription which can easily be classified is that occasionally found worked into a mosaic floor, like that in the British Museum, giving a number of names, QVINTVS NATALIVS NATALINVS ET BODENI [ . . . . . ], presumably the occupiers or owners of the villa.

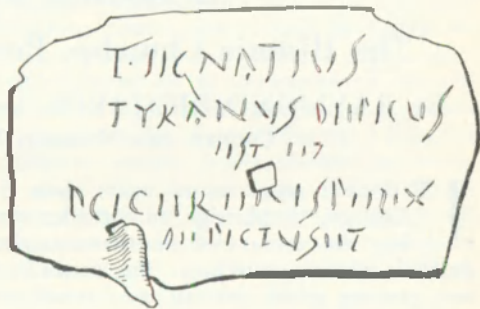
Perhaps the most fascinating class, from many points of view, is that of the graffiti. These are the scribbles or scratchings on tiles, walls of houses, and pots and other objects. They bring us into contact with actual personalities instead of remote emperors or army officers whose names are inscribed in stone. Most of these are merely names denoting ownership, just as modern soldiers scratch their names on their equipment to avoid others "borrowing" it. Occasionally more elaborate statements have come down to us, like the tile scratched by a disgruntled worker complaining about the conduct of a fellow-worker, "Augustalis goes off on his own every day for a fortnight." In this group come the prayers and curses scratched on lead plaques and nailed on the walls of temples. An example of this (p. 29, fig. b), known as the London Curse, is illustrated—it reads: T(ITVS) EGNATIVS TYRANVS DEFIC(T)VS EST ET P(VBLIVS) CICEREIVS FELIX DEFICTVS E(S)T. Two individuals, T. Egnatius Tyranus and

P. Cicereius Felix, are solemnly cursed.

Sometimes the beginning of the alphabet is found scratched on a wall. A more unusual and interesting inscription comes from a house in Cirencester. It is word-square reading (fig. a):

R O T A S  
 O P E R A  
 T E N E T  
 A R E P O  
 S A T O R

a



b

The actual meaning which can be made into "Arepo the sower holds the wheels with skill" is secondary to the words PATER NOSTER which with A and O (*Alpha* and *Omega*—the beginning and end) are concealed in the square. It was thus used as a secret Christian talisman.

Of the same type is the Gnostic talisman found at the fort of Segontium in North Wales. It is scratched on a thin gold plate four inches long and one inch broad. The lettering, some of it in Greek, gives the various names of God and is followed by magic symbols. Very important are the inscribed plates of bronze known as diplomas. They are copies of Imperial rescripts conferring citizenship on auxiliary soldiers on their discharge. They are valuable since they include lists of the regiments in the province or part of the province at the time of issue and help considerably in the preparation of Roman army lists. One of the most important of these was found at Malpas, Cheshire.

The Romans conducted their business correspondence on pairs of wood tablets, the interior surface of which was coated with wax. Using a pointed stylus, the letter was scratched on the smooth wax surface and the tablets folded together and sealed. Sometimes the writer pressed heavily on the bronze stylus and made an impression on the wood. Tablets with faintly inscribed writing are rare. One from the Thames has been deciphered and published by Prof. I. A. Richmond and reads as follows, "Rufus, son of Callisunus, greetings to Epicillus and all his fellows. I believe you know I am very well. If you have made the list please send. Do thou look after everything carefully. See that thou turnest that slave-girl into cash." One wonders what lay behind this cryptic business letter and what was the fate of this unfortunate slave girl.

# The Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust

in association with

## The Historic Churches Preservation Trust

BY RAYMOND RICHARDS, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.HIST.S.  
COUNTY AND NATIONAL TRUSTEE

IT doesn't seem many years since a few of us met in Jesus College, Cambridge, to consider ways and means of overtaking the arrears of maintenance in the preservation of the nation's historic churches. The condition of many ancient churches was causing grave anxiety, as a result of almost all buildings and repairs having been suspended during the war years.

We were well aware that during that period labour was scarce, materials even more so, the incumbent was possibly an air-raid warden, the church cleaner had evacuees to look after, and maintenance repairs to the church could not be done. A gutter choked in the early 1940's could have been cleared and the minor damage repaired for a few pounds then, had the work been possible. As a result of the delay heavy expense is incurred for replacements, as possibly half the roof will have been damaged by dry rot, with the possibility of a wall requiring underpinning.

The parishioners, who are guardians of these lovely ancient churches, are doing their best for them, often at quite amazing self-sacrifice, but they cannot manage alone in an emergency such as this. The problem is partly a result of the war, although no war damage compensation is available to cover it, but it is also the result of a gradual revolution which has been quietly taking place during the last fifty years. This 'revolution' began when the drift of population from the country-side to the towns became acute during the agricultural depression between the wars, and was completed by the recent steep rise in taxation and death duties which makes it impossible now for the squire and landowner to give largely to the upkeep of the church on his estate, as once he did.

It is well known that many large churches have only two or three hundred parishioners where once they had four or five hundred, and the Big House is often empty or become some sort of institution. The parish can manage day to day maintenance costs under normal conditions, but a population of two or three hundred, including children and pensioners, cannot cope with disaster.

The result of the historic Cambridge meeting was far reaching. Following the formation of The Friends of Ancient English

Churches, the Historic Churches Preservation Trust later came into being, and its work and attainments are largely due to the brilliant and untiring work of Mr. Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, the Chairman of the Executive Committee. He has written extensively on the subject, and in 1951 the Church Assembly agreed to set up a Repair of Churches Commission. This Commission, with Mr. Ivor Bulmer-Thomas as its Chairman, found that a sum of £4,000,000 would have to be raised over a period of ten years to supplement what the parishes would be expected to do themselves if the enforced postponement of repairs during the war and post-war period was to be made good. It recommended that a Historic Churches Preservation Trust, with affiliated county trusts, should be set up to raise and distribute this sum. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York accepted this recommendation, Her Majesty The Queen gave her gracious patronage to the venture, the most eminent persons in the land in all walks of life agreed to become trustees, and the Trust came into existence in October 1952.

With half a dozen national appeals of a compelling character pending, there could have been no more difficult moment for starting, but the problem was already so serious that delay could not be contemplated. In the subsequent two years the Historic Churches Preservation Trust and such county trusts as have been brought into existence have received gifts and promises totalling about £450,000. This is not a long way towards £4,000,000, but the organisation has now been well and truly laid, the most urgent problems have been tackled, and the real assault upon the problem can now begin. The battle with the repair of churches has been like the task of the British Army in the two world wars. At first we have suffered many reverses but have avoided any irretrievable loss; now we are consolidating our position; and before long we hope to press home our attack.

The contributions have come from charitable trusts, industrial and commercial firms, and private individuals; and the gifts and promises have ranged from 6d. to £100,000. There is need for the thousands of small contributions as well as for the larger contributions of the few. As the problem is being spread over a period of at least ten years, a growing number of people are taking advantage of covenanted subscriptions, whereby the Trust is able to recover the income tax on their contributions. A particularly satisfactory feature is that the Trust is receiving a growing income from legacies, for there is no more fitting memorial that people could leave behind them than the maintenance of the parish churches which have come down to us from the days of our Saxon forefathers.

In this period the emphasis has been on the national body with its headquarters in Fulham Palace, but as time goes on the emphasis will be transferred to the affiliated county trusts. There are now ten such county trusts in existence—in Cheshire, Essex,



Herefordshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Staffordshire, Sussex, and Wiltshire. Most of these are only just starting operations.

The Cheshire Trust we are pleased to say leads the way with a gross total of £26,000 raised in eighteen months. But the demands are heavy. Bunbury Church, thanks to the payment of a substantial War Damage claim, and the brilliant efforts of its vicar, is now restored to all its former magnificence, but what of the others less fortunate! One of the major restorations now in progress is securing the noble parish church of Great Budworth. This will entail an essential expenditure of not less than £20,000. Not only was the lovely medieval roof found to be dangerously decayed, but much of the stonework was in danger of collapse. A few months ago I stood, with Lord and Lady Ashbrook who are doing such splendid work in Budworth, on the roof of this ancient building, together with the architect and contractors, and in our presence the embattled parapets were actually rocked by hand,—an experience I don't wish to see repeated.

An almost similar state of affairs was found at Disley a few weeks ago, when Mr. Riseley reported that the roof pinnacles were without dowels, and the carved stonework only kept in situation by its own weight. Let me at once reassure the congregation and visitors to this historic church that all the decayed masonry observed to be in immediate danger of collapse has been removed until repairs can be put in hand.

The Diocese of Chester is outstandingly important with its noble heritage of old and beautiful churches; consequently it is not surprising that the list of parishes requiring urgent assistance is a formidable one.

The repairs necessary to secure the ancient church of St. John the Baptist at Chester call for urgent help, at least £6,000 is required at once,—and so the story goes on.

Apart from the work which is going on in Cheshire it is hoped in due course to have a county trust operating in every county in the land.

Spending money is, of course, much easier than raising it, but the wise spending of a strictly limited sum on the repair of architectural masterpieces has many pitfalls. The Historic Churches Preservation Trust endeavours to ensure that the most urgent needs are treated first, and that it deals fairly with all parts of the country, in the following manner. The evidence given to the Repair of Churches Commission gives a rough idea of the severity of the problem throughout the land. When the Trust foresees that it will have sufficient funds available, it makes an apportionment among the dioceses in relation to their roughly known needs. The Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches is then invited to recommend how the sum available for the diocese can best be allocated to individual churches. Two dio-

cesan apportionments of £50,000 and £100,000 each have been made. In addition earmarked funds amounting to about £50,000 have been allocated. Furthermore, in order to deal with specially urgent or large needs that could not be included in the diocesan apportionment, the Trustees have treated many important churches directly, and have allocated about £20,000 in this way. Finally, the Trustees are prepared to consider directly applications from churches not belonging to the Church of England if they have sufficient architectural merit or historic interest. In this brief period of two years grants have been voted to 439 churches, including ten in the main Free Church traditions and one Roman Catholic chapel. In all there are thought to be about 2,000 churches in need of help—and, of course, many of the 439 churches already voted grants have a long way to go before the repairs are complete.

The grants voted by the Trust are conditional on the work being done under satisfactory supervision. The Trust will not pay a grant unless the work is in charge of an architect, and the specifications of the architect are submitted to a regional advisory panel of specialists,—some 45 architects of the highest standing in the profession, respected by all for their experience in the care of old churches, constitute eleven regional advisory panels. In this way valuable advice about methods and materials is given to new entrants to the profession or men whose experience has been in other branches.

It has not been an easy two years, but we may say that a good beginning has been made, and if public support continues and grows as the Trust becomes better known, and more county Trusts are created, we shall hand down this great heritage to our descendants in at least as good a condition as that in which we received it.

Our English country parish churches are adjudged by experts to be the finest in Europe, and with their treasures of ancient stained glass, carved woodwork, stone statuary, wall paintings, plate, bells, textiles, and wrought ironwork, contain the major part of the nation's heritage of skilled craftsmanship and traditional art. We cannot afford to lose any part of it; it belongs to us all, and to all time: the present generation, and the people of the particular parish, are only trustees, and they must be enabled to hand on their charge to the next generation.

Donations for the national appeal should be sent to the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, Fulham Palace, London, S.W.6, and sums of money intended for Cheshire to the Bishop of Chester, Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust, Bishop's House, Chester, or to the Secretary and Treasurer, Chaplain's House, High Legh, Cheshire.

## Some Cheshire Artists

By WILLIAM PRITCHARD

**I**N response to a request that I would submit a contribution under the above heading I prepared the following article being fully aware of the fact that I would not discover a host of budding Thomas Gainsboroughs or those of his stock. I was, however, pleasantly surprised to find what an enormous number of my fellow County-men had devoted their time, labour and money in the pursuit of the Art of Painting.

In submitting to you the result of my efforts I must warn you that my list of Artists is by no means complete, in fact I feel that I have only delved into the fringe of the subject matter. What has revealed itself in this. To make progress in his ambition to follow the Art, a Student had to be prepared to uproot himself and move into the larger cities of say, London, Manchester or Liverpool—hence he tended to lose his County identity.

I now pass on to you this survey in the hope that you will bear with me in the knowledge that time and space will not permit a complete investigation into the lives of all Cheshire Artists.

STRINGER, DANIEL. Knutsford.

Samuel Stringer, father of Daniel, was a colour maker at Seacombe and no doubt was in touch with Joseph Mayer, for R. Edgrave notes that Mayer had drawings in his possession by Samuel Stringer. This fact may account for the interest shown in the son Daniel, as we find him a student at the Royal Academy in 1770. He must have been successful there for he produced works that held their own alongside of those of George Stubbs, J. Farrington, R.A., etc.

Daniel Stringer's works appeared in a catalogue published in August, 1779, of an exhibition of the members of the Society of Artists in Liverpool. This catalogue must surely rank as one of the earliest published in this country. The exhibition was held in the Academy rooms, 30, John Street, Liverpool.

CRANE, THOMAS. Chester. 1808-1859.

One of three brothers born at Chester, Thomas Crane showed early promise, for at the age of 17 years he was sent up to the School of the Academy where in his second year he justified the confidence placed in him by winning the medal for his drawings from the antique. Whilst not nearly so successful as his now famous son, Walter, he left behind many works as proof of his ability as a portrait painter, outstanding of which is his "Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby" (The eccentric Ladies of Llangollen).

He first exhibited at the Liverpool Academy in 1832, becoming a full member in 1838 and after serving that body for a

while as treasurer, bad health forced him to leave Liverpool for Torquay. His brush was never idle for he painted many fine portraits of females and children and never wanted for commissions. Amongst his better known oils are "The First Whisper of Love," "The Deserted Village," "The Cobbler" and many others in water colour, all of which found their place on the walls of the Royal Academy.

Walter, his son, was born in Liverpool in 1845 and did much to enhance his family's reputation.

**OAKES. JOHN WRIGHT.** Middlewich. 1820-1887.

On the 9th July, 1820 there was born at Sproston House, Middlewich, a boy destined to be one of the century's most colourful landscape painters. In an article of such limited space it must not be assumed that justice is being done to most of the artists concerned with Cheshire's history. As a consequence of this, followers of J. W. Oakes will bear with me in the manner this famous Artist has been treated.

Early in life Oakes moved into Liverpool to be educated, and to be given the trade of 'House Painter.' Painting pictures seemed to be just nature's gift for in 1839, at the age of 19 years, he makes his first appearance as an exhibitor at the Liverpool Academy with a Still Life of "Fruit," priced £5. 5. 0. What a difference took place at the second Autumn Exhibition in that city when £367. 10. 0. was paid for his "North Devon Glen." That was 32 years later in 1871. To make a review of his works between those dates with limited space would not do him justice, so I will refrain from doing so.

He never altered his style and although he was so closely associated with the Liverpool pre-Raphaelites he never allowed them to influence him. First hung at the Royal Academy in 1848 his last contribution was in the year 1887. No exhibition in London, Liverpool or elsewhere seems complete without his works. The Williamson Art Gallery has a fine representation of his works in oil "The Devil's Kitchen." After his death in 1887 Christies sold the remaining pictures of his stock on 10th March, 1888, for £3,848.

**WIMPERIS. EDMUND MONSON.** Chester. 1835-1900.

Chester is no mean city and the family name of Wimperis keeps showing itself in its history in some form or other. Of the three Artists of that name the above is the one most successful from our point of view.

Miss J. W. Wimperis, 1875, and S. W. Wimperis, 1868, must be mentioned but let us now deal with Edmund Monson. He was the eldest son of Edmund Richard Wimperis and it was intended that he should follow in his father's footsteps, and was trained for a commercial life after leaving school, entering the employment of Walker Parker & Co. Young Edmund had other ideas for at an early age of 16 he had persuaded his father to allow him to proceed to London to be apprenticed to Mason

Jackson the wood engraver, a business which at that time was as popular as the wireless trade of to-day. He joined partnership with W. J. Palmer, having served 7 years with Mason Jackson and it will be noted, was still in the commercial line.

The call to the Art life was strong within him for very soon afterwards we find Cundall the publisher taking all the wood engraving work that Wimperis produced, and these were used in a volume of Elizabethan Poets. At an early age he was elected a member of the Society of British Artists, also securing membership of the much coveted B. I. at a later date. To-day no gallery or collection can afford to be without an example of his work.

#### BESWICK, FRANK.

The Royal Academy and New Water Colour Society catalogues of 1881-1883 draw our attention to the fact that yet another son of Chester, i.e. Frank Beswick was exhibiting his water colours with them.

#### CALDECOTT, RANDOLPH. Chester. 1846-1886.

This son of a Chester Accountant was sent to the King's School, Chester, where he received an education that fitted him to become a bank clerk, but before leaving school he had won two prizes for drawing from the Science and Art Department. Leaving school at the age of 15 he became a clerk in the Whitchurch Bank, Shropshire, remaining there 6 years before moving into the Manchester & Salford Bank for a further 5 years. He took advantage of his stay in that district to attend the evening classes of the Manchester Art School and it is evident that he was not wasting his time there for in 1868 his first drawings appear in the public press curiously named 'Will o' the Wisp.' His first exhibition picture was entered in Manchester Royal Institution in 1869 and it was then that he seemed to be set fair for an art career. He received an introduction to Thomas Armstrong of South Kensington Museum and proceeded to London to form a friendship that was to last a life-time. This was to bring him in contact with Mark Lemon, then editor of 'Punch,' who in turn introduced him to Henry Blackburn and the Staff of 'London Society.' His water colours and small oil paintings were, by this time, having a steady sale. His success with the London Illustrated Papers left him with the choice of giving up his situation at the bank and devoting himself to Art.

Contact with the Slade School under Mr. Poynter improved his style and his success was assured. The high light of his career was in 1878 when he agreed with Mr. Edmund Evans to illustrate some books for children. Failing health caused him to seek the better climate of Florida where he died on 12th February, 1886.

#### HAYES, FREDERICK WILLIAM. New Ferry, Cheshire. 1848-1918.

Very little is known of Hayes in his younger days other than he worked with a firm of Architects at Ipswich. He is known to have left London about 1870 where he had been a pupil of Henry Dawson.

It is recorded that he helped to found the Liverpool Water Colour Society. He exhibited at the Royal Academy 1872-1880 (6 works), at Suffolk Street, and also at the R.B.S.A. (Birmingham).

He worked mostly out-of-doors, painting direct from nature in thin oil colour (often being mistaken for water colour) and to achieve this he mixed his oil colour with turpentine and used white paper coated with size. This meant that he had to complete many of his works at one sitting. "Snowdon and Caernarvon from Llanddwyn Island" and "On the Colwyn Beddelert" show him at his best.

**GRIFFITHS, THOMAS.** Sale. 1855-1918.

Thomas Griffiths was born at Sale in 1855 and very little is known of this very capable artist other than the fact that he was on the staff of the "Graphic" for many years. His works always found favour with the Royal Academy. Unfortunately he became very deaf and not living in the age of deaf-aids he must have resigned himself to his handicap for nothing more is heard of him after he had moved to Bideford, Devon.

**GHENT, PETER.** Birkenhead. 1857-1911.

At a humble hairdresser's shop, 126, Chester Street, Birkenhead, was born one of Birkenhead's most promising and yet most disappointing sons. As a boy-apprentice hairdresser to his father, Peter erected an easel in the saloon and with no mean ability started to paint small pictures in the oil medium. Richard Bentley, who was principal of the Laird School of Art promptly took him in hand and ere long Ghent was producing landscapes that would have done credit to greater known masters of the art. He became one of the original members of the R.C.A., 1882, and continued until 1892. His "Nature's Mirror" presented to the Walker Art Gallery by Messrs. Malcolm Guthrie and Ald. T. W. Oakshott, bears testimony to his ability. Altogether 8 of his best works found their way home to the Walker Art Gallery. The Williamson Art Gallery has 6 others in its collection.

Alas, bad company, etc. destroyed a life full of artistic promise. Peter retired to North Wales, continued to paint some splendid water colours until a stronger water ended his days in desperate straits.

**BIRCH, SAMUEL JOHN LAMORNA.** Egremont, Chesh. 1869 to-date.

Lamorna Birch must be regarded as one of the most colourful of all Cheshire Artists. His work is always a joy to behold, full of sunshine and movement, even on the dullest of days. Birch's work is infectious. On leaving Egremont and Mother Red Cap's Cafe behind him we find him at Manchester. Lancashire did not interest him for long for he moved South into his beloved Cornwall. He was A.R.A., 1926, and was elected a full member in 1934. Travel where you will in Art Galleries and there you will find his paintings, not only in this country but also in Canada and the U.S.A.

**TUNNICLIFFE, CHARLES FREDERICK.** Macclesfield. 1901 to-date.

Tunncliffe must have made up his mind very early in life that he was to form his career in the Art world. On leaving school (St. James' School, Sutton), we find him attending the Manchester Art School 1915-1921. He was R.C.A. in 1921-1925 and soon afterwards was exhibiting at the Royal Academy, Manchester Academy, British Council Exhibitions, etc. An artist of all-round ability, his work is slowly finding its way into our Public Galleries. He is reproduced amongst the great in "History of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and Etchers, 1880-1930," page 259.

**HAY, JAMES HAMILTON.** Birkenhead. 1874-1916.

The second son of James Murdock Hay was educated at Birkenhead School and showed promise as an engraver and etcher. The Walker and the Williamson Art Galleries hold some of his work. He died suddenly at Heswall in 1916.

**BRADSHAW, LAURENCE HENDERSON.** Cheshire. 1899 to-date.

Bradshaw was educated at Liverpool University prior to being assistant to Frank Brangwyn and what better passport had any one to a life of Art. Bradshaw was, in turn, painter, sculptor and wood-engraver and already has as many honours as would satisfy the normal person for life, but a great deal more is still to be heard from him and his recreation—"change of occupation" cannot lead him into many more pastures of the field of Art not already trodden.

**SWANWICK, JOSEPH HAROLD, R.I., R.O.I., R.C.A.** Middlewich. 1866-1929.

Born in Middlewich in 1866, Harold Swanwick studied Art in Liverpool under Legros and Fred Brown at London. Later we find him in Paris and after finishing his studies he developed into a splendid Landscape Painter with a style entirely his own. He is an artist whom present day students could study with profit for his perspective, atmosphere and figure subjects always command respect. In 1907 he married Ethel Libiam Heatley, a water colour artist of some repute.

**KELLY, ROBERT G.** Birkenhead. Exhibiting 1853-1888.

**KELLY, ROBERT TALBOT, R.B.A., R.I., R.B.C.** 1861—

**KELLY, RICHARD BARRETT, R.I.** 1896 to-date.

To record the history of this Birkenhead family would be equal to writing the history of Art in Birkenhead over the last century. Robert George was a member of the Liverpool Academy 1856 and his works can be seen in both the Walker and the Williamson Art Galleries.

**STEER, PHILIP WILSON, O.M.** Birkenhead. Born 28th December, 1860, died 21st March, 1942.

When serving up a banquet it is considered correct to serve the good wine last—hence we shall conclude this record of 'Some Cheshire Artists' with the greatest of them all. D. S. MacColl says of him 'Philip Wilson Steer who by consent of his chief fellow artists was the leading English Painter of his time, died in

1942. His home town paid a lasting tribute to his memory when they presented an exhibition of 120 of his works during the Festival of Britain. England does not easily produce the Van Gogh or Toulouse Lautrec but it DID have Steer.

For those interested in this remarkable man, Philip Wilson Steer, let me recommend the work published by Faber and Faber "Life, work and setting of Philip Wilson Steer" by D. S. MacColl.

Steer's father was himself a painter of portraits, animals and landscapes. The Williamson Art Gallery has his "Symonds Yat" and the "Brook, Hanwood, Salop" in their collection. Steer's father was, in fact, one of those rare spirits, who before the days of the Arts Council and other forms of State aided encouragement for the Arts, kept alive the flame of interest and enthusiasm in his home town by arranging classes in painting at his home in Grange Mount, Birkenhead.

Other CHESHIRE ARTISTS to be noted.

TURTON, W. Whitchurch. 1830. R.A. (1).

CHETTLE, J. P. Sale. 1871.

CHEFFIELD, G. Wilmslow. 1873. R.A. (6).

WILLIAMS, T. H. Runcorn. 1903.

WHITCOMBE, S. Heaton Chapel.

WOLLASTON, C. Frodsham.

BLUNDELL, M. L. Wallasey. 1907.

DRABBLE, R. R. Bowden. 1876.

#### CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS

TRANSACTIONS OF THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS SOCIETY. VOL. I. 1953.

"SALE NEW HALL, CHESHIRE," by Edmund Ogden, B.A., F.L.A.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. VOL. LXII, 1950-51.

"CHESHIRE BELLS": PART III by J. W. Clarke.

"A SUBSIDY ROLL FOR THE HUNDRED OF MACCLESFIELD, A.D. 610," Edited by John T. Driver, B.A., B.Litt.

"SIR PETER LEICESTER'S PRECEPTS TO HIS SON," Edited by Elizabeth M. Halcron, B.A., B.Litt.

"THE ENCLOSURE OF COMMON LAND IN STOCKPORT," by Phyllis M. Giles, M.A.

"THE LIEUTENANCY AND THE MILITIA IN LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE IN 1745," by Rupert C. Jarvis, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

CHESTER AND NORTH WALES ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC SOCIETY. VOL. 41.

EXCAVATIONS AT HERON BRIDGE.

"A BRONZE WORKER'S HEARTH," by B. R. Hartley.

"A ROMAN DOCK AND BUILDINGS," by B. R. Hartley and K. F. Kaine.

"CHESTER CATHEDRAL IN THE 18TH CENTURY., PART I, 1701-1740, by the Ven. R. V. H. Burne.

"MOLLINGTON HALL," by J. W. Clarke.

"THE PRESENT BOUNDARIES OF ST. PETER'S PARISH, CHESTER," by A. F. Estelle Dyke.



# Reminiscences of Ashton on Mersey Bank

By L. M. ANGUS-BUTTERWORTH,  
M.A., F.R.G.S., F.S.A., Scot.

CLOSE to the river at Ashton-on-Mersey, in an area still devoted to farming and market-gardening, there is some land that stands comparatively high. This elevated site is occupied by the old parish church of St. Martin, and by Ashton New Hall to the south of the church.

According to tradition, the vicinity of the church was an ancient burial place of the Saxons from about 850 A.D., but there is no record of any church here until early in the 14th century. A local antiquary, Dr. Charles Renshaw, says of the Ashton Old Church that it "dates from 1304, when John de Carrington, Lord of the Manor, then living at Carrington and owner of a large part of the County of Cheshire, built the Church for Carrington, Ashton-upon-Mersey, and Sale."<sup>1</sup>

In point of fact, however, the head of the Carrington family in 1304 was Sir William de Carrington (1272-1334), who was knighted by Edward I when he regained Scotland by defeating Wallace at the battle of Falkirk on July 22nd, 1298. The next heir, Sir John de Carrington (c.1300-59), son of Sir William by his wife Anne, daughter of Sir Edmund Farnell, does not appear as a witness to grants and charters until 1323. He married Sibilla, who is stated by Randle Holme to have been the daughter of Alan de Rixton of Rixton, near Warrington, and grand-daughter of Sir John D'Anyers. Thus there is some doubt about which of the Carringtons was responsible for the foundation. Perhaps it is sufficient to say, as Dr. Renshaw does elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> that "St. Martin's Church was founded by the Carringtons of Carrington in 1304."

At the time of the foundation of St. Martin's, the Carringtons held the whole of Ashton, but they afterwards sold half of it to meet the expenses of a high appointment at Court held by Sir Michael de Carrington. This change is evident from a record at Dunham Massey, dated 1402, which Ormerod<sup>3</sup> quotes thus:—

"Georgius Carington chivaler tenet manerium suum de Carington, et medietatem villae de Ashton, et tertiam partem villae de Partington, faciendo liberum servitium pro danbus partibus feodi militis; ut per chartem antecessoribus dicti Georgii per Hamonem Massy militem factam; et reddendo per annum de stotho, alias dictum sherriff's tooth, septem denarios," etc.

Like other famous Cheshire buildings, St. Martin's Church was originally constructed of wood. The ancient timber fabric

<sup>1</sup> "SOME BYE-PATHS IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN, ASHTON-UPON-MERSEY," by Charles J. Renshaw, M.D., 1912.

<sup>2</sup> *OP. CIT.*, p. 28

<sup>3</sup> "HIST. OF COUNTY OF CHESTER," by Geo. Ormerod, LL.D., F.R.S., F.S.A., 2nd Edn. rev. by Thos. Helsby, 1882, Vol.1, p. 558.

served well for three centuries, but was completely wrecked in the great storm of 1704. Rebuilding was begun fairly promptly, but took ten years to complete. Ormerod<sup>4</sup> records that in his day "Over the north porch is the date 1714." The benefactors responsible for the expense of rebuilding were the Earl of Warrington and Sir Joshua Allen; the son of the latter in 1717 became Lord Allen. For the work, stone was brought from Lymm, and timber from the Mainwaring estate at Peover Superior. The "Five Minute Bell" is of this period, and has the inscription, "1716. Prosperity to this Parish. A.R." The initials are those of Abraham Rudhall, at whose foundry in Gloucester the bell was cast.

By 1742 the population of Ashton-on-Mersey had increased to a considerable extent and the Rector, the Rev. Thomas Whitaker, with the support of Dr. Peter Mainwaring, obtained a faculty for building an eastern gallery, and another in 1743 for a western gallery. Some of the beautiful tracery of the windows was hidden by these galleries, of which only the western one now remains.

In 1885-6 the church was rescated. The old oak from the square high-sided pews was used to panel the chancel walls to a high level. In 1887, to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, certain changes in the church were made by Rector Ray and Sir William Cunliffe Brooks, Bart. A Jubilee tower was erected at this time, having a wooden belfry with a ring of thirteen bells.

The old church has three interesting fountains, and other features of interest. There is the Volunteer Flag of the Napoleonic Wars, for example, under which is a Proclamation copied by Dr. Charles J. Renshaw, in 1872, from a manuscript then at Ashton Hall. This reads:

May 17, 1803  
Ashton-upon-Mersey & Sale Volunteers  
to be raised for the defence of  
His Most Gracious Majesty  
King George III  
and the Preservation of our Happy Constitution  
in Church and State

---

All Lads of true Cheshire Blood  
willing to show their Loyalty and  
spirit may repair to the Plough  
at Ashton-on-Mersey, or to Captain  
Moor, at Sale Hall, Sale, where  
they will receive high bounties and  
soldier-like entertainment.

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Now for a strike at the Mounseers, my boys!

<sup>4</sup> OP. CIT., Vol. I, p. 560.

King George for ever !

Huzza !

(Signed) John Moor, Capt.,

Sale Hall, Sale, Cheshire.

Robert Ray, Lieut.

Rob. Williamson, Lieut.

Raymond Richards mentions<sup>5</sup> that in 1803 excitement ran high in Ashton over the threatened invasion of Napoleon. A return had to be made of all men under the age of sixty. Inns had to certify the number of soldiers they could accommodate, and all the inhabitants had to give details of their horses, carts, guns and pikes for purposes of defence. The rifle range of the local Volunteer Corps was on Ashton Moss, near the Barracks Farm, which appears to have gained its name from the fact that their rifles and accoutrements were stored there when not in use. The drilling and shooting practice seems to have taken place mainly at week-ends.

One of the mural tablets in the church is in memory of Charles White, who died at Sale Priory in 1813 at the age of eighty-four. The inscription records that he was a "member of the Corporation of Surgeons and Fellow of the Royal Society, who after rendering himself eminent in his profession for the space of sixty years, by a dexterity and extent of knowledge scarcely exceeded by any of his contemporaries, retired to the enjoyment of rural and domestic felicity in the society of his family and friends at Sale within this Parish."

The oldest grave in the churchyard is one dated 1622. Some of the Registers are of interest, especially those of the 17th century, one of which reads as follows:—

"A.D. 1608 September, Margaret Barlow, gentle-woman, daughter unto Sir Alexander Barlow, knight, and Dame Elizabeth, his wife, was buried on the XX day of September. Anno Domini 1608, in the Chancel of the P'she Church of Ashton-upon-Mersey, by John Barret of Northenden. She was born in Withenshaw Hall the 11 day of September, 1607, baptised Oct."

By the lych-gate of the church stands a fine example of multiple wheeled stocks. So far as is known only two other sets of wheeled stocks exist in Cheshire. At one time there was also a pillory, which stood in the pillory field near the church.

Ashton New Hall, the home of the writer of these notes, stands on a site known to have been occupied by the principal residence of the area at least from the beginning of Stuart times, and in all likelihood much earlier. The present house, some of the walls of which are over three feet thick, was largely rebuilt in the reign of George III after fire. It has the character and restraint of the Georgian style of architecture at its best.

We have noticed that all the land in Ashton-on-Mersey,

<sup>5</sup> "OLD CHESHIRE CHURCHES," by Raymond Richards, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., 1947.

including what is now the Ashton New Hall property, was formerly held by the Carringtons, but that by the beginning of the 15th century changes had taken place. Ingham,<sup>6</sup> following Ormerod, says that "Ashton-on-Mersey in 1402 was held as to one half by Sir George Carrington."

More land passed by marriage from the Carringtons to other families, including a branch of the Masseys of Dunham Massey. Thus Ingham<sup>7</sup> notes that, "In the year 1411 a pardon or permission to marry was given to Robert, son and heir of Roger de Massey, and Margaret, daughter of 'the noble man, George de Caryngton, Knight' by Thomas, Bishop of Durham, under letters 'of happy memorial of Alexander VI. Pope, his true Leaden Bull, bulled sound and whole, and free from all voice and sinister suspect.'" The Masseys from this date held land in Ashton-on-Mersey.

Sixth in descent from Sir George Carrington was Jane, heiress of Sir John Carrington, who married in 1577 Sir George Booth, and carried lands in Ashton into the Booth family.<sup>8</sup> The Booths were afterwards created Earls of Warrington.

A branch of the original Carrington stock was seated for several generations at Shaw Hall, Flixton. From this line descended Mr. John Broyden Carrington (1858-1942) of Woodsgate Place, Sussex, uncle of the author, and Major the Rt. Hon. Alexander Rupert, 6th Lord Carrington, M.C., whose heir is the Hon. John Carington.

Dr. Renshaw mentions that the Williamson family were possessed of the Ashton New Hall estate from the time of James I. We have seen that Lieut. Robert Williamson was one of the Ashton-on-Mersey Volunteers in 1803.

The Rev. John Hunter, as recorded by Ogden,<sup>9</sup> married Sarah Stelfox, grand-daughter and "heiress of the owner of the Ashton Hall property, a lady of great parts. Mrs. Hunter was proud of Ashton Hall, where she lived. She used to say the bricks were made on the estate, the sand for mortar was dug from the estate, and the timber was cut from woods upon the estate. This lady was born at the beginning of the last century, and lived until 1884." She was a Tory of the old school, and delighted to tell of having shaken hands with Dorothy Vaudrey of the formerly moated Riddings Hall at Timperley. When Prince Charles Edward Stuart came to Manchester with his Highlanders, he held a Reception which Dorothy Vaudrey attended. When she curt-

6 "HISTORY OF ALTRINCHAM, BOWDON AND ASHTON-ON-MERSEY," by Alfred Ingham, c. 1896, p. 241.

7 *OP. CIT.*, p. 224.

8 "OLD CHESHIRE FAMILIES AND THEIR SEATS", by L. M. Angus-Butterworth, M.A., 1932, p. 38.

9 "RENSHAW'S HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF ST. MARTIN, ASHTON-ON-MERSEY, edited by Edmund Ogden, B.A., F.L.A., 2nd ed. 1950.

seyed and he had given her his hand to kiss, he lifted her up and kissed her on both cheeks. In recalling this event the lady used to say that she was not surprised at Flora Macdonald being in love with the prince, for he was so fascinating. Mrs. Hunter also saw the lavender silk dress that Dorothy wore at the presentation, which was kept as an heirloom. Another incident of the '45 was that in Ashton-on-Mersey the Rector's horses were requisitioned for the army of Prince Charles Edward.

It has been remarked that "Ashton Village still retains its fascination and goes its leisurely way, a little world apart from its younger but now bigger sister Sale." It is only during the last hundred years that the modern development of Sale has taken place; before that it was merely part of Ashton parish. The change began in 1849, when the railway came to Sale but not to Ashton-on-Mersey.

Old customs continued longer in Ashton than in most places, as it "trod peacefully through the centuries." One of the village events supported by Mrs. Hunter was the Wakes. This annual occasion was of importance, for when there were no shops it was the time at which household goods and clothing were renewed. The Wakes began with the raising of the maypole and a service at the old church. Country games of strength and skill were afterwards played. It was natural that at this happy time the youths and maidens should become companions, often remaining loyal for the remainder of their lives. It was always understood, however, that if they tired of each other they could change at the next wakes.

Renshaw records that "the fine old lady, Mrs. Hunter, was much interested in the well-being of the villagers, but lost her interest in the Wakes as the population of Ashton-on-Mersey increased. Her lands, shady and pleasant, were visited by too many of the lads and lasses, and invaded by visitors from the town, taking besides wild flowers, her primroses and anemones, white scented violets and cowslips, while the beautiful kingfishers were either destroyed or frightened away from their haunts, until none was left. And so, little by little the Wakes ceased to interest the old families, and now little is heard of them."

There are various indications that former occupiers of the Hall farmed the land round about it. On the north side, facing the church, extensive and capacious barns with handsome stone-slab roofs, showed the extent of the harvests that were gathered. The structure of these barns became so infirm that in 1946 they were largely demolished, except for one altered to serve as a garage. At one time a strange use was made of these outbuildings, for from the upper floor a watch was kept for body-snatchers. Shot-holes in the church door are said to have been fired from the circular windows of the lofts opposite.

On the South side of the house, at a good height, is a big

bell that was used to summon farm-workers from the fields at meal-times. It is rung from an upper landing on the main staircase. There is now no stabling remaining, but in 1945 a pair of spurs was dug up in the garden, with parts of the original leather straps still attached, and another odd spur was found in 1950.

Some of the flag stones in the kitchen are said to be old grave stones, including that of one Tom Jackson. A local woman told the present writer that when she was a child she lived at the Hall, as her father was the butler and her mother the house-keeper. The house was believed to be haunted—a belief still held by the villagers—and very strange noises were sometimes heard downstairs in the middle of the night. In particular my informant said that she well remembered that one night, after more uncanny noises than usual, her father declared that it was old Tom Jackson come for his gravestone.

One of the farms in Ashton-on-Mersey that retains some relics of former greatness is Gnatt Hall, once the residence of Dr. Peter Mainwaring, a connection of the Mainwarings of Peover Superior. He was on terms of close friendship with Dr. White of Sale Priory, one of the founders of the Manchester Royal Infirmary, whose mortuary tablet in the old Church has already been noticed, and was also a friend of Dr. Byrom of Manchester.

Dr. Mainwaring used Gnatt Hall as a country residence in the earlier half of the 18th century. He also built a town house in King Street, Manchester, a street that did not then open into Deansgate. He was a magistrate and a man of considerable consequence. When in 1745 the army of Prince Charles Edward was approaching Manchester, he exhorted the citizens to oppose it by any means in their power, to give the Duke of Cumberland the chance of overtaking the Highlanders. He was seen on horseback encouraging the people, and no doubt wished to prevent the looting of Manchester.

Mrs. Hunter left on record that a few days later, Dr. Mainwaring rescued two of Prince Charlie's officers in Ashton-on-Mersey. They had lost their way and were being roughly used by the villagers, who did not understand their Tartan dress. The Doctor took the two strangers to Gnatt Hall, hiding them in what was called the Priest's Hiding-place until they could be sent to Chester.

Dr. Mainwaring married a grand-daughter of Richard Massey, and was the brother-in-law of the Rev. Massey Malyn, Rector of the old church at Ashton-on-Mersey from 1717 to 1729. It is interesting to note that in 1781 Peter Mainwaring, M.D. and James Massey were jointly elected the first Presidents of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. The Doctor died in 1785 at the advanced age of 90.

Gnatt Hall was pulled down about the year 1800, and a farmhouse built out of the old material. The only part of the

old building remaining is the banqueting hall, which is now the barn.

From the old village of Ashton-on-Mersey, Carrington Lane leads to the remote village of Carrington, also without a railway, and until the 1950's having only oil lighting in the cottages. The present Carrington Hall is a substantial and solidly built farm house on comparatively high ground. The original hall here was on lower ground closer to the River Mersey, and was a black-and-white timber-framed construction. When it was demolished a generation ago a carved beam was saved and incorporated in a house known as the Hollies, close to Carrington Church. In the centre of this ancient oak beam is the coat of arms of the Carringtons, and along the length of it on either side is an elegant grape and vine leaf pattern. According to a very old notice of arms "Carrington of Carrington beareth sable, a bende Argent: on ye bende three lozenges of the field: and on his helme a Unicorn's head, sable in a crownet Argent."

The ways in Ashton-on-Mersey are all called Lanes. There is Ashton Lane, Church Lane, Chapel Lane, Green Lane, Hawthorn Lane, Carrington Lane, Buck Lane, and others. In Chapel Lane is what is probably the most ancient structure in the neighbourhood. This is the old pinfold, built of sandstone blocks and now forming the lower courses of a building of comparatively recent date. The pinfold was used for safe keeping of stray cattle after being rounded up, and for herding sheep prior to marking, at a time when most of the country here was open common land without other available enclosures.

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### THE CHESHIRE CAT

Our attention has been drawn to the following extract from an article by REECE WINSTONE, A.R.P.S., in C-T-C GAZETTE, SEPT., 1954.

"Here is one possible origin of the Cheshire Cat; the coat of arms of John Catherall of Chester, dated 1304, included a cat. Catherall dealt ruthlessly with poachers and robbers in his capacity as Forester of Mara, and his grin indicated extreme anger. He died, grinning, in the defence of Chester, and was buried in the City Walls. Thereafter, Cheshire farmers made their cheeses in the shape of a grinning cat, and it is not unlikely that Dodgson too was attracted by the tale."

# The Prayer Book of The Rev. George Travis

By ANNE ANDERSON

**A**N interesting book belonging to an equally interesting man came to light during a recent spring cleaning of the vestry of the church of St. Barnabas, Bromborough. It was the Service Book of the Rev. George Travis, Vicar of Eastham and Bromborough. Bound in calf, 16 inches long and 10½ inches wide, printed in bold clear type with the old form of "s" used, it is very dry and rather damaged. It was a product of the University of Oxford printers, Wright and Gill, and was published in 1770, at the price of twelve shillings, unbound.

The order of Evening Prayer appears to have been more frequently used than that for the Morning. The Communion Service and the Burial Service both bear signs of much use. The Prayers for the King and the Royal Family contain the names of "Our Most Gracious Sovereign Lord King George (George III), our Gracious Queen Charlotte and His Royal Highness, George, Prince of Wales."

There are several Services not contained in present-day Prayer books; "A Form of Thanksgiving to be used yearly upon the fifth day of November for the happy deliverance of King James the First and the Three Estates of England from the most traitorous (sic) and bloody intended massacre by Gunpowder." "A Form of Prayer with Fasting to be used yearly on the thirtieth day of January, being the day of the martyrdom of the Blessed King Charles the First" and "A Form of Thanksgiving to Almighty God for having put an end to the Great Rebellion by the Restitution of the King and Royal Family . . . . on the twenty-ninth of May in the year 1660. In memory thereof, that day in every year is by Act of Parliament approved to be for ever kept holy." A further "Form of Prayer with Thanksgiving . . . . to be used every year . . . . upon the twenty-fifth of October, being the day on which His Majesty began his happy reign." Following these Forms is a paragraph bearing the Royal Arms and expressing the King's approval.

The Constitution and Canons Ecclesiastical are set out in great detail. The Psalms are printed in English metre as well as in the usual form. The Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat, Creeds and Commandments are also given in metre. A printed plate on the cover bears the words:

BROMBOROW  
G. TRAVIS A. M.  
MINISTER  
A.D. 1775



The Rev. George Travis came from a Rochdale family and studied at Manchester Grammar School. Some of his fellow-students rose to high positions in the Church and State. In 1761 he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, and in 1765 he appeared as the Chancellor's Senior Medallist, that is, he was the best classical scholar of his year. In the same year he was ordained Deacon by Bishop Young of Norwich, and Priest, nine months later, by the Bishop of Lincoln.

In 1766, he was nominated by the Crown (to which the presentation had lapsed) to the Vicarage of Eastham. At the time of his appointment, the entire value of the benefice was little more than £30 a year. The preceding Vicars had "lived for the greater part of their lives on charity and died insolvent." "Unable," says the Rev. Travis "to assert the rights of the Vicarage, they bartered them away . . . or abandoned them through a despair of enforcing their payment."

The new Vicar was resolved to vindicate these rights to the utmost, having first made himself a master of the Law of Tithe, on which he became an eminent authority. He commenced proceedings against the principal land-owners in the parish, who, headed by Sir William Stanley of Hooton, leagued themselves together against him. Single-handed, the Vicar carried on the contest. In spite of the strength and wealth of his opponents, Vicar Travis succeeded in defeating them, and after spending some £2,000 of his money in the struggle, he had the satisfaction of raising the value of the living to over £100 a year at that period.

From 1767 the Rev. G. Travis held the perpetual curacy of BROMBOROUGH, the annual value of which was then about £13. The living was held in conjunction with Eastham through nearly the whole of the century. In 1783, this busy priest was made a Prebendary of Chester and three years later was appointed Archdeacon. His literary abilities, notably his "Letters to Gibbon" evoked by an offensive passage in Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" brought him before the notice of the learned public. In 1787, the Archdeacon was appointed to the Rectory of Handlev, which he held with his other preferments till his death in 1797.

There is a monument to his memory in the north aisle of the Choir of Chester Cathedral with a profile portrait and an inscription which reads:—

"He was a man whose extensive learning, active mind and generous heart were assiduously exerted in the service of religion, his country and his neighbour."

# Cheshire Folk Songs

By DOROTHY FURBUR, A.R.C.M.

IT is generally thought that Cheshire is not rich in folk-song but over fifteen years of research have proved otherwise to me.

Singing and lecturing at Women's Institutes, Churches, Guilds, etc., very often in quiet little Cheshire villages where the old Folk Songs are still remembered, many an old person carried back in time as they listen to a snatch of song, remember another, or give me more verses to an unfinished one. We go back generations, to times when the world was romantic when the warmth of the sun, the song of the birds, the gentle patter of rain, awakened a phrase in the mind of the countryman, quickened his pulse rhythm, sparkled on his tongue and was given voice. In the fire-light after the days work was done others would take up the phrase, toss it about, add verses, enlarge the story, and sing it the next day to their children.

The oldest song I have found so far seems to be—SONG OF THE NUN'S OF CHESTER—a Carol which can be seen in the British Museum in the original manuscript and dated 1425. The nuns of St. Mary's Convent, Chester, gave vent to their womanly instincts as they sang round the Crib on Christmas Eve:

“Qui creavit coelum . . . Lully, Lully, Lu.  
Nascitur in stabulo . . . By, by, by, etc.”

Having stated the Nun's Carol to be the oldest song, I wonder, perhaps our Souling Songs are older than that, we cannot be sure.

The Abbey Vale Royal in Delamere Forest was founded in 1277 and the monks of the Abbey on the Eve of All Souls Day called at the houses of the faithful exhorting them to pray for the souls of the departed and were given a gift for the Abbey and refreshments, probably “Parkin” included.

The first Souling Song is of pre-reformation character, more of a chant and sung in the lovely key of E minor.

Parties of youths locally known as “Soul Cakers,” visited the houses in the neighbourhood singing this song, they were disguised in long black cloaks and here I give you the chorus:

“A Soul, a Soul Cake,  
Please good Missis, a Soul Cake,  
An apple, a pear, a plum or a cherry,  
Any good thing to make us all merry,  
One for Peter, two for Paul,  
Three for Him who made us all”

At Comberbach, Tarvin, Tarporley and other Cheshire villages I have heard another Souling Song, much gayer, sung in F major:

“Here we come, three jolly good hearty lads  
And we’re all in one mind  
This night we come a-souling,  
Good nature to find,  
And we hope you’ll remember  
That’s it’s Soul Caking time.”

How shocked we should be if we heard our choir in Chester Cathedral singing a jolly song on Easter Monday whilst the Bishop, Deans and other clergy played at ball and danced at the commencement of the Antiphone, but they did at one time. To-day in Wallasey, Wirral, on Easter Monday I have heard the children singing:

“Please, Mrs. Whiteleg,  
Please to give us an Easter Egg  
If you won’t give us an Easter Egg  
Your hens will lay all addled eggs  
And your cocks lay all stones.”

Resting one sunny May Day in the field where the Knutsford Queen had just been crowned, I noticed nearby a group of little girls dancing and singing a lovely Morris dance:

“Morris dance is a very pretty tune  
I can dance in my new shoon  
My new shoon they are so good,  
I could dance it if I would, etc.”

In Heswall village where I live I have heard boys singing a little bird-tenting song:

“Bird away, bird away,  
Take a grain, leave a grain,  
And don’t come again to-day.”

They do not know that their parents and grand-parents sang this song to scare away marauding birds from their crops.

At Acton Bridge girls still sing and play “Green Gravel,” a song also heard in Lancashire but as the two Counties are adjacent we often find an intermingling of folk-tunes and games.

Who would have thought that sitting quietly on Mobberley railway station awaiting the train to Chester after lecturing to the members of the Womens’ Institute, I would be given the long lost verses of our Cheshire Marling Song?

Sitting near me on the seat was an old farmer, who in typical country fashion asked what I, a stranger, was doing in Mobberley. On receiving his answer he then said “I can sing you a song you wouldn’t dare sing to any women’s gathering,” and straight way burst into song.

However, a little alteration here and there and all is well, and I am, and I hope future generations will be also, eternally glad that the old man met me that memorable day. There are seven verses in all but here I give you the chorus:

" For them as loves a good turmit,  
 We are the boys to fey a pit  
 And then yoe good marl out of it  
 He whom we work for opes his door  
 And gies to us of work galore.  
 For this was always Marlers law  
 Whoo-ooop, Whoo-ooop, Woo-o-o."

This short article cannot give you all the songs I have collected or the music either, but if your memories of old Cheshire Songs have been revived in any way and you feel with me the love of our old music and customs, help me, I beg of you, to preserve the old songs before they die for ever.

" Music, when soft voices die,  
 Vibrates in the memory."

SHELLEY.

## Review of Books

### COLLECTED POEMS and HOMAGE TO CHESHIRE

BY HEDLEY LUCAS

Lovers of poetry ought to be aware of two books of poems published by John Sherratt & Son of Altrincham at 10/6d. and 7/6d. respectively. They are 'Collected Poems 1933-53' and 'Homage to Cheshire' (now in its 5th edition) by Hedley Lucas.

Hedley Lucas, a Barrister of Gray's Inn, was for fourteen years engaged in voluntary hospital service and for seventeen years was the Master of the Manchester Royal Exchange, both appointments of a highly practical nature. This business man turned his thoughts in his leisure time to matters far removed from the world of administration and commerce. He evidently believed in the old adage "A change is as good as a rest." His fertile mind expressed its thoughts in poetry.

There is a freshness about his verse that gives it a distinctive character and it covers a very wide range; nature, philosophy, religion; humanity and architecture are all drawn on for themes. He is a great lover of the countryside and of his fellow men, both poor and rich. Some of his verse is lyrical and simple, some emotional and deeply philosophic. Occasionally its conciseness is somewhat puzzling and its diction a little obscure.

Of 'Homage to Cheshire' all lovers of the County should possess a copy. Hedley Lucas's knowledge of his native shire is geographically and historically profound. Apart from the value of the book as poetry, the reader will learn much about the County from the subjects the volume embraces or will have recalled to his mind features and facts about the County he has most likely forgotten. A County that evokes such emotional feeling and philosophic expression in the beholder is fortunate to have a Hedley Lucas.

## NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF WOODCHURCH

BY THE REV. B. H. C. TURVEY

No wonder it is out of print already. Printed on art paper and copiously illustrated the book gives evidence of careful research, compiling skill, and the great love the writer has for the venerable old church of Woodchurch and the story of the parish and parishioners for thirteen and a half centuries.

The early records of the parish are reviewed and its ancient charities set forth. A detailed account is given of the church fabric and its furnishings. Its memorials are brought to life by the author and the puzzles of its dedication and its churchyard are solved, very cleverly.

One of its chapters gives the reader an interesting lesson in heraldry, the various hatchments being fully explained. All the rectors have a place in the book. The story of the patronage of the church is told until it passed into the Robin family in 1861, from which date until 1931 three Robins were rectors. The author became rector in 1947 and in the seven years of his incumbency besides his onerous clerical duties, has found time to amass the most interesting material that makes this account a perfect example of the history of a parish.

May every parson read it and emulate the example of Mr. Turvey. His scholarship, his skill in presentation and his devotion to his cure make this book a model of what a parish history should be. Lucky is the reader, who can secure a copy !

A.O.



## LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES

- The Cheshire Community Council, Bishop Lloyd's House, 53, Watergate Row, Chester:  
General Secretary, N. G. Cottam.  
Chairman, Local History Committee: A. Oakes.  
Editor, Cheshire Historian: G. B. Leach.
- The Standing Conference of Local History:  
26, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.
- The Council for British Archæology:  
10, Bolton Gardens, London, S.W.5.  
Regional Secretary: Dr. J. D. Bu'lock, Chemistry Department, The University, Manchester, 13.
- Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings:  
Local Correspondent: The Curator, Grosvenor Museum, Chester.
- Macclesfield and District Field Club:  
Miss F. M. Chapman, 68, Chestergate, Macclesfield.
- The Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archæological and Historical Society:  
The Ven. Archdeacon R. V. H. Burne, M.A., 5, Abbey Street, Chester.
- The County Archivist, Chester: Cheshire Record Office:  
Major F. G. C. Rowe, The Castle, Chester.
- The City Archivist, The Town Hall, Chester:  
Miss M. E. Finch.
- The Grosvenor Museum, Chester.  
Graham Webster, Curator.
- Workers' Educational Association:  
Frank Garstang, 62, Hope Street, Liverpool.
- The Bromborough Society:  
Mrs. J. D. Jones, 6, Western Avenue, New Ferry.
- Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society:  
H. Clegg, 10, Granary Lane, Worsley, Walkden, Nr. Manchester.
- Liverpool Geological Society:  
R. G. C. Bathurst, Dept. of Geology, The University, Liverpool, 3.
- Record Society of Lancashire & Cheshire:  
R. Sharpe France, Lancashire Record Office, County Hall, Preston.
- Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire:  
G. Chandler, 202, Pitville Avenue, Liverpool, 18.
- Ancient Monuments Society:  
Rev. W. E. Clarke, Rector of Gawsworth, Macclesfield.
- English Church History Society:  
Francis Goodacre, Lime Tree House. Aughton, Ormskirk, Lancashire.

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A MAP of CHESHIRE North West from LONDON  
*Humbly Invented by W. Hill the Cart of Chalmers by Lord Lewt. of the County*

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THE CHESHIRE DAIRY, BY STELLA DAVIES . . . . .	1
I WONDER, No. 2, BY ROBIN ALLEN . . . . .	8
CHESHIRE ANTIQUITIES IN THE MANCHESTER MUSEUM, BY FRANK WILLET . . . . .	13
THE ARCHÆOLOGIST IN THE FIELD (PART VI): Excavations, BY GRAHAM WEBSTER . . . . .	16
CHESTER EXCAVATIONS, 1955 . . . . .	22
CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS	23
CHESHIRE WORTHIES, No. 3: Bishops of Chester, BY THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE . . . . .	24
OLD FASHIONED FLOWERS, BY CAPTAIN C. HAWKES . . . . .	29
THE WETTENHALL PARISH BOOK, BY MAURICE H. RIDGWAY . . . . .	34
ST. BERTOLIN AND CHESHIRE, BY THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE . . . . .	42
AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY IN WEST KIRBY, BY CLIFFORD BRATT . . . . .	44
BOOK REVIEWS, BY ARTHUR OAKES . . . . .	46
. . . . .	48

S AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES

.ES . . . . . INSIDE BACK COVER

# The Cheshire Dairy

By STELLA DAVIES, M.A., PH.D.



**D**AIRY farming was expanding in Cheshire from the late sixteenth century onward. Specialisation on cheese resulted in a surplus for export from the county as far as the London market. Cheese factors, who bought the cheese wholesale from the producers, were operating as early as the reign of Elizabeth.<sup>1</sup> Cheese and butter were sold in the local markets in the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century, the majority, perhaps almost all the farms on the plain where more than six cows were kept were managed primarily for cheese making. Cheese for the market was the equivalent in Cheshire of the "cash crop" in other districts in that it provided money for rent and for the purchase of goods not produced on the farm. Thus farmers would offer the failure to sell their cheese as the reason for not having paid their rent when it was due and this was allowed to be reasonable. On many Cheshire farms "the best cheese" formed part of the rent, and the rent of short leases was regulated by the price of cheese.

Distance, and the difficulties of road transport from Cheshire resulted in a long sea voyage coastwise for goods for the London market. Until the late eighteenth century there were no great centres of population near to Cheshire. Thus, perishable goods would be difficult, if not impossible, to market. Corn is a hazardous crop to harvest in the damp climate of the north-west. Cattle "on the hoof" were precluded by distance unless the expenses of fattening them after the journey was entailed. The ill drained Cheshire pastures of the plain were not suitable for sheep. Cheese, though not as stable as corn or wool, travels reasonably well and is even improved to a certain extent by keeping. Cheese, therefore, became the staple of the Cheshire farmers' economy.

"It is supposed in general," wrote Arthur Young in 1770, "that the famous Cheshire cheese depends more on the quality of the land than on any particular receipt." There may have been some truth in this but there was none in his following statement, "In general, the worst land makes the best cheese." The farms on the salt beds of mid Cheshire were considered to be the best for cheese production and on this land Holland thought that the average weight of cheese per cow per lactation was about 300 lbs. In Wirral, where the pastures were poor and overstocked with inferior cattle, the average was not more than 2 cwt. Averages, however, were not a reliable guide for assessing the performance of cattle. The quantity of cheese produced per cow varied between 50 lbs. and 500 lbs.; the average of 300 lbs. was obtained by including the cheese made from the milk of all the cows in

<sup>1</sup> ACTS OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL, 1587-8, pp. 372-3.

the dairies, even "slinkers, or such as had cast their calves." The lower average in Wirral was due to the absence of green food in the winter diet of the cows.

The process of cheese making had been established empirically by long practice. The rules governing the main processes varied little either in time or from farm to farm. It was in the attention to detail that the art of good cheese-making depended and here all depended on the judgment of the cheese-maker, for neither quantities nor temperatures were measured. "The dairy maid's elbow is the best thermometer" and "A dairy maid's thermometer is at her finger tips" are both local proverbs. Holland recommended that an experimental farm should be established by the Board of Agriculture "that something like scientific principles might be discovered" which would ensure uniformity in the quality of the cheese produced in Cheshire. This was badly needed, for though most Cheshire cheese was good, even "famous," some batches were very bad and the reason for this was not known. No experimental farm was established in Cheshire during the period examined, but the Cirencester Agricultural College, founded in 1845, had a dairying department.

The rennet for coagulating the milk into curds was made on the farms by infusing the stomach of a sucking calf after the stomach had been pickled in brine. Before the nineteenth century, a piece of the pickled stomach was infused for every batch of cheese. During the nineteenth century the custom increased of infusing quantities of calf stomach in one operation and treating the resultant liquor with salt to ensure keeping.

The milk from two milkings was normally used for one batch of cheese, though as the milk flow slackened in the autumn, the milk from as many as six milkings would be used to make a cheese. It was probably the souring of the older milk so used that produced the yeasty flavour and smell that so puzzled the producers. On large farms, of which there were few in Cheshire, cheese was made twice a day during the height of the milking season. As the cheeses were made from varying quantities of milk, they varied in size, normally decreasing towards the end of the summer, and the cheeses made in the smaller dairies were smaller than the cheeses made in the larger dairies. Cheeses, some of which weighed as little as half a hundredweight and some of which weighed over two hundredweight, were shipped down the Weaver Navigation. The turning of the larger cheeses was sometimes done by a male assistant towards the end of the 18th century, though this innovation was resented by the dairy maids and appears to have been discontinued soon after its inception. When Holland reported in 1808, the turning of the cheeses was performed "almost universally" by women. The best weight for a cheese was considered to be 60 lbs. The majority of the cheeses produced in Cheshire would be about that weight or a little over, for most of the cows were in herds of from twelve to

sixteen in number. The turning of cheese under one hundred-weight would present little difficulty to a practised hand, and even the heavier cheeses were turned by women "with ease." Nevertheless, dairy women suffered severely from the results of over exertion and from the long hours which were worked during the summer months.<sup>2</sup>

The process of cheesemaking has been described in great detail by Holland in his *General View of the Agriculture of Cheshire* (1808) and need not be repeated here. Holland's account repeated the earlier description by Wedge with added comments by Joseph Fenna and a few other local persons. The processes of cheese making and of other dairy products remained substantially the same until recently. In the absence of scientific knowledge of the theory of converting milk into cheese, much depended on the skill of the operative. The farmer's wife who generally made the cheese or, on the larger farms, supervised the dairy was, according to Caird, "the most important person in the establishment." Mrs. Poyser's claim in *Adam Bede* to be consulted by her husband and the squire because "I save half the rent and make the other half" shows the consciousness of this, even on a farm not entirely concerned with cheese making. Apologies for the non-payment of rent were sometimes accompanied by the explanation that the cheese was unsold. "My mother now has a new dairy maid and I hope the cheese will be better" added Mathers of Wettenhall.

In a letter to Admiral Tollemache, written in 1824, asking him to intercede in a family quarrel, Samuel Brassey writes "The woman I am about to marry . . . is one of unblemished character and of a very respectable family and with as good a property as I have and she is one of the best cheese makers in the parish." The young lady's cheese had sold for 14s. a cwt. more than the cheese made by Brassey's mother and her skill, Brassey thought, "would mean an extra £30 a year to me." Mrs. Brassey was against the marriage and would not agree to living in the same house as the young couple. Samuel's pride in the young lady's superiority would exacerbate the dispute.

The proportion of women employed in the dairy to the number of cows varied, according to the reporters on Cheshire agriculture, in different parts of the county and probably from farm to farm. On the medium and smaller farms, work other than dairying was included in the dairymaid's duties. This could be farm work or employment in the manufacture of textiles. This latter alternative was general on all farms during the winter. One woman to ten cows seems to have been the average proportion. Allowing an average of 300 lbs. of cheese per cow, about one and a half tons of cheese would be made by each dairymaid. Good dairymaids on well managed farms made much more cheese

<sup>2</sup> REPORT FROM THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN AGRICULTURE, 1843. XII.

than this. A prize was awarded in 1801 for three tons four hundredweight of cheese made by one woman in one season.

The dairyhouses were floored with cobble stones on beaten earth and were roofed with thatch. Many of these were replaced or reconstructed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. New materials, such as flag stones and slates were coming into general use and these materials were used for improving the dairies. The necessity for keeping milk cool to avoid souring was understood and there were complaints that the new slated roofs were not so good for this purpose as thatched roofs. The connection between dirt and souring was beginning to be realised, certainly in the nineteenth century, though the meticulous cleanliness, now known to be necessary, was difficult to reach in the absence of running water laid on to the buildings and with the pervious materials, such as wood and stone which were used for dairy utensils. The cast iron "set pots" or boilers which were supplied by Dales of Great Warford with the furnaces must also, when corroded by the lactic acid in the milk, have been difficult to keep clean. These furnaces and boilers were used to heat the milk when it had not been immediately curded after milking in order to raise it to the temperature necessary for the rennet to act.

During the summer months it was difficult to make good cheese from milk which was more than one day old, so cheese was made on Sunday as on any other day. This circumstance was alleged by cheese-makers to be the reason for non-attendance at Church. In Victorian England observance of the Sabbath was a matter of great concern. In 1841, the Marquis of Cholmondeley "with truly Christian liberality, offered a very handsome premium to the best dairy of cheese, made within the county, upon condition that no portion of it was made on the sabbath." The cheese-makers were convinced that cheese made on a Monday from Saturday's milk would be inferior in quality to cheese made with fresh milk even if curding could be avoided when the older milk was heated. The Reverend J. Armitstead, Vicar of Sandbach, made experiments on his home farm in order to devise a method of cheese-making that would eliminate or reduce the amount of work needed in the dairy on Sundays. Armitstead published the results of his experiments with hints from "sabbath keeping farmers' wives" in a pamphlet which was widely distributed. The alternating piety and commonsense in the dialogue between an imaginary "clergyman" and "Mr. and Mrs. Fairman" is interesting and amusingly naive. Several expedients were suggested, such as salting the curds on Sunday and adding them to Monday's curds. The vicar saw clearly, however, that the best solution would be to improve the dairies and install running water in them in order to facilitate cleanliness and coolness. Farmers were advised to ask their landlords either to provide better buildings or to provide the materials which would enable the farmers to improve their buildings themselves. Such requests, thought the vicar,

would not be refused "for so worthy an object" as an increase in the observance of the sabbath. Whether as the result of the vicar's campaign, or as part of the general recognition of the connection between hygienic conditions and good results, dairies in Cheshire were improved during the 1840's, though William Palin of Stapleford could report in 1845 many examples of unsuitable buildings. His own were models of the best contemporary practice. They were built in the early nineteenth century; they are still in use and still good.

Those indefatigable collectors of information concerning agriculture, the writers of the Dorfold minutes (1803-1821), recorded many hints about cheese making supplied to them by their more expert tenants or tenants' wives. They commended the practice of one dairy or chided the careless methods of another, encouraging production by disseminating information of the large amounts of cheese per cow obtained on well managed farms and urging emulation on the less skilful. Thus, Blanthern of Hampton, in 1819, was feeding his cows on turnips in winter. This kept them in such good health that they started the summer season at an advantage, and his mother was able to make two cheeses a day of 80 lbs. each, which was "much more" than before. Mrs. Fenna, of Tilstone Hall, had obtained the highest price paid in the neighbourhood in 1811. She recommended that the cheeses should be tightly bound as "once it swells at the sides, it never recovers." Mr. Sudworth of Stanlow had been obliged, in the same year, to accept a lower price for his cheese because he kept it too long.

The normal procedure of marketing cheese was to sell the whole season's production to cheese factors who disposed of it in London, the Midlands and, increasingly in the nineteenth century in the growing industrial towns to the north and east of the county. In the eighteenth century the cheese was carried by land carriers or by farmers themselves to the ports from whence it was shipped. The agitation that accompanied the proposals to improve Cheshire waterways and so eliminate some land carriage "produced one of the finest crops of pamphlets of any contemporary navigation scheme."<sup>3</sup> Many of these pamphlets presented the objections of the cheese carriers. Cheese destined for London went down the Dee from the Port of Chester and accounted for "at least nine tenths of the exports from Chester."<sup>4</sup> Some cheese was carried by land to the Trent and from thence by water to Hull and London. Cheese was also carried by barges from Frodsham to Liverpool, there to be re-shipped to London and other markets; it was carried by land to Manchester and the surrounding towns from Northwich despite the availability of the Weaver and Irwell navigations. The greatest proportion of cheese from the southern and middle districts of Cheshire was still being sent to London in

<sup>3</sup> Willan, T. S., *THE NAVIGATION OF THE RIVER WEAVER*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *THE CASE OF THE CHEESE MONGERS*. 1732.

the early nineteenth century, but most of the cheese made in the north and east of the county was being sent to the local markets. After the Napoleonic wars, when cheese was difficult to sell, cheese was sent to Heywards in St. Mary's Gate, Manchester, from the farms on the estates managed from Dorfold Hall, by the good offices of Henry Tomkinson. Heywards paid 88s. a cwt. in 1818, which was 8s. per cwt. more than the London factors were offering. This better price may have been the result of good bargaining by Tomkinson, for the minute concluded "Mr. Garnet sold 70 tons of cheese to Biddys of Manchester for 75s." (per cwt.). The dependence of Cheshire cheese sellers on the cheese factors was remarked and deplored by Wade in 1794. The marketing of Cheshire cheese awaits further investigation. Some cheese was marketed directly to the customer by the producer, especially from the hill farms in the Macclesfield Hundred, though not apparently in any great quantity since cheese was brought into the area. The proportion of cheese sold wholesale to retailers by producers is unknown and would be difficult, if not impossible to estimate. It must have been great.

None of the reporters on Cheshire agriculture wastes much space on describing the production of butter in Cheshire. In estimating the product of a cow, Young allocated £6 10s. 0d. to the value of cheese produced per annum and only £1 to the value of butter. Normal practice seems to have been to take a small quantity of cream from each "meal" of milk,<sup>5</sup> about one pint from twenty gallons, and use this cream for butter-making, leaving the remainder in the milk to be used for cheese-making. When Holland visited Cheshire, butter was also churned from whole milk or whey. Holland was not impressed by the haphazard methods of butter making in Cheshire, which was subordinate to the production of cheese. Butter to supply the needs of the farmer's household was made on every farm; the large number of holdings under ten acres in the county suggests a domestic supply of butter to some, at least, of their occupiers. This would certainly happen where the holdings were occupied by the well-to-do, who, even in the towns, often kept a cow or two for domestic use. The industrial workers in the textile towns cannot have been able to afford much butter and apparently substituted the cheaper commodity, cheese. Butter does not keep as well as cheese and was, therefore, less suitable, under contemporary transport facilities, for long distance marketing. These factors would account, in part, for the absence of a large butter production in Cheshire.

Butter was churned by hand, a laborious process, but unlike cheese making, only requiring to be done twice a week. It was unpopular work and devolved where possible on the "bov." Towards the end of the 18th century small water wheels and wheels driven by horses or donkeys were introduced to lighten the labour of churning, but Holland had only "met with one farmer" who

<sup>5</sup> The product of one milking of the herd.

possessed one. Whey butter made from the whey which was pressed out of the cheese was made on Cheshire farms and was sold a little cheaper than butter made from cream or whole milk. The residual liquor, which cannot have contained much nutriment, was drunk by the farm servants, sold to neighbouring cottagers or fed to pigs.

The value of cheese in the economy of Cheshire farms was stated by Caird to be between two thirds and three-quarters of the value of the total product of the farm. Owing to the insufficiency of contemporary farm accounts, it is impossible to check this estimate, though it can perhaps be accepted as not improbable. The value of cheese in the economy was of sufficient importance to ensure that most of the improvements in Cheshire agriculture, during the period examined, were directed towards increasing the cheese production. Because the amount of open field arable was negligible, this could be done without any radical changes in organisation, technique or personnel. The small to medium individual farm, employing little or only family labour and producing cheese as a staple commodity, was and still is characteristic of the county. The new farms, established on the commons, waste and moss rooms after enclosure, were an extension of the same pattern and thus increased the area of cultivation without alteration of the existing agrarian arrangement. Improved techniques in cultivations and management such as the growing of winter fodder and pasture leys were undertaken primarily to improve the milk supply. They were easily, though slowly, assimilated by contemporary farm practice, because their adoption was determined by individual decisions and necessitated no great changes in the lay-out of the farms. The social grouping of the farming community remained substantially unaltered because of the absence of alteration in organisation and because the dairy farm could be economically managed as a small unit. The increased cultivations which resulted in the increased production of cheese and the manufacture of that increased production caused a demand for more labour than could easily be found owing to the proximity of the industrial areas. The labour force, therefore, was in a relatively strong position and maintained or even improved its standard of life. The industrial areas provided an expanding market which stimulated increased production and offered a more easily accessible alternative for the sale of cheese, than London, to which most of the cheese had previously been sent. The significant factors, therefore, which influenced the development of Cheshire agriculture, were the presence of individual farms, the production of cheese as a staple commodity, and improved marketing facilities. These factors and their interaction ensured an expanding production without the disruption that accompanied agrarian improvement in other districts.



# I Wonder

No. 2

BY ROBIN ALLEN

ONE of the great difficulties about History is that we take what we are taught at school too much for granted. Twenty years ago, Richard III was looked upon as a wicked, misshapen murderer whereas today there exists a Society formed for the defence of Richard's reputation. I wonder which is right. Personally, I am inclined towards Richard but even more do I wonder how many of the stories were put out as a form of propaganda to discredit the opponents of those in authority. For example, was James I of England really the son of Mary Queen of Scots, or is it true that Mary's child died in the first week of its life and another baby was substituted to ensure inheritance? Certainly, James I of England and VI of Scotland bore little resemblance to his Stuart forebears; the gay and gallant James IV and James V of Scotland or, indeed, his mother Mary Queen of Scots.

"A slobbering lout whose tongue was too big for his mouth." The man the French King called "the wisest fool in Christendom"—was he really a Stuart? James V of Scotland his grandfather, when dying, said that the Crown of Scotland had come with a girl and would go with a girl; it would seem that it also came with uncertainty and went with uncertainty, at any rate, so far as the Stuart Rule of England. I wonder if James III, the Old Pretender, was really the son of James II and Mary of Modena, or if the story that he was smuggled into the Palace in a warming pan is true. Beyond personal bravery, a notable possession of all the Stuarts, the Old Pretender was a dull fellow, he lacked the charm of his uncle, Charles II, and seems to have had not even the ability to conjure up the devotion which his father, James II, inspired in the Navy. The Old Pretender's abortive attempt to invade England in 1715 reads almost pathetically; it was so pitifully organised but the '45 was a different matter. Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, had all the Stuart charm, coupled with the gaiety and courage which captured the heart of Scotland and still inspires the Society of the White Rose.

"Charlie is my Darling, my Darling, my Darling,  
"Charlie is my Darling, my Prieux Chavalier."

Perhaps he inherited it all from his mother. She was one of the best matches for a monarch among all the young princesses in Europe. Maria Clementina, grand-daughter of John Sobieski, the hero King of Poland, was a young lady of strong character, resolute and courageous as befitted her lineage, and she is described by one who knew her as "without possessing the lustre of great beauty yet uniting endless attractions in her person. She is ob-

liging, compassionate, and beneficent. Her piety is deep-seated, and in truth she leads the life of a saint." In a letter written later to a friend she admits to having fallen in love with an ideal and married a man she had never seen "to help in his misfortunes.'

Clearly, Charles Edward must have inherited some spark from her yet it must have been an individual spark for his younger brother, Cardinal York, seems to have taken after his father.

Cheshire has a very real piece of wonderment in regard to the Young Pretender. The records show that the Prince arrived in Manchester on the 29th of November. He is recorded as being at Stockport on the 30th where he waded across the river, "waded up to his waist," and he arrived at Macclesfield on the afternoon of the 1st of December. That seems reasonable—but wait. In a Book of Reminiscences written by the Rev. Henry Green called "Knutsford and its Tradition" we find the following. Speaking of Knutsford he says:—

"A not unreasonable surmise may be that the Pretender himself privately passed through or near the town, for it is almost certain that he had an interview at Marbury Hall with the then Lord Barrymore, for which that nobleman was summoned before King George II and the Privy Council for questioning. A mistake of a day, however, had been made in laying the accusation, and the steward proved before the Council that he had been with Lord Barrymore from an early hour in the morning till eventide, and that no other person had visited his Lordship.' "It is pretty certain, however," says Hanshall in his 'History of Cheshire,' "that the Pretender had been on a visit to Marbury; for on the death of his Lordship's second son, the Hon. Richard Barry, the cup out of which 'the Stuart' had drunk, although intrinsically not worth threepence, was engraved, ornamented and sold for £26."

I wonder when he came. There is a day missing somewhere. Lord Barrymore would not be summoned to London unless there was some very real background in the accusation yet he managed to avoid trouble by this discrepancy of the day. Can it be that the Pretender made his way perhaps disguised as a servant to some well-known friend of Lord Barrymore's? Possibly he came over on the 29th when he was in Manchester, or it might be some time between then and the 1st of December. We do know a little of what happened in Macclesfield but despite the Prince's apparent optimism I fancy that the meeting at Marbury with the Catholic or Jacobite gentlemen of the North West showed him how very slender was his hope when they made it clear to him that they were not prepared to "come out" on his behalf.

The Scots reached Macclesfield round about mid-day, a scattering of mounted men came in first followed by the main

body under the Duke of Perth. A little later, approximately about 3 o'clock, to the skirl of pipes, the Prince marched in. "He was in Highland dress with a blue waistcoat trimmed with silver and had a blue Highland cap on his head. He marched on foot from Manchester as he had done, 'tis said, all the way from Carlisle and I believe they made their very best appearance into the town expecting to have been received, as at Manchester, but there was a profound silence and nothing to be seen in the countenance of the inhabitants but horror and amazement. The endeavours were used to give them a peal of bells for fear of insult to the town but four ringers were all that could be got and they rang the bells backwards, not with design but through confusion."

The Prince took up his residence at the house of Sir Peter Davenport who, though an avowed Jacobite, had tactfully left for London a short time before. Once settled in, the Prince's Secretary sent an order to the Mayor to proclaim a Stuart King of England. His Honour, Samuel Cooper the Mayor, with the support of two Aldermen made the Town Crier repeat the Proclamation and when it was done gave a huzza or two but received no help from his fellow townsmen. Charles Edward put the best face he could on things; his constant cry was "Onward gentlemen, surely onward; London is ours for the taking," but Tuesday night was spent at Leek and the invaders arrived at Derby on Wednesday the 4th.

The Council of War held on that night must surely have been one of the most dramatic episodes in English History. Old Glenbucket, over 80, who had been in bed for some two years before the Prince landed, had got to horse and had ridden with his sons and almost all his retainers and was prepared to follow the Prince blindly because he was his Prince: Elcho and the Duke of Perth, unhappy and of uncertain minds and Lord George Murray, the only real experienced soldier on the Prince's staff, all counselled retreat. Murray's advice finally tipped the scales in favour of a return to Scotland for if this man with experience in the field, the man who had hood-winked the Duke of Cumberland by a feint march to the West, suggesting a junction with Welsh Jacobites and then a quick cut-back to Derby thus putting the Prince's forces between the Duke and London: if such a man counselled retreat, the rest felt bound to follow and, so, despite the tears and pleading of the Prince the retreat took place and the Derby turn passed into English History. I wonder. I wonder if it all hung on the meeting at Marbury and I wonder exactly when it took place.

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In the south aisle of Weaverham Parish Church there is an incised slab; it is a piece of Cheshire sandstone dug up in the churchyard some 25 years ago by the late Charles Bebbington who, incidentally, had a most enviable reputation as a local antiquarian. The incision, or perhaps more accurately, the scratching

would appear to portray the head and shoulders of a person. It is extremely primitive, more approximating to the work of art of a child of about 4, but it is unlikely that it was produced by a child because the scratching is sufficiently deep to suggest that it was worked with perhaps a nail and a maul. A note in the Church says: "The carvings, which are of a strange design, have every appearance of great age (possibly Saxon) but as yet its date has not been determined." The most noticeable thing about it are two lines which suggest horns and if it really is of great age I have a feeling that it smacks of Cretan art rather than Saxon. Somehow, I do not think it is nearly as old as this. It has been suggested that it is an attempt at the portrayal of the devil but I wonder if the perpetrator was trying to record something he had seen.

Henry III had taken possession of the Earldom of Chester upon the death of John 'the Scot,' the last of the Norman Earls. Henry gave the Earldom to his son Edward, later King Edward I, and Edward was immensely proud of his new possession. When he was in the Holy Land, or perhaps when returning from France to England it is recorded that he was in grave jeopardy from shipwreck and made a vow that if he came safely to shore he would found an Abbey to the Glory of God. In due course he was able to implement this vow and decided to build the Abbey, which was to be the greatest Cistercian Abbey in England, and that it should be placed in this 'My Vale Royal of Chester.'

Going back on our story a little, during the troubles of Simon de Montford when Edward was taken prisoner by the Barons and held at Hereford, the monks in the Abbey of Dore were kind to him. In return for their kindness he invited them to form a nucleus for his new foundation. In the first instance they came up to Dernhall but in August 1279 the ceremony of laying the foundation stone and the consecration of the new Abbey took place. Edward and his wife, Queen Eleanor, travelled from Chester and stayed at the Manor of Wallerscote during the 7th, 8th and 9th of August as guests of Sir Adam de Wringle who, incidentally, is the earliest recorded owner and occupier of this manor. Wallerscote was at that time a one-house township and a separate manor within the manor of Weaverham. I wonder if Adam de Wringle was an old soldier colleague of Edward's; perhaps they had been adventuring in the Holy Land together. In any case, in view of the number of nobility and the clergy who attended upon Edward and his wife it is extremely probable that many of them would stay in other houses in the district, possibly at Weaverham or Crowton. Ormerod states that the consecration took place on the 2nd of August (there seems to be some confusion of dates) by Anianus, the second Bishop of St. Asaph, and following the setting of the first stone by the King he was followed by Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, William Beauchamp of Warwick, Maurice

de Croun, Otho de Grandison, John de Greylez, Baron of Manchester, Robert Tiptoft and Richard de Vere. These all laid their stone in honour of Christ, the Virgin Mary, St. Nicholas and St. Nichasius. Queen Eleanor then laid two stones, one for herself and one for her son Alfonso, and finally Robert Burnet, Bishop of Wells and Bath, the Chancellor of England, assisted the Bishop of St. Asaph in celebrating Mass.

It is not difficult to imagine the feverish preparations which would be made at Weaverham and at Wallerscote. The anxiety that everything possible should be done for the comforts of the royal visitors and particularly the awe with which every man, woman and child must have waited to catch a glimpse of them on their journey between Wallerscote and Vale Royal. I imagine the Queen would receive special attention. Her velvets and her fur trimmed garments would be an eye-opener to the unsophisticated country people of Weaverham and above all they would note the head-dress that she wore. The ordinary Cheshire maid was used to going about with a scarf round her head at the most, but here was a great lady with a long flowing veil supported by two cones set at an angle above the head. Did somebody feel that this was an occasion never to be forgotten and to be recorded for future wonderment. Did some local artist try to put on record what he saw, using a piece of red sandstone as his canvas. Did he bury it for safety in the churchyard, and may the slab now in the south aisle of the church be an impression of Queen Eleanor, Edward's beloved wife? If so, it was done nearly 700 years ago. I wonder.

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### EDITORIAL NOTES

The History Committee of The Cheshire Community Council desire it to be known that authors alone are responsible for opinions and statements which are made in their articles.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

The History Committee regrets that it has been found necessary to increase the price of The Cheshire Historian to 2/6d. owing to rising cost of publication.

# Cheshire Antiquities in the Manchester Museum

BY FRANK WILLETT, M.A.

THE Manchester Museum, having intimate connexions with the University, draws its collections from the whole world, and has naturally attracted specimens from the adjacent county of Cheshire. Those which are here described were discovered before 1925. It is hoped to describe the remainder in a future article.

Most of the Cheshire antiquities in the Manchester Museum are casual finds, discovered in the course of agriculture or building, and therefore lacking associations. Typology alone has to guide us, and for the most part these Cheshire antiquities cannot be closely dated by that means alone.

Polished stone axes of New Stone Age or possibly later date come from Ashley, near Altrincham<sup>1</sup> (found before 1903, "on a stone heap") and Great Budworth, found in 1921. The Ashley<sup>2</sup> axe is 6 inches long by 2.5 inches wide, and is complete, but with a weathered and scratched surface. "Slicing" reveals that it is of Graig Lwyd rock<sup>3</sup> and was supplied by the Penmanmawr factory.<sup>4</sup> The Great Budworth<sup>5</sup> axe is 4.1 inches long by 2 inches wide, well-polished and of a fresh appearance. It is of Borrowdale volcanic ash and was made at the Great Langdale factory.

A very fine perforated axe-hammer from Macclesfield<sup>6</sup> was purchased by the Museum in 1909. Varley and Jackson<sup>7</sup> list this as the one from Dane's Moss mentioned by Shone,<sup>8</sup> and first published by Sainter.<sup>9</sup> Sainter, writing in 1878, said the implement had been found lately. He figures it,<sup>10</sup> but his drawing does not bear more than a generic resemblance to the object in the Manchester Museum. We must, I think, suspend judgment on whether these are the same implement, as nineteenth century drawings of stone implements were often remarkably inaccurate. The axe-hammer is made of sandstone, probably from the local Coal Measures, and shows signs of use at both ends. The upper and lower surfaces have been carefully hollowed round the perforation, and up to the edges of the axe end, whilst the hammer end has been left convex and somewhat globular. Its overall length is 8 inches.

Another heavy perforated axe-hammer, 8 inches long, of fine-grained micaceous sandstone (also probably from the local Coal Measures) comes from Gatley<sup>11</sup> where it was found in 1881. This type of implement, like the better made one from Macclesfield is fairly common in the North of England, and is likely to have been of agricultural or industrial use. They are frequently alleged to have been used for crushing ore, but they cannot all have been used for this purpose, for the ores of copper and tin would hardly be traded as widely as the distribution of these

axe-hammers, in the Bronze Age, to which these implements must be assigned.

A small perforated axe-hammer 4.6 inches long comes from Northenden,<sup>11</sup> found in clay at a depth of 18 feet in 1881.<sup>12</sup> It is of the type sometimes known as the battle-axe, and often associated with A—C Beakers of the earliest Bronze Age. It is made of vesicular diorite.

From Adlington<sup>13</sup> comes a perforated Bunter quartzite pebble, 5.2 inches long, the edge of which is battered with use, perhaps as a macehead. It was found in 1898, but cannot be certainly dated, as natural pebbles were perforated for use from the Middle Stone Age until the early Middle Ages.

The pounding stone, 6.3 inches long, found before 1908, near Pownall Green, Bramhall,<sup>14</sup> is of equally uncertain date. The mining axes or hammers from Alderley Edge<sup>15</sup> are similarly uncertainly dated. Too much has been written on the problem of these mines, for a summary to be attempted here.<sup>16</sup> The iron pick found in the pits, near the Engine Vein mine,<sup>17</sup> on which Roeder and Graves presumed a Romano-British date for the mines, is in the Manchester Museum. Some of the flint implements from sites on the Edge close to the mines may be of Middle Stone Age date, but the surviving series is too small to be certain.<sup>18</sup> They may well be of Bronze Age date.

Pottery is, of course, the easiest prehistoric material to date, and is used for dating all other associated objects. We are on safer ground, then, in discussing the Middle Bronze Age cremation urn found in the grounds of Ilex House, Wilmslow, in 1857. The body of the urn<sup>19</sup> has been deposited at the Manchester Museum on loan from the Salford City Art Gallery. From Sir Arthur Smith-Woodward's collection we received in 1945 a fragment labelled "Part of a British urn. Dug up near Wilmslow. Augt. 1857."<sup>20</sup> The accounts of the discovery in 1857 refer to only one urn so this fragment must belong to the same pot. Earwaker's illustration<sup>21</sup> shows a detached piece of rim, about twice the size of our fragment, showing the same style of decoration — irregular zigzag impressions of twisted string. Like our piece it is from the lower edge of the rim. With the body of the urn a tiny fragment of the upper edge of the rim is preserved, so that we can obtain a reasonable impression of the original urn, though the depth of the rim is uncertain. It would be most interesting to know whether any other fragments of the rim of this pot survive either in public or private hands.

In addition to these originals the museum possesses a number of casts of Cheshire antiquities. One,<sup>22</sup> also from the Smith-Woodward collection, is of the perforated net-sinker or loom-weight of baked clay from the gravels of the Bollin at Macclesfield. The original was described and illustrated by Sainter,<sup>23</sup> and according to Shone<sup>24</sup> is in the British Museum. It is probably Anglo-Saxon or mediæval. We also have a cast of the bronze palstave<sup>1</sup> found before 1895 at Adswold or Shaw Heath, Cheadle,<sup>25</sup>

at a depth of 17 feet. The original is kept by the Clerk of the Council at the Town Hall, Bruntwood, Cheadle. The important hoard of late Bronze Age implements (two spearheads and ferrules, and one socketed axe) found at Congleton, in 1925, were examined at the Manchester Museum whilst they were on loan to us, and an account published by Dr. Jackson.<sup>26</sup> Casts were made, which, of course, we still have, but the originals were recalled and are kept at Congleton Public Library.

- 1 This specimen is at present on loan to the Old Manchester Exhibition, at the Manchester City Art Gallery (Athenæum Annexe).
- 2 Museum Register, No. O.978. Photograph in W. Shone, PREHISTORIC MAN IN CHESHIRE (London & Chester) 1911, Fig. 13, 3.
- 3 I am indebted to Mr. G. Russell Coope for the petrological indentifications in this article, all except one of which, are based on microscopic examination of their sections.
- 4 See THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN, No. 4, p. 29.
- 5 Register No. O.5046. Inaccurate drawing in TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, Vol. 39, (1923), p. 195. Photograph in THE NORTH WESTERN NATURALIST, Vol. 11, June, 1936, Plate 7, 4.
- 6 Register No. O.1599.
- 7 W. J. Varley and J. W. Jackson, PREHISTORIC CHESHIRE, (Chester), 1940, Schedule II.
- 8 W. Shone, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 and 97.
- 9 J. D. Sainter: [SCIENTIFIC] RAMBLES . . . ROUND MACCLESFIELD, 1878, p. 148.
- 10 *op. cit.* facing p. 148.
- 11 Register No. O.483. Photograph in W. Shone, *op. cit.*, fig. 13, 2; engraving of other face in TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, Vol. 11, (1894), p. 171.
- 12 Register No. O.484. Photograph in W. Shone, *op. cit.*, fig. 13, 1; engraving in TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, Vol. 11, (1894), p. 172. The date of finding is here given as 1883, but an earlier reference in the same TRANSACTIONS (Vol. 5, (1888), p. 327) gives the date as 1881.
- 13 Register No. O.1483. Photograph in W. Shone, *op. cit.*, fig. 13, 4.
- 14 Register No. O.1482. Photograph in W. Shone, *op. cit.*, fig. 16.
- 15 Some of the large series in our collection are illustrated by W. Shone, *op. cit.*, fig. 35.
- 16 The interested reader might care to consult:— MEMOIRS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE MANCHESTER LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. Vol. 14, (1875), pp. 74-78; JOURNAL OF THE [ROYAL] ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, Vol. 5, (1876), pp. 3-5; Charles Roeder in TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, Vol. 19, (1902), pp. 77-118 and Vol. 23, (1906), pp. 17-29; W. Shone, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-79 and 92; J. W. Jackson, TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, Vol. 50, (1936), pp. 94-95 (with references) W. J. Varley and J. W. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- 17 See TRANSACTIONS OF THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, Vol. 23, (1906), p. 23.
- 18 Cf. Varley and Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 19 and fig. 1, 1-4.
- 19 Photograph in W. Shone, *op. cit.*, fig. 37.
- 20 Register No. O.6941.
- 21 J. P. Earwaker, EAST CHESHIRE (London), 1877, Vol. 1, p. 146.
- 22 Register No. O.6942.
- 23 J. D. Sainter, *op. cit.*, pp. 53 and 147.
- 24 W. Shone *op. cit.*, p. 96.
- 25 Register No. O.961. Photograph in W. Shone, *op. cit.*, fig. 13, 5.
- 26 ANTIQUARIES JOURNAL, Vol. 7, (1927), pp. 62-64, and fig. p. 63.



# The Archæologist in the Field

(Part VI)

## Excavations

By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.A.

THE first consideration should be—why excavate at all? There are many excavations that are unfortunately made necessary because the site is threatened by building, mineral or agricultural development. In this rescue work it is vital to salvage as much information as possible, working usually against time and in confined circumstances, before the site is completely destroyed. Under these conditions it is rarely possible to use the methods one would normally employ to understand a site thoroughly and one has just to make the best of a bad job; the vital task is to make a detailed and accurate record, without necessarily arriving at any definite conclusions as to the nature of the site.

Where, however, an excavation is considered on a site which is not threatened by imminent destruction, there are very different considerations. With the knowledge that excavation is itself destruction, the project should be approached with caution and a strong, logical case for the need for the work. Some small-scale excavations are justified on the ground of merely dating the site but work of a larger order must be considered only in the light of unsolved problems. Too many sites in this country have been haphazardly dug without the excavators having any specific ideas in their heads, but merely because the site happened to be there and might have produced interesting objects.

It is well known that over five hundred Roman villas have been plundered in this way and our real knowledge of this aspect of Roman life is based only on some half-dozen which have been properly excavated and published. Irresponsible work still goes on, sometimes under the auspices of people who are in a position to know better. The growth of our knowledge underlies the necessity to assess all sites of the same type and period in relation to each other and the general background. For example, a Roman fort does not exist alone: it is part of an intricate system of defence and its study cannot be divorced from this all important context. In the same way Roman towns, villas and villages all belong to a general social and economic pattern at present only vaguely understood but we will never achieve any advance if all investigators regard their sites as purely local in character and fail to relate them to wider problems. An extensive background knowledge is required and is this asking too much? What results could be expected if a layman started doing experiments in a laboratory without any serious knowledge of chemistry or physics?

Archæological excavation is entitled to the same respect and more since by its nature it is destructive and leaves no future opportunity for repeating the process. Before an excavation takes place the reasons for it should be clearly set forth and a series of campaigns planned with a full knowledge of the resources of manpower, tools and equipment available. On these factors will depend the methods to be used and before a trench is cut an accurate survey of all existing surface features is required and a base line securely laid down.

Archæological excavation is not just a matter of digging trenches and finding interesting objects as some people seem to imagine. There are three main stages, each mutually dependent on the other, and without which an excavation is valueless. They are recording, interpretation and publication. The first of these vital requirements is the easiest to grasp—any intelligent person can learn to record finds, draw plans and sections and take photographs. The next important logical consequence is the interpretation of the evidence, something that cannot easily be taught. Let us face it—at some stage or other, one may come to realise that one has neither the ability or the mental equipment for interpretation to be an easy and natural process. That is the time when one should decide never to undertake full responsibility for an excavation but to be prepared to assist people who have the gift. It might be argued that there must be degrees in this and that surely there are simple excavations which could be worked out by someone not fully able to deal with more difficult ones. This is an illusion, for nobody knows in advance how an excavation will turn out and only skilled interpretation will sometimes foresee the problems which actually exist. Interpretation is the art of archæology, requiring imagination blended with sound knowledge and commonsense. Without these, imagination alone is highly dangerous and may even be disastrous. It is easy to confuse interpretation with experience. For example, an assemblage of stones and mortar can be seen to be a wall of a building: that is merely experience. The art of interpretation is to determine the kind of building and details of its superstructure. It is the imaginative reconstruction, both in shape and time, that is the essence of interpretation. With knowledge and experience the excavator will deal confidently with the dating evidence of coins, pottery and other objects.

The third requirement is publication. It was the great Pitt-Rivers who established the dictum that a site was not excavated until it was published and it is a pity these words are not graven on the heart of every would-be excavator. Publication is the presentation of evidence in permanent form. Before the spade is driven into the earth, the archæologist should consider how that presentation is going to be made and the whole course of the excavation may well be determined by it. There will, of course, be far more records taken than are necessary for publication but the question in the mind of the excavator

throughout should be "having established these facts how am I going to present this evidence so that anyone unfamiliar with the site will be able to reach the same conclusions from an unbiased assessment." It should be possible for a future investigator to come to a different conclusion, in the light of advancing knowledge. To take a simple example, ideas on the dating of pottery are still very uncertain and it is very probable that they will undergo a change. If the dated groups or key fragments are properly drawn and described, it should be possible for a re-assessment of their dates to be made in the future.

The method of excavation must be carefully thought out and should be chosen as the best means of solving the particular problems known in advance. In dealing with defences and linear earthworks, a section at right angles to the alignment is the obvious method. Here it should be observed that in the case of defences one should always start with a cutting selected to give the general characteristics rather than any particular features. It would be a mistake to start, for example, at a gate or tower, for at these points the general features of the defences would be complicated by these special additions. Knowing the normal, one can detect and consider the abnormal.

For buildings and habitation sites, one needs a more open method and here the deciding factor is the area to be exposed during the season or period of the excavation. On this will depend important factors like the position of the spoil dumps and base line. Generally in excavating an area, however small, it is advisable to barrow the spoil away to a convenient dump. Only in exploratory trenches where there is to be no development can the placing of spoil on the side of the trench be justified. In open work it is advisable to measure out, with some care, a system of grids with two foot baulks. The size of the grid will depend on the depth of excavation; for most purposes a 10 ft. square is suitable but for very shallow work this can be increased to 15 ft. The excavation proceeds by removing materials layer by layer, the finds from each being kept and recorded separately. If all layers were horizontal and distinctively coloured this would be a very simple matter but in practice it is usually difficult to distinguish the individual layers and they lie at various angles. One requires considerable practical experience before one can deal confidently with this problem. Even the choice of tools is governed by experience; a beginner inevitably starts scratching around with a trowel and brush on levels which could well be removed by pick and shovel. The recognition of the relative value of different layers is one of the characteristics of a competent excavator. It is, therefore, impossible to set down a detailed guide to digging but one can consider certain principles and study purely hypothetical situations.

A principle which must always be observed in excavation is that intrusive material must always be removed first. For

example, a rubbish pit, which can usually be recognised by the darker content of the filling, may start at a high level and go down deep into lower ones and must be completely removed before the levels, into which it cuts, are stripped, otherwise serious contamination may occur.

The theory of stratification must be clearly understood. In Euclidean language, if two layers of material have been deposited in such a way that one overlies the other, the lower one must be the earlier in date or the two may be contemporary. In a rampart there are many layers representing the successive dumping of material but these represent a single process and not a gradual development. If the upper level is of such a consistency that it would have been impossible for objects to have penetrated it in the course of time, the lower level is said to be sealed and the dateable material in it can be used as evidence. Before the implication of this simple statement are considered, one must understand how various layers encountered in an excavation have come into being. The simplest is the turf line which is caused by the growth and decay of vegetation over a long period of time. If at some stage in its history there has been heavier growth in the form of trees and shrubs, there will be a greater depth of subsoil and here and there powerful roots will have pushed their way into the natural subsoil and disturbed it. Where ploughing has taken place the thickness of humus will be much greater also. On an occupied site, human agency has added to this natural process; buildings, especially of masonry, add layers by their construction, decay and final ruin. On Roman sites one gets accustomed to fairly clean layers which constitutes a levelling-up process prior to other building phases. These building levels may be sandwiched between occupation layers or solid floor. On Roman sites one does not so often get the accumulation of material on floors as much as in the more squalid living conditions in prehistoric and mediæval times.

There are thus two fundamentally different kinds of layers, (1) occupation or destruction and (2) constructional. The vital distinction is that in the first of these the material accumulated in situ, while in the second it was brought to the site from another place and spread out or built up there. This difference is of the greatest importance when the dating evidence is considered. The objects dropped into the first kind of layer will all be contemporary but those in the second can be of any period earlier than the date of the moving of the material. It is thus possible for a situation to arise where the lower of two levels contains material of later date than the one sealing it, evidence which appears, on the face of it, to make the upper level earlier. The answer is that in content the upper level is earlier in date but must have been moved bodily from some other place at a later date. Probably the best illustration of this process is that of a defensive rampart and ditch. The example chosen is an

excavation in Rutland on the small Romano-British town of Great Casterton (Plate 4).<sup>1</sup>

The rampart was found to consist of a bank of material which had been excavated from the ditch, most of it as might be expected very clean in character. A little occupation material was recovered from this bank and it was all found to be of first century date and had obviously come from the occupation which had spread over the area of the ditch. This shift of material from one point of the site to another meant that all one could say about the date of the rampart was that it must be later than the first century but it could in fact have been any time after this date. The actual occupation may have ceased for reasons which had nothing whatever to do with the cutting of the ditch. In this particular example, the excavators were fortunate in finding underneath the rampart an occupation layer of much later date, belonging actually to the end of the second century. This naturally advanced the dating of the bank to a time later than this and subsequent excavations showed that it could not have been much later and that it was this phase of occupation which was destroyed when the defences were established.

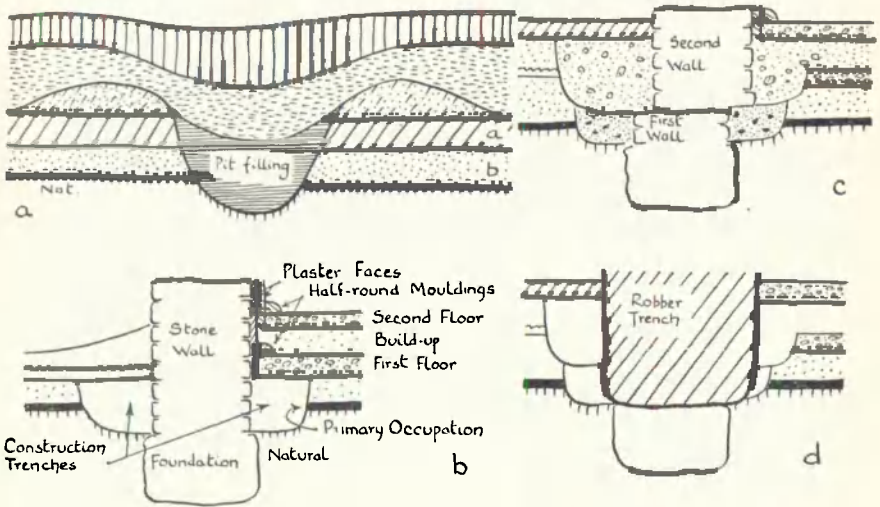
Another example is the digging of a construction trench or rubbish pit. The excavated material may remain round the lip of the hole or along the edge of the trench and produce a very puzzling state of affairs, since in this particular case the material has been shifted only a short distance but in a vertical direction (fig. a).

It will be seen, therefore, that it is possible, owing to the vital difference between the character of the deposits, for layers containing earlier material to overlie ones with much later dating evidence. In dealing with construction deposits great care must be exercised; the bulk of the material will be residual but there may be an odd piece which is actually contemporary with the deposit. In these cases, therefore, the whole deposit may be dated by one sherd and a hundred or more pieces rejected, whereas in an occupation or destruction deposit all the pieces are contemporary and can then be dated as a group.

Where solid structures exist, in the form of floors and walls, the stratigraphical problems are simplified in as far as it is possible to recognise their function. Often in Roman buildings floors and walls are added or altered and this introduces complications. The critical point at which to observe the relationship of floor and walls is, of course, at their junction. It is very unfortunate that many excavators are unaware of this and in tracing the plan of the building, trench along the wall face and remove the vital evidence. This is the result of thinking only of one kind of problem and excluding everything else. The excavator should

<sup>1</sup> THE ROMAN TOWN AND VILLA AT GREAT CASTERTON, RUTLAND, University of Nottingham, 1951.

be capable of intensive four-dimensional thought the whole time and also accommodate himself to shocks and surprises which continually appear.



- a. Showing in section the effect of digging a pit through two occupation levels a and b and the spoil being left on the edge. Note also how subsequent levels have sunk into the pit.
- b. A wall cut through earlier occupation and having two floors.
- c. Showing the effect of rebuilding a wall on an earlier one and the distinction between construction trenches.
- d. The same after all the walling has been removed but some of the construction trenches left.

Walls can be built in different ways, but if they are faced with masonry, a trench is needed to the level of the lowest course in which the masons can stand. It is not necessary always to have construction trenches of this kind on both sides of the wall, especially if it meant difficult excavation. Unfaced walls and foundations of concrete or rubble are trench-built, i.e., a trench is excavated and the material shot in from above. A floor which is laid at the same time must abut the wall. This means that the wall was in position when the floor was laid. The floor may, of course, be much later in date and if it represents also a relaying at a higher level, the floor will abut the original plaster face on the wall. Here it must be observed that Roman building practice quite often appears to have been to plaster the walls before laying the floor, so that the chronological sequence is not always clear. The key to this difficulty will be the presence of an earlier floor below the upper one. These relationships are shown in the diagram (fig. b). Complications arise when walls are rebuilt either on the old line or on a new one and only close study of the floors and construction trenches can help to sort out

the tangle. The filling of the construction trenches should be carefully studied. In the example (fig. c) the earlier one will be filled with disturbed natural subsoil and some of the primary occupation whereas the later one may have fragments of the first floor and wall in it. In Roman buildings it is quite common to find pits dug into the floor along the wall and these can be confused with the construction trench. Further difficulties may arise if instead of stone walls, the building is found to be of timber construction. When the timbers disintegrated, the wall probably collapsed into the void taking the edges of the floors with it and in these circumstances the details are not always clear. Very often the stone walls are found to have been robbed away at some later period. The robber trench usually shows very clearly with its dark filling and may well have removed all trace of the construction trench as well, but sometimes one can trace the merest outline which gives a valuable clue. An illustration (fig. d) shows the effect of robbing on the walls already considered. Here the edges of the construction trenches and their relationship to the floors are still in position and offer their evidence to the discerning eye. It will by now be appreciated by most readers that the real difficulty on a site is not the solution of these rather simple problems of logic but the initial stage of observing the details on which the problems are based.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

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## Chester Excavations, 1955

### 1. NORTHGATE STREET SITE.

FROM April to August a site in Northgate Street was excavated by Mr. D. F. Petch for the Chester Archæological Society with the help of a grant from the Ministry of Works. The site was on the north side of the Odeon Cinema and work on it revealed portions of two barrack buildings (*hemistrigia*) standing back to back. These were of very similar dimensions to those found in the Deanery Field. To the south lay another building of uncertain type.

### 2. NEWGATE STREET SITE.

Testing of the sub-soil behind Nos. 32-36 Newgate Street, in preparation for the building of a new office block, revealed the presence of a Roman wall of substantial construction. In order to obtain precise information about its date and character, an excavation was begun in June under the direction of Mr. F. W. Tobias, with the aid of a grant from the Ministry of Works. This revealed that the wall belonged to a rampart building, erected early in the second century and deliberately demolished at its close. The Agricolan turf rampart was also recognised, together

with the foundations of the rear wall of an interval tower. In subsequent observation by Mr. Tobias and myself during demolition and building operations, more of the rampart building was noted, together with a stretch of the rampart roadway and stone-lined legionary ovens.

### 3. HERONBRIDGE EXCAVATIONS.

At Heronbridge the earthwork was further investigated under the direction of Mr. B. R. Hartley. A section trench was cut immediately north of the area examined by Mr. J. A. Petch in 1930 (C.A.J. XXX, pt. 1). This showed the rampart to be later than the building found in 1930 and made it clear that the "clay layer" found then was in fact the tail of the rampart bank. The ditch was found to be U-shaped and, as in 1954, there was no trace of a wall facing the rampart. The pottery sealed below the rampart ranges up to the late third or early fourth century.

In the lowest levels part of a timber building of the first phase of occupation (A.D. 90-130) was uncovered, associated with metal-workers' debris.

F. H. THOMPSON.

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### CESHIRE MATERIALS CULLED FROM JOURNALS

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THE BUNBURY PAPERS.

NO. 4. THE EFFIGY AND TOMB OF SIR HUGH CALVELEY, by Claude Blair, B.A.

NO. 5. THE SANCTUARY OF BUNBURY CHURCH, EXCAVATED 1952-53, by M. H. Ridgeway, B.A., F.S.A.

NO. 6. THE PLATE OF BUNBURY CHURCH, by Sir Leonard Stone.



# Bishops of Chester

BY THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE, M.A., F.R.HIST.SOC.

**T**HERE have been thirty-seven Bishops of Chester since the See was founded by Henry VIII and it is of course quite impossible to deal with them all. A selection will therefore be made of those who for one reason or another merit attention.

JOHN BIRD was the first bishop to be appointed to the new See and he is probably typical of many who found themselves in high place during the many changes of the Reformation. For Bird was a weathercock, constant only in studying his own interests. He began as a Carmelite friar, in which capacity he attained high office. When Henry VIII began his quarrel with the Pope, Bird supported the King and was one of the three men sent by him to the divorced Catherine of Aragon to try to persuade her to give up the name of Queen, "which nevertheless she would not do." In 1537 he was consecrated Suffragan Bishop of Penrith and two years later was sent on an embassy to Germany to negotiate a marriage between his master and Anne of Cleves. He was present at the marriage in 1539 and subscribed to the decree for her divorce in 1540. By this time he was Bishop of Bangor and was translated to Chester in 1541. When Henry died and Edward VI succeeded to the throne Bishop Bird took a leading part in the confiscation of the Church ornaments for the Government, published a treatise against the mass and transubstantiation and married a wife. When Edward VI died and Queen Mary came to the throne Bishop Bird was hard put to it to explain his actions. He did his best and put away his wife whom he said he had married against his will, and succeeded so far that although he had to leave Chester Bishop Bonner appointed him his suffragan and gave him the living of Great Dunmow in Essex where he died in 1558. A picturesque if not a very "worthy" character.

GEORGE COTES, who succeeded him, only lived to be a bishop for one year, and then came

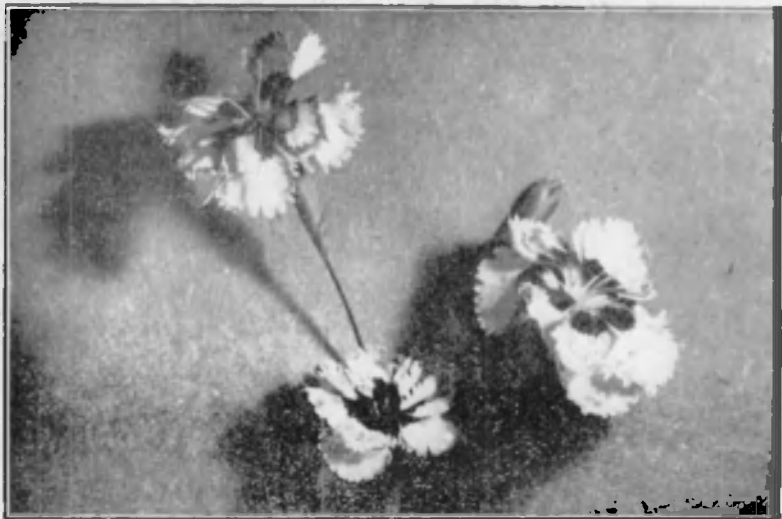
CUTHBERT SCOTT, who was no time-server, but a thorough-going supporter of the Papacy and a refreshing contrast to Bird. His testing time came when Queen Mary died and her half-sister, Elizabeth I, ascended the throne. Scott vigorously opposed in the House of Lords the passing of the Act of Supremacy which substituted the Queen for the Pope as Head of the Church of England, and spoke no less vigorously against the Acts of Uniformity which restored the second Prayer book of Edward VI. In consequence he was deprived of his office and imprisoned in the Fleet, whence he managed to escape to Flanders, and Chester saw him



MILKING IN THE FIELDS

From Robert Bloomfield's "A Farmer's Boy" (ed. of) 1808.

Block by courtesy of G. E. FUSSELL.



**PAINTED LADIE or MASTER BRADSHAWE AND HIS DAINY LADY**  
(of John Parkinson in his "Paradisi," 1629).

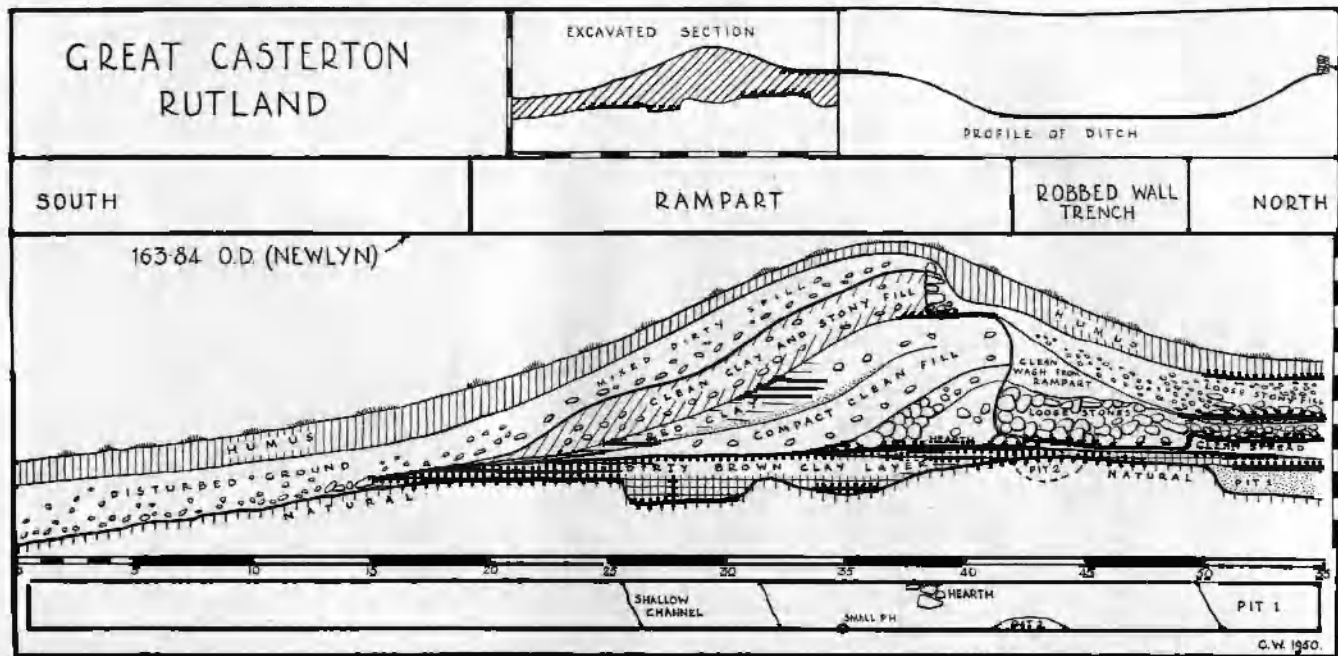


**AN OLD TUDOR CARNATION**

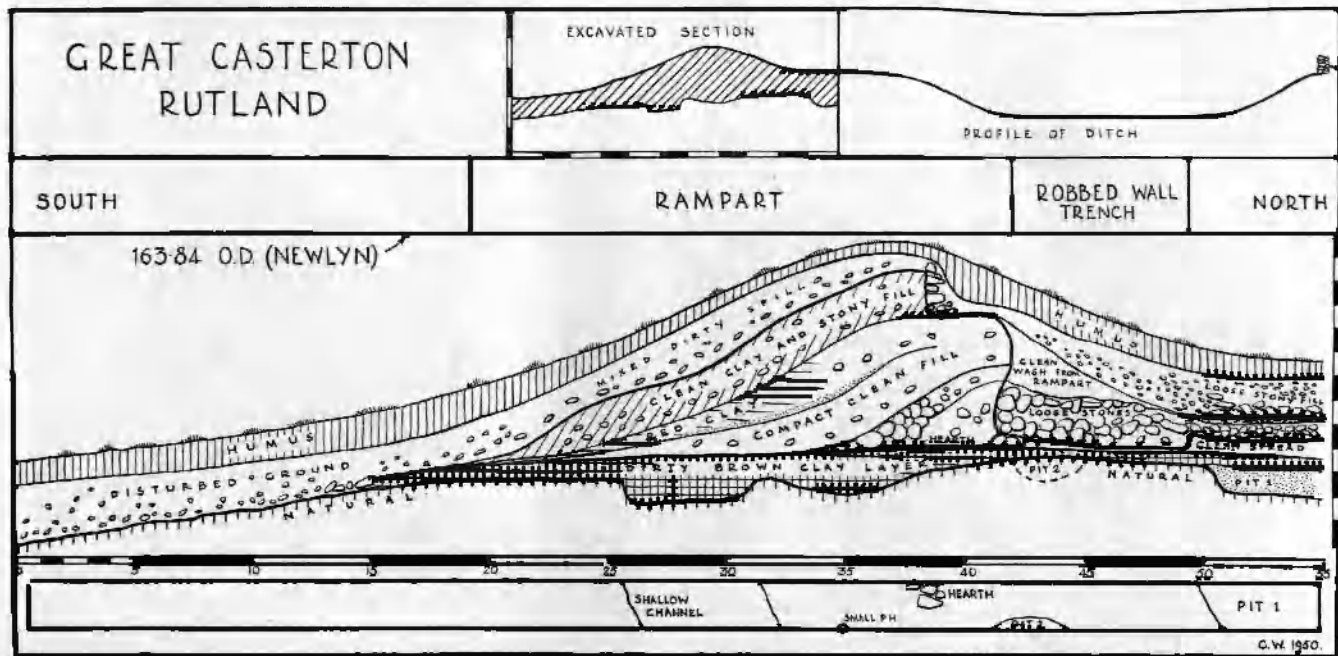
Photographs by CAPTAIN C. HAWKES.



Copy by MR. M. GRIENTHWAITE of the original photograph.



Block by courtesy of THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM.



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no more. Those who do not approve of his politics can still admire the character of the man.

WILLIAM DOWNHAM was a much more easy-going person. His motto might well have been "Live and let live," and his toleration of the papists in his Diocese brought him a sharp reprimand from the Queen herself. "Suffer not for lack of your personal visitation," she wrote, "by repairing into the remotest parts and especially into Lancashire, that obstinate persons having been most justly deprived, be not secretly maintained to pervert our good subjects within any part of your Diocese, as we understand they have now of long time been." In other words, the Lancashire squires were harbouring recusant priests in their houses, many of which were fitted with "priests' holes." Downham set off in his coach for these remotest parts—and in those days the Chester Diocese reached nearly to the Lakes—"and found the people very tractable"—so he reported to Cecil; in fact if they had not been very hospitable he must have left most of his horses by the way, for the heat was extreme, and "such drought was never seen in those parts." In spite of this spurt of energy the Privy Council reported him to the Archbishop of Canterbury two years later for being slack in his disciplinary duties.

WILLIAM CHADDERTON, who succeeded Downham on the death of the latter, was evidently chosen with a view to the suppression of the recusants, for he was specially active in this respect and resided most of his time in Manchester, where he was Warden of the Collegiate Church, so as to be on the spot where most of the danger lay. But his real title to fame is his attitude to matrimony which he expounded in a wedding sermon, of all places. "The choice of a wife," he said, "was full of hazard, not unlike as if one in a barrel full of serpents should grope for one fish. If he 'scape harm of the snakes and light on a fish, he may be thought fortunate. Yet let him not boast, for perhaps it may prove but an eel." Perhaps he spoke from experience, for some ten years before he came to Chester, when he was chaplain to the Earl of Leicester, he had plunged his hand into the matrimonial barrel, though not without consulting his patron first as to the propriety and wisdom of his action.

Passing over the next three bishops, we come to one who really does deserve the name of "worthy"—Bishop John Bridgman, who ruled the Diocese from 1619 to 1644. He was appointed to Chester by James I, whose chaplain he was, and given the rich living of Wigan where he chiefly resided. He did not like the Palace at Chester, which he said was unhealthy and affected by the proximity of the brewery which occupied the west side of Abbey Square bordering Northgate Street. In his injunctions issued after his Visitation of the Cathedral in 1623 he refers to "the daily noise of brewers with their knocking, cooping, carting and the like," and complained that the smell made him ill. He was very annoyed when on the death of the brewer the Dean and

Chapter renewed the lease to the brewer's wife and still more annoyed that when the wife died the Dean and Chapter showed signs of renewing the lease to the son, and he complained to no less a person than Archbishop Laud, who took the matter to no less a person than Charles I himself. Charles at that time (1638) had his hands full with the trouble in Scotland caused by his policy in forcing the English prayer book upon the Scotch and war was brewing, but it is typical of the man that he found time to forbid the Dean and Chapter to renew the lease, at least Laud said he did. However, we are anticipating.

In those days the Bishop had much more control over the Cathedral than he has today, and it was he who gave leave to the parishioners of St. Oswald's to re-seat their church, which was situated in the south transept, and when he disapproved of the way in which it was done, it was he who removed the Sunday sermon, (which was attended by the Mayor and Corporation), first into the Choir and then to the west end of the nave, where he had a pulpit erected specially for the purpose. In consequence the Mayor and his followers stayed away from church, and went so far as to take counsel's opinion, telling him that, "during the sermon in the new pulpit many (for want of convenient room to sit or hear in) do walk in the church, some keep at home, and others (which is most of all) go to the alehouse at sermon time." The Mayor held out for twelve years, during which time the pulpit was moved back to the choir and yet another pulpit made with the Bishop's initials on it and the date (1637). Part of this survives in St. Erasmus Chapel and is a fine piece of Jacobean carving. Other contributions made by the Bishop to the Cathedral included a loft or gallery on each side of the choir, a font at the west end of the nave, and new stone to the windows in the choir which "were so eaten out with antiquity and weather as most of them were in danger of falling." He also moved the Consistory Court from the Lady Chapel to the South-west tower and furnished it with a massive table and most uncomfortable seats; and added a plaster ceiling to the bishop's Norman chapel, now called St. Anselm's. In one respect he failed, and that was when he had the stone *mensa* of the old high altar which had been demolished in the reign of Edward VI, dug up and set up in the Lady Chapel. When the very Puritan Vice-Dean discovered this he vigorously protested and the Bishop weakly gave way. "When I caused it to be set up," he wrote to him, "I protest I had no thought of an altar; and I meant it only as a repository to the Preacher (in the use of a table) in that place . . . but hearing that great offence was taken at it, I gave order for it to be taken down, which is done accordingly." A more permanent piece of work was the building of four cottages for the choirmen of the Cathedral in Abbey Square in 1626, two of which survive to this day and are much sought after. Lastly, mention should be made of Bishop Bridgman's Ledger, a book in which he recorded the chief facts about his Diocese and which is invaluable to the historian. The



Bishop entertained Charles I in his Palace in September, 1642, at the beginning of the Civil War, but did not remain in the beleaguered City. He died at Kinnerley, near Oswestry, in 1652.

JOHN WILKINS (1668-1673) was the fourth Bishop after the Restoration, the other three having very short reigns. He was typical of his time, for he was keenly interested in the Experimental Philosophy which was the name given to the science of his day. He was in fact more of a mathematician than a theologian, more of a scientist than an ecclesiastic. The son of an Oxford goldsmith, he entered that University in 1627 at the early age of thirteen. He was ordained in due course and became in 1637 Vicar of his native parish of Fawsley in Northamptonshire, but soon resigned it in order to become chaplain to Lord Saye and Sele, and later to the Elector Palatine, Charles I's nephew, at that time exiled in England. It is worthy of mention that he was succeeded at Fawsley by his grandfather—surely a record? In the Civil War Wilkins sided with Parliament and was rewarded by being made Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, in place of the Royalist Warden, who was ejected. While here he married no less a person than Cromwell's sister. In 1659 he resigned the Wardenship of Wadham on being appointed by Richard Cromwell, his wife's nephew, to the Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge. This post he naturally lost in the following year when Charles II returned to the throne, but so well did Wilkins make his peace with the Royalist party that he did not lack preferment. This was also due to the fact that his moderation and gentleness when his party was in power had gained him many friends at court and he seems to have been universally beloved. A staunch Church of England man like John Evelyn, for example, was a personal friend of his. It is said that it was through the influence of the Duke of Buckingham that Wilkins was made Bishop of Chester in 1668, which is not unlikely, for Buckingham loved to dabble in chemical experiments, as did his master, Charles II, himself, and he would be attracted by Wilkins' scientific attainments. And so it came about that only eight years after the Restoration Cromwell's brother-in-law was made a bishop. No wonder the Royalists said that the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion meant indemnity for the King's enemies and oblivion for the King's friends.

Wilkins was a Calvinist by conviction and therefore very tolerant towards the non-conformists. He even dared to speak against the Conventicle Act in the House of Lords, although the King begged him not to. He answered (according to Bishop Burnet) "that he thought it an ill thing, both in conscience and policy; therefore, both as an Englishman and as a bishop he was bound to oppose it." However, it is not so much as a bishop but as a scientist that he merits our attention today, for it was largely through his efforts that the Royal Society was founded and he became its first Secretary. He had an insatiable curiosity and a

lively and ingenious mind. He was always inventing. While he was at Wadham he shewed Evelyn "the transparent apiaries which he had built like castles and palaces, and so ordered them one upon another as to take the honey without destroying the bees," and after he was Bishop, Evelyn found him one day with "Sir Wm. Petty and Mr. Hooke, contriving chariots, new rigging for ships, a wheel for one to run races in, and other mechanical inventions." His writings show what manner of man he was. In 1638 he published "The Discovery of a World in the Moone, or a discourse tending to prove that there may be another habitable world in that planet." In the third edition he added "a discourse concerning the possibility of a Passage thither." "I do seriously and on good grounds affirm it possible," he wrote, "to make a flying chariot in which a man may sit and give such a motion unto it as shall convey him through the air." Naturally the idea of a journey to the moon was ridiculed, but when the eccentric Duchess of Newcastle, who had the reputation of originating impracticable and useless schemes, said to him, "If I undertake the journey, will your Lordship kindly tell me where I am to bait the first night," the Bishop with ready wit replied, "Truly your Grace is the last person in the world to ask such a question, for you have built so many castles in the air that you would find one to receive you at every conceivable stopping place."

Wilkins also wrote a book "tending to prove that the earth is one of our planets," and another book on what today we call telepathy, "shewing how a man may with privacy and speed communicate his thoughts to a friend at any distance." Another of his works was an "Universal Language," a sort of Esperanto, which looks much more complicated and difficult than any ordinary language. In the midst of it he digresses to show, by means of careful measurements and diagrams, how that it was quite possible for all the animals to have been accommodated in the Ark together with the necessary fodder.

John Wilkins, though not a great bishop nor cast in any heroic mould, was nevertheless a very remarkable man, kind and tolerant in an intolerant age, and within the limitations of his time no mean scientist, and one well entitled to the epithet of "worthy."

BISHOP PEARSON (1673-1686) can hardly be omitted from this series, for he is perhaps the best known of all the Bishops of Chester, but his fame is due rather to his scholarship and learning than to his episcopal administration, of which there is very little to record. "Pearson on the Creed" will be remembered long after Bishop Pearson of Chester is forgotten.

# Old Fashioned Flowers

BY CAPTAIN C. HAWKES, M.B.E., M.C.

IT is indeed pleasing to see that there is an awakening interest being taken in the flowers which our forebears grew, cherished and loved so well. These old-fashioned flowers have the charm and restfulness associated with old world gardens, and, as Materlinck says "A long human past behind them."

One sometimes wonders the reason for the neglect of these lovely and beautiful flowers of the past, and one can only think that perhaps it was due to the introduction in the last century of so many plants from China, Tibet and the Himalayas, with their brilliant colours, thus swamping the old favourites. Beautiful though some of these introductions are, yet they lack that wonderful peacefulness which reflects the soul of our forebears.

With the craving for something new, many of these old flowers have been entirely lost to cultivation, while others have been rescued just in time to save them from total extinction. It has already been suggested that perhaps the reason for this neglect was because of new introductions, but while that may be true to a degree, yet another reason may be that most of these old flowers were double, and did not set seed, but had to be propagated vegetatively, which is not so easy as sowing.

The origin of some of these "antique pieces" is rather obscured by the mists of time; others can be traced and some we can only surmise from whence they came. Undoubtedly the Romans who, we know, were keen gardeners, were responsible for some, and there is little doubt that others were introduced by the returning Crusaders, monks and gypsies. The Elizabethan adventurers are known to have brought some plants and seeds from the New World, and of course, the Flemish weavers who settled here also brought their quota.

Some of these flowers were greatly improved by the working men of Lancashire, Paisley, Norwich, Spitalfields, and Manchester, and it seems as though weaving and flowers have some connection—hence the beautiful floral patterns of Paisley shawls, and the silks of Macclesfield. We owe much to the old-time artisans for the creation of many floral gems, as many of the old flowers were the result of their patient industry.

It is quite impossible, in a brief outline, to do justice to this subject, and only short descriptions of some of the flowers can be given.

The names given to these plants by the old gardeners, in some cases, are quaint, and many are most appropriate. In the primrose group, we have "Jack-in-the-Green," "Jack-an-apes," and "Hose-in-Hose"; in Auriculas, we have the "Bear's ears," as the leaves were thought to resemble the ears of that animal, but more will be said about this when describing the various flowers.

The Carnation is an ancient plant and records of its cultivation go back as far as the 13th century. From then up to the 17th century carnations were classed as herbs, and grown for practical and not for decorative reasons. It provided the flavouring and bouquet for wines, simples, cordials, etc., and is listed as one of the ingredients in *The Divine Cordial* and in the once popular *Angelica Water* given in the "*The Receipt Book of Elizabeth Cleland 1759.*"

The Elizabethans called the larger type—Carnations, and the smaller ones, which Francis Bacon knew as "Pinks," were Gilloflowers. We still have the Nutmeg Clove carnation and the Crimson Clove; the latter being extremely rare to-day. These two kinds were called "Sops in Wine" and have beautifully serrated edges to their petals. They were Chaucer's Nutmeg and Clove Gilloflowers and with the exception of *dianthus caryophyllus* are the oldest carnations still in cultivation.

"Painted Ladies" is another group which include "Ye Gallant's Fayre Ladye," rescued from extinction in 1942, which has a flower with a white ground painted red or purple. "Painted Lady" of Parkinson's day has a white ground with pink markings. It is said that in 1620 there were no less than 150 different kinds of "Painted Ladies."

The old very dark red Clove—a rugged old fellow—had very large double flowers with a delicious strong clove perfume. It seems to have been entirely lost to cultivation. The writer remembers hundreds of these growing in a garden in Berkshire 50 years ago, and while he has had numbers of plants sent to him from various parts of the country, purporting to be this plant, yet the old kind has never turned up. A very old pink, now seldom seen is the "Carthusian Pink" (*dianthus carthusianorum*), with brilliant red flowers on a single stem over grass-like foliage. It is supposed to have been introduced into this country in the 12th century by the monks of that order from Germany.

Auriculas are certainly among our oldest cultivated plants, and it is thought by some that the earlier kinds were brought to these islands by the Romans. We have definite proof that several varieties were in cultivation in the 16th century. The garden Auriculas as we know them to-day, were probably brought here by the Huguenots in the 16th century.

The charming "Old Dusty Millers" are survivals of a very old kind, which include "Old Yellow Dusty Miller" with densely powdered leaves, "Old Chocolate Dusty Miller," "Old Red Dusty Miller" and "Old Purple Dusty Miller." The last mentioned is thought to be the great "Purple Jack-an-apes" of the 17th century. Then we have "Old Bronze" with smoky bronze flowers, and "Old Irish Blue" a lovely thing, but not to be confused with the modern "Blue Velvet."

The old writers speak of these plants variously as "Bear's Ears," in Gloucestershire, as "Vanner's Aprons"—no doubt an

illusion to the leathery leaves—and in other parts as “Baziers” referring to the baize aprons worn by some tradesmen.

Samuel Gilbert in his “Florists’ Vade Mecum,” 1702, says that one Peter Egerton of Broughton, near Chester, later moving to the Hall of Shaw, near Manchester, had a very choice collection of these plants to the number of twenty, of which he raised four himself, naming two of them “Darling” and “His Delight.” He also had nine double kinds and three double striped. All these seem to have become extinct but there may be one or two of them yet to be discovered in some old garden.

One could linger over these old auriculas indefinitely, describing their colours, some of which he states were fair, reddish liver, red brick, flesh and sky shades. One of the doubles—bluish purple—carried flowers which were as big as half crowns.

Some of the old primroses are freak flowers, such as “Jack in the Green,” which carries its flower set in an Elizabethan ruff of five green leaves and when the flower fades, the ruff continues to grow for some weeks; the “Hose in Hose” or Double Decker, which has one flower superimposed on the other, which in fact is the calyx of the flower become petaloid. Parkinson says of this type “like unto breeches men do wear.”

Then there are the very old double primrose, the white one being illustrated in Gerard’s “Historie of Plantes,” and mentioned by Tabernae Montanus as far back as 1500. There is also the “Double Yellow,” which was grown in the 17th century and a “Double Green,” which is a quaint old thing, and has now become very scarce. “Double Mauve” or “Quaker’s Bonnet”—“Marie Crousse”—which is bright rose mauve, edged with silver, and Arthur De Molyns deep violet, are early 19th century kinds.

The old kinds of gold and silver laced polyanthus must not be forgotten. Those which the old weavers brought to such perfection with very even lacing on the petals have become rare but efforts are now being made to raise these old kinds once again.

Readers who are interested in auriculas and primroses, should visit the annual show of the National Auricula and Primula Society, held in Manchester on the first Saturday in May, when Dr. Newton courteously places his wonderful collection of old plates, books and illustrations at the Society’s disposal for visitors to inspect.

A very old plant still to be obtained is “Barrenwort” (*epimedium*), which Pliny the Elder mentions in the 1st century and according to Gerard was introduced into this country in 1590, which he says “the French King’s gardener Robenus sent him a plant which he planted in his London garden, yet in spite of the hot summer of that year it failed to set seed.” Pliny had already noticed this fact centuries before.

The "Old Rose Plantain" (*plantago rosea exotica*), is more quaint than beautiful because while the foliage is the same as the "Common Plantain" or "White Man's Sole"; in the former the flower takes the form of a curious green bract. Clusius also knew this plant.

In Chaucer's day, the Daisies seem to have been favourites as he says of them:

These flow'res white and red  
Such that men call daisies in our town;  
To them have I so great affection.

The "Double Daisies," in pinks, reds and whites, were a great feature in old gardens and were held in high estimation by those who wished to make a brave show of spring flowers. One specially interesting old daisy is the "Hen and Chicken" or "Childing Daisy" (*bellis perennis proliferans*), with the centre flower in pink surrounded by a ring of smaller ones.

Double Buttercups were much grown in Tudor days but are seldom seen in gardens to-day yet they are easily grown plants. Several dozen are mentioned by old writers. Some have been lost to cultivation but the following can still be obtained and are well worth a trial:— "Batchelor's Buttons" (*ranunculus acris*) very small double golden flowers; *ranunculus bulbosus*, that massive flowers, often more than 2 inches across and in their formality suggest the conventional flowers of mediæval tapestry; *ranunculus speciosus*, glistening pompons of gold with a green centre, and the charming little double white "Fair Maids of France" (*ranunculus acronitifolius*).

The "Double Nonesuch" (*lychnis calcedonica*), of which Parkinson says "As it is rare and not common, for his bravery it doth well deserve a master of account that will take care to keep and preserve it." This Elizabethan plant carries striking orange-scarlet flowers and makes an excellent subject for the herbaceous border.

"Goodbye to Summer" or "Bouncing Bett" (*saponaria officinalis*), is another Elizabethan plant which produces an abundance of fragrant deep pink flowers in September, and can also be obtained in white.

"Double Lady's Smock" or "Cuckoo Flower" (*cardamine pratensis*), is one of our best and most attractive spring flowers with its heads of double mauve blooms, that are so similar to stock.

Gerard knew this plant from his boyhood days and says, "In Northfolk cuckoo flowers are called "Caunterburie Bels"; at Namptwich in Cheshire where I had my beginning, "Ladie Smock" which hath given me cause to christen it after my countrie fashion."

The old Double Wallflowers (*cheiranthus cheri*), are plants of great character, and are most fragrant. The first to be noticed of these is "Harpur Crewe," which for many years was thought

to have become extinct. It was re-discovered growing on the walls of Tantallon Castle in East Lothian. This fine old plant carries golden rosettes of double flowers and is almost certainly the "Pale Yellow Double" which Rae mentions in his Flora 1665.

The "Yellow Rose" of Gerard has become very rare as indeed has the "Double Red" of Parkinson. The latter is excessively scarce, as perhaps there are not more than a dozen plants of this to be found in the country to-day. The "Bloody Warrior" wallflower seems to have been lost as the writer has been unable to locate a single plant in spite of searches in Scotland and Eire. Years ago it was to be seen in gardens in various parts of the country. It is a lovely thing with its yellow petals splashed with red. Let us hope that somebody will re-discover it in some old garden.

A curious and strange little strawberry is the "Plymouth Strawberry" (*fragaria vesca fructu hispido*), which was found in a garden near Plymouth about 1590 by John Tradescant. It produces green flowers followed by green fruit set with bristles; later this turns to red and finally to a dull crimson.

A rather pretty little shrublet which takes us back further than any of the plants already mentioned is "Hyssop" (*hyssopus officinalis*), the Hyssop of the Scriptures. Its leaves are lanceolate and aromatic, and years ago it was much used as a flavouring for wine and medicinally as a gargle.

Some of the old columbines (*aquilegia*), produce quaint flowers and are quite unlike the modern varieties, as the flowers are double and as Parkinson says "without Heeles or Hornes." The old rose columbine (*aquilegia vulgaris*), with dull red flowers, is characteristic of mediæval manuscripts. They can also be obtained in violet, very dark red, blue and white and the old Scotch folks knew them as "Grannies' Mutches" as they are thought to resemble Grandmother's Nightcaps.

The Christmas rose (*helleborus niger*), is said to have been grown in these islands for at least 400 years. Theophrastus and Aristotle tell us how various plants were gathered, some by day others by night, some approached from windward, but in gathering Hellebore, gatherers first smeared themselves with oil. In this case, it may have been because the plant is poisonous as the two words from which "Hellebore" is derived means "to cause death" and "food." This fact need deter no one from its cultivating. It produces large and beautiful flowers in purest white, around Christmas time.

Some of the old daffodils are well worth growing, and one of these is "Von Sion" with very showy double golden yellow flowers. Parkinson mentions that this kind was grown by Vincent Sion as far back as 1620. It is generally thought that this was the "Great Rose Daffodil" mentioned by John Tradescant.

Continued on page 41.

# The Wettenhall Parish Book

By MAURICE H. RIDGWAY, B.A., F.S.A.

THE township of Wettenhall, seven miles from Nantwich and five and a half miles from Tarporley, Cheshire, has attracted little attention in its long history. Its two thousand acres of clay soil have been farmed by a scattered community which has succeeded in surviving without creating any noticeable village centre. An early chapel (once attached to the parish church of Over) now rebuilt and a parish church, stands at the end of the two miles of uninhabited Wettenhall 'Straight' leading to Alraham and the main Tarporley-to-Nantwich road. Some distance away, adding some interest to the farther side of the community, and beyond the little stream stand the 'Boot and Slipper' and the 'Little Man.' The township would escape the notice of all but the extremely curious for it presents no features that attract attention.

The population has never been large and has changed little in the last two hundred years. A census taken in 1801 showed that there were 228 people, by 1831 it had risen to 272 and ten years later two more had been added, but in 1931 the Parish had only 186.

The recent recovery of 151 leaves of parish accounts, held together within the boards and rotting leather of the original binding, resurrect a vivid picture of life in this township between the years 1760 and 1826. In it were recorded year by year the accounts of the Overseers of the Poor, the Parish Constables, and the Surveyors of the Highways, recalling the times when the manor and township were responsible by law for the care of the poor, the protection of the community, the control of vagrancy and the repair of roads and bridges. It is a simple countryman's record of 18th century local government and initiative, all the more praiseworthy because it depended mostly upon the voluntary labours of the officials who were appointed annually to carry out their duties.

Page after page the officers come to life, and line after line tell unconsciously the story of the life and work of this isolated community. The accounts are peculiar to this particular township but hundreds of other parishes in Cheshire must have had a similar tale, unfortunately comparatively few of their accounts have survived.

After the Incumbent, the most ancient and honourable of the parish officials were the Church Wardens, and the Parish Clerk. Wettenhall however came within the Ecclesiastical Parish of Over so that the Wardens' Accounts are bound up with those of the mother church where they are still preserved within the medieval iron bound chest safely secured by three large padlocks.



The chapel at Wettenhall had to be content with a curate and a parish clerk who were for most of the period under review, the Rev. John Kent and Richard Banks. Mr. Kent, a note on the final page of the accounts records . . . . 'died at Croxton on the fifteenth day of July in the year of Our Lord 1805,' and adds 'He preached at Wettenhall Chapel about thirty five years.' Richard Banks, the parish clerk, was 'Clerk to him thirty one years and a half' and 'died Aug. 23rd 1826 aged 77 years, and his son in law, Nathaniel Hart (or Hunt?), succeeded him in the office of Clerk for the said Chapel.'

Of these men, Richard Banks appears in the accounts most frequently, though presumably by virtue of his office he was never called upon to perform any of the duties of the other parish officers. But beneath the umbrella of parish clerk he managed to cram, or had crammed numerous other services. He cleaned the chapel and was paid £1 8s. 0d. per annum 'wages for saying Amen.' On occasions he was called upon to house homeless travellers apprehended without passes or other official documents, and to board and lodge persons under arrest (when not put in the roundhouse) until they could be dealt with by the justices. For this he was able to pick up a few extra shillings but it is not stated whether he appreciated the privilege they entailed. At the turn of the century he is found in charge of the Sunday School for which in 1809 he got £1 2s. 0d. The following year £1 9s. 0d. was spent on books for the Sunday School. The same Overseers' accounts shortly afterwards relate 'To John Hunt' (what an appropriate name!) for going to Crewe in search of a school master 1/- and one is left wondering whether Richard Banks had sickened of his part-time responsibilities or whether the parish thought a change might be for the better. Whatever the reason, Richard Banks is found back again at Sunday School in 1815 at the increased salary of £1 6s. 0d. p.a. Two years earlier he had been working for the Surveyor of the Highways.

'Rich Banks for guttering, cobbing, laying flags and sundry other work 14½ days.....£1 9s. 0d.'

Every year the parish clerk would be present at the parish meeting and vestry and witness the appointments of the new parish officers who normally began their tenure of office at Lady Day.

By far the heaviest duties fell to the overseer of the Poor who appears to have carried out his multifarious duties single handed. For security reasons perhaps, two parish constables were appointed, and one surveyor, overseer or 'supravisor,' was deemed enough to keep a watchful eye upon the roads, plats and bridges.

Very rarely was the same official nominated for a second year, and generally it appears to have been the custom to let many persons realise their responsibilities to the community. Any qualified resident was deemed fit apparently to carry out any of the duties. John Newall in his day managed to perform all three to the satisfaction of the justices at various times. An overseer

of the poor might become a constable the following year and likewise the past constable might be called upon, in a different sphere of activity, to see that the township mended its ways.

In the Wettenhall Township the amounts disbursed annually increased considerably, especially after 1800. The money had first to be collected by means of parish leys and assessments, sometimes four in the year, and in bad years must have represented a heavy drain upon the farmers. When there was any balance it was usually small, no capital was held for cloudy and dark days, and sometimes the overseers were a few pounds over-spent at the end of the year.

The Poores' Account for 1760 amounted to a little more than £29, the Highways expenditure, £3 15s. 0d. and the Constables, £5 13s. 10d. Seven years later the Poores' Account had risen to over £118, the Highways to £17 18s. 11d., whilst the Constables remained low at £6 3s. 3½d. In 1821 the Poores' Account showed an annual disbursement of over £288. Bastardy money alone in 1821 amounted to over £24, which can be considered a heavy outlay for such a small community.

The Overseer of the Poor having the most work and consequently the fullest accounts, has left the most animated of these three mirrors upon country life. His duties seemed to cover everything which could not be conveniently dealt with by the Constables and the Highways Surveyor, and with them was engaged upon endless and sometimes fruitless journeys, in addition to a monthly meeting at Tarvin to report and present 'lists.' At home the poor he had with him always, and those in need or asking for help appear to have increased even though the population remained under three hundred. The names of widows, old men, unmarried mothers and illegitimate children appear yearly in the accounts, and in many ways as the following items show:

1760 for leading Wid Walkers turffs 3/6

1761 On account of illness 3/-

1763 A load of coals 10/- (in 1767 a hundredweight of coal cost 6½d.).

1760 A pair of stockings for Sam Moss 1/-

1760 Two yards of flinnin (linen) for widw Walker 4/6

1760 One dozen buttons 4d.

At other times their gardens were dug, dunged and planted and their cottages repaired:

1763 Pd Thos Duning for winding and daubing 2/6

Pd for 20 thrave of straw for Thos Walker at 6d. per thrave 10/- and pd for drawing the same to his house 2/- pd for 6 hundred of thatch pricks at 3d. per hundred 1/6

When the poor had to be moved the Overseer helped to defray the cost:

1760 for fliting widow Walker 5/3

and when the poor were still capable of industry this was encouraged as the following seems to show:

1767 Given Widow Wood to pay for weaving linsey 2/-  
Given Do. to pay for repairing her wheel 2/-  
(In 1809 Elizabeth Towers wheel is mended).

1795 Given to Ann Barrow to buy tow 2/6 and sixteen  
years later in 1811 she was still spinning tow:

Given to Ann Barrow to buy tow to spin for sheets 8/-  
This may throw light upon the meaning of the otherwise obscure  
reference in 1799:

Given to Mary Donkinson 5 bags to make sheets on at 1/-  
pr bag.

Similar help was given to poor men to assist them to make a  
living:

To Thos Walker to buy beesom steals 12/6  
and in 1808 to Timothy Dunning £1/6/0 'To buy an Ass to  
carry beesoms on' (a horse in 1767 cost £2 10s. 0d.)

Again,

1767 a sithe 4/-

1810 To buy a spade 6/-

Pecks of peas, pecks of corn (at 2/- a peck) in 1796 or half a  
measure of Barley 3/9 were also handed out in relief.

The prices and also the names of garments mentioned are  
also of interest in these accounts:

1761 Smock 4/2

Sheets 4/6

6 Pettecoats 2/6

New Pair of shoes and mending 6/4 (a pair of shoes  
in 1825 was still 6/-)

Hat 1/1

2 pair Brecches 4/4

Coat and coatwise 6/10½

A Shift 5½

Making a coat and 2 waisecoat 2/-

1762 Flannel waistcoat, thread and making stript cotton  
½ yd....3/-

Bodies and Stomacher for Sarah Holland 30/-

A Rug and Blanket 9/6

Cloth prices are interesting also:

1763 Linsey 1/2 pr yd.

1767 Blue Frize 2/- pr yd.

1760 Linen 1/3 pr yd.

1825 Calico 7d. pr yd.

The overseer was also called upon to help where medical  
attention was needed for the poor:

1765 Pd the midwife for laying his wife and Thos Pem-  
berton for fetching her 5/-

1769 For bleeding and other expences 1/-

1795 Salve for a sore leg 1/-

1799 (to Thos Hodshkinson) to buy a steel truss to wear  
about his loyns 3/-

1811 To Thos Vickers for relief when lame of his shoulder  
1. 0. 0

and to another patient in 1810:

a quart of Ale when he was ill 8d.

Very rarely is wine given but we find that it cost 2/6 a bottle. Several doctors are mentioned by name and whenever called in, their fees are usually high. Perhaps this is why the local overseer was not ashamed to use intoxicating drinks in place of medicine even when there was no cure, but the following entry seems to show that a doctor might in this case have proved less expensive:

1827 Marthar Banks Account

24 May Gave her to buy gin 6d

12 June Payed towards her funeral 19/-

Was this the widow of the Parish Clerk ?

1795 'bought 8d worth of lemons for Eliz Thonton'

A later entry says her coffin cost 12/6.

In 1783 the following kindly act is recorded unconsciously:

Gave Sarah Walker for bred and buter when she came  
out of the Infirmy to Wettenhall 5/6

The Walkers are often met with in the Accounts. Perhaps it was a relation of this Sarah who for some unrecorded grave misdemeanour caused the writing of:

1795 Ann Walker when she was in the round house 1/6

The burying of the poor was always an expensive item. Coffins in 1762 could be made for 7/6, in 1764 9/-, in 1795 12/6 and by 1800 they had risen to over £1. In addition to this outlay there are items as follows to add to the expenditure:

1810 To fetching herse and drawing Sarah Baker to Over  
Church 7/6

If such last journeys to church cost money, the first did also

1764 Pd for one pint of ale that Mr Rathbone had when  
Baptizing the child 2d

Other duties of the Overseer were those in connection with the setting of apprentices and in 1783 there is the first hint that even Wettenhall was linked with the industrial revolution in south Lancashire. In this year five lads were sent 'to Pendleton for the Cottonwork.' They were equipped with clothing by the Overseer, a very meagre wardrobe, and escorted by him to their new work.

The Overseer was also concerned with the effects at home of the Militia system, which required every manor or township, to provide men for the militia. The families of men who were enlisted in this way sometimes became an additional burden on the parish funds, but if no militia man was forthcoming from the parish a substitute had to be found. This is apparently the meaning behind:

1795 hiring a seaman

1795 Recd of Mr Thos Acton four pounds of overplus money that was collected to hire a man into his Majesties service £4

In 1822 Saml Wittingham's family was given £16.0.6 'he being sent beyond the seas'

The listing of the militia was however one of the duties of the Constables, and when drawn up the lists were taken by the Constables to Bridge Trafford or to Tarvin as required. Although there may have been considerable grousing over this compulsory military service for men more accustomed to a plough than a sword, it is only occasionally that a hint is given of rebellion on the part of an individual against his national service. One such person, Joseph Frances, evidently failed to reconcile his love of freedom with his duties as a patriot, even though Napoleon was quickly becoming a threat to the country, for the accounts read:

- 1803 To going to Tarvin to inform the Gentlemen of Jos Frances running away after being ballotted 1/6
- To a journey to Chester concerning Jos Frances 4/-
- To going to Tarporley with a letter to get Jos Frances advertised 1/-
- To going to Chester to a day of ballotting 4/-
- To paid at same time for advertising of Jos Frances when run away from the militia 10/-
- To going to Chester to get a substitute swore into the Militia for Richd Garrat 4/-

The journeyings of the Constables were endless for in addition to these irregular journeys, other regular journeys had to be made. To Tarvin for the monthly meeting, to the Abbey Arms or to Bridge Trafford or Winsford in connection with the taking of oaths, freeholders lists and assessments had to be dealt with at Tarporley whilst land, window, property taxes and lists of alesellers usually went to Tarvin.

Theirs was in any case an unenviable task but they appear to have carried it out conscientiously. Having been appointed they were solemnly sworn in before justices, given their staffs or batons of office and having paid the curious fee called 'The Sberiffs tooth' (in 1760 it was 1/9d. and in 1776 4/- covered three years), they are found dealing with local malefactors and delinquents. One man had stolen a cow, two had been caught fighting, the coroner had to be called to deal with the bodies of a man and a woman, and two men had been caught robbing orchards. One offender on another occasion did not go to the local lockup without protest:

- 1782 Spent at taking John Blackmore & putting him in the Cage 4/-
- John Oulton for assistance 1/-
- Thos Ravencroft for taking him out of the cage 1/-

As Thomas Ravencroft was himself the Constable that year he was evidently determined to get some kind of compensation for the trouble John Blackmore had caused him!

An earlier Constable had claimed a meal:

1769 Pd for meat & drink taking Wackefield to house of  
Corexen at Midlewhich 2/4

The serving of 'summons' was a regular duty, and if need arose the Constables were required to carry out the rather severe laws in connection with vagrants, paupers and strangers without passes.

Wettenhall Chapel also came under the care of the Constables. Quite extensive repairs involving new slates for the roof, repairs to the bell frame and the renewing of the windows were carried out on several occasions, and they are careful to note that 11/- credit was allowed on the old windows. Preservation of the parish documents in the chapel was important and to this end the old chest was repaired in 1769 and replaced in 1798:

To a Box with three locks for the Towns use 10/6

The cost of cleaning and rushing the chapel was in addition to the normal salary of £1 1s. 0d. paid to the parish clerk. But the essential purpose of the chapel was not forgotten and the two items which follow are reminders that it was not merely a store house of documents, and place to be repaired and kept clean, but essentially a place of worship:

1768 Pd for a pich pipe for the chapel 3/6

1771 Pd for 2 Cupes for the Chapel for the Sacrament  
wine 6/6

The two cups were remarkably cheap, merely the price of a pair of shoes and it would be interesting to know out of what material they were made. Lustre-ware cups were known to have been used in some of the poorer churches in Wales and it is possible that lustre-ware is referred to here, a second having been bought in case of an accident.

Charity towards the outside world too is not forgotten by the Parish. When major disasters occurred there was no insurance to meet the cost and by special permission, usually letters patent, briefs were issued. These were circulated throughout the country and the good cause read out on Sundays (the Prayer Book still provides a place for them to be read). The clerk would then collect the offerings of the faithful and generous at the end of the service. One likes to think the Wettenhall Box had seen much use:

1778 Pd for mending the breef Box 6d

The Parish Constables were also required to take into pound any cattle found straying on the highways. These they placed in the public pinfold:

1775 Rails for the Pinfould 4/-

Such were the many duties of the Constables and there seemed to be only one department of public property yet to be cared for, namely the highways and bridges of the township.

At Wettenhall two main bridges seem to have called for attention throughout the period of the Surveyor of Highway's accounts:

1772 Pd Mark Topping for repairing the stone bridge 2/6  
1772 Pd Daniel Walley for repairing the Wooden Bridge  
2/6

Smaller bridges were also looked after and new ones built:

To Frances Turner for building a cart bridge 3/3/0  
To 3300 of bricks at 10/- a thousand 1/13/-

The highway account rarely exceeds £10 until 1811 when a concentrated effort was made to improve the roads system of the township. This included the making of a new road and between 1811 and 1813 over £100 was spent. The stone came from Peckforton Hills. In earlier accounts it had been drawn from Beeston Castle. Sand from Mr Dones sandpit at Calveley, 'Scinders' from Winsford, flags from Kelsall and 'grig' from the Forest which cost 13/- a load. Richard Bebbington was paid 7/6 for 'pheing' sand. Later in 1826 another local expression is found 'To falling and Kidding thorns and putting them in the ruts' and 4/7 is paid for 'hook and thimbles for a gate.' Stones were taken to the marshy ground to make 'plats' or causeways and roadside ditches cleaned. Upon all these activities the Surveyor kept a watchful eye seeing that every man did his fair share of work, for which by custom and law he was impressed, for the common good.

By the end of the period costs had risen considerably and although both wages and prices had risen there is a marked lack of prosperity, and for the first recorded time a list of defaulters appears owing the parish in all over £43 between 1819 and 1821. We do not know from the account book what action was taken against them. The accounts are imperfect towards the end of the book and finish with the year 1826. Shortly afterwards new central legislation under William IV in 1834 began to change the character of the earlier parish administration leading to present day systems, and the last tattered page of the old account book virtually marks the end of the old order which had done much for England in its 300 years of voluntary service.

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#### OLD FASHIONED FLOWERS — Continued from page 33.

The "Queen Rose of Austria," a double Jonquil (*narsissus odorus rugulosus plenus*), with grass-like foliage, and clusters of bright yellow double flowers that are sweetly scented, has now become very scarce, but it should be found in any garden where old flowers are grown.

There are many more lovely old flowers, but there is only space left to mention a few, such as the old tulips, lilies, pæonies, the scented rosemary and "Lad's Love," all with a wealth of legend associated with them.

# St. Bertolin and Cheshire

BY THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE, M.A., F.R.HIST.SOC.

ST. Bertolin is one of the less well-known Saints of the Church of England, to put it mildly, and Miss Arnold-Forster, in her "Studies in Church Dedications" assigns only one dedication to him, that of Barthomley in Cheshire, but on the Staffordshire border. The excavation of his chapel at the west end of St. Mary's Church in Stafford in 1954 and the publication of the report thereon by Adrian Oswald, F.S.A., this year (1955) has brought him before the public notice. Further, the recent researches of Mr. Ferguson Irvine, published in the Cheshire Sheaf, have also added to our knowledge and it may not be amiss to summarise all that is now known of the dedications to this very obscure saint.

It seems that there were originally not one but three parish churches in Cheshire dedicated to St. Bertolin. Besides Barthomley, it appears that Runcorn parish church was dedicated to St. Mary and St. Bertolin as early as c.1115, but this dedication was changed to St. Bartholomew at the Reformation, and to All Saints at some subsequent date. The third parish church is Thurstaston, and the evidence for it is a stone slab bearing a mediæval inscription, probably 15th century, which is now built into the wall of the 1824 brick church tower, but which, according to Bishop Gastrell (1724), was formerly on the outside of the south window of the Norman church. This inscription is hard to decipher and Bishop Gastrell's informant made a sad hash of it, for he read it

SANCTI BEATISSIMI JOHN WITTMORE RELIAM LIVGL  
whereas it really reads, according to Mr. Irvine,

SANCTI BERTILINI JOHN' WITTMOR WELIAM HOOL . . .

If the missing word is "gardiani," as it almost certainly must be, the translation will be "John Whitmore and William Hool, churchwardens of St. Bertolin." This dedication has remained hidden until now because the generally accepted reading has been BERTHIMI, which Mr. Irvine has shewn to be impossible. We do not know what the dedication was in Bishop Gastrell's time, for unfortunately he does not give the dedications of the churches mentioned in his admirable "Notitia Cestriensis." They have been added by the editor in 1845 and in that year Thurstaston church was dedicated to St. Bartholomew, as was Runcorn at one time.

We have, therefore, reason to believe that St. Bertolin was remembered or commemorated at three churches in Cheshire and at a chapel in Stafford. To complete the list mention must be made of a possible dedication at Ilam. Miss Arnold-Forster writes, "It is just possible—though there is no proof of this—that Ilam church as a whole may once have been dedicated to St. Bertolin. The present dedication is "Holy Cross," and Holy Cross Day is on September 9th. It not infrequently happens that



the day of a local saint, falling at the same time as some better known festival, is lost sight of in the celebration of the greater feast, and in this manner Holy Cross Day may have come to be looked upon as the patronal festival of Ilam." Further corroborative evidence is given. The legend says that St. Bertolin left his hermitage at Stafford and withdrew into "the mountains." Derbyshire provides the nearest suitable country for this withdrawal and moreover there is in Ilam church a chapel dedicated to St. Bertram. "If St. Bertram be not one with St. Bertolin," writes Miss Arnold-Forster, "he is a new and wholly unaccountable saint." There are also some elaborately carved stone pillars, called locally "the Battle stones," which might well be a corruption of the Bertolin stones," and it is noteworthy that in the next parish to Barthomley (Sandbach) there are similar stones.

We come last of all to the chapel of St. Bertolin in Stafford and there some five feet under the floor in the centre of what was the nave was found buried a wooden cross or the remains of it, and from the evidence of a coin of Ethelred II conveniently dropped by it, it must have been buried before 1000. It is suggested that the cross stood there erect in pre-Danish times in the middle of an enclosure, which was used both for services and burials. The enclosure was replaced in due course by a small timber church, which might be as early as the seventh century, but was more probably built after the reconquest of the Danelaw by Alfred and his daughter the Lady of the Mercians, when a burgh was thrown up at Stafford in 913. This timber church was afterwards replaced by a stone one. On the whole it seems very likely that the cross just excavated is the remains of the original cross set up by St. Bertolin on his mission to heathen Stafford.

It is natural that we should want to know all there is to be known of this Saint whom Cheshire shares with Staffordshire. The earliest mention of him is found in the twelfth century History of Peterborough, where the shrine or tomb of the holy martyr Bethelmu is stated to be at Stafford. The next mention of him is in the 1516 edition of the *Nova Legenda Angliae*, which contains a life of the Saint. From this we learn that Bertolin was of royal blood, and that he left his home in order to avoid the vices of his father's court, only to fall in love with the daughter of an Irish king. She eloped with him to England, where in a forest she and her new-born child were devoured by wolves while Bertolin was away seeking for help. In penitence Bertolin renounced the world and led a life of solitary contemplation, during which he performed many miracles. The one that interests us is the turning, not of stones into bread, but of bread into stones. This took place, we are told, "at the place called Bertelmesley," where the stone was still to be seen at the time of writing! Later on he returned home to his father, who failed to recognise him, but granted him a small island for a hermitage "called by the ancients Bethnei, by moderns Stafford." From here in order to avoid worldly fame he withdrew to mountainous and desert places where he ended his life on September 9th.

# An Interesting Discovery in West Kirby

BY CLIFFORD BRATT, A.R.HIST.S.

CHAIRMAN OF THE HOYLAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

IN 1954 the writer was requested by one of the West Kirby residents to inspect some stones in order to trace, if possible, their meaning and origin. In so doing he made an interesting discovery of some historical importance to the county and one which has given great satisfaction to the members of the Hoylake Historical Society and the people of Bromborough.

Hidden behind a high wall, in a lovely old garden in the Grange district of West Kirby, lay three huge blocks of red sandstone. From their size it was roughly estimated that each must have weighed close upon twelve hundredweight. Why or when these stones came to West Kirby is still something of a mystery, but the fact remains they had lain untouched behind that garden wall for well over twenty years. One stone was boldly carved in low relief with animals of the most grotesque and extraordinary character, while the other two were completely plain and devoid of ornamentation. Successive owners of the house where they lay have pondered over them and wondered for what purpose they might be effectively used, but finally their immense weight and size resolved the problem and the stones were allowed to remain undisturbed in the place where they had been originally deposited.

That the stones were old and most fascinating with their unusual carvings there could be no doubt, but no mention of them having appeared in any written history of West Kirby suggested one of two things, either (a) the stones were not then in position, or (b) that they had somehow been overlooked. Historians as a general rule, are most meticulous in their accounts and painstaking in their researches, so that the latter possibility to say the least, seemed highly improbable. The puzzling feature was that the stones in question appeared tantalisingly familiar yet foreign to West Kirby, but after a thorough search through a number of books about Wirral it was discovered that one of these identical stones was illustrated in a volume published over fifty years ago where it is described as forming part of a fireplace in an upper chamber of the Manor House Farm, Bromborough.

In fact the stones under review are mentioned by Young in his book entitled "A Perambulation of the Hundred of Wirral" and are also referred to by Sulley in his "Hundred of Wirral." A photograph (Plate 3) copied from one taken fifty-six years ago by the late W. H. McMillan, shows the carved stone in position in the Manor House Farm. Apparently the original fireplace had been blocked and a common sitting-room grate installed in its stead.

Improbable though it appeared that the carved stone found at West Kirby could be the same as that described as belonging to the Manor House Farm, it was indeed a fact. From subsequent enquiries made at Bromborough it was established that the stone

in question mysteriously vanished when the farm building was demolished just prior to 1930, and since that time nothing further had been seen or heard of it. It formed the lintel or chimney breast of the fireplace previously described and measures 64 inches in width. The height at the ends is 26½ inches while the depth is at least 10½ inches. Between the projections is a very much depressed Tudor arch of a type still to be seen in many of the older buildings within the county and elsewhere.

The whole stone is divided into three separate panels and that on the left contains the resemblance of an elephant with some kind of building upon its back. From the carving it is obvious that the mason had never seen an elephant, but that it had been cut either from imagination or by report, as it is totally unlike any encountered by man; while the castle appears as an elaborately domed and gabled mansion, almost a miniature Taj Mahal. The panel in the centre shows a lion rampant guardant, facing right, and therefore not the Scottish lion of James the First, which has been incorporated in the Arms of successive monarchs right down to the present day. The right hand panel depicts a ferocious dragon with outstretched wings; its tail and tongue armed with the conventional sting.

It is not possible to afford an explanation for these strange carvings neither to account for the presence of them in the Manor Farm, Bromborough, nor for their subsequent appearance in West Kirby, but it is hoped one day that the mystery may be solved.

Similar subjects to those chosen to ornament this curiously carved relic, were however, often used to decorate misericords or to embellish the stall ends in the chancels of some of our churches and examples of a like nature are to be found in Chester, and St. Andrew's Church, Bebington. There is no doubt that in days gone by the elephant and castle had some particular significance for they appeared in the Chester Mystery Plays. The elephant and castle occurs frequently up and down the country and may bear some allusion to the discovery of India and the formation of the East India Company which obtained its charter in 1600. A very splendid example of the elephant and castle may be seen in the little village of Peckforton. Carved from a solid block of stone it is the work of a local mason in the mid-fifties of last century.

The Bromborough carved stone would appear to be the work of a craftsman of the Tudor period and can probably be dated from the latter years of the reign of Elizabeth I. Did the stone come from the home of the Stanleys at Hooton, demolished to make way in 1778 for a successor in the Italian style, itself now no more?

Due to the generosity and public-spiritedness of the owner of the stone it has been possible for this interesting relic to be returned to Bromborough, where it rightly belongs, the entire cost of removal having been borne by The Bromborough Society. The other two blocks of sandstone which formed the jambs of the fireplace still remain in West Kirby.

# Book Reviews

BY ARTHUR OAKES, B.A.

## “DISLEY, The Story of a Village”

“Disley, The Story of a Village,” written by Susan Marshall, B.A., and published by John Sherratt & Son, of Altrincham, at half a guinea, is an admirable book. It can be recommended to the readers of “The Cheshire Historian” as a model of how to write the history of a village. It is sincerely to be hoped that other village histories will be written in the manner of Mrs. Marshall’s.

The great love of the writer for her village is displayed throughout the book. Susan Marshall has been endowed with the gift of scholarship, a keenness for research and a flair for writing a straightforward story as all readers of the book soon realise. Even readers who don’t know Disley will find the book a joy; it will make them find parallels in their own village story. They will be stimulated to search the Parish Registers, to study place and field names and exercise that imagination that can picture a present day village in its stages of growth from infancy.

Have you a Mudhurst Lane in your Village? Disley has and Burton-in-Wirral has a variant of it, Mudhouse Lane. What does it mean? How did Redhouse Lane, Disley, get its name from “The White Lion” Inn? The book provides several of these posers, evidence of the powers of observation and inference possessed by the author.

She deals with the great families—the Leghs of Lyme, the Sherds of Dysteleg, etc.—but with the ordinary folk too; their economic condition, their experiences in the Great Plague and their excitement and trepidation when Bonnie Prince Charlie and his men were in their neighbourhood.

The book is well illustrated with plates—though that of the Bow Stones lacks definition—and end paper maps. These two maps are excellent; they help the reader to follow the text with great clarity. Mrs. Marshall has added herself to the Disley worthies by this book.

## “THE WIRRAL PENINSULA”

The most recent of the Regional Books, published by Messrs. Robert Hale Ltd., at 18s., is “The Wirral Peninsula,” by Norman Ellison. He takes us on an itinerary through Wirral, instead of dealing with the Peninsula historically. Probably this is a more interesting and informative approach for the general reader. He has certainly accomplished what he set out to do “to show you its many beauties through the eyes of one who loves it.”

There is no doubt that he loves Wirral, especially the less industrialised western half of the region. This is to be anticipated for Norman Ellison is “Nomad,” the naturalist. His des-

cription of Hilbre and its two companion islands is enthralling. The reader requires little imagination to feel the pulsating bird life of the islands and to picture the magic and majesty of thousands of birds wheeling in flight and performing their amazing convolutions. Again he compels the reader to feel the atmosphere of the Burton saltings. The loneliness, sometimes the eeriness, and often the dangers of the Sands of Dee are described most graphically. He tramps with us through brambles and gorse along the now overgrown Kingswood Lane, but pauses so that we may hear the marching feet of the royal troops as they make their way to Shotwick Castle to embark for Wales or Ireland in the 13th century.

His chapter on Neston and Parkgate is illuminating. He gets us begrimed in the under-river coal workings of Denhall and before we have had time to make ourselves presentable he is introducing us to Handel or drawing our attention to the bewitching beauty of the Divine Emma, Lady Hamilton.

There is much history in the book for he has compiled very skilfully from numerous sources all that has been written about the places of interest in Wirral, the historic buildings and the famous people. From the cheirotherium of Hr. Bebington Quarry to the Atomic Factory at Capenhurst is some thousands of years and to deal with such an expanse of time is a serious undertaking. But "Nomad" has accomplished it so successfully that the book is now in its 3rd impression.

It is well illustrated by excellent photographs by Mr. H. M. Eccles, A.R.P.S., of Hoylake, Wirral, and the sketch map at the end of the book helps the reader to follow the meanderings of his guide.

### "HOMAGE TO CHESHIRE"

Published at 10s. 6d., by John Sherratt & Son, of Altrincham, with an attractive book jacket displaying a view of Rostherne Mere, by F. H. Done, the fifth edition of "Homage to Cheshire," by Hedley Lucas is much enlarged.

Mr. Lucas abounds in love of the county of Cheshire. Merely to read the titles of the poems provides clear evidence of his geographical and historical knowledge of the county. Cheshire's busy towns and quiet countryside, its historic buildings and noble families; its folk and their pursuits; its eccentrics and worthies are all subjects for the verse of this prolific writer. His affection for Cheshire shines on every page, but the brilliance of his muse is occasionally overshadowed by a cloud of obscurity.

He finds delight in the River Dee on which "swans engrave a water's frontispiece"; he mourns the draining of Arley mere, "Gone is the mere that lovely lay, With facets of a crystal day"; his interest in the flora of the county produces "Clustered communal beauty see In wild flowers' blithe miscellany"; her cottage doors "are hinged on homeliness"; and in "Historic Inns" he tells of "love astride elopement's steed."

The lay-out of the book and its type are most attractive.

# Queries

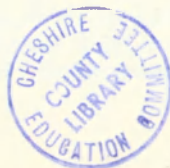
## Wanted - William Maudsley

The Vicar of Bunbury is anxious to obtain as much information as possible about William Maudsley who was a Nantwich Pewterer in the early part of the 18th century. The only information so far gathered together is that he worked at Nantwich and was insolvent by 1737. At a meeting of the Society of Pewter Collectors some time ago the members were able to examine the pewter collecting 'shovels' remaining in Cheshire (two from Bunbury, one from Tushingham and one from Malpas). These may actually be unique in the country for no further specimens are recorded. But on one of the Bunbury Shovels (purchased in 1732 for 6/-) appears the only known mark of William Maudsley. This shows a cock facing left between two fluted columns with the word William above and Maudsley below, the whole occupying a square. If any further specimens of this pewterer's mark exist anywhere, please communicate with the Editor, or with the Vicar of Bunbury.

## Chester Goldsmiths

It is surprising to find that hardly anything has been written upon the Chester Goldsmiths though their record is a long and honourable one. The Festival Exhibition enabled many to see some of the fine work of these men from the time of Ralph Walley, c.1683, including the work of Peter Pemberton, Thomas Maddock, Richard Richardson, John Walker, Nathaniel Bullen, Thomas Robinson, Joseph Walley and the first George Lowe. But nothing remains in print about these men and their work beyond an occasional book reference. May we urge that somebody of authority undertakes this before the Chester Silver gets too scattered. The family of Edwards (Griffith and Sam) were also Chester Goldsmiths but little is known of their work though Sam presented a flagon to his parish Church (St. Michael's, Chester) in the 18th century. Griffith Edwards is even more obscure, but he appears to have been working about 1610. There is a small silver paten at Bunbury Church which bears the initials G. E. within a trefoil. Beneath the letters is a devise which at present defies identification and it is most desirable that should this mark be known on silver elsewhere, a comparison should be made so that further knowledge of this Goldsmith of Chester might be revealed.

M.H.R.



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---

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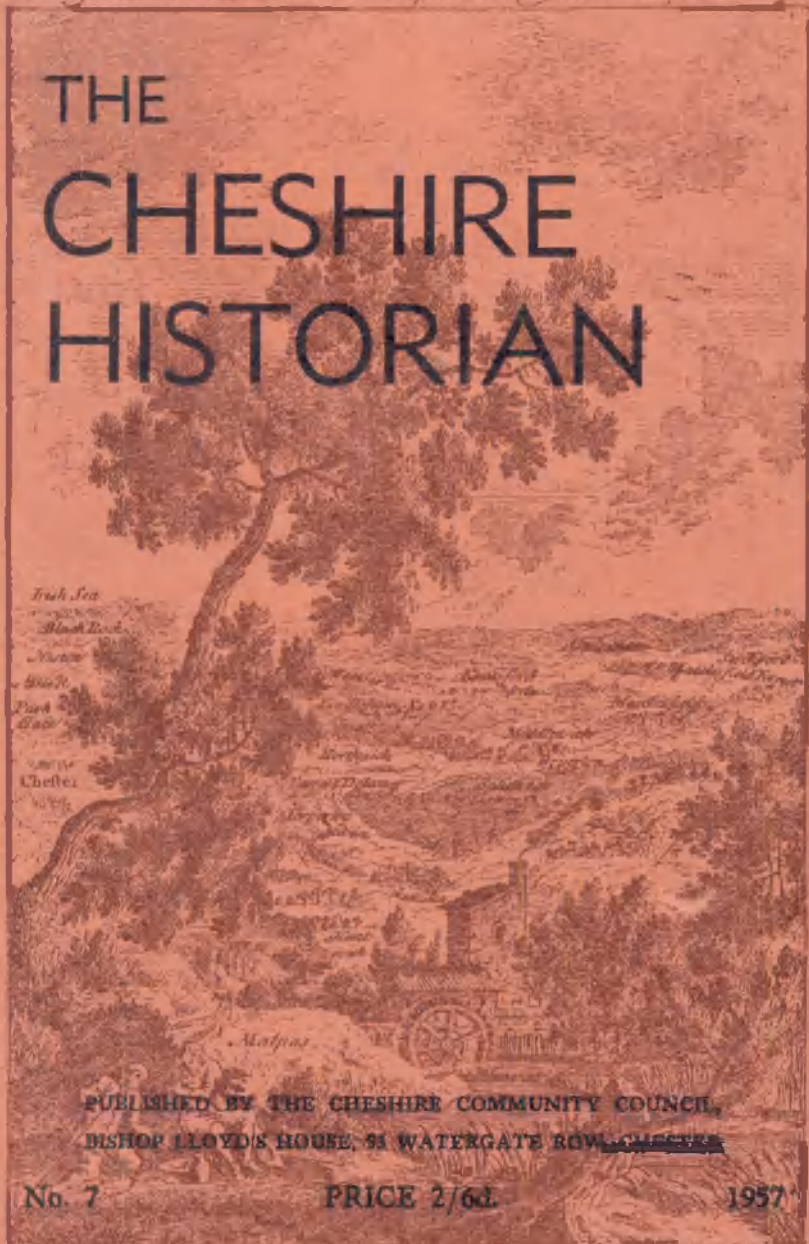
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A MAP of CHESHIRE North Well from LONDON

*Humbly Invented by the R. Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Earl of Cheshmately Lord Seat of the County*

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PRE-CONQUEST SCULPTURE AT SANDBACH, By C. A. RALEGH RADFORD . . . . .	1
CHESHIRE WOODLAND IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By DOROTHY SYLVESTER . . . . .	7
NEW LIGHT ON ST. WERBURGH'S ABBEY, By THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE . . . . .	14
I WONDER, No. 3, By ROBIN ALLEN . . . . .	20
THE ARCHÆOLOGIST IN THE FIELD (PART VII), By GRAHAM WEBSTER . . . . .	24
CHESTER EXCAVATIONS, 1956, By F. H. THOMPSON	28
CAPESTHORNE, By LENETTE BROMLEY-DAVENPORT . . . . .	29
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY OF BEESTON CASTLE, CHESHIRE, By MAURICE H. RIDGWAY . . . . .	35
THE CHANGING SCENE IN THE TOWNSHIP OF HIGHER BEBINGTON, WIRRAL, By GRAHAM F. A. WILMOT . . . . .	39
THE NOBBLER, By S. JACKSON . . . . .	45
COCKFIGHTING, THE LAST GREAT MAIN AT PEEL HALL, By S. JACKSON . . . . .	46
CHESHIRE MATERIALS CULLED FROM JOURNALS	48
LIST OF NAMES & ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES . . . . .	INSIDE BACK COVER



# Pre-Conquest Sculpture at Sandbach

By C. A. RALEGH RADFORD, M.A., F.B.A., F.S.A.

The writer is much indebted to Sir Thomas Kendrick, K.C.B., for permission to reproduce the photographs illustrating this article.

THE two great pre-Conquest cross shafts, which stand on a stepped base in the Market Place at Sandbach, have long been recognised as among the most important Mercian monuments of this age. The earliest mention of the crosses dates from about 1585, when William Smith, a local man, who became Rouge Dragon Poursuivant, recorded that "in the Market Place do stand together two crosses of stone, on steps, with certain images and writings thereon graven." A later writer, William Webb, about 1620, does not mention the crosses in his description of Sandbach. This has led to the conjecture that they were thrown down by the group of iconoclasts, who were brought before the Court of Star Chamber in 1614 and charged with the destruction of the Maiden's Cross in Delamere and a number of other local monuments. Sandbach is not named in this case, but the successful plea of the accused, arguing that they were only protesting against the idolatrous worshipping of the crosses, secured their discharge and would have left them free to return home and continue the work of destruction.<sup>1</sup>

The state of the crosses shews that considerable force was used for their overthrow and many fragments are now missing. These were doubtless removed as building material, like other sculptured stones that have been recovered in later times. After the Restoration, probably about 1670, the most important fragments of the cross shafts were rescued by Sir John Crewe and taken to Utkinton. They were subsequently removed to Tarporley and Oulton, where they were incorporated in a recess near the artificial grotto in the grounds.<sup>2</sup> In 1816, on the initiative of Sir John Egerton, of Oulton, the cross shafts were brought back to Sandbach and re-erected on a stepped base, incorporating a number of other sculptured fragments found in the town.

John Palmer, the Manchester architect, who was in charge of the re-erection of the cross shafts, evolved the theory that the crosses had been set up to commemorate the conversion of Peada, sub-king of the Middle Angles and son of Penda, the last pagan ruler of Mercia. Peada was baptized in 653 at the court of Oswiu of Northumbria and returned to his own land with four Christian priests.<sup>3</sup> Sandbach was sufficiently near the frontier to make it plausible to regard this town as the site where Christianity was first preached to the Middle Angles. Neither the date nor the iconography of the crosses supports this theory, which may safely be discarded.

Recent examination of the material at Sandbach has shewn that the crosses do not stand alone. The sculptured stones incorporated in the stepped base that was reformed in 1816 and other fragments found in the town include parts of a third cross shaft, parts of two grave covers and a headstone. The whole group belongs to the Mercian School and can be dated to the 8th and early 9th century.

To explain the existence of this important group of pre-Conquest sculpture at Sandbach reference must be made to the later history of the parish. A church and a priest are already mentioned in the Domesday Survey.<sup>4</sup> The medieval and later parish was very large, including a number of dependent townships and Chapels at Goostrey and Church Hulme.<sup>5</sup> In the 12th century the patronage was in the hands of the Earl of Chester. In an Inquisition held in 1224 the Jurors deposed that the great-grand-father of the then Earl, Ranulph le Meschin (ob. 1129), had presented Steinulf the priest and that his son, Ranulph de Gernon (ob. 1153), had presented Hugh Lech. The existence of a large parish with dependent chapelries, the mention of a church in the Domesday Survey and the exercise of patronage by the Earl, taken together, indicate the probability that Sandbach had been one of the Saxon minsters, on which the earliest ecclesiastical organisation of the country was based.

The function of these minsters is well illustrated by the foundation charter of the church at Bredon on the Hill, Leicestershire. This records the gift to Peterborough of 20 households at the place called Bredon in order that a "monastery and oratory of monks serving God should be founded in the aforesaid place and a priest instituted for the administration of the grace of baptism and the instruction in the Christian doctrine of the people committed to him."<sup>6</sup> These monasteries, or, to use the vernacular term, minsters, served as missionary centres in the earliest days; they were the bases from which the individual missionary made those countless journeys through the countryside, that are so well pictured in early records such as the Life of St. Cuthbert. Those which survived the Danish wars of the later pre-Conquest period appear in the records as collegiate churches or as houses of secular canons, a type of ecclesiastical organisation not greatly favoured by the reformers of the 12th century. A number of these then became houses of Augustinian Canons.<sup>7</sup> But an even larger number failed to preserve their corporate character and declined to the position of normal parish churches, the outlying parts of the large district having acquired independent status.

The layout of these minsters is very little known as none of the sites has been scientifically explored on a sufficiently large scale. The literary evidence, borne out by our knowledge of sites in the Celtic west, suggests that they were normally surrounded with an enclosure, either a wall of earth or stone or a hedge. At Whitby,<sup>8</sup> and again at Jarrow,<sup>9</sup> excavation has disclosed traces

of this bank. Within the enclosure would lie a church, or churches, set in a large cemetery, together with other buildings, such as the school, library and guesthouse. Normally the monks seem to have lived in separate houses, possibly with certain buildings, such as a refectory, in common. Sandbach church and cemetery cover a small spur projecting into the valley of a stream that runs down to the River Wheelock; the site joins the higher ground to the west only on the narrow neck now forming the Market Place. The site has much in common with that of the Saxon monastery of Jarrow and it seems probable that the medieval and modern parish church, set within the extensive cemetery, marks the site of an early Saxon minster. The foundation, on the evidence of the crosses must go back to the 8th century; it may be even older, of the age of King Wulfere (657-74), during whose reign Christianity was established in Mercia. The minster at Sandbach would then be approximately contemporary with that of St. Werburgh at Chester, which is named after a daughter of that monarch.

#### THE NORTHERN CROSS

The longest shaft, now on the north side of the base in the Market Place, has been reconstituted from a number of fragments, reset in their original position.<sup>10</sup> It stands to the original height of nearly 16 ft. above the top of the stepped base; the shaft was originally surmounted by a head about 2 ft. 6 ins. across, the base of which remains, cut from the same piece of stone as the shaft. As the surviving fragment shews, this head had free arms cut to a double curve, as in the 7th century cross at Ruthwell.<sup>11</sup> The shaft, rectangular in section, tapers from 2 ft. 8 ins. by 1 ft. 11 ins. at the base to 2 ft. 1 in. by 1 ft. 7 ins. at the top. The angles are rounded and cabled and all four faces are decorated. The base of the decoration is finished with pendent triangles, which clasp the angles of the shaft.

The principal face, now the east, illustrates the basic doctrines of the Christian Faith. In the centre is the Crucifixion (fig. 1). Christ, clad in a short tunic, hangs on a broad, flat cross; above His head are two small blobs representing the sun and moon. This motive often appears on early representations of the crucifixion; it became popular in Carolingian art, where the two heavenly bodies are shewn grieving for the death of Christ. Saxon representations are also shewn at Ruthwell, and elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> The representation of the Crucifixion on the shaft, rather than shewing the figure of Christ suspended on the cross head itself, is an early feature. The spaces between the arms of the cross are occupied by the four evangelistic symbols, the angel of St. Matthew and the lion of St. Mark above, the calf of St. Luke and the eagle of St. John below. Beneath the Crucifixion is the Nativity (fig. 1). The Infant Jesus lies in a cradle and is adored by the ox and the ass. The winged figure set into the base of the cross is one of the angelic choir and the two flank-

ing figures, which also appear to be winged, are probably meant to represent angels at the Nativity, rather than persons at the foot of the Cross. Below the Nativity are three haloed figures, the central one carrying a cross headed staff over the shoulder. This can only be Christ. The figure on the left carries a book or tablets and is probably Moses with the Tables of the Law, while the bird above the head of the figure to the right suggests Elijah, indicating that the scene refers to the Transfiguration.<sup>13</sup> Three figures in a circle below represent Christ with a cruciform nimbus, flanked by two haloed saints; it probably represents Our Lord with the saints after which the original church was named; these would probably be St. Peter and St. Paul. The base of this face shews four winged figures in separate compartments. They are damaged, but a comparison with similar figures on other faces of the cross makes it clear that they are part of the choir of Seraphim, conceived as surrounding the Throne of God (Isaiah, vi, 1-2). The upper part of the shaft is too damaged to permit of a clear identification of the scenes.

The west face has a number of small scenes and interlaced beasts in the compartments at the base of the shaft (fig. 3). These deformed lumpy beasts, with the intricate interlace ending in tendrils and the lines emphasizing features on the bodies are characteristic of the Mercian school; they reappear on a number of monuments such as the cross shafts at Bredon<sup>14</sup> and Gloucester.<sup>15</sup> The two compartments above with draped figures are badly damaged. There follow three scenes each with two figures, which appear to form part of a historical cycle representing the Passion (fig. 2). The lowest shews Christ before Pilate. Next is probably Simon of Cyrene bearing the Cross. The uppermost of the three shews Christ led away to be scourged. Above this were further figures, but this part of the shaft is now too damaged to enable the scenes to be identified.

The narrower north face has two small figures in separate compartments, above which is a great interlaced beast with a forked tongue. The conventional interpretation as the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is open to the objection that no close iconographical parallel can be cited. Moreover, the two lowest figures in the pendent triangles are clearly winged and form part of the group of Seraphim described on the east face. It would be preferable to regard the figures on this face of the shaft as saints connected in some way with the church of Sandbach, probably saints, of whom relics were possessed or after whom altars were named. The beast at the top is to be regarded as purely decorative like those at the base of the west face.

The fourth face has an inhabited vinescroll (fig. 4) at the bottom with a thin regular interlace above; the lowest loops of this interlace catch the uppermost tendrils of the vine, but the two patterns do not intermix. The scroll is stiff and stylized with

small grotesque animals that may be compared with late examples on Yorkshire crosses such as Ilkley.<sup>16</sup>

The parallels cited shew that this cross shaft must be assigned to a late stage in the Mercian School. Its date should be about 800, probably after rather than before the turn of the century.

#### THE SOUTHERN CROSS

The smaller cross shaft on the south side of the base has been more severely damaged. It now stands to a height of 10 ft. 9 ins. and is rectangular in section, measuring 2 ft. by 1 ft. 7 ins. at the base. The angles are cabled and, as on the larger shaft, the ornamental faces terminate in pendent triangles. The shaft, which is incomplete at the top is now surmounted with a fragment of a cross head; this seems too small and probably belonged to the third shaft.

Only the lower part of the main west face is sufficiently preserved to shew the design. At the base is a network of small cells, each with a figure. In the register above are three standing figures, that in the centre larger than the other two and carrying a long shaft with a double barred cross head over the right shoulder and a lily headed staff over the left. The scene may represent the final Resurrection.

The east face is divided by a diagonal network into a series of small compartments, each with a human figure or an animal (fig. 4). The arrangements may be compared with the lowest register of the round shaft at Wolverhampton, a monument now recognised as belonging to the 9th century.<sup>17</sup>

Both the narrower faces are divided into a series of small compartments with figures.

The general design and a number of details shew that the two crosses belong to the same school of sculpture and there cannot be much difference in their date. The rather stiffer figures on the smaller shaft suggest a slightly later date, but this is not decisive.

#### THE THIRD CROSS

Two much weathered sculptured fragments, which have been reused as corner posts in the stepped base, belong to a third cross shaft. A third, on which no design is now visible, may well have belonged to the same monument, of which the broken head on the southern shaft is also to be considered a part.

The only faces that have retained recognizable designs shew draped figures set in niches. The work belongs to the Mercian school of the 8th century.

#### THE TOMB STONES

The collection of sculptures from Sandbach also includes two grave covers and a small head stone. The grave covers are

about 18 ins. wide with a slightly keeled surface. The design shews small niches with human figures or animals. The style closely resembles the third cross shaft and must be approximately contemporary. Grave covers of this type are commonest in the later Saxon period, but a more elaborate example at Wirksworth, Derbyshire, is of the same age as the fragments from Sandbach.<sup>12</sup>

The headstone is plain and stood some 5 ft. high with a shaped, slightly expanding base. It belongs to a type of which a number were found in the early monastery at Whitby.<sup>19</sup>

#### NOTES

- 1 For references and fuller details see A. C. Tait in TRANS. HIST. SOC. LANC. AND CHESH., XLVIII, 1-20; no writing is now visible, but there may once have been names, as on some northern crosses.
- 2 G. W. Ormerod, HISTORY OF CHESHIRE, II, 118.
- 3 BEDÆ HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA, III, 21.
- 4 Earwaker, HISTORY OF . . . SANDBACH, 2.
- 5 Ormerod, *op. cit.*, III, 95.
- 6 Birch, CART. SAX., 841, of c. 680.
- 7 J. C. Dickinson, THE ORIGINS OF THE AUSTIN CANONS . . . , ch. III, especially pp. 109-25.
- 8 ARCHAEOLOGIA, LXXXIX, pl. XXXI; for the interpretation of the enclosure see Official Guide (Ministry of Works), p. 6.
- 9 ARCH. JOURN., CXI, 208.
- 10 There are minor errors in the resetting; they do not affect the appearance or the arrangement of the shaft.
- 11 Baldwin Brown, ARTS IN EARLY ENGLAND, V., pl. XV.
- 12 Cf. DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY TRANS., SER. III, XXXI, 188.
- 13 The Transfiguration is included in the historical cycle on the Irish crosses (F. Henry, LA SCULPTURE IRLANDAISE, 147); cf. BEDÆ HISTORIA ABBATUM, 6.
- 14 ARCHAEOLOGIA, LXXVII, pl. XXXV.
- 15 T. D. Kendrick, ANGLO-SAXON ART, pl. LXXXII.
- 16 *IBID.*, pl. LXXXIX.
- 17 *IBID.*, pl. LXXXVI, here the lowest register is formed of pendent triangles.
- 18 *IBID.*, pl. LXVII.
- 19 ARCHAEOLOGIA, LXXXIX, p. XXIV, (a) and (b).

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#### EDITORIAL NOTES

The History Committee of The Cheshire Community Council desire it to be known that authors alone are responsible for opinions and statements which are made in their articles.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.



# Cheshire Woodland in the Middle Ages

By DOROTHY SYLVESTER, M.A., F.R.G.S.

COMPARATIVELY few stretches of extensive woodland remain in Cheshire today, but the county still bears many marks of a former woodland scene in its half-timbered houses, its fine avenues of trees, its parkland, and in a hundred and one lesser ways.

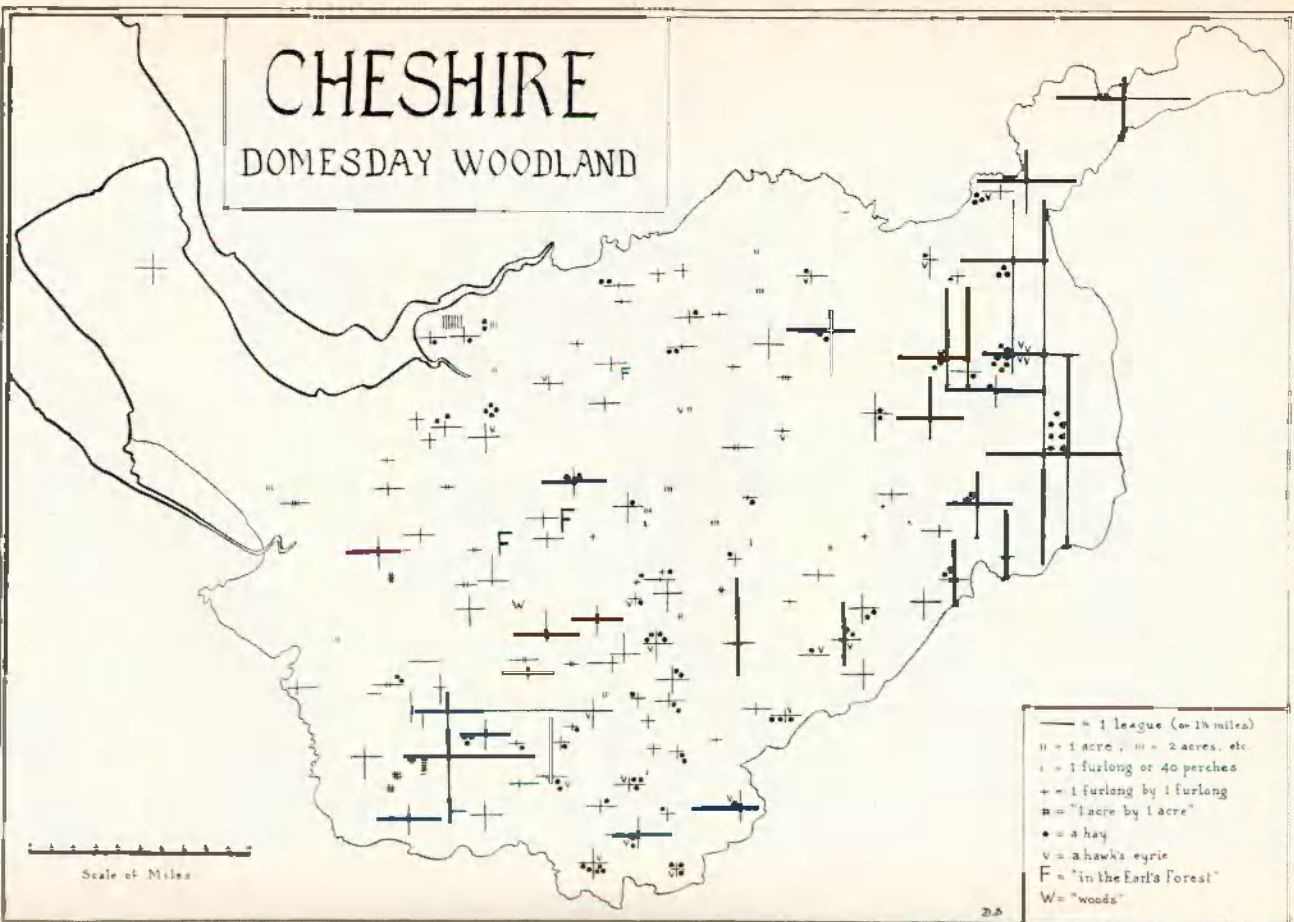
The wide extent of glacial clays is especially favourable to damp oakwood, and many of the lighter sands and porous sandstones naturally carry a mixed woodland of such trees as birch, lime, ash and the sessile oak, as well as a number of conifers which have been introduced. Not only the soils but the cool, damp climate encouraged the growth of timber in the Cheshire plains at the beginning of the Christian era, and many miles of Roman roads must have been constructed only after laborious clearance.

For several centuries British or Celtic tribes maintained a poor, pastoral economy in these lowlands, their sparse numbers slowly and with difficulty clearing small patches and rambling with their herds wherever pasture offered. The Anglo-Saxon advance beyond the Whitmore gap and across the rolling ridge of the Ellesmere moraine was delayed. By 600 A.D. many parts of Staffordshire were comparatively well settled round Anglo-Saxon villages and earlier hamlets. But only then, about the time of the Battle of Chester, did a thin stream of Anglo-Saxon settlers press into the rather uninviting, ill-drained Cheshire lowlands over much of which dense stands of timber still flourished. Hence few early English place-names are to be found in the county, but the number of *-ley* endings gives some indication of the number of woodland clearing settlements which they later established.

There are few other clues to the extent of the woodland until the coming of the Normans and the compilation of the Domesday Book, and then, in 1086, when everything taxable was recorded, woodlands were returned together with ploughs, meadows, fisheries and many other things of economic significance. There are doubtless numerous omissions and errors as for example when a composite manor returned a single figure, when the Commissioners took the local estimate which, as it was for taxation purposes, was unlikely to be generous, and when land lay in what had already become "the Earl's Forest" and so was free of tax and described in terms of the most general overall measurements. Nevertheless, the accompanying map gives a remarkably detailed idea of the distribution of the woods and forests at the end of the eleventh century and shows too that the best settled lands lay, in complementary positions, in Wirral and in the valleys of the Dee, Gowy and Weaver rivers. The mapping of arable land,

# CHESHIRE

## DOMESDAY WOODLAND



meadows and population brings out still more emphatically that those were the settled areas, evidently long established as the most productive lands in Cheshire. Woodlands were, until the Norman Conquest, among the lands ranking as common pasture and waste, though this latter word had then a very different meaning from its present one, and woodland was highly valued. Away from the three main valleys and Wirral, the population was more scattered and woodland correspondingly more extensive. Hence over much of the eastern plains there were numerous small woodlands, in addition to the relatively virgin areas which extended over central Cheshire and along the foothills of the Pennines, and were included immediately after the Norman occupation in the great Forests of Macclesfield, and Mara and Mondrem. Much of the latter was true woodland though many villis with their cultivated lands became "afforested." In Macclesfield Forest, all the high Pennines were open moorland, variously covered with ling, cotton-grass and hill grasses, and only the hill slopes and plains were in fact wooded. The population was much less than in central Cheshire and was to be found in rare hamlets in the alluvial valleys where they break from the Cheshire edge. Wirral later formed a third Forest (probably from the early twelfth century), though even by 1086 only one relatively small woodland was returned for the whole of Wirral, and its disafforestation in 1376 soon ended what was little more than a fictitious legal status.

It is probable that the Domesday forests gave little indication of the real extent or location of woodlands at that time. Not only did they include many cultivated and settled areas from which most of the wood had long been cleared, but they also excluded many areas which William the Conqueror and his army had devastated in his mid-winter march across the Pennines and Cheshire en route for Chester and Shrewsbury in 1070-71. These wasted manors were particularly numerous in the east Cheshire lowland, and this, together with the records of woodland in the more fortunate manors, suggests that woodland was probably little cleared from the Pennine Edge to the fringe of the Weaver valley. Wasting and afforestation between them altered the smooth course of history for many a vill and hamlet. Several were abandoned or lost, and a number of unidentified manors can probably be accounted for in one of these ways.

The economy of medieval Cheshire was based primarily on its salt, its cattle and its woodlands and of these, the last were of considerable versatility and value. Timber was not only used for domestic building over the greater part of the drift-covered lowlands, but for innumerable fittings in houses and farm buildings, for the furnishing and fitting of churches, manor houses and mills, for domestic utensils and table ware, for weapons, implements and tools, for pails and churns in the dairy, for vats in the dairy and the salt houses, for ploughs, carts and vehicles and, increasingly as trade developed, for ships. Lesser timber

was constantly in demand for fencing crofts and enclosures and for repairing houses and households fittings, and the right to gather timber for these purposes was known as haybote (or haybold) in the former case and as housebote in the latter. Similarly ploughbote meant the right to take wood to make and repair ploughs, and firebote to gather twigs and brushwood for kindling. When the woods were common land, the commoners could supplement their diet with honey, fruit, nuts and berries which they could gather from the woods in their seasons, and with birds and animals which they shot or trapped there. But more valuable was the pasturage which they afforded when, by custom, the commoner could graze cattle, swine and goats and sometimes other animals and geese on the herbage and the verdure which gave additional forage, and in the case of swine on the acorn and beech mast in autumn and winter, a right which was known as pannage.

With the coming of the Normans and the establishment of manorial and demesne land everywhere, woodland rights were drastically restricted. The local woodwards were over-ruled by the Master Foresters wherever forest law ran, as it did in the Earl's Forests. Not only the pleasures of the chase, but the many other profits of the woodlands became more and more reserved for the barons and for the lesser lords of the manors. Game laws protected the larger animals and birds and thus denied them to the peasant's pot. Forest courts tried offences against both the venison and the vert. The early "bite" of the goats was forbidden, and pannage for swine and pasturage for cattle were restricted. In the lesser woods in manors outside the range of forest law, the lord of the manor was often almost equally restrictive, and they eventually became absorbed into the demesne or emparked in many cases. Nevertheless, the fight for ancient privileges went on, and tenants frequently had housebote and haybote and some type of pasturage specified in their leases. And despite the laws, the slow depredations continued, fires occurred, illegal pasturage was exercised, timber was filched and poaching became the poor man's sport. As the woodlands shrank, the associated privileges became more sought after by tenants, more jealously meted out or denied by the landowners, as many medieval leases show. For instance, in 1328, all Ranulf de Caldecot's land in Nether Tabley was let with 'housebold and haybold,' but without the right to cut trees growing on the land, and the tenant to pay a heriot (i.e. a death render) of the third best pig or the second best beast if he died within the terms of the lease. In a 1307 lease in Nether Tabley, housebote and haybote were to be exercised only 'by view of the woodward,' and in addition to a heriot, the services of a reaper were required for two days at Wathall. A more generous arrangement was recorded in a grant of land made at Cledford in the late thirteenth century with housebote and haybote in Bradwall wood, common pasture in that wood and free pannage for all the occupant's swine.

In the forests, the position was far worse, for the commoners lost nearly all their common rights especially the right of free pasturage. Everywhere, under Norman rule, woodland and waste came increasingly into the hands of the King, the Earls and the manorial lords. The bounds of the Forests were defined with precision and within them none might hunt except the King or the Earl and the occasional person to whom they accorded the privilege.

It was inevitable that this state of affairs should give rise to discontent and to constant petitioning, for not only were individuals of all ranks disgruntled, but Cheshire was at last an area of expanding economy and population, and woodlands covered the greater part of the undeveloped lowland. If any extension of the cultivated area was to take place, it must either be on the good soils of the woodlands or on the poorer soils of the heathlands. The demands of the chase and of a hungry population came increasingly into conflict. The barons petitioned Ranulf, the third Earl of Chester, for further privileges in the forests and elsewhere and the result was the formulation of the Charter of 1215, sometimes called the Magna Carta of Cheshire and confirmed in 1300 by Edward I. Among the liberties granted were the right to receive certain strangers to settle on their lands, the right to assart lands within the arable area of the forest and to grow crops on land formerly cultivated and free of wood without payment, to take housebote and haybote in their woods without the supervision of the forester, and to give and sell dead wood. But the liberties of shooting in the Earl's forest and of feeding their swine there were refused. As a result of these limited privileges, an increasing number of licences to assart was given. The right to grow crops on land previously cultivated makes clear, however, that in some cases this represented only a recovery of lands formerly settled. But the movement grew as land hunger grew and would not be denied. In Wirral, where woodland was practically non-existent, assarting was carried out without payment. In Delamere, a payment was made on enclosure, and in Macclesfield Forest an annual sum was payable, said to be one cause of the 1353 rising. Open lands, such as Rudheath, were similarly involved in this advancing settlement front. The Abbots of Chester were active in this colonization movement, and brought large areas of waste and woodland under the plough. The Abbeys were highly privileged bodies in medieval society and as early as 1208-11 Ranulf, the third earl, granted to St. Werburgh's the rights of pannage and commonage for their demesne pigs in the forests of Englefield (later in Flintshire) and Cheshire. In 1272 a jury of inquest gave the verdict that the Abbot of Chester by the liberties of his house might break up and clear land, make mills and mill pools, put up sheep folds within his manors in the forests of Cheshire, take venison in his passage through the forest, and claim other privileges including the taking of three cartloads of dead wood from Delamere Forest daily for the Abbey except at

fawning time, and in 1285 he granted hunting rights to the Abbot in Delamere and other Cheshire forests. This went a good deal further than the 1215 Charter to the barons. Another thirteenth century grant, gave the Abbot an oak a year from the wood at Mottram (St. Andrew) and enough dead wood for the abbey's demesne house at Prestbury, together with the usual common herbage for the men of Prestbury except at mast time and mast for all the tithed pigs in the tenement.

The woodward—an old Anglo-Saxon office—acted as overseer in the manor, ensuring as far as possible that the forest laws were obeyed, controlling and checking the depasturing of animals and the amounts of wood cut and carted, while at a higher level the master foresters controlled the forests for the Earl or, later, the King. The forest courts dealt summarily with offenders as the Forest Rolls show, and from time to time a check was made on bounds, assarts, and enclosures without licence. The master forestership was an important office and carried many privileges and even as late as 1626, the profits of the office were listed in a letter written by Sir John Done as including “crops of trees, bark, forfeiture of bulls, oxen, heifers, goats . . . taken within the forest between Michaelmas and Martinmas; sparrowhawks, hobbies . . .; benefit of bees taken within the forest; fee of deer, their shoulders, heads, suet, chines, skins; browse wood and after-pannage; all the wayfes within the forest; and other fees” as well as rights of common which included agistment, herbage, pannage, and turbarry of the forest. The Dones of Utkinton held this office for centuries in Delamere, the Sylvesters of Storeton for a much shorter period in the case of Wirral.

When the Black Prince succeeded to the Earldom of Chester, he relaxed the forest laws, recognizing that landtaking and hence economic progress were strangled by the rigidity of forest administration. For by the fourteenth century Cheshire had become increasingly dependent on imported corn. Sheep were not allowed to graze in the forests, cattle were more important than crops, and the two staples of English farming at this time—wool and wheat—were generally of minor value in Cheshire agriculture. The Black Prince made possible extensive assarting and enclosure of the waste in small parcels with appurtenant common rights in his manors, and made grants of land in Cheshire to knights returning from the Hundred Years' War, creating new tenancies in many parts of the county notably in the Forest of Macclesfield.

Gradually in these several ways the woodlands were invaded and depleted. Most of the lesser woodlands passed into the ownership of the lords of the manors and became protected enclosures for game, or were thinned to form parkland around the family seats which arose in increasing number in Tudor times. The former common status of the woods lapsed almost everywhere. Many of the former stands of oak became coppice or disappeared,

while the royal forests themselves became gradually a complex of protected areas, isolated assarts on which appeared farmhouses or cottages, widening village lands (especially in Mondrem which disappeared as a forest, and on the fringes of Delamere and Macclesfield), meres and mosses (the latter with their common rights of turbary), occasional squatters' tenements and, not least, the 'Lodges' and manor houses and parklands which grew up within these woodlands and form now so characteristic a feature of former woodland areas in central and north-eastern Cheshire. The hunting 'hays' of Domesday were to disappear, but in the time of Edward III a similarly protected area known as the Old Pale originated in Delamere, and the New Pale in the seventeenth century. The forest edges, and even the inner woodlands, became increasingly ragged, and by sheer attrition they shrank. The wave of colonization was irresistible.

The incomparable sylvan beauty of great forests is known today to few of Cheshire's denizens, but the county has grown prosperous on the produce of the clearings and enclosures which slowly released its rich, deep soils to agriculture. Even now, a few stretches of high forest remain, and though over most of the county it is the occasional coppice or the ash and oak in our fields which are the sole relics of the once wide stands of timber, much of the countryside scene is redolent of vanished woodland in its orchards, its damsoned hedgerows, and its half-timbered houses. And if you stand on a high point of the Peckforton ridge, looking east towards Nantwich, the foreshortened view of the plain, still rich in solitary trees, will show where the forest of Mondrem spread at one time, though the name of Aston-juxta-Mondrem is the only direct reminder to be found on the map today.

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# New Light on St. Werburgh's Abbey

By THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE, M.A., F.R.HIST.S.

ANY document which throws new light on St. Werburgh's Abbey is very welcome, for though we know a certain amount about the abbots, good and bad—about their building and their lawsuits, “the endless pastime of litigation which the mediaeval mind seems to have found so irresistible,” we know practically nothing about what went on inside the monastery. We want to picture these historic buildings, which are trodden today by the feet of thousands of visitors and sight-seers, as they were when they were in the occupation of the monks, and see the brethren at work in the cloisters, at meals in the refectory and at prayers in the choir. But of all this we have hitherto had no information.

The document which is here printed for the first time is the Bishop of Lichfield's report on the Abbey after holding a Visitation of it in 16 Edward II (1323). The Latin original is preserved in the Lichfield Diocesan Registry in Bishop Norbury's Letters (Vol. III, f. 98). This report is the more valuable because it is the only one on St. Werburgh's in existence, so far as is known. Episcopal visitations here came to an end in 1346, for in that year the Abbot, William de Bebyngton, obtained from the Pope exemption from all such visitations and thenceforward St. Werburgh's was visited only by one or more abbots of other Benedictine houses as ordered at the annual Chapter held at Northampton, and their reports we have not got. That the exemption was not altogether popular either within the monastery or at the court is clear from the fact that in the following year royal protection was asked for and granted for one year to four of the monks of St. Werburgh's against the wrath of their abbot. This information comes from the Calendar of Patent Rolls, August 3, 1347, where we read that these four monks, Ralph de Chaddesden, Roger de Wodeford, Adam de Stanewygge and Thomas de Bredon, were “prosecuting an appeal, as is lawful for them to do, against an exemption from jurisdiction of the ordinary (i.e. the bishop) obtained from the Apostolic See by their abbot without consulting the chapter and without their knowledge and consent, to the perpetual confusion of the house, wherein they fear that evil will befall them by the procurement of the abbot and his party.”

So the abbot had a party in the monastery, but not a strong enough one, apparently, to risk a vote in the chapter. The document goes on—“The king [Edward III], perceiving that the obtaining of the said exemption redounds not only to the destruction as it were of the house, inasmuch as among other changes it will thereby be rendered liable to cess (*censualis*) for ever, but also to the grievous prejudice both of the right of Edward, Prince



of Wales and Earl of Chester, [the Black Prince], the patron, whose licence was neither asked nor obtained, and of the right which would come to the king in the event of the Earl's death, as in any voidance [vacancy] the admission of the elect to be abbot and the presentation of him to the bishop would so be taken from him," grants the protection.

There is interesting evidence here of the way an abbot was appointed, being elected by the convent, admitted to office by the Crown, and installed by the bishop. As the abbot was a feudal lord it was important to the king that he should have some control over his appointment, but now apparently this control would pass to the pope. It shows also what a powerful person the abbot was in that he could flout the king in this way and not be brought to book for it.

We come now to Bishop Norbury's Injunctions delivered in 1323 in the last year of Abbot Thomas de Bouchelles. The numbers are added for convenience of reference. The document begins with the usual exhortation to observe the statutes and ordinances promulgated by the Bishop's predecessors, of whom Walter de Langton is named.

1. "Item we decree and firmly enjoin that the abbot for the future cause the dish with fragments to be distributed to the poor and not to others. And lest in this matter through his servants there should be fraud or collusion as hitherto has happened, we will that a monk of the house should be deputed specially for this distribution of alms by himself or another."

This raises the question of monastic almsgiving on which a good deal of misunderstanding exists. It will come as a surprise to many, for instance, to learn that St. Benedict did not order it in his Rule, where the only mention of the poor is in connection with hospitality to guests. However, the custom grew up for the broken meats left over from the meals in the refectory to be given to the poor, generally at the Abbey gate, and it is important to notice that in our document these scraps are called "alms." I suggest that writers have been misled by this word and thought it meant money payment, whereas as a matter of fact most of the monastic charity was given in the form of food or cast off clothing. I can find very little mention in our authorities about regular payments to the poor out of monastic funds. Most of the money payments were benefactions bequeathed to a monastery to be given to the poor on the anniversary of the testator's death and for the good of his soul and as such they were not counted as part of the monastic income when it was being computed for taxation purposes by Henry VIII. At St. Werburgh's, for example, every Maundy Thursday £14 was given away "to the aged poor, for the souls of the kings of England, founders of that monastery," but it did not come out of the ordinary income of the abbey. We see from this injunction that

the "alms" which were given did not always reach the poor but were diverted to the friends and relations of the abbey servants.

2. "Item, we decree and clearly enjoin that the abbot conferring with his fellow monks should summon now these now those, each being received with marked favour and affection, into his own chamber for recreation and refreshment in proportion as their needs may have demanded and whatever their rank may be, thus showing the example of the greatest Shepherd of all, with whom there is no respect of persons. But we enjoin under due obedience that the number of those who must be so refreshed and recreated should be invited only with careful consideration, so that three or at least two quarters (*partes*) of the whole college should remain each day in the convent at meal time."

This injunction, that three-quarters or at least half the monks should be present in the refectory for meals, is one which appears in nearly all visitations in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It seems strange at first sight that the monks should not wish to be present at meal time, considering that they had only two meals a day and that the first one was not until 12 noon. The reason is that St. Benedict had laid it down in his Rule that no meat should be eaten. "Except the sick who are very weak let all abstain entirely from the flesh of four-footed animals," he wrote. This may have been suitable for people living in Italy and other Mediterranean countries, but the monks in cold northern climes found this rule too hard for them, and so the practice of meat eating gradually crept in, though lip service was done to the Rule by forbidding it to be eaten in the refectory. It could, however, be obtained in a number of other ways; at the abbot's table, where meat was provided for the benefit of any guests who might be present, in the infirmary where it was provided, as we have seen, for the sick, and at the private table of one of the Obedientiaries. (See Injunction 7 below). In the fourteenth century the rule was so far relaxed that a special room where meat might be served, called a "misericorde," was provided near the refectory and the monks took it in turns to dine there. The Visitor always tried to limit the numbers there, for the refectory was in danger of being quite deserted.

3. "Item, we have learned that at the dwelling of the abbot himself there are greyhounds and other hunting dogs which eat the food which ought to be distributed in alms—to the great danger of souls; we forbid this to be done by those [in the abbot's lodging] or by any others whatsoever, be they regulars within the monastery or seculars, under any pretext for the future if they wish to escape the punishment of the canon law."

The abbot had permission to hunt hares and foxes on his manors, even though they might be in one of the three great

forests of Cheshire and so be subject to forest law, but the Earl of Chester kept the hunting of the deer entirely in his own hands. If the scraps from the refectory were purloined by the servants and the scraps from the abbot's lodging were given to the hounds the poor must have fared very badly.

4. "Item, we learn from information from the abbot himself that the confessions of his fellow monks ought to be heard by him personally, but that his age prevents him from doing so *in foro consciencie*. Now if it is agreeable to the abbot [*domino*] who is unable to perform this task, we knowing this consider that he should be relieved of this urgent duty and that there should be appointed from the convent some honest, honourable and discreet men with the blessing of the abbot and chosen by the advice and with the consent of the prior and of other leading brethren [*presidentium*] who should be deputed to hear confessions for the future."

The abbot was Thomas de Burchelles, who succeeded Simon Whitchurch in 1291 and carried on his work of rebuilding the choir. His plea of old age as a reason for not hearing confessions is corroborated by the fact that he died three months after these injunctions were issued. He had been abbot for twenty-two years.

5. "Item, because it has been learnt that Brothers Metatus, the sub-cellarer; William of Chester, the sub-sacrist; John of Worth, the almoner; and Robert of Capenhurst, keeper of the fabric and overseer of the kitchens, are incompetent in their office and in carrying out the duties of their office and in the direction thereof [*regimen*] we remove them completely from their offices and decree that within the space of three days other discreet and upright men, after due deliberation concerning their characters, shall be chosen by common consent and put in their place. Those who have been removed from their offices in this way should not be appointed to any other office in the house under any title whatsoever at least for a period of three . . . , but should devote themselves once more to reading in the cloister, to discussion and to the performance of other good works, unless before this period has elapsed reformation of their ways makes it advisable that these same men or any one of them should carry out some other duties for the good of the house."

The duties of these obedientiaries, as they were called, are thus described by Dom David Knowles.<sup>2</sup>

The almoner dispensed the charity of the house to regular and casual applicants for help; this might take the form of food, clothing or lodging. It was also his duty to visit deserving cases in the town or city and distribute alms.

The cellarer was responsible for maintaining staple stocks of food, such as flour, fish, beans and beer, from which other departments drew.

The sacrist had complete charge of the service of the altar, of the vestments and all internal decoration and repair of the church.

The custos of the fabric was appointed when the building operations proved too extensive for the sacrist to control.

The kitchener was the immediate caterer for the monks. He received a number of perishable foodstuffs such as honey, eggs and milk from the farms; the rest, such as flour and dry vegetables, he drew from the cellarer.

John de Worth may have been a descendant of Robert de Worth, who gave the vill of Chelford to the Abbey in 1267 and for whose soul masses were said every year right down to the Dissolution. Two out of the other three defaulters were evidently local men, to judge by their names.

6. "Item, we decree and strictly command it to be observed that administrators or officials holding any office or administration without any particular title shall render an account of each single administration each year, according to the constitution of Sir (*domini*) Ottobon, the Papal legate in England . . . , but if any scorn to obey in this matter, since the obstinacy of these men demands canonical punishment according to the penalty laid down by the aforementioned constitution, it should be proceeded with in such a way that the fear of this punishment will be an example to others."

Ottobon was a genuine reformer and did his best to raise the standard of the clergy in his day. He issued his Constitution in 1268.

7. "Item, we decree and ordain that the obedientiaries and all other the monks wherever they shall be at meal-time outside the refectory but within the bounds of the house except in the presence of the abbot shall have their livery [*liberatio*] placed before them, and that no one shall dare to sell to give or in any manner to alienate his livery or any part of it without obtaining permission from his superior. But whatever residue remains shall be required for the poor at the provision and distribution of the almoner under penalty of suspension from his office and "*divinis*."

This looks as though the obedientiaries or heads of departments were not obliged to have their meals in the refectory. They were also excused attendance at the daily offices in the choir.

8. "Item, we most straitly forbid any external administration of the house to be committed to Brothers Roger Lauton, Walter Peweyn and Alexander Asthull gravely accused of incontinence and insolence until the report (*fama*) be amended . . . And we decree that Walter

Peweyn, who is accused of incontinence and suspected of accompanying with women in no honest talks and walks on many occasions and who was not able lawfully to purge his innocence in these matters, remain within the bounds of the cloister and give his time to the common gift (*donacoe*) and to prayer and without talking to women, even with any relations of his own whatsoever, except in the presence of the senior members, or any one of them specially appointed, until this infamy having been purged he shall deserve to obtain grace and favour from us.

This was not an uncommon item in Visitation injunctions and it may be accounted satisfactory that there were not more than three monks in St. Werburgh's Abbey at this time who found the celibate life too hard for them. They were sympathetically dealt with.

#### CONCLUSIONS

There are five more items to be considered, which must be left for another time, but a study of the eight before us leads to the conclusion that things might have been a good deal worse. We must read between the lines and note that there is much that might have been condemned which passes without rebuke, and so presumably needed none. We must also remember that these charges against monks were made by the monks themselves, so that there must have been some at any rate who disapproved of what went on. We have, however, to realise that the monastic movement was subject to the downward drag which affects all human efforts and that the high ideals which animated the monasteries in the twelfth century had been lowered by contact with the world, the flesh and the devil. Popularity and riches brought inevitable temptations in their train and the monks continually sought to mitigate the severity of their Rule and make their lives more comfortable, so that Dr. Moorman can write that "what was meant to be a religious community became more and more a residential country club." If this was true of the thirteenth century of which he wrote much more was it true of the fourteenth, for the deterioration was progressive, but even in the thirteenth century the monks "appeared as men of the world, conservative, reactionary and living in comparative wealth and security."<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that they did not still produce from time to time scholars and saints, a Ranulf Higden in Chester or a Thomas a Kempis in Germany.

(to be concluded).

#### NOTES

1 Moorman, CHURCH LIFE IN ENGLAND IN THE 13TH CENTURY, p. 353.

2 Knowles, THE MONASTIC ORDER IN ENGLAND, p. 431.

3 Moorman, p. 254.

I acknowledge with gratitude the help I have received from Canon J. E. W. Wallis in transcribing the document and from Mr. F. N. S. Lampard in translating it.

# I Wonder

## No. 3

We regret that the writer of the series "I Wonder" died after a short illness on 16th June, 1956. He was J. Robin Allen, who in the First World War served with the Royal Naval Air Service as a fighter pilot. He reached the rank of captain in command of a flight, and was awarded the Croix de Guerre. Later, he took an engineering degree at Trinity College, Cambridge.

He joined Brunner, Mond and Co. Ltd. in 1922 and quickly rose to become Works Manager of the Lostock Works of the Alkali Division. This post he held until November, 1955, when he was moved to London to take up the newly created post of Schools Liaison Officer.

At the 1955 annual meeting of the Cheshire Community Council he proposed the establishment of a folk museum for the county of Cheshire, and reminded his audience of from what small beginnings that wonderful and popular Castle Museum of York had arisen. He urged the Council to take steps to found a "Kirk Museum" for Cheshire, his native county. His interest in the past achievements of his county and his belief in her future prosperity made him a valuable member both of the Cheshire Community Council and the Cheshire Society in London.

His charm of manner, his lovable nature, his geniality, his knowledge and his wit made him a most valuable and popular member of any organisation with which he was concerned. He will be greatly missed.

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**I** WONDER what life in Cheshire was like just before the Norman Conquest. In 1057 the Earl of Mercia, Leofric, died to the grief of all men "for he was very wise for God and also for the world which was a blessing to this nation." He was buried at Coventry at the Priory founded by himself and his wife Godgifu. She was the famous Lady Godiva of the well-known legend; the story that the Earl put a somewhat invidious task upon his Lady Wife seems to be completely fallacious and there is no reason to suppose that they were not a normal, happily married couple—at any rate, they had a country house close to where the present Vicarage of Weaverham now stands!

Their son, Aelfgar, succeeded to all his father's lands from the Wash to the Dee, "nine broad shires" but he was not permitted to keep his East Anglian possessions. It may be remembered that in a previous article it was pointed out that Mercia was a very real problem to the English king. The Earldom was so large and the power of the Earl so great that Alfred the Great's son had been very firm in absorbing Mercia into his own control.

In 1058, within two years after he inherited, the Earl Aelfgar quarrelled with Harold Godwineson the virtual ruler of England. Strife broke out between them and the Mercians were outlawed by the Witan. Aelfgar called to his aid his old friend Gruffyd, the King of North Wales. It seems that at this precise moment he had given his daughter, Aeldgyth, in marriage to the Welsh Princeling and, at the same time, a Viking Fleet which chanced at that moment to be in the Irish Sea was called in to help him. Nevertheless, war did not take place since Harold showed himself marvellously ready to accept a compromise and avoid a Civil War, and within a few months Aelfgar was 'inlawed,' recovered his Earldom and his position in the State. He held them undisturbed until 1062, and, in fact, we have no trace of further quarrels between him and Harold. His eldest son, Edwin, succeeded peaceably to the whole heritage of his father but Harold was active in and around Cheshire for he had a Welsh War on his hands which ended in his complete triumph.

In 1063 Gruffyd gave trouble once more by making raids over the Mercian border. Harold took the field very unexpectedly in mid-Winter since warfare in those days was normally carried on at fixed times of the year, winter being clearly unattractive and the harvest making it very difficult to collect the necessary fighting personnel. The mid-Winter campaign was a success; Harold surprised Gruffyd in his residence at Rhuddlan on the Clwyd. He captured the town and the king's treasure and also his ships, and this is the first time and, indeed, the last on which we hear that the Welsh had any naval armament, but Gruffyd himself escaped to the mountains. He was not left undisturbed in his fastness for in the Spring of 1064 Harold collected a fleet at Bristol, sailed round into Cardigan Bay to attack the Welsh from the outside while his brother Tostig led a land army from inland. Gruffyd was defeated in several skirmishes and chased from hill to hill till most of his followers deserted him and surrendered. Nevertheless, the Welsh King was prepared to keep up the war but in August his own people, angered at his obstinacy, slew him and sent his head to Harold. This rather ghastly trophy Harold forwarded to King Edward ( a strange gift for a saint) together with the gilded beak and ornaments of the Welsh Royal galley. It would seem that Harold's victory was followed by considerable annexation beyond Offa's Dyke, which was the first appreciable addition to England on the western side which occurred for three centuries, and it is probable that there was a slight advancement of the border opposite Chester into the modern county of Flint.

With the death of Edward the Confessor and the advent of Harold as King we come to a point in history which is always controversial. 1066 and the Battle of Hastings changed the whole pattern of European history but I wonder whether we are right in supposing that the Norman Conquest benefited England. Sir

Charles Oman had grave doubts for a variety of reasons. He felt that the advent of the Normans was a retrograde step. Listen to what he says: "Let any one who believes that the Norman Conquest led in every sphere of civilisation to a rapid and satisfactory development, compare the neat silver pennies of the later issues of Edward the Confessor and the short reign of Harold Godwineson, with the shapeless ill-struck issues of Henry I, Stephen and the early years of Henry II. A relapse into barbarism might rightly be deduced from the comparison."

Cnut, though a Dane, very nearly welded a northern confederation of Scandinavia and England into an Empire and indeed but for an early death would have done so. In my view, Harold Godwineson, "the wise, the just, the merciful" but also the strong handed was exactly the kind of ruler under whom the days of Cnut might have come again. During his nine months' reign Harold showed himself a resourceful, active, capable ruler, and it seems hard to find him guilty of inadequacy because of the tactics of his final fight. The march to Stamford Bridge, the defeat of Tostig and Harald of Norway and the return to Hastings all within 18 days must be an achievement of almost unparelled brilliance. Indeed it might even be said that the chance arrow from on high which slew him turned a victory into a defeat, while if William the Bastard had fallen, lopped down by the axe which slew his horse in an early phase of the fight, Harold might have served historians to point another moral. May it not be that William turned England from her true line of development towards the sea (for she was a great naval power when he found her) and involved her in the unholy game of gambling for French provinces which did not end until the Hundred Years' War was over—four centuries of wasted effort? It was a bitter day when Norman grip tightened upon her, nor was it in error that the Northern poet Thorkil Skallason sang:—

Cold heart and bloody hand,  
Now rule the English land.

I wonder if Harold was killed at Hastings. We know that Edith of the Swan-neck was given permission to seek for his body after the battle and carry it away for burial and although it was supposed to be buried in Sussex yet there is a persistent rumour, a folk-lore story if you will, that Harold escaped, recovered and lived in a hermitage below the church of St. John without-the-Wall at Chester.

We do not know what happened between 1066 and 1069 but we do know that when William spent his Christmas at Chester, a Fleming called Gherbod was made Earl of Chester. William realised the immense importance—in fact, the necessity of a firm bulwark against the Welsh and established Chester as his County Palatine where the man in charge, the Earl Palatine, was to all intents and purposes a sub-King, having power of life and death, his own Parliament and indeed everything that goes with king-



ship. Gherbod, the Fleming, was unfortunate. "He had gallantly behaved himself against the English and the Welsh" but early in 1070 he received a summons to return to Flanders where he had left great possessions in order to follow Duke William in his invasion of England. He obtained permission from William to leave his Earldom while he settled his affairs in Flanders, having promised the Conqueror that he would in due course return to take up his responsibilities in Cheshire. Unhappily for Gherbod he was captured by his enemies on the Continent and suffered "grievous, long imprisonment," with the result that William was forced to appoint another Earl of Chester, and he appointed Hugh, nicknamed 'the Wolf' or Lupus. More strictly, Hugh's surname was D'Avranches since his father had been Count of Avranches in Normandy. In 1093 Hugh founded the Abbey of St. Werburgh. I fancy some of the buildings in the cloisters which abut on to the north transept show signs of being of pre-Norman foundation, but the greater Norman church with the monastic buildings was Hugh's work. He invited the saintly Anselm, who had been Abbot of Bec in Normandy, to come over and organise his monastery for him. Anselm came, appointed Richard his own chaplain as the first Abbot and St. Anselm's Chapel may be seen in the Cathedral at Chester to this day.

In 1096 Hugh Lupus and Hugh de Montgomery, the Earl of Shrewsbury, adventured themselves and captured Anglesey. They did much cruel hurt to the Welsh but Hugh, the Earl of Shrewsbury, was killed by the Welsh either on this adventure or at a later date, whereas Hugh Lupus died on the 27th of July, 1101, having been Earl for 31 years. He appears to have been a man of gross figure and taste; he was known as "Hugh the Fat" by the Welsh, and the two Hugh's, one "the Fat" and "the Red," were the terror of the Welsh. Hugh Lupus left one legitimate son Richard who became the Second Earl of Chester but, at the same time, he appears to have left innumerable illegitimate children. Hugh's other claim to fame was the fact that he and Richard de Beaumont, a great Norman magnate, were the principal supporters of Henry I in advancing him to the Crown of England, against Robert of Normandy, William I's eldest son and therefore Henry's elder brother.

I wonder what Cheshire thought of its new rulers. I feel the heavy-handedness of the Norman must have proved an almost unbearable burden upon the more easy going Saxon. A short time ago I was asked to look at a place in Delamere Forest which had all the signs of a motte and bailey castle. Mr. Webster came with me to look at it and although we were at variance over certain points we did agree that in all probability it was the site of a very early castle of this type. No record whatsoever exists of the site, or anything about it, but I wonder if it was not a place of refuge in the forest put up by some local Saxons in a desperate last stand against their hated conquerors.

# The Archaeologist in the Field

## (Part VII.) Excavations (contd.)

By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A.

IT is usual on Roman sites to find several distinct building phases with many structural alterations and additions designed to meet changing conditions or needs during the two or three centuries of occupation. These are reflected not only in the build-up of layers of occupation and construction but also in the alterations and additions to the structural elements, such as walls and floors. This often leads to difficulties in interpretation especially if the site has been heavily robbed for stone.

Features to be noticed and studied in walls are butt joints and changes in style of construction (fig. 1). To take two simple examples: where one wall meets another at right angles the two are either of one homogeneous build (a) or one abuts the other (b). In the latter case the abutting wall can be considered to be of later construction unless it happens to be contemporary, and merely that the builders made it an independent phase. It is not always easy to decide on this point without a careful examination of the foundations of the walls. It sometimes happens, for example, that the foundations were laid for the whole building as a single operation, as in modern construction, but that the masons built first the main walls, then the internal partition walls without bonding them together. This would lead to no serious structural weakness. One must be aware, therefore, that butt joints of this nature must be regarded with due care. Only if the two walls are of entirely different character and, for example, the abutting one is built on the floor associated with the other wall, can one consider them to be of different periods.

At corners the same rules apply, with this difference, that here one might expect structural changes, but again the principles of building construction must be applied. For example, the main part of a building might receive the addition of a minor element such as a lean-to or a veranda, in which case butt joints would be normal, whereas if the added wall is substantial in character, it may be part of a large scale alteration. A butt joint (d) in a length of wall without a corner is a peculiar feature, which usually needs an explanation. Walls do not normally come to an end unless for an opening such as a door or unless the building is open ended or timber fronted. In the latter case a search is necessary for post-holes or socketed stones for the uprights supporting the roof. At butt joints of this kind, one should check the possibility of an original corner with the return wall having been removed. This could well be the result of an extension of a room or building. While the butt joint will be visible on the outside face, the evidence will probably be hidden on the inside



Photograph by MAURICE H. RIDGWAY



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



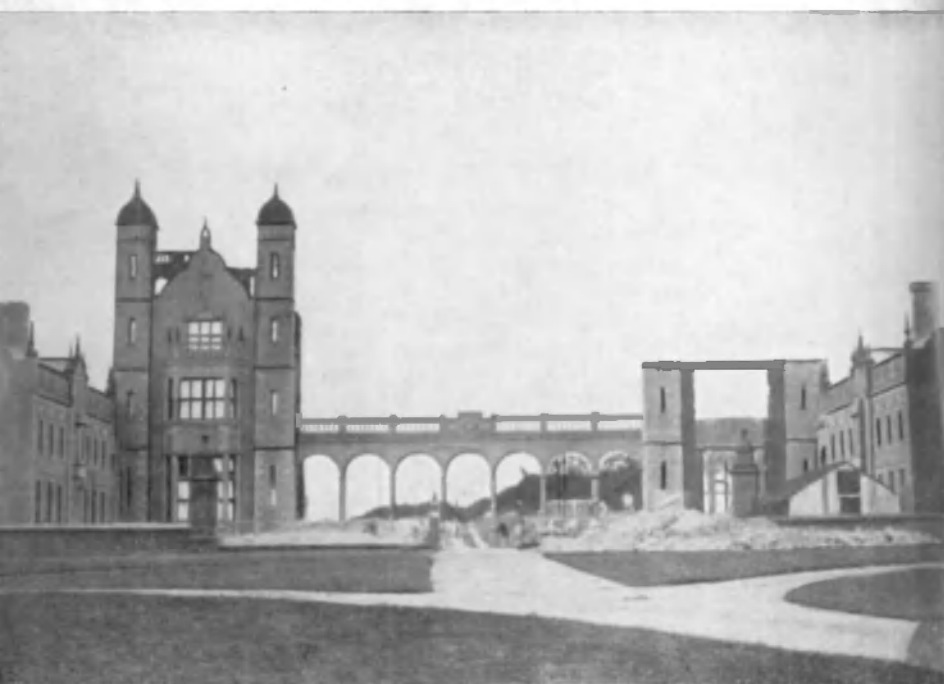
Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fire at Capesthorpe, 1861.



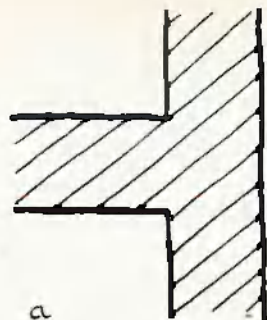
Capesthorpe after the fire,

by later plaster. In this case, the foundation of the demolished return wall can be recovered by trenching the floor at the right place. If the return had been in the other direction it will show as a rough broken vertical strip, contrasting with the dressed face of the masonry on both sides. If all the facing stones have been robbed away, leaving only the wall-core, the return wall can only be found by trenching the floor. The butt joint will, of course, be visible in the core, but more care is needed in locating it without the guide of the dressed masonry. Blocked openings are quite common—they are usually doors but if one is fortunate enough to have walls standing to considerable height, the possibility of windows must not be overlooked. With internal walls, assistance can be obtained from the plaster, which shows very clearly where it has been cut vertically when part of the wall has been removed or when it disappears behind an added wall.

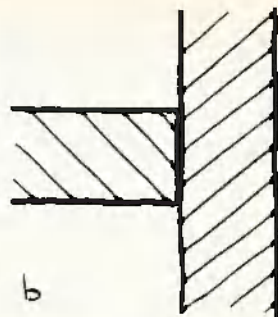
The lateral butt joint is sometimes more difficult to spot. This occurs when one wall is built lengthwise against another. The need for thickening a wall like this is either to support a heavier roof or one of larger span, or if the original wall has started to crack. The first wall will have a dressed face against which the supporting wall has been built. The addition, therefore, has only one, the outer, face. Some bewilderment may be caused to the inexperienced if the earlier wall has been robbed, leaving the supporting wall standing. This appears as half a wall, but close study will reveal that the rough face is in effect the matrix of the earlier wall, and the impression of its effects, or chamfered plinths, for instance, will be seen.

It is never sufficient merely to be able to observe these features; the excavator must establish the reasons for them in order to work out the full chronological sequence of the building phases. Yet alas, how many excavators are not only woefully ignorant of the main principles of building construction, but of the various functions of parts of typical Roman buildings.

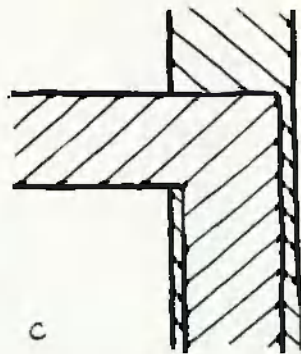
Quite often on Roman sites one finds a later wall built on to the demolished stump of an earlier one (c). Usually the distinction is quite clear from the character of the masonry, but one of the best guides is the mortar, and the way the joints have been pointed. While it is true to say that mortar would have been mixed in small batches, and therefore differences might be expected in each phase, it is surprising how one can trace walls of one particular phase by the character of its mortar, usually its colour. One must, however, be careful as, when some mortars dry out after being exposed, they often change colour. Sometimes it is necessary to have various mortars analysed to be quite sure. This, however, must be regarded as the very last resort. Careful observation and intelligent thinking will usually give the answers, and one should never rely on scientific aids of this kind unless it is absolutely necessary. Rebuilding may not always be on a demolished wall, but on a stone sill in a half-timbered building. In Chester, for example, where the barrack blocks are of



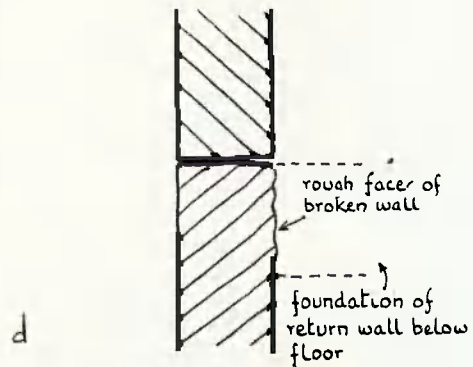
a



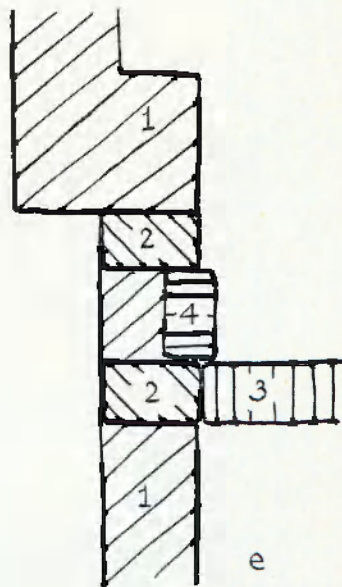
b



c



d



e



this construction, it is common to find two stone sills, one built on top of the other, each with a smooth mortar finish to receive the timber beam.

One of the places in a building most sensitive to change is the threshold. Every change of level requires an alteration at this point, and a careful study of the changes may lead to a solution of the main building phases. Sometimes difficulty is caused by uncertainty as to whether one is inside or outside the building. The presence of buttresses, plinths and offsets which are usually to be found only on the outside of walls is adequate evidence, but if the building has been extended, one may find these features inside a later part. The type of flooring also helps in this problem. Internal floors are normally of concrete or clay while outside one might expect gravel or no prepared surface at all

Again, as is the case with the relationship between walls and floors detailed above, some clear, logical thinking will usually produce the right answers. One golden rule to apply to all these problems is that of introducing the roof. Only when one starts to consider the type of roof construction do some of the difficulties become clear. One must also bear in mind the problems of the disposal of rain water. The Romans did not have the gutters and downpipes of modern times, but the rain-water ran off the roof on to the ground. For this reason the eaves were kept clear of the walls so that the water did not run down them. In important buildings a system of stone gutters and soakaways was introduced to prevent flooding and stop the water from seeping into the building. In some buildings such as baths, the roofs were vaulted and this made buttresses necessary. All excavators of Roman buildings should make themselves thoroughly familiar with this main principle of roof construction for unless one can visualise the whole building to the ridgetop, one can never properly understand the structural problems of the walls and foundations.

There are so many possibilities which await the excavator that it is impossible to do more than mention some of the more common problems. Such structures as hypocausts and baths need special treatment for their full understanding and will be considered in the next article. These brief notes are concerned only with simple structural relationships and in conclusion an illustration (e) is given to demonstrate the methods outlined above. It is taken from the Bathhouse at Wall, Staffs, a site under the care of the Ministry of Works, and anyone can go there and study this problem for himself. The earliest structure consists of a buttress (No. 1) and against which there is an opening, the original entrance to the bathhouse. Next the opening was made more narrow by adding internal door jambs (No. 2), then an internal wall (No. 3) was inserted butting the one of the joints. Finally the opening, together with these and the inserted wall, was completely blocked (No. 4).

# Chester Excavations, 1956

By F. H. THOMPSON, M.C., B.A., F.S.A.

## 1. CHESTER CASTLE

During February and March, a cut was made into the edge of the Castle mound with the aim of finding traces of late Saxon occupation on the old ground surface sealed beneath it. A depth of 23 ft. was reached but the ground here was found to contain much builders' rubbish dating, according to the associated pottery, from c. 1800. It is thought the mound may have been enlarged when the Castle was rebuilt by Thomas Harrison in the first decade of the 19th century and that the original Norman motte lies further back.

## 2. FOREGATE STREET

Between March and May, a site at Nos. 62-66 Foregate St. was kept under observation during the mechanical excavation of a basement and stanchion holes for the new office building it is proposed to erect there. Traces of Roman clay and cobble walling and associated floors were noted and much pottery recovered; that from the primary layers is late first century in date, indicating that whatever occupation there was here belongs to a period coincident with the founding of the legionary fortress. A number of mediaeval pits were also recorded on the site.

## 3. COMMONHALL STREET

Plans for the rebuilding of the First Spiritualist Church in Commonhall Street led to further investigation of the block of three granaries found on the site of the new printing works of the "Cheshire Observer" in 1954 (see *Cheshire Historian*, No. 5, p. 20). With the aid of a substantial grant from the Ministry of Works, excavations carried out between April and June enabled the full dimensions of these important buildings to be discovered.

Running side by side from east to west and ending just short of Old Hall Place, they were each 159 feet long and 45 feet wide. The outer walls,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet in width, were of coursed sandstone masonry on concrete foundations with 3 foot square buttresses at approximately 7 foot intervals. Between every other pair of buttresses, apparently, a ventilator 2 feet wide allowed air to enter and pass beneath the floor which was raised above ground and supported by seven dwarf walls running lengthwise, each  $1\frac{3}{4}$  feet wide. Dating evidence was scanty but it seems likely that these buildings belong to the reconstruction of the fortress in stone in the first decade of the second century.

These are the first granaries to be excavated in full in a permanent legionary fortress in Britain and in addition are the largest yet known from the province. It has proved possible to make an estimate of their probable capacity and it is likely that they held, in all, a year's supply of grain for the garrison of 6,000. By tracing their full plan, a considerable gap has been filled in our knowledge of the layout of Roman Chester.

(continued on page 48)

# Capesthorne

By LENETTE BROMLEY-DAVENPORT

ONE must look at Capesthorne with one's heart as well as one's eye, to find it beautiful. Those who acknowledge beauty only in classical symmetry, and to whom this house is ugly, even repellent, must think it strange that, for such a fantastic edifice, with its smoke-covered domes and turrets and pinnacles, so many inherently beautiful and well beloved homes have been sacrificed. But Capesthorne is like a great mysterious Ark, which carries within its heart the secrets and dreams of many families. The sons of the de Capesthorns, the Hasewalls, the Calveleys, and the Bromleys have died; but with the arms impaling the Davenport arms in the heraldic windows of the Entrance Hall, I believe that each heiress brought with her, not only her fields and her chattels, but also the hopes and unfulfilled dreams of her family, to add these too, to our own.

Capesthorne is first mentioned in the Great Domesday Survey of 1086 as the "Vill of Copestor" where the Earl of Chester held half a hide of land. It lay in the Hundred of Macclesfield, but outside the boundaries of the Great Forest. As the name is Anglian in origin, this little township must have existed before the Normans came. Dr. Foote Gower says that a Roman Military road lies under the present house,<sup>1</sup> but the Roman Legions who passed by have left no record of it, and there is no further evidence. Perhaps, when the prehistoric tumulus that stands in the Park is opened, some of the mysteries of the past may be revealed, and we shall find the bones, or other tokens of early Britons, possibly those of the peaceful Cornavii or the fiercer Brigantes.

The "Mesne lords of the Vill" in early days were the Capesthorne family. The Baron or Le Baron family and the Fitton family held lands here also at an early time, and the old oak chest beside the front door at Capesthorne used to hold documents<sup>2</sup> referring to these three families. But the lives and characters of Thomas or Richard de Capesthorne, or of John Le Baron, and others of their name, are shrouded in impenetrable mists. However, their personalities are no less remote and mysterious to me than those of my Quaker ancestors who lived six or seven hundred years later, and whose candid eyes look at me from the faded daguerrotypes which I brought with me from my home in Philadelphia.

On one of the walls of this Philadelphia home my father's initials and the year of my birth—the year the house was built—are carved in stone. In this new house there were no great brass-studded leather chests nor heavy oak boxes crammed with ancient deeds and bundles of musty letters. One would never find here a school report a century old, a frail bag of golden net filled with

neat packets of baby curls, nor the tormented secrets revealed by an old diary, that would rouse the past to vibrant life and overwhelm one with the consciousness of affinity and continuity.

Yet, in an old world, Capesthorpe is not an old house. The older Capesthorpe, the mediaeval manor which Sara, the sole heiress daughter of Ranulf de Capesthorpe brought to her husband John le Warde in 1386, stood near the water, several hundred yards east of the present house. Its foundations and those of the little Chapel nearby now lie hidden deep under the present Parkland. The Ward family, who thus became Lords of the Manor, were said to come originally from Yorkshire, and in the reign of Edward IV a collateral branch had settled at Monks Heath. John Ward (1604-1682) of this elder branch, bought the "capitall mesuage" or Mansion House of Capesthorn, January 4, 1641, from his distant cousin of the same name, who then owned it. This John Ward, originally of Monks Heath, is the first Squire of Capesthorpe of whom we have a portrait, and the first who steps out of the shadows as a tangible personality. He was a devout man, and a courageous royalist, in consequence of which Capesthorpe suffered ten difficult years of sequestration, from April 3, 1650, when the County Committee informed against him. In his Will dated November 26, 1678, "Grandfather Ward" mentions his "dear grandchild John, whom God in mercy preserve and bless . . . ."

This grandson John (1667-1748) succeeded his father Philip when he was only seventeen. He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, and the Inner Temple and held a high position as a barrister. In 1703 he was chosen as Member of Parliament for Newton Borough, Lancashire, and in 1719, having decided to build a new house of the then fashionable type, he made an agreement with William Smith, of Wergs, County Stafford, for building at Capesthorpe "two wings for offices, and ye other for Stables and Coach Houses." Later, in 1722, the design for a new house was entrusted<sup>3</sup> (we believe) to John Wood, who was later to become so famous for his work at Bath. John Wood, then barely more than eighteen, followed the conventional layout of the time, consisting of a central block three storeys high, with low curved walls on either side enclosing an Entrance Court.

A simple apsidal Chapel containing box-pews and a two-decker pulpit was placed to the South-West of the house. The bricks for this Chapel were baked at Capesthorpe, and the panelling and pews were hewn from stout Capesthorpe oak. It was consecrated September 4th, 1722, "to the Honour of the Holy and Undivided Trinity" and Services were held thereafter at least once daily.

The surrounding landscape was laid out in the manner of the time, and although no evidence has been found to suggest the authorship, it is strongly reminiscent of the work of the renowned landscape architect Lancelot ("Capability") Brown. The

whole appears so serene and natural that it is difficult to believe that it is entirely artificial and as deliberately composed as a painting.

Four years after this new Capesthorpe had been built the son of the house died. This John Ward, the last male of his line, was the first to lie in the vault under the little Chapel. His elder sister, Penelope, now became the heiress to Capesthorpe. In 1721 she had married Davies Davenport I (1696-1740) of Woodford, Marton and the Inner Temple. Davies, a Barrister, had much in common with his father-in-law, and the fact that the fields of Marton were contiguous to those of Capesthorpe, was another bond. The Marton Estate had been in the Davenport family since 1176 when Amabilia, daughter of Gilbert Venables had brought it in frank marriage to her husband Richard, son of Ormus de Davneporte, the Saxon. Marton Hall, the old black and white Manor House has been torn down, but it lives on in the Library at Capesthorpe, whose walls are panelled with its shining dark oak. Over its mantelpiece the Davenport Arms are inlaid in varicoloured woods with the sinister crest above—the felon's head with a halter, denoting the power of Life and Death "without delay and without appeal" which this family exercised over the vast Forests of Leek and Macclesfield.

The next son and heir, Davies II (1723-1758), married his distant cousin, Phoebe, daughter and co-heiress of Richard Davenport (1705-1771), of Calveley, Davenport, Wootton and Heswall. In the Davenport family it was a traditional thing to marry cousins, and two of Davies' Woodford ancestors had already done so—Nicholas who married Margaret, daughter of Wm. [John] Davenport, of Bramhall (circa 1460), and William who married Ellen, daughter of John Davenport, of Davenport. A special dispensation for this marriage was granted July 3, 1529, by Cardinal Wolsey, as the relationship of the cousins was so close.

The marriage of Phoebe and Davies II was a short, tragic one, for Phoebe died when her small daughter was scarcely a year old and her son Davies III (1757-1837) had only been born a month. Davies himself died a year later, and the care of the two small orphans fell to their maternal grandfather at Calveley. Their education was far from conventional for it was inspired by the revolutionary ideas counselled by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in "Emile." The result of this, and perhaps also the result of living with an indulgent grandfather produced in Davies III a headstrong, autocratic, but deeply affectionate character. He fell so madly in love with the beautiful Charlotte, daughter of Ralph Sneyd, of Keel, while he was still at Oxford, that he insisted he could not continue his studies, and in 1777, when he was only nineteen, the marriage took place.

Davies was a devoted husband to his lovely high-spirited wife, and an affectionate, generous father to his three sons and his daughter. He represented the County of Cheshire in the

House of Commons from 1806 to 1830, and during his last four years there suffered the anguish of seeing his eldest son, his one-beloved "Ned" sitting opposite him as Whig Member for Shaftesbury—a bitter political opponent.

This particular generation seemed to have the wanderlust, and was the first from Capesthorpe to travel abroad. Most often at home was Walter, the youngest son, for he had taken Holy Orders, and from 1811 until the year of his Mother's death, 1829, he took the services in Capesthorpe Chapel. In 1822, he had succeeded to the Bromley Estates and added this name to his own. With this inheritance, Baginton, the beautiful home of the Bromleys in Warwickshire came to him; and Wootton, where his great grand-father Richard Davenport had given Jean-Jacques Rousseau sanctuary for a year, came back to the Davenport family. Here the Rev. Walter Davenport Bromley was later to hang most of the marvellous Italian pictures for which he combed the Continent and the Sale Rooms.

Edward Davies Davenport (1778-1847) the eldest son, was also a collector, and the once famous Library at Capesthorpe was largely assembled by him. He was a rebel by nature, and just as he had challenged his father's Tory politics, so too he revolted against the simple Palladian house to which he succeeded in 1837. It was he who transformed Capesthorpe into the large provocative building it has become, employing for this Edward Blore, architect to William IV and Queen Victoria. The changes included the raising of balustrades, gables, turrets and pinnacles, and the additions of mullions to the windows. Work began in July, 1837, and continued until November, 1839. A list detailing the different types of labour engaged shows that 150 workmen were being employed on the Hall.

In about 1845 an immense Conservatory was constructed to join the house to the Chapel. It was probably the largest of its day, measuring some 125 ft. by 45 ft. and is believed to have been designed by Joseph Paxton. This Conservatory was used as a Reception Room and here among the heavy scent of gardenia and the rare specimens of Bread Fruit, Coffee, Sugar, Musa and other plants, the Village Children were instructed every Sabbath in the lessons of the Scriptures.

There are several books in verse and many pamphlets in earnest prose at Capesthorpe, written by Edward. His nephew, William Davenport Bromley, was also beginning to write, and with much greater facility than his Uncle. He "was one of those enviable beings to whom everything came with extreme facility. He excelled in every kind of sport, was an accomplished and fearless rider, a first-rate shot and equally efficient fisherman, an admirable actor with a turn for music, with an appreciation of art . . . . But beyond this he was a writer of exceptional capacity."<sup>4</sup>

During the years that Capesthorpe was being remodelled this young man was investigating the wonders of Italy, France,

Germany and Russia, while his cousin Arthur Henry, the adored young heir to Capesthorpe, was fishing the pools of his home, or galloping about the lanes on his beloved pony "Billy." He was still a boy at Harrow when his Father died, and he grew up to live a rather intemperate bachelor life with a pack of hounds at "The Kennels," over the Capesthorpe bridge, and plenty of hunting and shooting. While he was living at Capesthorpe the disastrous fire broke out (1861) which completely gutted the centre of the house, destroying every trace of the original John Wood building.

Fortunately Arthur Henry engaged Anthony Salvin to carry out the reconstruction, for he, like Blore, based his design on the Jacobean style. The work was started in 1865 and was continued until 1868. Salvin rebuilt the Entrance front almost exactly as Blore had designed it except that the windows were taller as the new house had only two floors and an attic instead of the original three floors. On the garden front he was less influenced by Blore, and here we have a fair example of his own particular idiom.

During this period of reconstruction Arthur Henry died and his gifted cousin, William, having changed his name to Bromley-Davenport by Royal Licence, came to live at Capesthorpe with his charming Scots wife and seven children. This uncompromising Tory Member of Parliament for North Warwickshire, commemorated the fact that his ancestors used to exercise the power of Life and Death, by reproducing the Davenport crest on the Main Staircase at Capesthorpe in the image of his arch-political enemy, Mr. Gladstone—an inspiration followed enthusiastically by his grandson ninety years later.

At William's sudden death in 1884 his wife was utterly desolate. In his memory she entirely altered and redecorated the interior of the Chapel. Its re-opening in 1889, was a great occasion when, most surprising among the changes to be seen, appeared a glistening mosaic reredos made by the Venetian firm of Salviati. The composition had been inspired by the artistic gem of the house, Giotto's beautiful "Dormition." It caused a considerable sensation when it was known that the unmistakable features and foaming beard of the late exuberant squire, had been reproduced in shining stone in this Holy Place.

The eldest son was another William (1862-1949). He lacked his father's artistic temperament, but like his father was a great sportsman and an accomplished actor; and whereas the father had excelled in the written, the son's gift was for the spoken word. In Macclesfield, which he first represented when he was twenty-four years old, they said that when he spoke it was "like silk coming off the bobbins."

In 1890 this William had the theatre built at Capesthorpe, and henceforth the family theatricals became one of the joys of the Christmas season. After the performances the guests would be entertained in the Conservatory, which, hung with Chinese lanterns, was transformed into a tropical fairyland. But the

Conservatory was pulled down later in this Squire's lifetime, during which there were many grievous losses to the Davenport family. The ancient estates of Calveley, Woodford and Baginton were sold, as well as the cream of Edward's Library, the incomparable Giotto and the famous Romney picture of Mrs. Davies Davenport III.

For this was a revolutionary era, very different from the halcyon era before. The Boer War and first World War, in which William served with distinction, were only a prelude to the Second terrible World War in which, now old and tired, he saw Capesthorpe turned into a Red Cross Hospital, and men in blue hospital uniforms fishing the pools for pike or watching ENSA performances in the little theatre.

When at last this War was over the house was shabby and neglected, the garden a mass of weeds and brambles, and the walks an impenetrable jungle of nettles and elder. Mercifully on a wild February day in 1949, Sir William (K.C.B., 1924), was laid to rest, and his beautiful Lord Lieutenant's flag was lowered from its great height above the house.

The next heir was Walter Henry, Sir William's nephew. He and his American wife and two children had already made their home at Capesthorpe, and Walter had been in the House of Commons since 1945 as Member for Knutsford.

Formidable enemies were ranged against this heir, most of which have yet to be vanquished—crippling death duties, punitive taxation, dry-rot, woodworm, neglect and decay. Silver, furniture, pictures and books went to the Sale Room. Wild romantic Wootton had to be sold as well as the property at Heswall and farms perilously near Capesthorpe.

The maps and plans in the basement of John Ryland's Library are the mournful testimony to this family's lost kingdom. Capesthorpe alone remains, with the precious rich fields of Siddington and Marton protecting it. While it lives something of the lost homes and forgotten families lives too. Here my father's tall mahogany desk and my grandmother's sewing table have found refuge with the fragments of other loved and vanished homes—the mantelpiece from Calveley, the Sundial from Baginton, the Gates from Wootton . . . .

How surprised John Davenport, the Puritan Divine, would have been, had he known when he stepped off the "Hector" in Boston Harbour, June 26, 1637, that, one day, craftsmen in the savage wilderness to which he had come, would make furniture that would sail back to England with the descendant of one of his fellow-passengers; and that it would rest under the same sprawling beloved roof as the ancient monuments of his fore-bears.

#### NOTES

- 1 Addl. MSS, BRITISH MUSEUM, II, 338, Fo. 72.
- 2 Now deposited in John Ryland's Library.
- 3 Ref. "SUSAN CLAYTON'S LETTER AND JOHN WOOD OF BATH," Trans. Lancs. and Chesh. Hist. Soc., Vol. C, 1948, S. A. Harris.
- 4 Lord Newton, Introduction to "SPORT," by W. Bromley-Davenport, published 1933.



# An Introduction to the Story of Beeston Castle, Cheshire

By MAURICE H. RIDGWAY, B.A., F.S.A.

**T**HE sandstone crag of Beeston is quite detached from the neighbouring hills which form the Peckforton, Bickerton and Broxton range curving like a great wave towards the Welsh border. On the south side it rises with a regular but steep ascent until it terminates a little over 500 feet above sea level in a jagged precipice 300 feet above the immediate countryside.

From earliest times the crag has been a natural vantage point for the south west corner of Cheshire. The view takes in the whole of South Wirral, the mid-Cheshire Plain, the Frodsham and Helsby Hills, the Delamere Heights, and the more distant hills of Derbyshire, Shropshire and Wales. It is no wonder therefore that long before the mediaeval builders chose the site for a Castle (*Castrum de Rupe* they called it) it probably already showed signs of prehistoric occupation. Beeston Crag, however, comes into authentic history in the time of the much travelled 6th Earl of Chester, Randle de Blundeville, who also built Dieulacres Abbey. Beeston was begun in 1220 but the Earl did not live to test its value over any period, nor did these strong independent Earls of Chester enjoy the security it offered for very long, for on the death of John le Scot, the seventh Earl, the King decided in 1237 to take over Beeston Castle as a Royal stronghold and from then until the latter years of the reign of the first Elizabeth it remained a royal castle, and even after that date withstood a long siege in the name of Charles I.

The Castle was always meant to be a military stronghold and, unlike many, never became a private residence with all the domestic touches which so often changed the faces of so many mediaeval strongholds in the 15th and succeeding centuries. Though now ruined and battered its architecture is severe and military in character.

The Governors of the Castle from the 13th century to the 17th (a fairly full list survives) who occupied Beeston with their garrison were there for military reasons and not for the excellent view nor for farming the rich pastures adjacent to the Castle. This task was left to the Lord of the Manor of Beeston, who resided at Beeston Hall about a mile away. Beeston Castle crumbled away in the years of peace not in times of war.

The fortified area consists of a strongly defended upper bailey enclosing about three-quarters of an acre, and further down the hill, a curtain wall having seven defence towers and a gate house built at some distance from the keep and enclosing a further nine and a half acres of uneven hillside. Full use was made of the natural defences afforded by the nature of the site and on

the north and west sides there was little or no need of additional walls. The main defences were therefore built across the south-west approaches to the hill, each having a deep, dry ditch cut in the rock, producing in the case of the upper defences a notch in the precipice side clearly visible from the surrounding countryside.

The first part of the Castle's story belongs to the long reign of Henry III, to whom direct ownership passed in 1237. Towards the end of his reign the Castle was seized for Earl Simon de Montfort from whose followers it was later taken by Edward after the fateful battle of Evesham in 1265. After the death of Henry III, Edward, now King, linked Beeston with the other castles which he proceeded to found in North Wales, and at the close of the 13th century and during the opening years of the 14th century Beeston Castle is often found sharing the Royal masons and carpenters who were engaged upon the vast schemes on foot in the neighbouring principality. The accounts seem to show that Beeston though not yet a hundred years old was being brought up to date to meet the requirements of the new reign. Flint Castle was begun in 1277. Conway and Caernarvon in 1285, Harlech in 1286, and Beaumaris in 1295. Caernarvon was still being built under the eye of the King's Mason, Walter de Hereford, when in 1303/4 the Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts supply interesting information about the alterations at Beeston, amounting to over £109 in that year, a considerable sum in those days.

'Master Hugh de Dymoke, carpenter repairing three towers in the upper bail.

To Master Warin, Mason assigned by Sir W. de Blibury for his wages and divers masons whom he had there working in his company viz., sometimes 24 masons, sometimes more and sometimes less working about the masonry work of the gate of the dungeon, for having a drawbridge there and for crenellating the said three towers and for making one massive stone wall before the said bridge 34 feet high and seven feet thick and 20 feet long, and for raising the walls of the said three towers and crenellating them because they formerly had high wood surfaces and now they are level.'

The accounts go into considerable detail and the activity there lasted for many weeks, smiths making masons' tools and sharpening them, carpenters preparing great doors and the smiths preparing 'great and large hinges, hooks and great locks and keys for the great gate.' Timber from Delamere Forest is mentioned; oxen being used to draw it, soap and grease is bought for the machines. Lead scrap was brought from Flint Castle (left over from making the roof there) and from Northop to Chester Castle where it was founded into sheets and then brought to Beeston where we are informed Thomas le Plumer (a monk of Combermere) presumably released or impressed for the work because of his skill is found drawing wages for 145 days at Beeston whilst engaged upon his task.

Ten years later the same accounts show that further repairs were being carried out to keep the Castle up to strength.

1312/3. 'To Robert the carpenter of Kyngislegh and William the Plumber working in Beeston Castle about the mending and repairing of houses and towers in the said castle.'

This reference presumably refers to the ancillary buildings which would be erected within the bailey and were probably of timber.

This constant vigilance upon the part of the Crown was often justified. In 1322 Edward II, in fear of a rising of the barons, sent word to all the Royal Castles to see that they were fully equipped and manned and in the list appears the summons to the Marcher strongholds of Denbigh, Beeston, Holt, St. Briavels, Hanley and Hereford. An echo of this is to be found in the Chamberlains' accounts when in 1325/6 a long standing debt is ordered to be paid

'And of £4 paid to Hugh de Peck and Walter de Hereford, masons which were owing to them.'

In the same year Master Richard Legh Carpenter (elsewhere called the King's Carpenter) was also paid for work at the Castle, and had also worked at Chester and Flint.

Shortly before the end of the reign of Richard II, legend, perhaps founded upon truth, states that the King chose Beeston as the safe deposit for the sum of 200,000 marks, garrisoning the Castle with 100 men to ensure its safety. The legend at least preserves the truth that Cheshire was considered by Richard one of the most trustworthy and loyal parts of his unsettled country.

Of the fifteenth century a fairly complete list of governors, janitors, porters or keepers has been culled by Ormerod, the Cheshire historian, and others from contemporary documents but much research remains to be done before their exploits and the story of their influence upon the Castle's fabric can be written. Inevitably the Castle played its part in the party factions of the century and in 1460 it and the Manor of Beeston were counted among the lands and possessions added to the Earldom of Chester when it was granted to Richard, Duke of York. With peace again restored within England's borders the Castle was again neglected and it is not surprising to find that Leland in the first half of the 16th century describes it as 'shattered and ruinous.' In Elizabeth's reign it was no longer considered to be of strategic value to the Crown and eventually it passed into private ownership, and may for a short period have become a private dwelling of no great standing. Perhaps its sole occupant was a caretaker, for at a time when great Elizabethan houses were rising in many parts of the country few would relish the idea of a stiff climb to a grim fortress which had few conveniences.

It was not until Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham in August, 1642, that the Castle came into its own again and in three years was to show to the world something of the

spirit of its long dead founder Randle de Blundeville. Parliament occupied the decaying ruins with 300 men on the night of February 21st, 1643. They had been there long enough to put the fortifications into some kind of order when in the early morning of December 13th, Captain Steele, its Governor, had to deliver it to Captain Sandford as the result of a surprise attack, backed some declare by treachery. The action cost Steele his life for although he was allowed to march to Nantwich with his garrison of 80 with colours flying, the War Council at Nantwich decided he was a traitor and the Captain was shot in Tinker's Croft at the east end of the parish church. The garrison had actually surrendered to eight men. The price Parliament had to pay for this defeat was heavy for in spite of a long siege which Prince Rupert and Prince Maurice tried to relieve, Beeston Castle remained in Royalist hands for almost two years, a bitter half way house between loyal Chester and rebel Nantwich. The vicissitudes of these years have been carefully documented by contemporaries of the events, and the Parish registers of Bunbury, Tarporley and Nantwich supply grim reminders of those unsatisfactory days, Burghall and Malbon giving the fuller details in their diaries. After the disastrous battle of Rowton Moor much of which could have been witnessed from Beeston Crag, Captain Vallett and fifty-six soldiers were forced to surrender the Castle to Colonel Brereton. He like Captain Steele marched out with colours flying and was allowed to proceed to Denbigh and await the end of the Civil War. This was the last colourful scene in the Castle's long history, if we exclude fetes and Wakes which have taken place there for over a hundred years. In the spring of the following year an order was issued by a temporarily victorious Parliament for the defacing of Beeston Castle. The order was carried out by Whitsunweek, 1646, and the ruins which now crown the hill only speak of the thorough and ruthless way in which the order was executed. Time and thoughtless visitors have leagued together to increase the devastation and it is only now that more enlightened persons are anxious to save what remains of this castle of so many memories and such loveliness, that future generations may still be able to trace in her surviving battered towers and breached gateways the story of so many exploits in our nation's history.

One thing alone remains to be mentioned and no account of Beeston could ever be complete without it, namely the famous well. It was after all the presence of this well that made Beeston a doubly strong point. Carefully hewn out of the hard sandstone this major well (for there are two on record) was sunk to a depth of almost 370 ft. in the upper bailey. Two attempts have been made to clear it, one in 1842 and another in 1935, but the principal object behind this difficult task, namely the recovery of the lost treasure of Richard II, was not achieved and the greatest of the Beeston mysteries remains unsolved to this day.

# The Changing Scene in the Township of Higher Bebington, Wirral

By GRAHAM F. A. WILMOT

## 1. AREA

THE historical township of Higher Bebington covered the present area of the Higher Bebington and Woodhey Wards of the Municipal Borough of Bebington and the Bebington Ward of the County Borough of Birkenhead. A township of 938.5<sup>1</sup> acres, it is rectangular in shape with a north-eastern appendage extending to the River Mersey. This "appendage," now the Bebington Ward of Birkenhead and formerly known as Rock Park, was ceded by the former Urban District of Higher Bebington to Birkenhead in 1877. The township attained a width of 3¼ miles in the north, tapering to a quarter of a mile in the south and averages 3¾ miles from north to south.

### THE BOUNDARIES OF THE TOWNSHIP

The township is bounded on the west by Storeton, to the south by Poulton-cum-Spital, on the east by Lower Bebington and the River Mersey and Tranmere lie to the east and the north.

(a) THE STORETON BOUNDARY: The old trackway of Mount Road<sup>2</sup> from its junction with Thornton Road to the Sitch Cottages forms this western boundary. The old road was an ideal line of demarcation.<sup>3</sup> From Thornton Road to the "Wishing Gate," the road runs along the ridge of Storeton, a "hog's back" ridge in character, the ground falling steeply away on both sides of the eminence. South of the Wishing Gate the ground dips steeply to the south, flattening out in the level marshy ground by the Sitch Cottages<sup>4</sup> cross-roads. In this southern section of the road the ground once more falls gently away from both sides of the boundary.

(b) THE TRANMERE BOUNDARY: A well-defined stream<sup>5</sup> course with its source in the highest point of the pinewoods on the Prenton and Storeton boundary (about 75 yards west of Mount Road at its junction with Stanley Avenue<sup>6</sup>) marks the boundary for half a mile from west to east. The stream, now drained, after crossing Mount Road continued due east, cutting across Thornton Road and running along the northern side of Brimstage Avenue. After crossing King's Road, the force of the stream was slowed by the more gentle slope and the brook meandered its way in a south-easterly curve to the site of the King's Hotel,<sup>7</sup> where until recently a meare (boundary) stone stood. At this point the brook turned sharply southwards following a clearly defined valley, while the Tranmere boundary continues in an easterly direction following one of the tributaries of this stream to its source in Dacre

Hill. East of this hill, the line follows a stream which eventually found its way to the Mersey following the line of Old Chester Road, cutting eastward by Green Lawn, crossing Highfield Street and the railway and flowing north-east to Rock Ferry pier.

(c) **THE LOWER BEBINGTON BOUNDARY:** From New Ferry Pier, this boundary follows ancient stream courses south-west across New Chester Road, along Stanley Road, crossing the railway and continuing to Old Chester Road. Here the boundary encloses Woodhey into the township, continuing westward along Town Lane as far as the north-west corner of Bebington Cemetery. Skirting the western wall of the cemetery, the line proceeds in a southerly direction following the line of various ungraded stream courses across a heathy area as far as the Brimstage-Spital road.

(d) **THE POULTON-CUM-SPITAL BOUNDARY:** This boundary joins together the Storeton and Lower Bebington boundary and runs along a dry valley from the Sitch Cottage for a quarter of a mile to the Brimstage-Spital road.

## 2. PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GEOLOGY

Geologically, Higher Bebington is a part of the Cheshire plain of Triassic sandstones which separate the coalfields of North Wales on the one hand and South-west Lancashire on the other. Almost throughout the township, however, the Triassic rocks, representatives of desert conditions of former times, are overlain with varying thicknesses of deposits left by the more recent ice age incursions.

The Triassic rocks have a number of sub-divisions and, in Higher Bebington, different types are found all of which have had a profound effect in modelling the landscape. The earliest representatives of the Triassic sandstones are the Bunter sandstones exemplified in the township by the Bunter Pebble beds and Upper Mottled Sandstone. The Pebble Beds cover nearly all the Rock Park area and consist of a hard, somewhat brittle, type of rock. They give rise to sharp relief as instanced by the prominent Dacre Hill ridge, where the land falls sharply away on every side. The bulk of Higher Bebington is covered by the Bunter formation of Upper Mottled Sandstone which results in a gentler landscape contrasting with the sharper type of relief characteristic of the Pebble Beds. Exposed in the eastern part of Well Lane near King's Road the Upper Mottled Sandstone is reddish-brown in appearance with white shaly bands frequently occurring.

Later in Triassic times, a different type of formation arose known as the Keuper sandstones. In the township the Keuper Basement Beds, although small in area, were by far the most important economically. Much more yellow and harder than the Mottled Sandstone, the Keuper Basement Beds make excellent building stones resulting in the extensive quarrying in Higher Bebington and Storeton. Confined to Storeton ridge, the Keuper

Beds are free of a drift cover and the sandy soil thus derived has resulted in an intensive growth of conifers along the ridge.

The very narrow "hog's back" ridge of Storeton is a result of extensive faulting at the junction of the Upper Mottled Sandstone and the Keuper Basement Beds.

Glacial deposits which cover the sandstones over the majority of the township, while not fundamentally altering the topography of the area, have exerted a considerable influence in the economic use of the land.

### 3. FOOTPRINTS IN THE KEUPER

While the Keuper series of the Triassic were important in rendering this sharply defined Storeton ridge and produced important stones for quarrying, they also proved to be the place where the first recorded evidence of life in the township has been found. During quarry excavations on the Higher Bebington side of Mount Road in 1838, footprints of a mammal were found in the Keuper rock which can be dated back to approximately 150 million years ago. Few townships can with certainty date evidence of life as long ago as this!

Toward the end of the long period when Triassic sandstones were laid down, desert conditions gave way to wetter, tropical climates and, intermixed with the Keuper basement beds, traces of Keuper marl laid in the shallow water of these tropical conditions, appeared. Keuper marl is a fine compact mud showing the ripple marks of its underwater origin. Often its surface became sunbaked by the relentless heat of a tropical sun. Research has shown that small lizard-like creatures crawled about in this late-Keuper swamp and in Higher Bebington their footprints have been preserved by the drying qualities of the sun. In addition to the lizard footprints found in this section are much larger prints belonging probably to the Cheirotherium, a gigantic beast with scaly skin and poised like a kangaroo. Unlike the marsupial, however, the Cheirotherium appeared to have walked rather than hopped. There are many fine examples of these footprints and on a slab in the Liverpool Museum, Cheirotherium footprints are found on the same slab as those of a tiny lizard.<sup>8</sup>

It is indeed unfortunate that Higher Bebington's claim to geological fame should be passed over and the finds invariably attributed to Storeton. As the quarrying originated on the Storeton side of Mount Road, the quarries became known as the Storeton Quarries. Although these finds were discovered in Higher Bebington, they have always been considered as being unearched in Storeton township.

### 4. THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

Higher Bebington's origins as an organised village community with definite boundaries date back to Anglo-Saxon times. It is highly probable, however, that prehistoric tribes eked out an existence within its bounds and that the area was not unknown

to the Roman legions. Evidence of later prehistoric communities must always remain obscure, for only the scattered neolithic and bronze age finds of the archaeologist can shed any light on this dark period. Higher Bebington's physical appearance must have presented a most inhospitable picture to those early tribes. Conifer wood would dominate the ridge and eastwards towards the river, a mass of dense bushes and undergrowth would abound on the wet, sticky boulder clays which give a thick cover to the Triassic bedrock.<sup>9</sup>

The coming of the Anglo-Saxons transformed the landscape. The new tribes cleared much of the tangled mass of bushes and controlled the drainage by regulating the waterways. Today, it is difficult to visualise the vast areas of mud, swamp and impenetrable bush which must have clothed Wirral before the Anglo-Saxons struck hard at reclamation in their long period of colonisation.

In prehistoric times the only likely areas of settlement in the township for neolithic and bronze age men were the Storeton ridge and along the Rock Park coast. The sandy soil of the Storeton ridge rendered a sparse cover of undergrowth and a soil easily worked with the crude primitive implements of those times. The only find related to this long period in Higher Bebington comes from the Storeton ridge—a dagger of bronze age period.<sup>10</sup> It was located near the Prenton boundary during excavations at the end of last century. At nearby Mount House in Prenton, flint scrapers were found<sup>11</sup> while the majority of other Wirral finds relating to early man are all sited in similar ridge areas like the Keuper eminences of Bidston and Thurstaston or near the coast at Hilbre, New Brighton and Tranmere.

One bronze age dagger found on Storeton ridge cannot, naturally, indicate a Bronze Age community existing on the height, but further excavations may bring more positive clues to light.

## 5. ROMAN TIMES

The European has not lost the feeling of the grandeur, romance and security of the Roman Empire and has searched, almost unconsciously but unsuccessfully over 1,500 years to fill the void created by the collapse of the Roman Empire. There is a compelling romance about the Roman period and many have let their imagination overcome cold judgment in their assessment of the importance of the Roman occupation of Britain.

On the parochial scale, the same process of exaggerating has been prevalent. Of Higher Bebington it has been stated that the Romans worked the quarry and drove roads through the township. The present facts do not bear out these assertions. The theory that the Romans worked the quarry on Storeton ridge



was first advanced by E. W. Cox,<sup>12</sup> who claimed that an inscribed tomb in honour of a Roman centurion was "undoubtedly from Storeton and is now to be found in Chester Museum." The evidence would have been positive proof that the Romans had worked these quarries, but later geological evidence shows that the stone was quarried from Manley on the Peckforton range in mid-Cheshire.<sup>13</sup> The only certain evidence of dates when the quarry was working is the fact that Lower Bebington Church is constructed with this stone. Lower Bebington Church is a magnificent example of early Norman architecture built on the site of an earlier church of late Anglo-Saxon times. Thus, the latest date for the original working can be placed between 900 and 1000 A.D.

The theory of Roman roads in Higher Bebington was advanced by S. O'Dwyer in his admirable publication "The Roman Roads of Cheshire." In Wirral, O'Dwyer tentatively expounds the theory of a road running along the eastern side of the peninsula as far as the ancient Roman Bridge at Wallasey Pool. The course of the road is deemed to proceed from Chester Northgate through Ledsham, Willaston,<sup>14</sup> Hargrave, Raby, Clatterbridge and along the line of King's Road and Borough Road to Wallasey Pool. An immediate disadvantage of this theory is that its course followed Borough Road which until the 19th century was on the site of a deeply entrenched river valley, commonly called "Happy Valley." This fact seems to rule out the possibility of the road following the line of King's Road, which is a direct southward continuation of the Happy Valley River. Apart from the Willaston excavations (footnote 14) there is little direct evidence in favour of this road. Discoveries of coins and pottery, however, shed some light on the difficult task of piecing together the facts. A Roman coin of the reign of Victorinus (240 A.D.) found in Storeton quarry<sup>15</sup> and a piece of pottery claimed to be Roman, discovered at Gorsey Hey<sup>16</sup> are the local township finds. In addition, a hoard of Roman coins found at Arno Hill (Oxton)<sup>17</sup> and a coin found in Grainger Avenue, Prenton,<sup>18</sup> may point to the fact that such a road existed proceeding from Clatterbridge along the line of the old trackway of Mount Road to Storeton Road, continuing over Arno Hill towards Bidston. The direct straightness of this route gives weight to the hypothesis but more excavations are required before the theory can become a practical reality.

The Roman occupation can only have affected Wirral for three centuries at most. As late as 80 A.D. the peninsula was inhabited by the Celtic, the Cornavii,<sup>19</sup> but after the establishment of Chester as a Roman garrison in the first century, Wirral came under the influence of the Twentieth legion. A proved road in north-western Wirral running towards Hoyle Lake showed that the Hoyle Lake was probably employed as a sheltering harbour while ships waited for calmer times to venture down the Dee to

the port at Chester. Thus the Twentieth legion may well have been conversant with Higher Bebington but the lack of sufficient data bars the way to more definite ideas about the township in the early centuries A.D.<sup>20</sup>

(to be concluded)

#### NOTES

- 1 Higher Bebington U.D.C., 698.5 acres; Rock Park, 240 acres.
- 2 In 18th century referred to as "Buggins Lane" (Cheshire Sheaf).
- 3 E. W. Cox, in *TRANS. LANCS. AND CHESH. HIST. SOC.* (1897), felt that this road was the division between Celtic field systems in the West and the open fields to the East. Scarcely any evidence exists to fortify this hypothesis.
- 4 Sitch Cottages often incorrectly written as "Sick Cottages" probably owing to the proximity of Clatterbridge. "Sitch" is an old Norse word meaning "a stream in marshy ground"—the element is common in field names, especially in Nottinghamshire.
- 5 As late as 1924 the stream was a water-course with a wooden bridge at its crossing with King's Road and it is marked on many maps (e.g. Map of Cheshire, 1846) prepared by Birkenhead Borough Surveyor. The spread of suburbia caused it to be piped and drained in places. Its name is puzzling—it has been suggested it was called (a) The Dale Stream and (b) The Withert. The latter name (c.f. Withert Avenue) is reputed to be a family name and there is no documentary evidence for the authenticity of the Dale Stream. Field names throw no light on the subject.
- 6 Boundary (or Meare) stones were marked on the O.S. Survey of Cheshire (1875) at this point and were described in *TRANS. HIST. SOC. L. AND C.* (1896).
- 7 The curve of Princes Boulevard was conditioned by the stream's meander in this section.
- 8 Other good examples are found in the Williamson Art Gallery (Birkenhead) and in the porch of Higher Bebington Church. In the latter case the footprints were found on the stones actually selected for the construction of the Church in 1860. Also in Grosvenor Museum, Chester. A section is in possession of the Bromborough Society.
- 9 In many writings about Wirral, an impression of dense woodland covering the peninsula from prehistoric times to the 18th century is often conveyed. It is, of course, true that the history of the peninsula tells the common tale of the ever diminishing woodland throughout its historic life, but apart from the legendary rhyme:

"From Blacon Point to Hilbree,

A squirrel may skip from tree to tree"

historical and geographical evidence runs contrary to the idea of dense woodland in Wirral. The Domesday survey of 1086 mentions only two areas of woodland, one being undoubtedly the Storeton ridge area, for in the Prenton entry is recorded "There is wood 2 leagues by 2 leagues." Confusion is caused by the establishment of the mediaeval "forest" of Wirral. The mediaeval legal meaning of forest referred to an area outside the common law (Latin: *foris*—outside) and had no connection with woodland. The majority of Wirral mediaeval documents often refer to forest but seldom to wood. Place names assist the evidence: Wirral itself means "corner land of the bog myrtle," a tree of bushy stunted growth flourishing in marshy areas. Other township and minor names commonly refer to the poorer stunted types of trees and rarely to elm, oak, beech, etc. (cf. Heswall—hazel; Saughall and Saughall Massie—willow; Bromborough, Brimstange—broom; Thornton Hough, Childer Thornton—thorny scrub).

- 10 Liverpool Museum.
- 11 TRANS. LANCS. AND CHESH. HIST. SOC., XIV, p. 120-122.
- 12 TRANS. LANCS. AND CHESH. HIST. SOC., VOL. XLIX, (1897) pp. 57-58.
- 13 The tomb is still extant at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.
- 14 Note "Street Hey" in Willaston. Excavation in this area apparently confirms the existence of a Roman road for a distance of about 2 miles.
- 15 In Liverpool Museum. Unfortunately, no date can be traced.
- 16 Information A. Carlyle Tait—found during excavations for the new Brackwood housing estate.
- 17 TRANS. LANCS. AND CHESH. HIST. SOC., VOL. X.
- 18 Information A. Carlyle Tait.
- 19 Cornavii—men of the corner-land.
- 20 O.S. Map of Roman Britain. The so-called Roman Road running from Little Storeton to Prenton is a mediaeval track-way and it also seems likely that the "Roman Road" of Kirket (Kirkup) Lane in Lower Bebington is of much later origin. (For the latter road see TRANS. LANCS. AND CHESH. HIST. SOC., 1893, pp. 248-250).

## The "Nobbler" in Tarvin Church

By S. JACKSON

**T**HIS story, concerned with Tarvin Church at the opening of the 19th century was told to me by the late Dr. T. W. E. Moreton.

During the long sermons of those days a watcher with a long wooden pole used to sit with his eye on the congregation. He was known as the "Nobbler" and the moment he saw any nodding off to sleep he would stroll down the aisle and gently tap the offender with his long nobbling pole.

The Lady Sophia Grey, daughter of the fifth Earl of Stamford and Warrington, lived at that time at Ashton Hayes, which was then in the Tarvin Parish. Lady Sophia was a regular worshipper and much intrigued with the Nobbler, and service after service she followed his activities with increasing interest. What sort of a man was he? Would he treat the nobility just as he treated the ordinary people, or was he only concerned with the farm workers and their families? At last, one Sunday morning when the sermon was proceeding, she decided to find out by pretending to fall asleep. Surely enough, caring nothing for her rank, the Nobbler came down the aisle, stopped at the end of her pew, and presently she felt the end of the rod prodding her into wakefulness.

So pleased was she that when the service was over, she sent for the Nobbler, congratulated him on his zealously and rewarded him generously for his fidelity to duty.

# Cockfighting

## The last Great Main at Peel Hall

By S. JACKSON

ONE hundred and eight years ago an Act of Parliament made cockfighting illegal, but from accounts in the newspapers the custom still survives and the recent account of a local main recalls a conversation I had thirty years ago with a very old man who gave me a description of a cockfight he witnessed when a boy. It was in the year 1865 and took place at Peel Hall in the parish of Ashton Hayes. It was the year that President Lincoln was assassinated, but my informant, a toiler on the land, had never heard of him. He did however associate the event with the same year that cattle in the district fell victims to the Rinderpest.

Many mains had taken place in the vicinity of Delamere Forest but the secret of the rendezvous had always been so well kept that the police had been baffled. This was not surprising as it was only nine years earlier that the Police Act had made the establishment of an efficient police force compulsory.

In the Peel Hall orchard, surrounded by a nine feet high wall, a crowd estimated at between 150 and 200 people had collected. In the centre of the orchard was a ring about five yards in diameter, enclosed with sods, and around this ring were placed benches, logs of wood and even chairs from the hall.

Men were coming and going through the front door of the hall, and presently the boy saw the tenant, Joseph Beckett, come out. He was followed by two men, each carrying a silk bag containing a cock, which when taken out the bag was seen to have its legs tied. Throwing cloths over the birds' heads to blindfold them, two men weighed the birds, untied their legs, and passed them to the two "handlers," who then stood in the ring facing one another, each holding a bird. The head cloths were pulled off and the birds encouraged to peck each other's head. The birds, armed with silver spurs or some such bright metal, were then set on the ground and immediately started fighting, feathers flying in all directions.

While the fight was going on, a considerable amount of betting was in progress. After about a quarter of an hour one of the birds, with scarcely a feather left, and blood streaming from gashes all over its body, lay down exhausted and dying, and like a boxer knocked down in the ring was counted out. The dead cock and the bedraggled victor were taken away and two more bags were brought from the Hall and the cocks for

the second main taken out and weighed. This fight proved even more cruel and harrowing than the first, and after twenty minutes both birds were so severely tortured and exhausted that they could no longer fight, and were taken away.

Before the third fight could begin, the Chief Constable accompanied by some of his men had gained an entrance to the orchard, pushed through the crowd and entered the ring. Then followed a scene which one could hardly imagine happening today. The ringleaders consulted together for a time, then went up to the police and asked them if they intended to prosecute. On the assurance that this would certainly be the case, they decided they might as well have their money's worth and stated they would continue with their programme whatever the consequences. The Cockfight was then resumed and the Chief Constable with his men stood aside and watched. This sounds incredible but I was able to verify the statement in the reports of the Cheshire Observer and the police court case which followed. Altogether fifteen fights took place, with thirty birds going into the ring and practically all of them finishing their contest either dying or blinded or profusely bleeding.

On April 25th the case was heard at the Abbey Arms, Delamere, with William Atkinson, of Ashton Hayes, as Chairman of the Bench of Magistrates. Some twenty-four people were before the Bench as being concerned in the promotion of the main, but apart from Joseph Beckett, none of them came from Ashton Hayes. The others were from places as far apart as Bolton, Islington and Worcester. The magistrates imposed fines of £5 and £2 10s. 0d., and in default of payment, imprisonment with hard labour for one month.

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## HISTORIC CHESHIRE CHURCHES PRESERVATION TRUST

The attention of readers is drawn to the importance and urgency of the appeal for funds now being made by the Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust which has been created to prevent England's unique heritage of ancient and beautiful churches from falling into decay and ruin. Local History Committees are invited to send a donation to the Trust and individual readers are urged to give their support. The Secretary will be glad to receive contributions addressed to the Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust, Baycliffe, Lymm, Warrington, and to supply further particulars and forms of covenant.

(continued from page 28)

#### 4. WEAVER STREET

The possibility of further work in the south-western quarter of the fortress arose with the widening of Weaver Street during July and August. This involved the demolition of the massive sandstone wall along the east side of Weaver Street, thought to be, or to follow the line of, the precinct wall of the White Friars, and the levelling of a strip of the garden behind. No archaeological discoveries of note were made except for the presence of ~~two culverts of post-mediaeval date.~~

The work also involved the demolition of two 18th century houses, 39 and 41 Commonhall Street, and a photographic record was made of these before their disappearance. The opportunity was then taken of cutting two trenches near the Weaver Street/Commonhall Street junction. The first revealed a Roman wall running east-west, dated by associated pottery to the early second century; superimposed on it was a later wall, probably early third century in date, with an associated floor of blocks of cream sandstone to north and south. The second trench was largely occupied by a mediaeval pit but disturbed remains of the sandstone floor were again encountered. It is difficult to be certain of the identity of this building but it is probable that it is the most westerly of the barrack blocks which occupied this part of the fortress.

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#### CHESHIRE MATERIALS CULLED FROM JOURNALS

THE HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE, VOL. 107:

"THE CHESTER MINT," by William Geddes, M.A., LL.M., F.R.A.S., F.R.N.S.; "DELAMERE FOREST IN LATE MEDIEVAL TIMES," by B. M. C. Husain, B.COM., M.A.; "DISPUTES AT NETHER PEOVER CHAPEL IN 1625," by W. F. Irvine, M.A., F.S.A.

THE CHESTER AND NORTH WALES ARCHITECTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC SOCIETY, VOL. 42:

"THE MINT OF CHESTER" (Part I), by R. H. M. Dolley, F.S.A.; "CHESTER CATHEDRAL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY" (Part II), by The Ven. R. V. H. Burne, M.A., F.R.HIST.S.; "A SECTION THROUGH THE LEGIONARY DEFENCES ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE FORTRESS," by Graham Webster; Miscellanea, "AN EXPANDING FLINT AXE FROM LYMME PARK."

THE ANCIENT MONUMENT SOCIETY, NEW SERIES, VOL. III:

"THE GAWSWORTH ARMORIALS," by The Rev. William Edgar Clarke.

THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, VOL. LXIII, 1952-53:

"THE EARLY LIFE OF SIR WILLIAM BRERETON, THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMANDER," by R. N. Dore, M.A.; "CHESHIRE BELLS" (Part IV), by J. W. Clarke; "CHARLES ROE OF MACCLESFIELD (1751-81)" (Part II), by W. H. Challoner, M.A., PH.D.

THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, VOL. LXIV, 1954:

"POSSIBLE REMAINS OF CELTIC FIELDS AT KELSALL IN CHESHIRE," by J. D. Bu'Lock, M.A., PH.D.

## LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES

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- The Cheshire Community Council, Bishop Lloyd's House, 53 Watergate Row, Chester.  
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Chairman, Local History Committee: A. Oakes.  
Editor, Cheshire Historian: G. B. Leach.
- The Standing Conference of Local History:  
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- The Council of British Archæology:  
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- Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings:  
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- Ancient Monuments Society:  
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- English Church History Society:  
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- English Place Names Society:  
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- The County Archivist, Chester: Cheshire Record Office:  
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- The City Archivist, The Town Hall, Chester:  
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- The Grosvenor Museum, Chester:  
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## CONTENTS

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	PAGE
SALT IN CHESHIRE	
By JOAN BECK .....	1
CHESHIRE COAT ARMOUR	
By F. E. S. BAKER .....	7
THE PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT IN EAST CHESHIRE	
By PAULINE F. BROOKES .....	13
CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS	20
EXCAVATIONS, 1957	
By F. H. THOMPSON .....	21
INQUEST ON HENRY DODDING	
By JOSEPHINE L. REID .....	24
NORSE SETTLEMENTS IN WIRRAL	
By LEONARD WHARFE .....	29
DID JASON FIND THE OLD LACE AND THE ARSENIC ?	
By G. NULTY .....	34
FAIRY ANCESTOR FOR SOME CHESHIRE FAMILIES	
By G. NULTY .....	37
THE CHANGING SCENE IN THE TOWNSHIP OF HIGHER BEBINGTON, WIRRAL	
By GRAHAM F. A. WILMOT .....	39
LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES .....	INSIDE BACK COVER

# Salt in Cheshire

by JOAN BECK, M.A.

THE sixteenth century historians wrote in glowing terms about the wonderful Cheshire cheeses, about the thriving population of mid-Cheshire towns, such as Nantwich; their wealth was derived partly from old industries like glove-making and tanning, a by-product of the dairy-farming and cheese-making, but mainly from the manufacture of salt.

The importance of the fine Cheshire cheese we can still appreciate, and we can understand the Cheshire folk who groused that all the best cheeses were exported to London and other faraway places. It is quite true that cheese did make up a considerable proportion of the exports from Chester and its lesser neighbour, Frodsham. Smith and Webb (published by Daniel King in 1656) considered that God had put some special quality in the soil to make the grass tender for the cows whose milk produced such cheese; and although women in other areas of the county and even of the whole kingdom tried to learn the secrets of cheese-making as perfected by the women of mid-Cheshire "yet can they never fully match the perfect relish of the right Namptwich Cheese, nor can that Cheese be equalled for pleasantness of taste, and wholesomenesse of digestion, even in the daintiest stomachs of them that love it."

But it is the salt that was far more important. In the sixteenth century Nantwich was the centre. To-day Northwich is.

As far back as 1086 the Domesday Book gives us a very interesting account of the way in which salt affected the area in the pre-Conquest and post-Conquest period. Before 1066 King Edward and Earl Edwin had eight salt-houses between them in Nantwich and they divided the proceeds of the well, or brine spring, so that the King received two thirds and the Earl one third of the profits. The Earl had another well near his manor at Acton, and this supplied his personal needs. If he sold any of the Acton salt then he had to give the King two-pence out of every three-pence raised by toll on the salt. Other men from round Nantwich also had salt-houses in Nantwich and they were allowed to carry away for their own use what they liked from Ascension Day to Martinmas (11 November). Any salt sold to anyone else was liable to a toll. After Martinmas until Ascension Day only salt from the Earl's salt-house might be bought without toll whether the salt was for personal use or to be sold. In the period when the salt-houses were working the salt, these eight salt-houses usually did sixteen boilings a week and fifteen boilings made up one horse load. The salt-houses were surrounded partly by the river and partly by a ditch; within this area, except for homicide and theft, punishable according to normal laws, a payment of two shillings atoned for misdeeds. Evasion of salt tolls

meant a fine of forty shillings if a free man, or four shillings if unfree, and, of course, the salt was forfeited. If the smuggler got away out of the county, he received the same punishment if caught.

By 1086 when the material for the Domesday survey was being collected things were different in Nantwich. The whole area had suffered devastation; whole villages were now laid waste and some had disappeared completely. The Domesday Book tells its story simply. "In King Edward's time, this wych with all pleas in the same hundred rendered £21 in farm. When Earl Hugh received it, except only one salt-house it was waste." Earl Hugh d'Avranches or Hugh Lupus (the Wolf) let out Nantwich, both town and hundred, to William Malbedeng (Malbanc). The town was assessed at £10. Salt, bought at Nantwich or Middlewich, paid fourpence in toll if taken on a cart drawn by four oxen, twopence if the cart were drawn by two oxen and if there were two horse loads in quantity. People in Nantwich Hundred paid a smaller toll than people from other hundreds. If the cart were overloaded then there was trouble in more ways than one. "Whoever loaded his wain so that the axle broke within a league of either Wich, gave 2 shillings to the King's or the Earl's officer, if he were overtaken within the league. In like manner, he who loaded his horse so as to break its back, gave 2 shillings if overtaken within the league, but nothing if overtaken beyond it. Whoever made two horse-loads of salt out of one was fined 40 shillings if the officer overtook him. If he was not found nothing was to be exacted from any other [than the actual offender]. Men on foot from another hundred buying salt, paid 2d for 8 men's loads. Men of the same hundred paid 1d for the same number of such loads."

By the early twelfth century most of the salt trade profits of the Malbanc family had been granted by them to St. Werburgh's Abbey, Chester, and to Combermere Abbey: and several smaller religious houses and hospitals also benefited, e.g. the Hospital of St. John, St. Mary's Nunnery, the Priory of St. Thomas at Stafford. Lichfield expected a supply of salt for the Bishop's table. A temporary stoppage in salt production was caused by Henry III in 1245 when he was trying to crush the Welsh. At the Dissolution some of the salt-houses reverted to the Crown which treated them as it did much other property: it sold them to local gentry. In 1590 Roger Wilbraham of Dorfold bought "three wiche-houses and a half" in Nantwich for £136-6s-8d, and in the same year Richard Sawyer bought one "wiche house" for £66-13s-4d.

When James I visited Nantwich in August 1617 and stayed at the house of Thomas Wilbraham, he walked as far as the brine spring. "... it pleased him to walk so far as the Brinesceth, and with his eye to behold the manner of the Well, and to observe the labours of the Briners: and after that his Majestic's gracious enquiry among the poor Drawers touching the nature of the same Brine, and how they converted it into Salt, most

princely rewarding them with his own hand, his Majestic returned." This "Brineseeth" was, Smith and Webb believed, near the chapel dedicated to St. Anne, near the town bridge which was by this time a strong timber bridge. Nantwich also had a school, founded by John and Thomas Thrush of London; they were described as "Woolpackers" and the school was well and sufficiently maintained.

Middlewich was described in 1656 as "the second Town of the Hundred, . . . a Market Town, having therein two Salt pits; and great store of Salt is there made and vended into parts both near and remote." Northwich was the third of the trio of salt towns; it belonged to the Earl of Derby, and "it is a Market Town well frequented, gives name to the Hundred, and is often allotted to the meetings of the chief Governours in the County, for the great affairs." Northwich, too, had a school, well endowed with land and with "the Saracen's Head in the City of Chester."

In his "A Description of the Country from thirty to forty miles round Manchester" (published in 1795), Aikin explained that Nantwich once had been the chief salt town but was fast losing that position. In Elizabeth's day, he said there had been 216 salt works of six leads (that is, lead pans) walling (boiling) each; this must mean for all the salt towns in the district. Now (that is, in 1795) they had decreased to two works, presumably in Nantwich, of five large pans of wrought iron. He says that previously Britons, Romans and Saxons had got their salt from the brine pits and had worked out "various laws and usages." The production of salt was carefully stinted by a restriction on the number of pans used and by working for a very limited period. The salters moved supplies only in the drier weather. (Several place-names in mid-Cheshire indicate routes taken by the salt carters, e.g. Salterswall, Saltersford). The salt from Northwich was taken overland to Frodsham, then shipped down the Mersey. Some improvements to the River Weaver helped transport.

In the seventeenth century coal gradually replaced wood for smelting and heating, and iron pans began to be used instead of lead ones. Northwich salters, not being under the restrictive government of a borough, quickly introduced the iron pans, and so they began to outstrip Nantwich in the production of salt. As early as 1682 Northwich produced weekly three times the quantity of Nantwich or Middlewich. Another advantage that Northwich had over Nantwich was that in 1670 William Marbury found rock salt at Marbury near Great Budworth. This rock salt without any refinement could be easily transported, for example, to the refinery at Bristol. William Marbury had hoped to find coal, for coal was very expensive to transport. Transport cost more than twice the cost of the actual coal at the pit head. As it was cheaper to take the salt to or towards the coal production areas, a rock salt refinery was set up at Frodsham in 1694; in 1696 there was a petition in Liverpool to start saltworks there, and in 1697 the Dungeon works on the Mersey were started.

Strangely enough William Marbury does not seem to have been interested in rock salt, for he continued to be a briner and when he died in 1683 his estates were heavily mortgaged; his three sisters, who took the estates after his son and brother in rapid succession, fared no better, and the creditors seized the estates in 1690. One of these creditors was Celia Fiennes. During the last ten years of the seventeenth century disputes between the salt briners or boilers and the rock salt refiners led to rock salt being more heavily taxed than salt made from brine.

In the eighteenth century the export trade expanded. Salt in increasing quantities was sold to Ireland and elsewhere; Danish boats fetched salt from Frodsham and Liverpool. Daniel Defoe on his tour through England and Wales between 1724 and 1726 said that in 1724 Liverpool merchants "trade round the whole island, send ships to Norway, to Hamburgh, and to the Baltick, as also to Holland and Flanders." The coastal trade was growing as well as foreign trade, and salt was often part of the cargoes.

The problem of transporting salt from the salt works or pits to Frodsham was becoming an obstacle. The demand for salt was increasing so much that something had to be done. Pack-horses were no longer sufficient to carry enough salt, nor were they quick enough. By 1709 salt producers were negotiating to present a bill to the House of Commons to make the River Weaver navigable as far as Winsford. In 1721 this act was passed. The work of deepening and widening (and straightening) the river was begun in 1730 and the river was open to traffic in 1732. The river was used for the transport of coal to the salt area and of refined salt to Frodsham for export by the Mersey. The problem that now became prominent was the slow carting of the coal from the coal pits in the St. Helens area to the Mersey. Salt producers in mid-Cheshire were not the only people needing more coal. The Liverpool refiners and even domestic consumers demanded more coal. In 1754 Liverpool merchants decided that the matter was sufficiently urgent for a petition to consider the construction of a canal, and the Liverpool dock engineer, Henry Berry, planned and built the Sankey Canal. This new canal was opened in 1757. In future flats could go from Liverpool to St. Helens for coal, bring the coal via the Sankey Canal and River Weaver to Northwich or Winsford, and return to Liverpool with salt. Unfortunately the River Weaver then proved too narrow and too shallow, and this had to be altered. By 1817 it was reckoned that most of the coal from the St. Helens pits, e.g. Parr and Ravenhead went to the salt-works in mid-Cheshire, "upwards of one hundred thousand tons." The output of salt rapidly increased from 20,000 tons a year in 1760 to 58,000 by 1793 to 106,000 tons by 1800. By then salt proprietors were becoming coal proprietors with their own barges and boats, thus controlling the whole business at every stage.

This improvement of communications with Liverpool and St. Helens and the mining of the rock salt thus made Northwich

more important than Nantwich. Aikin remarked that perhaps the Chester Canal, built between 1772 and 1779, if brought nearer than Acton, might help Nantwich to recapture its importance, but "the other salt towns be more convenient for commerce, and abound almost to excess with that commodity." The Chester Canal by-passed Nantwich just as the railways were to do in the nineteenth century. It is true that Nantwich remained an important road centre, that the turnpiked road between Chester and South Staffordshire was completed between 1729 and 1744, and the Chester to North Staffordshire turnpiked road was complete in 1766, but carts and pack-horses were too slow and could take too little at a time when speed and quantity were vital to supply the growing demands. And the rock salt was a much more transportable commodity and was bulky. Water transport was best.

Aikin was interested in the way the salt was extracted from the earth.

Rock salt is hard—so hard, he said, that workmen could just manage to cut it with picks and wedges. Recently (that is, in the early 1790s) gunpowder had begun to be used to loosen many tons at a time. At this stage the rock salt looked like sugar candy. He described the double seam of salt with the lower one the purer though not so strong as the upper one. When the salt was hewn out, blocks were left at intervals as pillars to hold up the roof of the pit. There was a danger in this because sometimes brine springs seeped into the pits, dissolved the pillars and the whole roof of the pit collapsed. A supply of fresh air was circulated to the pit by a pair of forge bellows connected with a tube. The largest pit in 1795 was at Witton on the land of Nicholas Ashton. "It is worked in a circular form, 108 yards in diameter, its roof supported by twenty-five pillars, each three yards wide at the front, four at the back, and its sides extending six yards. The pit is fourteen yards hollow; consequently each pillar contains 294 solid yards of rock salt; and the whole area of the pit contains 9160 superficial yards, little less than two acres of land." This rock salt was sent to Dunkirk, Ostend, Riga, Bruges, Nieuport, Pillau, Elsinore on the continent and to Ireland: some of the salt was refined in the Northwich area, some at Liverpool, at Frodsham and at Dungeon, and then transported elsewhere. "The rock salt, as well as the white salt, made at Northwich, is conveyed down the Weaver, and thence by the Mersey to Liverpool in vessels from fifty to eighty tons burthen, and there reshipped for foreign countries, or kept for refinement. We have already mentioned the great advantage Liverpool has derived from possessing such an article for the ballast-loading of its outward-bound ships."

The salt made from brine was crystallised by boiling the brine in large iron pans, twenty to thirty feet square and fourteen inches deep; the scum was removed and the liquid gradually evaporated leaving a crust on the surface; this sank to the bottom

and was taken out once or twice every twenty-four hours. In Hall's account of the history of Nantwich he described the process in great detail, adding interesting facts like the quantities of blood and beer mixed with the brine to help it crystallise.

The taxes on salt were relatively high. From 1778 all salt of any quality, even that kind previously used as fertilizer, had to pay duties. Salt leaving the works was scrutinised: "Not a peck of salt can go from the works without a permit, under the risque of forfeiture and high penalties; and officers are stationed on the roads to demand a sight of permits, and to reweigh on suspicion of frauds."

Looking through some petitions to Quarter Sessions for 1700 in the Cheshire County Record Office at Chester Castle, this was found. It is an interesting sidelight to this tale of salt.

"The Information of Joseph Cadman of Witton in the s[ai]d County Yeoman who upon his Oath saith that on Thursday night Last he this Informant had feloniously taken out of his Salt house in Leftwich in the s[ai]d County several Bushalls of Salt and hath in Suspicion James Hunt Peter Barlow Ann his wife Martha Gorse Elnor[sic] the wife of Laurence Peirson John Gorse Jun[ior] and James Gore all of Northwich in the s[ai]d County.

Thomas Lamb of Northwich in the s[ai]d County shoemaker upon his oath saith tht on Thursday Last about ten or eleven of the clock in the night time in Northwich aff[ore]sd he this dep[onen]t did see several suspicious p[er]sons going towards the salt house of Joseph Cadman in Leftwich near Northwich whereupon he this dep[onen]t with Jeffery Jackson did privately goe towards the Salt house to try if they could make discovery of any evil Action & comeing near the s[ai]d Salt house did see in the yard thereof Martha Gorse Ann the wife of Peter Barlow Jun[ior] and Elenor the wife of Lawrence Peirson James Gorse all of Northwich aff[oresai]d and Imediately after this dep[onen]t with the s[ai]d Jeffery Jackson went on the contrary side of the River where the s[ai]d Salt House stands and there found five or Six Baggs (in which this dep[onen]t beleives was Salt) Lyeing upon the ground & James Hunt and the s[ai]d Peter Barlow carried two of the s[ai]d Baggs away from there but whither or who took away the Rest this dep[onen]t knows not And this dep[onen]t further saith that three of the s[ai]d Baggs soe Lyeing on the ground he this dep[onen]t with the s[ai]d Jeffery Jackson did examine & found em to be filled with salt and that James Jackson Servant to the s[ai]d Joseph Cadman offerd Five shillings to this dep[onen]t not to make this discovery."

For further reading see—

E. Lipson. "Economic History of England" vols II and III (Black 1948).

T. C. Barker. "Lancashire Coal, Cheshire Salt and the Rise of Liverpool." (Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, vol. 103, 1951).



# Cheshire Coat Armour

by F. E. S. BAKER

## 1. Some Beginnings

HERALDRY has been called "the shorthand of history;" and the idea behind this series is not to give the reader a detailed introduction to the mysteries of coat-armour but rather to indicate a few of the ways in which some small knowledge of that subject can enhance the enjoyment of that historical heritage, of which Cheshire people are justly proud. Cheshire, that fertile "seedplot of gentility," is particularly rich in ancient coats of arms: few counties can, in fact, equal Cheshire in this respect.

To begin with, what is the origin of coat-armour? Its primary use and significance was military; its purpose being the identification of the leaders of an army in the field, at distances, which would preclude recognition by other means. It may, perhaps, be more than mere coincidence that the period of the introduction of coat-armour (the second and third quarters of the 12th century) was more or less co-eval with that of the closed helmet.

Just how coat-armour began is not known. It certainly developed very quickly and it is even possible that the idea was the "invention" of a single individual. More probably, however, the system grew up gradually, its growth being influenced by a variety of circumstances. However this may be, the "fashion" spread very quickly over Europe and, because the leaders, even of the smallest bodies of troops, were all men of a certain social class, holding lands on condition of military service, a coat of arms soon came to be recognised as a badge of rank or mark of gentility, denoting the bearer a gentleman, in the original sense of the word, and a land-owner, or, at least, land-holder. To this we owe the survival of coat-armour, long after its military significance had, to all intents and purposes, ceased.

Now, let us put ourselves, for a moment, in the position of a Cheshire gentleman of the late 12th century and see what were the main factors governing his choice of a coat of arms; for although in later days, the control of coat-armour by the king and the royal officers of arms (those people with picturesque titles, like Garter King of Arms, Chester Herald, Bluemantle Pursuivant, etc.) became of necessity, more and more rigid, yet in the earliest period of heraldry, a man was free, within certain limits, to choose any device he pleased as his coat of arms.

The principal factors governing his choice, then, were two in number. First, he must choose something distinctive and easily recognised at a distance. The War Office of those days did not issue binoculars to field officers and the consequences of a mistake might prove disastrous, if not fatal. For this reason, all the earliest coats of arms are extremely simple in character, consisting, for the most part, either of simple divisions of the shield into

two parts of differing colour and metal or of plain "charges" (called ordinaries), formed by parallel lines, as the cross, chevron, etc., quickly followed, of course, by the whole heraldic "menagerie" of lions, dragons, griffins, bulls, bears, stags, etc.

The second factor was the necessity of choosing a design not already appropriated by someone else because this could, and, occasionally, did lead to TROUBLE.

One of the most celebrated causes, in the Court of Chivalry, held before the Constable and Marshal, the two principal officers of State in military affairs, was that of *Scrope v. Grosvenor*, in which Sir Richard le Scrope, a Yorkshireman, challenged the right of Sir Robert le Grosvenor to the arms, *azure, a bend or*, that is, a blue shield, with a gold diagonal band or "bend." The case lasted over three years, from 1386-1389, the main hearing being in London, although some of the 300 witnesses were examined at Nantwich and nearly all the knights and gentlemen of Cheshire and Lancashire, as well as several Abbots and other clergy, testified to the use of the disputed coat by the Grosvenors "from time immemorial."

On the Scrope side, however, were such figures as Edmund, Duke of York, and John of Gaunt (the King's uncles), the Earl of Derby (after King Henry IV) and many other great names, including Geoffrey Chaucer, then aged 40. Geoffrey, in fact, was rather superior about the whole affair, saying he had never heard of the Grosvenors, although, as an afterthought, he did remember once seeing these arms displayed outside an alehouse, in London, and, on inquiring who used the arms of Scrope for an inn-sign, he was told they were the arms of "some fellow from the county of Chester, of the name of Grosvenor;" and that, he said, was the first time in his life that ever he heard the name of Sir Robert Grosvenor. At least, that is a fairly free translation of the Norman-French, in which the records of the trial were kept.

Finally, after an appeal to King Richard II, himself, the arms were awarded to Scrope, but Grosvenor, after indignantly refusing to bear a differenced version of the disputed arms, was granted the well-known coat, borne by the Grosvenors to this day, *azure, a garb (wheatsheaf) or*, in token of his descent, which had been amply proved during the hearing, from the Earls of Chester, who bore *azure, three* (originally six) *garbs or*. Yet, even to-day, the memory of the original Grosvenor arms is kept very much alive and the late Duke of Westminster named one of his race-horses "Bend Or."

To return to our Cheshire gentleman of the 12th century, one way to avoid duplication was (paradoxically) to choose, deliberately, an existing coat; perhaps, that of the head of your family, that of your feudal overlord or of someone with whom you were connected in some way through the many and complex links of the feudal chain; and, having adopted this (with the owner's permission) you then proceeded to "difference" it, either by changing the colours, altering the form or position of the charges or

by adding to the design something of your own. In this way, a number of series or territorial groups of similar coats have come down to us, to-day.

The best-known of these is the Mandeville series, founded on the quarterly coat (fig. 1) of Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, who died in 1144. This, incidentally, is the earliest known coat of arms in this country and a very large number of coats have been based upon it or upon variants of it. They are to be found in most of the counties of England and several occur in Cheshire, including Malbank or Malbedeng, Baron of Nantwich, Massy, Baron of Dunham (fig. 2) and, possibly Dutton of Dutton (fig. 3).

Coats containing garbs (wheatsheaves) are fairly numerous in Cheshire and, while such a coat does not, by any means, always denote a direct connection of the original bearer with one of the Earls of Chester, there are many well-authenticated cases where this is so, perhaps the best known being Grosvenor (fig. 4) and Cholmondeley (fig. 5).

Likewise, the coat of Montalt (the Cheshire baron, who took his name from Mold or Monte Alto) was *azure, a lion rampant argent* (silver) (fig. 6) and the Domvilles, who claimed relationship, differenced by the addition of a collar to the lion. The Pooles of Nether Poole, in Wirral, who were connected feudally, and possibly by marriage also, with the Montalts, added an orle of fleurs de lys *or* (gold) (fig. 7). In this connection, it may be of interest to note that the last of the Montalt barons left his estates to Queen Isobel, widow of Edward II, with the remainder to her younger son, John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall, who, as younger brother of Edward III, differenced the royal arms (fig. 8) in almost exactly the same way as his contemporary, Robert de Poole, differenced those of Montalt. John of Eltham, of course, took his "difference" from the arms of his Mother, who was the daughter of the French King. Did Robert de Poole derive his orle of fleurs de lys from John of Eltham? Who knows? It is like fitting together a jig-saw puzzle some of whose pieces are missing. One gets so far—and all the pieces fit. Then, perhaps, another piece turns up, which doesn't fit; and then one has to start all over again. That is part of the fascination of Heraldry.

Just one more group of coats derived from that of a Cheshire baron. Venables, Baron of Kinderton, (fig. 9) bore *azure, two bars argent* and, of the many coats derived from this one, the following are just a few; Brereton, who simply changed the colours to *argent* and *sable* (black); Legh of Booths, who added a *bend gules* (red); Legh of Baguley, who, also, differenced with a bend; Legh of Adlington, who used a *bend compony, or and gules* (i.e., a bend composed of alternate squares of gold and red) and the Dones of Utkinton, (fig. 10) who bore, on the *bend gules*, three silver arrows in token of the Forestership of Delamere, which they inherited from the Kingsleys. Several other branches of the numerous Legh family also bore variants of this coat, being descended from William Venables, who married Agnes, daughter

and heir of Richard Legh of High Legh. The early Breretons and Dones held their lands from Venables, and, Ormerod thought, might have been related.

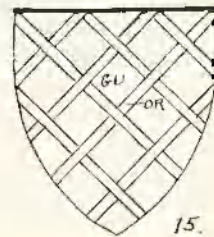
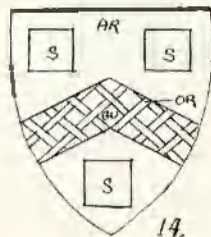
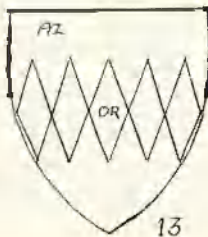
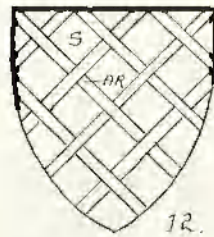
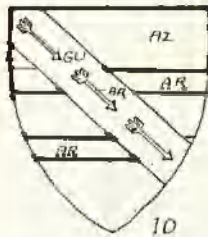
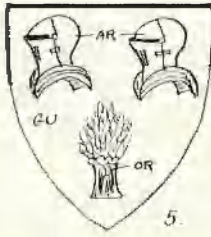
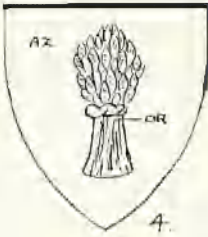
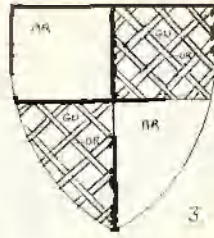
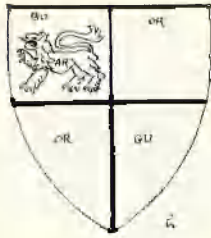
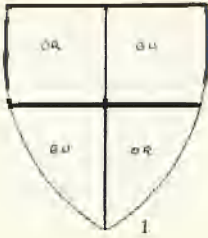
Another device, which our Cheshire gentleman might have chosen, and one which has been extremely popular, in all ages, was the "canting coat." This was, or is, (for canting coats are still popular with the heralds of to-day) a play on words or pun on the bearer's name. There are, literally, thousands of such coats; in some cases, the pun being quite plain and obvious as in the following examples: Capenhurst (a chevron between three capons); Calveley (a fess, i.e., a broad horizontal band, between three calves) and Beeston (a bend between six bees). The last two may be seen in Bunbury church. Others, however, are much less obvious, as, e.g., the coat of an old Cheshire family, now, I believe, extinct, of the name of Bechton, which was *azure, three spade irons or*. The pun, here, depends on the French word "becher" to dig. The arms of Lancelyn-Green contain three stags and this, too, is a canting coat because stags are found in association with the greenwood. Canting coats containing stags and bucks are, indeed, fairly numerous, other Cheshire instances being, Parker (three bucks' heads) and Downes (a buck lodged, i.e., lying down).

In the well-known coat of Tollemache, (fig. 11) the fret is supposed to represent the meshes of a net and the fretty coat of Harrington (fig. 12) is generally thought to depict a herring-net, although it could just as well portray an ordinary spike-harrow. The three hedge-hogs of Harrison derive their significance from the French word for a hedge-hog, "herisson."

The last two examples, both from outside the county, are perfect instances of the sort of thing to be met with in the "canting" field. Another particularly good example of the less obvious type of pun is the ancient, original coat of the Percy family of Northumberland, prior to the marriage of Jocelyn of Louvain with the Percy heiress, which was *azure, five fusils conjoined in fess* (i.e., horizontally) *or*. A fusil (Latin *fuscus*, a spindle) is a narrow, elongated form of lozenge (fig. 13) and was originally a conventional representation of a distaff, spindle or, possibly, bodkin. A little imagination will reveal the similarity to a sharp instrument piercing a ball or skein of wool; and here we have the operative word "piercing." The Percies took their name from a village in Normandy, called Percè, because it was situated in a glade or clearing, "pierced" through the forest.

There are many hundreds of these "canting" coats and a very eminent authority on Heraldry has expressed the opinion that a proper study of the earliest coats of arms, in the light of a knowledge of Middle English, Norman-French and Latin would reveal many more than are, at present, suspected.

Only lack of space prevents the enumeration of more examples of this typical mediaeval device but there is one, which is (or should be) known to all good Cheshire people; the coat of Delves



of Doddington, *argent, a chevron gules, fretty or* (red chevron with gold fret or trellis) *between three delves sable* (black) (fig. 14). Non-Cheshire writers usually describe these "delves" as conventionalised spades, lacking the handle-sockets, but Ormerod says they represent turves. The interest of this coat, however, lies less in the "delves" than in the chevron because this was one of the augmentations granted, after the battle of Poitiers, by Lord James Audley to his four famous Cheshire Squires; Delves of Doddington, Dutton of Dutton (fig. 3), Hawkestone of Wrinchill and Fouleshurst of Crewe.

The story, as told by Froissart, is almost too well-known to quote but, briefly, Lord Audley had made a vow to be the foremost knight on the English side or to die on the field; accordingly, he asked the Prince's permission to place himself in the forefront of the army, where he fought with great distinction all day and then lay down under a hedge, dangerously wounded. After the battle, the Black Prince, after enquiring for Sir James Audley, had the knight brought before him on a litter, embraced him and granted him a yearly revenue, for life, of 500 marks, a large sum, all of which Lord Audley divided among the four squires, saying that they had always served him faithfully and to them belonged the credit of the day. He, also, granted to each of them the right to add to his shield part of his (Lord Audley's) own coat, *gules, fretty or*, (a plain red shield, with gold, interlacing trellis) (fig. 15), which the Audleys derived from their feudal overlords, the Verduns, of whom the Audleys were, probably, a cadet branch and who bore exactly the opposite, viz. *or, fretty gules*.

In this article technical language has been kept to a minimum, having been introduced in such a way as to be self-explanatory, for the benefit of the reader with little or no previous knowledge of Heraldry. Future articles will deal with the technical jargon of the subject to show that it is really quite simple and eminently practical. Meanwhile, this little article will have achieved its object if a few readers are inspired to discover for themselves some of the heraldic "treasure trove," in which this county is so rich. Not having made a special study of "canting" coats, myself, I cannot call to mind a Cheshire example quite as obscure as that of Percy but I feel sure there must be one, somewhere—probably several. May I wish you "Good Hunting?"

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#### EDITORIAL NOTES

The History Committee of The Cheshire Community Council desire it to be known that authors alone are responsible for opinions and statements which are made in their articles.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

# The Pattern of Settlement in East Cheshire

by PAULINE F. BROOKES, M.A.

**R**URAL settlement in Cheshire is largely dispersed. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalisation in the most prosperous parts of the county, namely the Dee Valley, parts of Wirral, and again in the Weaver Valley. Occasional examples may be found in East Cheshire but in almost every case the nucleations are small.

Settlement forms are a reflection of geographical conditions, cultural traditions and agricultural economy and in the light of these factors we will trace the growth of rural settlements in the eastern part of the county.

Cheshire, lying on the edge of the Saxon Kingdom of Mercia was essentially a transition County between the zone of nucleated settlements and associated two and three field systems of Eastern and Central England, and the Western parts of England and Wales where dispersed settlement associated with the Celtic system was the rule. Cheshire thus felt the impact of both, but owing to the primitive vegetation of woodland, forest and marsh which covered a large part of the County, colonisation and permanent settlement was late and was modified by this environment.

These early influences are apparent in the present day pattern and many characteristics can be traced back to traditional modes of settlement in the colonisation phase, and to systems of land tenure which have long since disappeared.

Let us look at some of these early influences and see how far they are responsible for what we see to-day in rural Cheshire.

The physical environment is a positive factor which cannot be removed or destroyed, and can only be altered and adapted within certain limits to man's use. Relief and rock type, soils, water supply and natural vegetation have all exercised a profound influence on settlement throughout the process of colonisation. The primitive vegetation cover was an all-important factor in the location of the original settlements, for early colonisers had not the superior equipment and knowledge which was to be available later for the clearance of forests and drainage of marshes.

East Cheshire is an area of undulating lowland rising from the Weaver Valley to the Pennine foothills where relief is more diversified, and culminating in the upland of the Pennines where heights of 1500 feet are reached.

The lowland zone is composed of Triassic strata overlain by a thick covering of superficial deposits. This lowland is diversified as a result of stream action and glaciation, and terminates abruptly at the Pennine foot where it gives way to a series of

gently sloping ridges, broken into scarps by steep sided valleys which dissect the Pennine upland. In the Pennine zone, where the physical control is strongest, man's utilisation of his environment may be seen in the occurrence of stone walls and stone built houses, whereas the lowland area shows a pattern of hedged fields and brick built dwellings. The sparser population of the hill country reflects the poverty of the soil and the bleak environment. The few settlements there are favour sandstone sites in the more sheltered valleys.

In the lowland the sandy sites have been selected for human habitation since they were originally covered by more open woodland than the boulder clay and offered better facilities for communication and a clearer space for dwellings. South of Congleton, the villages of Astbury, Moreton and Rode Heath cling to a narrow band of sands trending to the South West. Settlement extended from these points, into areas of thicker woodland by a gradual process of clearing and draining. Buglawton, Nether Peover and Hurdsfield are notable examples of settlements sited on boulder clay. Soils and water supply are further determining factors in the nature and location of settlements. The whole of lowland East Cheshire has an ample supply of pure water from the sandstone rocks which underlie the drift, while the Pennine rocks afford an adequate supply in the uplands.

The variety of soil types within the lowland townships helps to explain the predominance of mixed farming in East Cheshire, while the open moorland of the Pennine hill lands accounts for the pastoral economy which is practised there.

Woodland was one of the chief obstacles to the early settlers, and as much of lowland Cheshire was still covered by forest it is not surprising that the earliest settlers favoured the more open area of upland. In fact, evidence of prehistoric settlement is frequent on the Pennine moorland. Settlements have persisted in these parts to the present day, and though there is no evidence of continuity from these early times, it is possible that successive waves of invaders continued to settle in the hill region through phases of evolution and devolution. The Romans seemed to find little difficulty in traversing the marshy wooded lowland country, and they appear to have been the first to make a major penetration into these hitherto unsettled areas. Two main Roman roads cross East Cheshire in a North-South direction, one from Manchester to Newcastle, the other branching from Watling Street at Altrincham to join the former a few miles north of Newcastle.

Thus the colonisation of the woodland began, a process which was to continue through later Mediaeval times to the present day when the modern settlement pattern emerges. To-day forest and woodland occur in a scattered distribution, in part the result



of artificial plantation, while remnants of the original woodland still remain as a heritage from the past. The progress was, however, slow. The development of agriculture, assarting of land and the expansion of settlement were retarded by the restrictions of the Forest Laws, and it was only by a gradual process that the diminution of woodland became possible.

These adjustments between man and his environment have continued thus since the earliest settlement phase. From a time when man's activities were largely conditioned by his physical environment we see the gradual conquest of the diversities of nature through centuries of toil, till the present day picture where man has emerged as the dominant and controlling influence.

Let us now look at the process of colonisation from prehistoric times to the present day. The early settlers, as we have seen, favoured the open uplands of the Pennines, and by the time of the Roman invasion of Cheshire most of the hill lands had been settled by nomadic pastoralists. The effect of the Roman conquest on settlement in the County was slight, since the new invaders were militarists, not agriculturalists. Their main contribution to this area, as indeed to most of England, was in the construction of roads.

The true colonisation phase really began with the coming of the English settlers, who laid the foundation of the present settlement pattern, and whose influence was to be felt in Cheshire for many centuries.

In Midland and Southern England the Anglo-Saxon settlement took the form of nucleated villages, each with its central green and church. A three field system of agriculture was associated with these settlements. Cheshire settlement is unusual since no large nucleations are to be found, and the question which is inevitably raised is why the true Anglo-Saxon nucleations are lacking in East Cheshire. The explanation probably lies in the fact that Cheshire was a border county for so long between the English Midlands and Wales. The clearing of woodland, however, fitted in with the traditional Anglo-Saxon mode of life, since they originated from the forested plains of Western Europe, and though colonisation was slow, permanent settlements were established at this time in the more favoured areas. There is ample evidence that these Anglo-Saxon settlements were associated with open field agriculture, but with a system very different from the three field system of Midland villages.

In contrast to this, the Celtic system of agriculture is more associated with scattered hamlets than large nucleations, and open arable fields were small. Allodial tenure of land is thus in the tradition of Welsh settlers, while English agriculture shows a persistence of commonalty holdings. In Cheshire, in this

central position, a fusion of the two types was inevitable and the resulting pattern which was set up may be expected to show characteristics of both well developed systems and traditions.

Since the Anglo-Saxons entered Cheshire from the South, it is most likely that townships in the Weaver basin may bear traces of former open fields. It is, in fact, in the broad lowland of this valley that suggestion of open fields is to be found.

In the central area of the Pennine foothills and on the moorland to the East there is no suggestion of open fields, and in many cases enclosure took place directly from the woodland state. From these pointers some conclusions may be drawn. A central area, much of which lay within the bounds of Macclesfield Forest, has no suggestion of open common land, but was probably enclosed as settlement expanded and as the woodland was cleared. Surrounding this zone lies a crescentic area, following the lines of the Weaver, Dane and Bollin valleys which possibly had some kind of open field system.

What kind of field system was in operation here? Since a fusion in settlement types is to be expected, then also a fusion of field systems seems likely. It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules on this question, as the evidence is so scanty and is not always a consistent pointer. It is certainly evident that the two or three field system as it was known in the English Midlands never reached East Cheshire, and the form of open field which was found there was probably a modified form of the one field system, due to the nature of the environment, the sparse population and the fusion of both Welsh and English forms of settlement which precluded a more perfectly developed system. It appears likely, too, that the open fields functioned imperfectly and enclosure took place at an early date.

To this pattern of early English settlement a new and alien element was soon to be added with the advent of Danish settlers from the East. They came from the Pennines and followed the lines of the valleys into lowland Cheshire. Place names in the Dane Valley give evidence of this infiltration. "Hulme," "booths," and the frequent occurrence of "riddings" and "doles" attached to the farms are undoubtedly of Danish origin. Several examples of Danish farm settlements are to be found in Davenport and Somerford Booths townships.

This is the picture of East Cheshire settlements as they were at the end of the primary phase of colonisation. Secondary settlements were to fill in this existing pattern and add still further to the complexity in East Cheshire.

After the Norman Conquest a new element was introduced into the settlement pattern of England with the imposition of a manorial system on the originally free rural communities. The

lord of the manor became an important factor in social organisation. Although a trail of destruction was brought by the Normans and many townships were laid waste by these invaders, the effects of the Conquest on the whole were beneficial, for population increased steadily for several centuries after this date. A colonisation of waste lands followed in many areas and this naturally limited the extent of the open fields. In East Cheshire encroachments were made into the lands of Macclesfield Forest, and by the mid-seventeenth century the remaining parts of the forest were granted away and enclosed.

Many settlements grew up with the assarting of land, and most of the Pennine townships held their land in copyhold tenure within the Forest of Macclesfield. These encroachments and enclosures marked the beginning of the break up of communal life.

An indication of the spread of settlement is given by the spread of churches in three major phases. The earliest phase may be said to represent the initial expansion from the original centres of population into hitherto unsettled and uncultivated lands. A second wave, on a smaller scale, took place mainly in the forest townships, while modern Churches have grown up in response to an expanding population with the advent of the Industrial Revolution.

The spread of villages during the next few centuries shows a growing prosperity. Figures for the Mize in 1453 show greatly increased values of land. Later still the growth of farming improvement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was marked by a phase of road building. Piecemeal enclosure of the land continued alongside and in the late eighteenth century enclosure of commons and waste took place in many East Cheshire townships.

The Industrial Revolution saw the growth of towns. Macclesfield and Congleton drew people to their rapidly expanding industries and in North-East Cheshire the dormitory suburbs of Manchester began to grow up.

It is evident though, that despite the advance of modern suburbia into Cheshire, the pattern of small hamlets amid scattered farms and small fields still dominates the landscape and bears witness not only to the present day response of human groups to a changing economic background, but also to the influence of past adjustments between man and his environment.

We have now looked at some of the factors, both physical and historical which have played such a vital part in the nature and location of the rural settlements in East Cheshire, and from these certain conclusions may be drawn.

Two major groups of settlement types emerge which may be termed Primary and Secondary.

### Primary Settlement Types

These were the earliest established settlements and they may be sub-divided into three groups:—

#### (a) THE MOORLAND SETTLEMENTS

Settlements on the Pennine moorland of Cheshire probably ante-date the Anglo-Saxon colonisation of the County, an inference which may be drawn from abundant place name and archaeological evidence, but more permanent dwellings were probably established in the Bronze Age. Few true villages have grown up in this area, and those settlements which do exist are sited in sheltered positions. They probably took the form of pastoral farms occurring in small groups or singly. The open moorland was probably used for grazing animals, and as time went on these pastures were enclosed as larger fields.

The townships of Rainow, Kettleshulme, Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough lie in this region, and each reflects the severity of the moorland topography and climate. The farms and hamlets are sturdily built of stone, square in form, and low in build with outhouses built close to, if not adjoining the farm. The open country to-day attracts a number of tourists from the industrial centres but this is only a superficial and recent development.

#### (b) ENGLISH VILLAGES OF THE FOOTHILL ZONE

There are only two true villages in this group and both show some trace of former open field arrangements. They are Prestbury and Astbury, and both are old ecclesiastical centres serving many minor outlying settlements. From the tithe map of Prestbury there is some suggestion of former open field arrangements in the "flatt" and "shoot" field names. However, early enclosure seems apparent from the irregular field shapes and if an open field did exist, it probably lay to the West and South-West of the village. To-day Prestbury retains many features of the old village, but a modern residential element has been superimposed which is quite incongruous in this village of old and picturesque dwellings.

Astbury had a similar history to Prestbury and grew up as the centre of a large parish. The nucleation here, though small, is quite distinct from the dispersed settlements so characteristic of East Cheshire.

#### (c) ENGLISH VILLAGES OF THE LOWLAND ZONE

In this group most of the villages are small, some not even worthy of being called villages since they have only a scattered form of settlement. These townships have some evidence of open field agriculture but they appear to have been very small,

and probably seldom comprised more than a few strips of land held in communal ownership. They are probably decadent forms of the English village in a wooded lowland area, which were less suited to land organisation than villages within the foothill zone.

Knutsford is the best developed of these villages, though there has been, of course, a great deal of expansion in recent times. It soon lost its rural character and to-day is a small but prosperous town, functioning as a residential suburb of Manchester as well as a market.

Lower Peover, Mobberley, Goostrey, Brereton and Wilmslow are similar in origin, though dispersal of dwellings here is more apparent. The old village of Wilmslow is now submerged under a veneer of modern residential suburbanism, since it has come into the outer sphere of influence of the industrial and commercial centre of Manchester.

### Secondary Settlement Types

These represent a general expansion from the older centres, or take the form of entirely separate settlements within the woodland zone. They may be sub-divided into four distinct groups:—

#### (a) THE DANE VALLEY SETTLEMENTS

The Dane Valley Settlements, as their name implies, are found along the River Dane, and show distinct traces of Danish penetration to this area. Somerford Booths is a good example of this type, as also are Church Hulme, Somerford Radnor, Hulme Walfield and Congleton, though differential development in later times has given rise to marked contrasts in the present day appearance. Field names of Danish origin are abundantly to be found on the tithe maps of these townships, especially close to the river. In some cases, as at Somerford Radnor, the township is dominated by a large estate and this may have led to the submergence of many Danish names which might have thrown further light on the original Danish character of the settlements.

#### (b) WOODLAND SETTLEMENTS OF THE FOOTHILL ZONE

This is one of the largest groups in East Cheshire, a fact which is not surprising when it is remembered that most of the foothills were covered with woodland in early times. Most of the settlements here would, therefore, tend to be secondary expansions from the earlier centres, or would be the results of individual enterprise in the colonisation of the woodland. A woodland environment encourages a dispersion of dwellings, and in all these townships there is a complete absence of any form of open field. Enclosure took place by encroachment and irregular fields surrounding the dwellings became common features of this region.

Typically dispersed in form, Bosley consists of scattered farms, each surrounded by their own fields. Similar features are to be

found in North Rode, Hurdsfield, Eaton and Moreton cum Alcumlow, though the latter two are distinctive in having large estates within the township boundary.

(c) WOODLAND SETTLEMENTS OF THE LOWLAND ZONE

Fundamentally this group has many features in common with the preceding one, the only major difference being that of a less diversified physical environment. The townships show features associated with woodland colonisation and late enclosure, with no trace of any early communal land arrangements. Dwellings are characteristically dispersed and few, if any, nucleations are to be found within the group. Marton, Siddington, Snelson, Allstock, Nether Peover and Great Warford, to mention only a few, are settlements of this kind.

(d) WOODLAND ESTATE SETTLEMENTS

This group has been classified separately as a certain number of East Cheshire settlements are dominated by a large estate. In environment and arrangement of fields they are fundamentally the same as the other woodland townships, but the existence of a large estate occupying a large proportion of the land causes a reduction in the area available for enclosure, settlement and agriculture.

Capesthorpe, Henbury and Over Alderley are townships which are largely owned by a large estate, and there are only a few farms and cottages on the fringe, which are either wholly or partly dependent on the estate.

Cheshire settlement is unique in many respects, a fact which may be attributed to geographical factors which have operated throughout history, necessitating a modification of traditional modes of life of the colonising peoples to a new environment.

The broad picture of rural settlement in East Cheshire is one of dispersion round a small number of Anglo-Saxon centres in the lowlands and foothills, with a sharply contrasted zone of moorland settlements on the Pennines

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## CESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS

LANCS. AND CESHIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY TRANSACTIONS, VOL. LXV, 1955:

TRADITIONAL DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN LANCASHIRE AND CESHIRE, by William Singleton, F.S.A.

CESHIRE BELLS, part v. by J. W. Clarke.

THE FORTY FIVE AND THE LOCAL RECORDS, by Rupert C. Jarvis, F.S.A. (This contains Cheshire material).

(continued on p. 33)

# Excavations, 1957

## CHESTER

### I. INFIRMARY FIELD

TOWARDS the end of 1956, a large area of the Infirmary Field, north of the Chester Royal Infirmary, was levelled mechanically in readiness for the building of a new Out-patient Wing. The removal of topsoil disclosed the full length of the south wall of a Romano-British building previously located by Mr. Graham Webster in 1951-2. In an effort to obtain the complete plan, further excavation was undertaken from December, 1956 to February, 1957.

As finally traced, the building proved to be rectangular, measuring 50 ft. from east to west and 40 ft. from north to south. It was divided internally by three walls running from north to south, the eastern and central divisions being further subdivided by cross-walls so as to form a total of six small rooms, while the western division remained clear. The walls were of poor construction and consisted of sandstone blocks roughly set in stiff clay; no floors to the rooms could be detected but some attempt had apparently been made to improve the drainage by laying down a layer of sand on the underlying natural clay. At various points, an occupation layer of black soil containing pottery, glass, metal, bones, etc., was noted on the surface of this sand layer. To the north of the buildings, a line of postholes was found, running from east to west, presumably the remains of a wooden fence; west of the building, a ditch running from north to south was located in 1951-2.

The purpose of the building is not altogether clear. To the south, beneath the present Infirmary building, lies the Roman cemetery explored by the late Professor Newstead from 1912 to 1917, but it is doubtful whether it is connected with this. It is more likely to be an isolated small house, as both the plan and the nature of the finds suggest; a few buildings of this kind apparently lay outside the western defences of the fortress, though the main concentration was to the east along the line of Foregate Street. The house seems only to have been occupied for a short time, as the pottery was entirely of late first century date, and it is tempting to think that the very wet conditions encountered by the excavators deterred the original occupants from staying there long. The rough construction of the walls suggests that these were only the stone sills for supporting a timber-framed superstructure.

## 2. 16 NORTHGATE STREET

In March, 1957, the premises known as Campbell's Old Light-cake Shop at 16 Northgate Street were acquired by Quaintways and work began on incorporating them into the main store. To the rear were noted three segmental stone arches carrying longitudinal beams which in turn supported transverse beams resting at their ends on stone corbels. The whole formed another example of the medieval cellars, probably of thirteenth century date, so common in the central area of Chester. Towards the street end the remains of a blocked door in the south wall were noted. At the rear of the cellar and carried on the stonework above the eastern arch was a timber-framed wall extending into the premises above, 12 Northgate Street Row. Stripping of recent plaster revealed the original wattle and daub infilling on which traces of painted decoration, including a human figure, could be seen. A full photographic and drawn record was made of all these discoveries.

## 3. NICHOLAS STREET

In 1953-4, a commercial excavation in the yard of Carlux Electrical Services Ltd., between Nicholas Street and Weaver Street, cut through the western defences of the legionary fortress and revealed traces of a rampart building behind (*Cheshire Historian* No. 4, p. 30). In April, 1957, the site was extended to east and south and excavations carried out ahead of building operations made it possible to complete the plan of the rampart building (of normal dimensions, 70 ft. by 24 ft.) and also located an interval tower, 21½ ft. by 17 ft., attached to the rear of the fortress wall, one of the series set at regular intervals along the defences.

## 4. AMPHITHEATRE SITE

In October, 1957, exploratory discussions took place between the Chester Archaeological Society, Chester Corporation and the Ministry of Works about the timing of the long awaited excavation of the northern half of the Roman amphitheatre. It was decided that, apart from the demolition of St. John's House, an essential preliminary was to establish by how much it would be necessary to move Little St. John Street, which skirts the amphitheatre, so as to give elbow room for excavation. With this in view, a series of four trenches was cut along the south side of the street on the assumed line of the outer wall of the amphitheatre. In each case the existence of the wall was proved, although little of the upper levels had survived. It is hoped that the preparatory work may be completed during 1958 and that the actual excavation may begin towards the end of the year.



## CHESHIRE

### 5. ROMAN COIN HOARD FROM AGDEN

In January, 1957, ploughing on Woolstencroft Farm, Agden (between Lymm and Altrincham) turned up the lower half of a Romano-British pot containing a hoard of 2451 *antoniniani*, bronze coins, sometimes with a silver coating, issued in large quantities during the third century A.D. Through the kindness of the owner of the land, Lord Stamford, his tenant, Mr. J. L. Booth, and the finder, Mr. S. Froehling, the coins were presented to the Grosvenor Museum, where preliminary cleaning and identification have been carried out. They range in date from the emperor Valerian (A.D. 254-260) to the emperor Probus (A.D. 276-282), suggesting that they were concealed in or shortly after the latter's reign. Numerous hoards of this period have been found in Britain; in the west piratical raids from Ireland about this time seemed to have caused alarm among the inhabitants and no doubt it was for this reason that this small fortune was hidden by its original owner, who did not survive to recover it. The point he chose was the corner of a small but prominent spur overlooking the Agden Brook, about half a mile before it joins the river Bollin. By choosing a definite landmark, he would presumably hope to find the coins again without difficulty when the time came for their recovery.

### 6. CASTLE HILL, OLDCASTLE

Castle Hill, Oldcastle, lies two miles south-west of Malpas and is a prominent spur overlooking the deep valley of the Wych Brook, which here forms the boundary between Cheshire and the detached portion of Flintshire. In July, 1957, the felling of trees revealed an impressive earthwork on Castle Hill, consisting of a small platform defended on the north by two deep transverse ditches and on the south, overlooking the stream below, by three similar ditches. With the encouragement of the owner, Mr. S. Dimelow, a small excavation was carried out in August; a section was cut in the bottom of one of the northern ditches and trial trenches dug in the platform on the summit. Unfortunately, these yielded no evidence of date or structural remains, and the purpose of the earthwork remains an enigma. It is possible that the valley of the Wych Brook formed a covered approach to the *border of England and Wales and that the earthwork was intended to bar this route against cattle-raiders and other marauders.* Its date is uncertain and it may belong either to the Dark Ages before the Norman Conquest or to the early medieval period.


F. H. T.

### EDITOR'S NOTICE

The series "The Archaeologist in the Field" will be continued in the next issue.

# Inquest on Henry Dodding

by JOSEPHINE L. REID

N 27th June, 1663, an inquest was held before the Chester Coroners, Richard Harrison and John Poole, and a jury of seventeen, on the mortal remains of Henry Dodding. The final verdict of that inquiry, signed and sealed, records that he had died on the previous day of a fever and other infirmities, and by no other cause.

On looking further into the Chester archives, however, five other draft inquests and a number of examinations of witnesses<sup>1</sup> come to light, which suggest that there may have been a more direct reason for his death than that officially ascribed. One of these draft inquests relates that Henry Dodding died as a result of being thrown from his horse whilst riding on the Roodce on 9th June, 1663. The other four present yet another version of the story. They state that Dodding died as a result of being thrown from the stage at Wrexham Fair, where he was demonstrating his wares, on 6th June, 1663. The man who threw him from that stage was no other than Roger Puleston, Esq., of Emral Park, Flintshire, High Sheriff of Denbighshire.

Henry Dodding may indeed have died as a result of falling from his horse on 9th June, but he was apparently again on the stage at Wrexham Fair on 11th June for 2 hours. It seems more probable therefore that he died from the bruises received of Roger Puleston, and that the latter, not wishing to stir up a scandal around himself, tried to hush matters up. It is significant that none of the Denbighshire witnesses mentions Puleston as being present when Dodding came off the stage, but he must surely be the "Gentleman" referred to in the examinations of these witnesses. The fact that there are the five draft inquests, on which the jury could not, or would not, agree, for they are marked "Ignoramus," also suggests that a person as influential as the Sheriff of Denbighshire may have brought pressure to bear which resulted in the final non-committal verdict. Finally, the most telling remark of all is perhaps to be found in Anne Burrough's statement that Dodding's sister "said shee was willing to take a summe of money of the Sherriffe to end the businesse."

The reason for the Sheriff's provocation at Wrexham would doubtless be the sight of Dodding demonstrating his wares upon the stage there. These would be medical cures and remedies of a dubious nature, for he was by occupation a *pharmacopola*, that is, a quack or empiric. At this period, the mid-seventeenth century, most medical treatment was still a mixture of a little knowledge, a belief in magic, and a fair proportion of luck. However, the start of serious scientific experiment had begun, and man was awakening to the vast expanse of knowledge which

awaited him in this field. The art of surgery had been steadily progressing for a century, but that of medicine was hampered by the humoral doctrine, of blood, choler, melancholy, and phlegm, which still held sway. Henry Dodding is himself several times described as being a "malancholy" man.

There were, by this time, four types of medical men, each of which is represented in the inquest on Henry Dodding. In 1518 the College of Physicians had been founded, and in 1540 the Barber-Surgeons Company had been incorporated. In these two bodies was vested the duty and monopoly to examine and grant licences to those who wished to practise as doctors and surgeons, except if they were graduate physicians of Oxford or Cambridge, when they needed no such testimonial. At this period, however, the study of medicine at English universities was not very fruitful, and the most renowned centre for it was Padua University. Perhaps this fact had some bearing on the presence in Chester of the foreign doctor, Giovanni Battista Quarenten. The third branch of medical men was that of the apothecaries or druggists, who were officially approved of by the College of Physicians and the Barber-Surgeons Company, perhaps because they offered no rivalry to them and merely performed the functions of a modern dispensary or chemist's shop.

Lastly there were the empirics, such as Henry Dodding, who were held in high esteem by the majority of folk, rich and poor alike, and not as rogues and vagabonds as they were to be a century later. These quacks journeyed across the country visiting markets and fairs. Their learning, which had been passed down from the leeches of Saxon times, was based on a knowledge of astrology and of the properties of the herbs, and how the one worked upon the other, and in ministering "herbs, roots and waters" according to their "cunning, experience and knowledge."

There was still, too, a general belief that healing was a matter of magic. In 1681 Elias Ashmole writes in his diary, "I took early in the morning a good dose of the Elixir and hung three spiders about my neck and they drove my ague away." Although the concoctions which the empirics sold as cures and salves were foul, if not actually harmful, so also were the potions and powders sold by the approved apothecaries. Charles II, in common with many others of his day, firmly believed in the benefits to be derived from 'spirit of skull,' which he distilled in his own laboratory. This was a powder made of ground skull bone, and was the last remedy administered to him in his final illness. Another remedy extensively used at this time was mummy, usually prepared in the form of a tincture, a treacle, an elixir or a balsam. Mummy itself was administered in the form of powder, and is quoted in a list of drugs in 1685 at 5s. 4d. a pound. This gruesome remedy is said to be still sold in the drug shops of the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, but is very costly.<sup>2</sup>

Here follows now the sad, but lively, tale of the death of Henry Dodding as told in the words of its witnesses<sup>3</sup>

The examination of John Douty of Bridgnorth in the County of Salop, corvisor. "Upon Fryday the fifth day of this instant June hee . . . was present with the decedent Henry Dodding upon a stage in Wrexham . . . betwixt foure and five of the clocke in the afternoone. And hee . . . then saw Puleston Esq., highe Sherriffe of the county of Denbighe, come upon the stage and drew his rapier and swore 'God damm mee you rogues, I will kill you,' and thereupon made two passes with his rapier soe drawne att the said Henry Dodding, who thereupon desired the said sherriffe to bee civill for that they had the Kinges Majestie's licence for what they did. But the said Mr. Puleston made a third passe with his said rapier att . . . Henry Dodding. And this deponent did then in defence of the said Henry Dodding tripp up the heeles of the said Mr. Puleston, and thereupon two men fell upon this deponent whose heels hee tript up alsoe, and immediatley thereupon came upon the stage there a great company of men. And . . . Mr. Puleston togeather with two or three others whose names hee knowes not did throw . . . Henry Dodding from of the stage downe to the street. And Henry Dodding did complaine the next morneing that hee was crushed and bruised by the fall hee had by being cast of the stage as aforesaid."

The examination of Ellinor Knowlesley of the City of Chester, spinster. She "saw Mr. Puleston with a rapier drawne in his hand and making a mocion therewith towards the said Henry Dodding. And thereupon John Danty [sic] . . . tooke hold of the saide Mr. Puleston saying 'Will you kill my master? You shall kill mee first!'; but this deponent saw no thrust given.

The examination of Randle Sargeant of the City of Chester, draper. He "saw a gentleman who hee heard was the Sherriffe of Denbigheshor make a passe or two with a drawn sword or rapier att Henry Dodding, then beeing upon a stage att Wrexham, and shortly after hee saw the said Henry Dodding and a Gentleman tumble of from the said stage, and as hee conceived there was a drawne sword or rapier betweene them."

The examination of John ap John Gething of Sutton in the county of Denbigh, yeoman. He "was att Wrexham, and seeing some stirr upon the stage there, hee saw Henry Dodding comeing of the stage and slipping of the ladder comeing downe, a Gentleman received him in his armes soe that hee had noe fall there that could doe him any hurt att all."

The examination of Elias Preston of Wrexham, barber surgeon. He was present at Wrexham "when Henry Dodding deceased came of the stage, who missing the stepp fell upon a Gentleman's shoulder. And this deponent beeing behind the Gentleman, tooke the said Henry Dodding by the arme, hee saying 'O my capp, my capp, I did not know it was the sherriffe. And . . . that afterwards, to witt the 11th of June, the said Henry

Dodding came to Wrexham againe and was upon the stage about two houres, and was then as well in health as att any time dureing the time of his, this deponent's knowledge of him, wich was for about six weekes before. And... comeing to Chester and hearing the said Henry Dodding not beeing well, hee went to see him. And feeling his pulse and by other symptons perceived that hee was in a feaver, and this deponent asking whether hee had any particular paine, hee answered noe, and further said that Maloncholy was the cause of his distemper."

The examination of Eustace Crew of Wrexham, apothecary. "On the 24th day of June hee was with Elias Preston att Chester seeing the said Henry Dodding, and deposeth to the same effect with him concerning the passages there."

The examination of George Harvye of the City of Chester, bricklayer. "Upon wedsay in Whisunweeke hee, this deponent, beeing upon the Roodee did see Henry Dodding, since deceased, ride upon a horse, and one Jacob Hall on another horse, who did both ride full speede running a race there as hee conceived. And, neare the turning of the last pole, Henry Dodding and the horse hee rid on fell quite downe, and shortly after hee gott on horsebacke againe and rid towards the Watergate."

The examination of David Evans of the City of Chester, blacksmith. "That the day in the precedent examinacion mencioned, hee saw the above named Henry Dodding fall of a horse in running of a race upon the Roodee."

The examination of John Walker of the City of Chester, blacksmith. "Upon the ninth day of June last hee saw Henry Dodding, since deceased, then rideing a race about the Roodee. And neare the turneing att the last pole, hee and the horse he ridd on fell downe; and hee gott againe upon the same horse, and rideing up towards the Watergate, this deponent heard the said Henry Dodding say that hee had a pittiful fall there, and had hurt his backe."

The examination of Thomas Morris of the City of Chester, blacksmith. Henry Dodding sent for him several times, "and upon Wednesday last hee tould this deponent that hee had a bruise, but thought it strange that hee could not find out where it was. And this deponent the day after moved the said Henry Dodding to forgive Mr. Puleston who had hurt him, as this deponent had heard. And the said Mr. Dodding answered and said 'I cannot'."

The deposition of Frances Mason, wife of William Mason of the City of Westminster, gent., and sister of Henry Dodding. She received a letter from her brother saying, "he had received an affront by a Gentleman, who as shee hath heard was Puleston Esq., who is Sherriffe of Denbighshire. And that the said Henry Dodding was soe hurt that he was in danger of death" and she

“came to him att Chester upon Wednesday night last and found her brother much distempered, and hee often cryed out ‘the Lyon, that one lyon’.”

The examination of Anne Lambert, wife of Laurence Lambert of Dublin in the kingdom of Ireland, gent. “Upon Thursday the eleaventh day of this instant June the said Henry Dodding did complaine to this deponent that hee had had abuse att Wrexham and was ill hurt and bruised, and shewed this deponent a bruise upon his short ribbs and another on his backe, saying hee found himselfe much distempered thereby. And shortly after takeing a purge the same did not worke well with him, and another day after hee tooke a purge and a vomitt which did worke well with him, and there came from him with his excrement bloode, whereby shee conceives hee was crusht inwardly.”

The examination of Ann Burroughes, wife of Edward Burroughes of the City of Chester, innholder. She heard Henry Dodding say “that hee had bin beaten att Wrexham, but complained not of any hurt hee had then; but about six daies after, the said Henry Dodding did complaine that hee had a grievous fall of a horse att the Roodee. And upon Saturday the 13th of June the said Henry Dodding said to this deponent ‘I feare I must bee sick,’ and that evening hee began to bee sick; and she further saith that hee tooke much phisick, and confessed hee was a very malancholy man, and he was a very weak and diseased man as shee conceives. And further saith that Mrs. Mason said shee was willing to take a summe of money of the Sherriffe to end the businesse.”

The examination of Giovanni Battista Quarenten, doctor in physic. It is his opinion that “Henry Dodding by his owne relacion and by the relacion of diverse others had received bruises att Wrexham . . . done by Puleston Esq. and others there, by relacion as aforesaid. And this deponent doth verily beleeve that the said bruises were the occasion of his death.”

The examination of Robert Murrey of the City of Chester, barber surgeon. On the 26th June he visited Henry Dodding “who was then very ill in a feaver, and hee inquired what had bin given him or what hee had taken. And the said Doctor tould this deponent that hee had taken things by his owne direcion which did not worke with him, but that afterwards hee had administered phisick to him which wrought well with him; but this deponent conceived him not likely to recover. And doth beleeve that hee dyed of the feaver, and not by reason of any bruise that he knowes of.”

#### NOTES

- 1 Chester City Archives, Coroners' Inquests/11/4, and Mayor's File 1662-3.
- 2 C. J. S. Thompson. *MAGIC AND HEALING* (1947).
- 3 The original spelling has been retained, but modern punctuation inserted.

# Norse Settlements in Wirral

by LEONARD WHARFE, M.A.

THE story of the Scandinavian settlement in Wirral has been fully told.<sup>1</sup> A group of Norsemen expelled from Dublin in 902 received a grant of land near Chester from Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians.<sup>2</sup> This recorded instance was probably but one of many grants made between 900 and 910 when the Norse, including a few Danes and Irish, established colonies, each with its own leader, in Wirral, around Chester, and in the Gowy valley.

Place-names remain as the most obvious proof of their settlement. Most striking is the group of village names, many ending in '-by,' in North Wirral, a clustering which may suggest a feeling among the immigrants of being foreigners and isolated. The formation of the subordinate Hundred of Caldý,<sup>3</sup> a unique territorial unit within the Hundred of Wirral, emphasizes this separation. The problem this poses for the geographer is clear. What was the scale and character of their settlement and how may its influence be seen among the farms and fields at the present day? Is a Scandinavian place-name associated with distinctive settlement types?

The unit of settlement in the Norway from which these people originally came was the isolated farm owned by one or two families.<sup>4</sup> Cultivated land lay close to the dwelling but there was no need for rotation or fallow because of the abundance of manure; livestock played a prominent part in the economy, herds often spending the summers on upland pastures or shielings. Where the Norse colonized virgin land in Britain, as in the central Lake District, the distinctive pattern of main settlement (-by or -baer) at the entrance to the dale succeeded by a summer pasture (-erg) further inland was reproduced as in Norway.<sup>5</sup> Even on the southern lowlands of Cumbria, where the terrain is more like the low hills and wooded slopes of Wirral, the Norse settlements with their scattered farms, irregular enclosed fields, and absence of former open arable fields, are quite distinct from those of Anglian foundation.

It should be remembered that the Norse in Wirral had been in Ireland where small villages and scattered farms, sometimes with open arable, were the rule. To distinguish these features from any survivals in Wirral of pre-Anglian habitation would be difficult.

Rural settlement in this peninsula of west Cheshire is not obviously like that of the central Lake District or Norway. Small compact villages are mingled with dispersed farms; farm densities are quite high and there was little open heath land left

even in the nineteenth century to be enclosed by Act of Parliament.

The compact villages are well formed, often with a central church, like Bidston, or green, like Willaston, and they are the typical settlement unit in this area as in all the better settled areas of Cheshire.<sup>6</sup> Eastham, for example, is gathered round a central elevated church and small green. The sandstone cottages and larger half-timbered farms in the village centre are grouped on the edge of a broad expanse of sandstone while the many fields to the north bearing the name 'Townfield' and the 'Townfield Lane' leave little doubt as to the former existence of open arable, certainly never organised as a three-field system but one involving co-operative ploughing. The Eastham community had its woodland too and the Townfield Lane gradually widens beyond the old open field into Carlett Wood. The many enclosed fields to the west mark the site of old pastures and heath but water meadow is significantly lacking.

The salient characteristics of Eastham are reproduced many times over in Wirral. Ledsham, Moreton, Oxtan, Little Stanney, Storeton, Woodchurch, Frankby, Caldby, and Irby are essentially of the same type, with compact form, former open field, meadow, and common pasture. Irby, sited on a sandstone hill like Eastham, has a Scandinavian name which also bears witness to the Irish element.<sup>7</sup> It is a small straggling village amid the maximum concentration of Norse names and in earlier times it had a large open field to the north-east where are to be found the characteristic 'Townfield' and 'Flat' names.<sup>8</sup> Heath and enclosed pastures lay within the township and, apart from its less perfect nucleation, Irby is akin to Eastham.

The elements common to all the communities are heath, pasture or meadow, and arable. Heath, for summer grazing, soon ceased to be commonable in Wirral and records of enclosure begin in the early Middle Ages, but hill pastures must always have been limited in area because of the small amount of suitable land. More extensive were the meadows for hay and stubble grazing after cutting, fields usually situated on boulder clay soil and typically called 'heys.' The extensive, heavy, damp boulder clays, broken in places by exposures of Triassic sandstone and glacial sands, provided an almost ideal diversity of soils for the early village communities. Water meadow on alluvium must have been restricted to the marshier fringe along the Irish Sea coast and the Gowy valley for few Wirral streams have developed flood plains. The greatest expanse of alluvium is in the north and here fields sometimes bear the name 'Town Meadows,' which at Larton and Moreton remained divided into quilllets or unfenced strips even in the middle nineteenth century. This strongly suggests communal utilization. Long narrow meadows at Woodchurch and Landican may be further survivals of the system in



the field boundaries. The use of Scandinavian names for meadows in the north is more persistent than with other types of field: 'carr' at Saughall Massie, Moreton, and Landican, 'holme' at Bidston, Moreton, Prenton, and Oxton, 'thwaite' at Bidston. Though water meadow is not an essential characteristic of townships in the Scandinavianized area, it seems to have been well utilized when present there.

Open arable was widespread in Wirral in the Middle Ages, the rule rather than the exception. One field divided into 'shotts' or furlongs and subdivided into 'doles' or strips seems to have been most usual, the whole being tilled by co-aration but the parts owned severally by the time of the first references from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A second field is sometimes suggested by field names but there is no reason to believe that a two- or three-field system of the Midland type existed.<sup>9</sup> Suggestions of strip cultivation in association with Norse settlement are occasionally to be found in the Lake District but there is no obvious correlation between villages with Scandinavian names and those which worked Townfields in Wirral. Irby, Frankby, Thurstaston, and Caldby all had well developed open fields, very similar to those of Eastham or Ledsham and in no way clearly distinguishable from the latter. There is no clear evidence of a distinctively Norse type of open field.

It was with the break-down of the open field system that the idea of the village became obsolete. Dissatisfaction with the restrictions of co-operative cultivation, soil exhaustion through perpetual cropping of the arable, and the progressive enclosure of the waste encouraged farmers to break communal ties and set up homesteads away from the village. Slowly dispersed farms appeared throughout Wirral.

Scattered habitation is as widespread as the nucleated village; much may be medieval or later in origin but some is undoubtedly older. Occasionally there are isolated farms or farm clusters which afford no evidence of an earlier communal organization and no proof of open fields. Such are Woodbank near Shotwick, Pensby, or Arrowe. Before the spread of modern house building, Pensby township was composed of two separate farms, each sited on a sandstone outcrop, each independent, and each working its own block of fields. The name itself (a Celtic-Scandinavian hybrid) and the fields within it (Thistly Field, Wanton Dale, Dale Field, and Intake) hint at Norse affinities. The higher sandstone heaths and grasslands of the line of hills along the Dee flank, on which Pensby is situated, would be natural attractions to these pastoralist peoples.

Arrowe is now a park and almost all evidence of its earlier character is lost, only a few fields and scattered farms remaining on the west. Its name, which also occurs in the Lake District

south of Coniston, is derived from a Gaelic word imported by the Norse from Ireland meaning an 'erg' or summer pasture. Its site, astride the brow of a spur, is typical of such shielings. With Pensby, it points to a strong association of at least some isolated farms with Scandinavian settlement.

Four conclusions might be drawn from this brief survey of the rural settlements of Wirral. First, the characteristic Norse features of the Lake District and Norway are not reproduced as simple patterns but, if at all, mingled with alien forms. Second, Scandinavian place-names are not exclusively associated with dispersed habitations, nor, when linked to a compact village, with any distinctive features of field organization or land tenure. Third, evidence of former open arable fields is strong and widespread in Wirral, stronger indeed than might be expected with settlements of Norse foundation. And last, there is more convincing proof of Norse development of the grazing potentialities both of hill lands as summer pastures and of marshlands as meadow. Undoubtedly the Scandinavians settled in Wirral but their contribution to the settlement pattern was not sufficiently marked to distinguish the area, except in place-names, from the rest of Cheshire.

An explanation of this limited influence may lie in the conditions in Wirral in the tenth century. It is hard to believe that the Norse settled in unclaimed and unattractive land, creating entirely new villages and farms. Perhaps the Danish army under Håstein, which visited Cheshire in the last decade of the ninth century, had plundered the area, looted farms, and put opposition to the sword; even so, vestiges of the inhabitants, their stock, and crops would survive until the Norse arrived. These inhabitants were derived from a long period of pre-Scandinavian colonization. The peninsula had early enjoyed a slow but steady infiltration of British or Celtic peoples, some perhaps Welsh, whose influence can be read in the place-names: Liscard, Noctorum, Landican, Pen(sby).<sup>10</sup> By the end of the seventh century, Anglians too had migrated in, setting up their '-ingtons,' '-tons,' '-hams' amid the heaths and woodland, steadily increasing the area under the plough. The small compact villages of Wirral with their 'Townfields,' commons, and pastures probably owe much to these two groups of settlers. It would be surprising if, with the practised eye of farmers, they had left the warm, easily tilled, sandy soils in the north of the peninsula untouched when they sought them so eagerly over the rest of west Cheshire.

The Scandinavians must have moved into an area whose farming and settlement potentialities had already been realized. The Danes did not completely displace the English in Lincolnshire, for example; nor did they attempt to remodel the agrarian pattern there.<sup>11</sup> In Wirral, it would seem that they either took

over the existing settlements, especially if the area had been ravaged, or merged with the peoples already in occupation; their most distinctive contribution, natural for pastoralists, was the use of exposed hills as summer pastures and lowland alluvium as water meadow.

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continued on p. 48

## Did Jason Find The Old Lace— and The Arsenic?

By G. NULTY

“THIS is arsenic and old lace, cousin—but without the arsenic . . .” That was the half-forgotten comment that stirred my memory.

I took the charred book from my small son who clambered about the rockery, and saw where I had also written in it: “For Jason Ord, Knutsford, October, 1944.”

The book was Mrs. Gaskell’s “Cranford.” The comment was Jason Ord’s. And that day on the sunlit lawn I saw him again, half-smiling as he drawled reflectively “Waal, that’s a co-lossal understatement . . . Hist-ory is my subject—Cousin.”

“D’you follow the style of Miss Winsor,” I asked “or do you merely open tombs—Cousin?”

The day Jace Ord arrived by bomber from his native Idaho he had explained the “cousin” claim, to his own satisfaction at least. It seemed that after Sam Wynne left Malpas (about 1830) his most notable achievement was that in course of time he became the mutual great-grandfather. “And so” (said Jace) “we’re related. See—Cousin?”

However, months later I got some notes in the post to prove Jace Ord had developed a theory. He had discovered a book called “The Memoirs of the Rev. Harry Grey, 5th Vicar of Knutsford.” So different were the cleric’s experiences in contemporary “Cranford” that Jace believed the book was written as a direct reply to Mrs. Gaskell’s classic.

He wrote: “If ‘Cranford’ could be called ‘Victorian Knutsford,’ then Harry Grey’s book should be titled ‘Don’t you believe it’.”

But there, of course, is the fault. Sweet-and-pretty “Cranford” was not intended to portray Knutsford, but is a novel based on a few people in a certain secluded circle. Nevertheless, there is a widely-held impression that Knutsford was just like Mrs. Gaskell’s picture. That is why I like Jace Ord’s theory . . .

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Harry Grey must have seemed a natural choice for Knutsford. He was well-connected, his uncle being the 5th Earl of Stamford, his mother the daughter of Ralph Leicester, of Toft.

Grey refused the rectorship of Ashton-under-Lyme because of the Act of Uniformity, and in 1809 preached his first sermon at Knutsford the occasion being the celebrations to mark the 50th year of George III’s reign.

If Grey was accused of being a "new broom," the town certainly needed the treatment. He found the parish "disorganised," and his first act was to dismiss the curate. He ignored the ill-manners of some, particularly the opulent Methodist grocer, a man of some prominence in the community who referred to the new Vicar's youthful looks with a scornful : "What have they sent Grey's lad here for ?"

Then came the Sunday School re-organisation. Grey records that on his first visit he saw a youth belabouring the heads and shoulders of all who went in. At the girls' school where the teacher "loved a little brief authority" he wrote a prayer for opening the school. This was approved by the teacher until she came to the part where the teacher was mentioned. And this she found "humiliating."

The Parish Church choir was the next subject for reformation. Grey arrived to find a wheelwright with a fiddle providing the music, the fiddler teaching six boys to "scream at the tops of their voices" each Sunday. The organist had thought it beneath him to interfere in preventing the din, but Grey persuaded him to play loudly to drown the noise if it got too loud.

A few girls were brought into the choir. The "Tate and Brady" words were discarded. Then came the biggest problem in the new Vicar's plan.

"Everything about the congregation" (he wrote) "provided a death-like appearance." Those present would lounge about, sit, stand, or gossip at will during the services. Few of the congregation held books. It outraged Grey's keen sense of the devout—and his tidy mind also.

At a dinner in the town the Vicar mentioned this subject to his neighbour, a draper and banker (no doubt a Mr. Siddeley), who in turn mentioned it to his neighbour.

It is perhaps an indication of the goodwill Grey had at that period that his almost casual remark had an effect he describes as "magical." The improvement was immediate. Order replaced the chaos at church services.

It took a good deal of courage to tackle what Grey realised was Knutsford's biggest single evil. He decided to clean up the drunken brawling and riotous behaviour which on Sunday evenings made the streets unsafe for women.

Encouraged by the co-operation he had received from leading townfolk in making church services more devotional, he enlisted their support in this problem. Notices were printed stating the church bell would be rung at five minutes before nine each Sunday evening. Then with the constables and churchwardens he would visit each hostelry to make sure drinking had finished when the bell stopped at 9 o'clock.

He records that "much courtesy" was shown him at the 15 public houses he visited. He met only one difficulty, that in

the taproom of the principal inn, where there was some organised resistance. Grey states that by "peaceful persuasion" he got two of the ringleaders to go home. The rest was easy. And Knutsford streets were more peaceful—and safe—than they had been in living memory.

A curious character with whom Grey was friendly also appears in "Cranford." He was Rogier, a dancing master who held his classes at the George Inn.

Rogier had once heard a sermon by Whitfield and this, he said, had altered his life. He was ill and improvident, and Grey opened a subscription for him, but was forced to pay it to Rogier in periodic sums. His vagaries wearied the Vicar, but Rogier's enormous biblical knowledge, particularly his Old Testament history, was often a compensation.

It was Rogier who once hinted to Grey of the gathering storm. "Wait a little," said the dancing master, "and the devil will soon begin to rattle his chain..."

For Grey had lost friends. He was perhaps a little too strict, a little too unbending for that (most un-Cranfordlike) little town. Knutsford felt there should be a little more give and take in religion. If they came to church, why shouldn't he gamble at the races? That was the issue in an almost amoral community.

Card playing provides an example. It was a favourite amusement with the local squires, and card parties at the George or the Angel inns were two or three-day sessions.

Grey refused all their invitations. In return, the squires relaxed the early closing regulations for the taverns. He records that riot and disorder again became pronounced in the streets on Sunday evenings. In other ways, too, he observes he had "lost support."

There was at that time a patriotic organisation called "The Knutsford King and Constitution Club." From a minute book in Knutsford Public Library (to which it was presented by the Rev. R. V. H. Burne in 1926) the main aims were to raise money with which to pledge the king's health.

Each Whitsun, this club and other friendly societies attended a parish church service. A club member, ringleader in much of Grey's trouble, took it on himself to roar out the words of the National Anthem, with the lines "Confound their politics, frustrate their knavish tricks" repeated innumerable times as a chorus.

Grey was ill with worry and overwork. The "chorus master" also became ill and Grey attended him on his deathbed, recording that "he remained callous to the end."

Here Grey made his most serious error of judgement. He decided not to have the usual form of service said at the funeral and for it was reported to the Bishop. However, the Bishop had recently been appointed to another diocese and the request for an apology was not granted.

The incident caused many to cease attending the Parish Church, though Grey found he had made many new friends among dissenters. At a baptism of an infant the witnesses included a Quaker, a Methodist, an Independent and a Churchman. The Rev. James Turner, Independent Minister of Knutsford, was among those who offered Grey his friendship.

An estate had been bequeathed to Grey, but the will was cancelled in favour of his brother-in-law, Charles Mytton (or Thorneycroft), Rector of Eccleston. Soon afterwards, however, Grey inherited £5,000

His health failed and he was away from Knutsford, staying at Clifton, for nearly four years. Soon after his return his health broke down completely and he again went to Clifton.

His enemies at Knutsford forced his resignation on non-residence grounds, and the Bishop refused to renew his licence.

Grey died in 1860, aged 70. Almost his last act was the publication for private circulation of his memoirs of Knutsford.

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And Jace Ord? Well, I had given him the copy of "Cranford," and the wording inside the half-burnt cover helped to identify what remained of him after the plane crash in the Pacific....

I took the battered volume indoors, while the small boy yelled in a tantrum because he wanted it. He is only two. His name is Jason, also.

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## Fairy Ancestor for Some Cheshire Families?

**T**HE only topographer on record to claim he was descended from a fairy was named William Williams, which is perhaps a little disappointing. He lived in North Wales.

Admittedly, a far less fascinating discovery would have sufficed to turn me from my sadly slender notes on Welsh customs which have taken root in Cheshire. For Mr. Williams's fairy tale is much more interesting, as those Cheshire families who were unaware of their quaint ancestry will no doubt agree.

According to Mr. Williams, anyone whose name is one of the fairly common Cheshire variants of Pell, Pill, Pelling or Pilling will find the fairies which may be at the bottom of their gardens are in fact relatives. And for this startling news they should thank Penelope—or maybe only Mr. Williams.

William Williams wrote his book "Observations on the Snowdon Mountains and some Account of the Inhabitants" in 1764, but it was unpublished until 1802. He remarks on the race of people inhabiting the districts around the foot of Snowdon who "were formerly distinguished and known by the name "Pelling," and when he wrote, the name was not extinct.

Welsh fairies, unlike the mites of England and the "little people" of Ireland were always supposed to be of the same stature as mankind. This peculiarity was noted by the young farmer of Ystrad who (according to Mr. Williams) hid in a thicket to watch the fairies dancing on a moonlit meadow. As chance arose, he seized one of the fairy maids and took her home.

They were married and had a son and a daughter. The farm prospered until it extended to 5,000 acres.

It puzzled the farmer that his wife would not tell her name. He discovered it only by hiding in the same thicket and over-hearing the fairies talk of "our missing sister, Penelope."

The secret was out, but the farmer was given a kind of second chance (as someone once said farmers always are). Penelope warned him he must never strike her with iron, or she would have to leave him.

One day when trying to catch a horse the farmer threw a bridle. The metal part struck his wife and she disappeared for ever. Their children were in time called "Pellings," a corruption of Penelope.

Mr. Williams, a serious examiner of his countryside and its customs, hinted that Penelope was probably a gypsy. He also mentioned a suggestion that "Pellings" might be derived from "Ap Ellis." At the same time, he realised there was much more prestige in having fairy forbears, and did not try really hard to disillusion anybody, including himself.

For Mr. Williams concludes: "There are several opulent and respectable people who are known to have sprung from the Pellings. The late Lady Bulkeley was a descendant of this lady. The best blood in my own veins is this Fairy's."

G. N.

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# The Changing Scene in the Township of Higher Bebington, Wirral

## PART II.

by GRAHAM F. A. WILMOT

### 6. THE COMING OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

**T**HE long period from 450 to 1086 A.D. was an era of dark obscurity in British history. Yet it was a span of time probably the most important in our heritage. The fall of Rome and the withdrawal of the Roman legions from Britain was the prelude for the great struggles between the new Anglo-Saxon invaders and the Romano-British residents of the island. Battle ebbed and flowed for over three centuries. The later invasions of the Dane and Norsemen striking at the very heart of the newly-formed Anglo-Saxon<sup>21</sup> states added to the confusion for a further two centuries and the epoch was not ended until Normanisation set the island into a rigid feudal caste. Against the destructive backcloth of constant strife, was the constructive phase of settlement. It is in the Anglo-Saxon period that the story of nearly all the present English villages begins. The Anglo-Saxon invasion was not like its Roman predecessor a military occupation but a definitive and systematic settlement of the land. Old Celtic villages were abandoned as the Ancient Britons were driven back to the shelter of the highlands of Wales in the face of the determined Anglo-Saxons who came to clear the land for new settlements. The new invader began making determined attempts to clear the wood, drain the marsh and reclaim the moorland. A new system of economy began to take root. Settlements became integral communities with their bounds clearly defined from those of their neighbours.

Thus, a new era had dawned and it is in this period that the township of Higher Bebington first appeared historically. Practically nothing is known of what occurred in Wirral during this time except that the peninsula is presumed to have come into the Anglo-Saxon orbit after the battle of Chester in 613 when the Northumbrians separated the Britons of Lancashire and Cumberland from those of North Wales. Subsequent changes of the peninsula passing from Northumbrian to Mercian and one time even Wessexian control and the clash with the Norse invaders in the 10th century are the fragmentary recorded facts.<sup>22</sup>

Place names alone remain as a clue to this process of village formation. The name 'Bebington'<sup>23</sup> meaning 'the township or vill of Bebba's folk' alone remains to tell of the foundation of the townships of Higher and Lower Bebington. It is thought that 'Bebba' was a woman. The form of the name helps a great deal in fixing its date.

Anglo-Saxon place names indicate three separate phases of colonisation. The earliest period is exemplified by 'ing' names (e.g. Woking) telling how the early colonists formed themselves into folk groups under a leader. Woking is Wocca's 'ingas' or 'folk.' The formation of these groups into corporate communities with precise boundaries is indicated by "ington" names. The third and most common stage is represented by the earlier 'ham' or later 'ton' suffix to the place-names revealing a period of established Anglo-Saxon rule and a period of expansion from original settlements. The original folk groups had by then ceased to be important and 'tons' with a descriptive prefix were being created (e.g. in Wirral: Moreton, village in the moors, or Leigh-ton, village where leeks were grown).

Fixing the date of the settlement of Bebington cannot be performed with any degree of accuracy but an approximate date can be deduced. There are no 'ing' names in Wirral which date from the early colonisation from 450 to 600 A.D. while the complete lack of pagan names referring to ancient gods like Woden makes for a safe assumption that Wirral had become Christian at the time of the Anglo-Saxon penetration. 'Ington' names date from about 600 to 750 A.D., becoming progressively later in date from south to north England. Historically, the battle of Chester (613 A.D.) which separated the Celts of north-west England from those of North Wales appears to have opened the way for the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Wirral. The process of colonisation in the peninsula would not have been rapid considering its marshy and wild appearance at that time. In view of the evidence, it would seem most probable that Bebington was first settled by the new invaders between 700 and 750 A.D.

Bebington is one of the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlements in Wirral, the only other 'ington' names being Mollington and Puddington. The importance of the building stone on Storeton ridge would have been the prime factor for the choosing of Bebington as an early site. A major difficulty occurs in the fact that there is no evidence to show when Bebington was divided into the two townships of 'Higher' and 'Lower.' It is possible that both village sites were established at the same time, "Higher" on the leeward side of Storeton ridge and alongside the quarry with 'Lower' on the knoll of sandstone around the site of the present St. Andrew's Church. The early foundation of St. Andrew's built of Storeton stone points to the antiquity of "Lower" and the necessity of a community at "Higher" near the site of sandstone quarrying. Apart from this connection with building stone, there was little or no other link between the two townships. Historically each grew up separately and the persistence of 'Higher' and 'Lower' is an unsolved mystery. A much more likely name for Higher Bebington would have been Humlerston(e) or Humliston, owing to the many field names in the village site area with this root. The only physical connection between the

two villages in mediaeval times was along Kirket Lane (originally 'Kirkgate')—'gate' being Norse for a road.

The coming of the Norse in 901 A.D. from Ireland under Ingimund to the Cheshire and Lancashire shores led to the supremacy of Mercia being challenged and seriously threatened by a Norse-Danish meeting of forces in East Cheshire. The trouble for Mercia was eventually averted after many battles focused around Chester<sup>24</sup> and the Norse were driven back. Whatever may have happened during this strife, the Norse have recorded their presence in the peninsula by the many place names found in Wirral. From an original colony centred in north-west Wirral,<sup>25</sup> the Norse penetrated eastward<sup>26</sup> to the Mersey and southward to central Wirral.<sup>27</sup> Place name evidence indicates that the Anglo-Saxons of Higher Bebington were no strangers to the Norse for both the neighbouring townships of Tranmere and Storeton contain Norse place-name elements.<sup>28</sup> Within the township there is Bebington Rake (Town Lane) from Old Norse 'rak,' a sloping path, while 'Dale' (as in Hunstable Dale, Mardale) is derived from Old Norse 'dalr' or Anglo-Saxon 'dael' meaning a valley.

#### THE MEDIAEVAL SCENE

The geographical siting of the original township, the position of its boundaries and the field names, plus a few scattered documents, can alone tell of the economy of the mediaeval township of Higher Bebington. Domesday Book is silent on the subject.<sup>29</sup> Documentary evidence is extant only as far back as the 12th century and tells little of the economy and the way of life of the residents of the village. Salient facts can only be gained by inference.

The original village was almost certainly sited to the east of Storeton ridge in nucleated pattern around the area where the mill now stands. The site had much to commend it. Geologically the soil is drift free rendering a sandy soil immediately derived from the Keuper rock. Such a soil had the climatic advantage of warming up quickly and the economic attraction of being easily worked with the light, crude instruments. Further east the dark boulder clays prevent a settlement site because of their heaviness and capacity to retain water which results in the growth of dank vegetation. The Keuper rock had, in addition, the supreme advantage of providing an easily accessible supply of clear, hard water—an essential requisite in the foundation of a village.

Being on the east side of the ridge, the village was sheltered from storms and rain and the pine-capped summit assisted this process of protection by acting as a 'wind-break.' The Prenton ridge to the north acted as a buffer against northerly and north-westerly cold air-streams but to the south the land falls away gently giving the village site a southerly aspect. The quarry with its mediaeval workings on the west side of the ridge was within

easy reach and the ridge itself was an excellent look-out point. The view extends over to the Welsh Block whence perhaps anxious eyes were cast for fear of border incursions. To the east the panorama of the south-west Lancashire coast is in clear view.

Communications were provided by the road along the ridge giving easy access to Prenton and Oxton to the north, Tranmere to the north-east and Brimstage and Thornton Hough to the south-west. Another trackway (now Rest Hill Road) put the township in communication with the hamlets of Great and Little Storeton while there was doubtless a trackway along the line of Bebington Rake (Town Lane) providing a route to the Rock Park section of the township. Kirket Lane linked Higher and Lower Bebington.

What did the township look like in the mediaeval period from 1100 to the time of the enclosure movement? How did the men of Higher Bebington eke out a livelihood and what methods did they employ?

#### 1. THE EVIDENCE OF FIELD NAMES

The majority of the fields in the township are mapped and named in the Tithe Survey (1844) except in the Rock Park section where incidental documentary evidence has to take the place of a more complete survey. The names mark out certain sub-regions of the township as so many of them have faithfully recorded the type of soil and topography of the area. Three distinct sub-regions may be distinguished:—

(a) A Northern area of rough pasture lying to the north of a west-east line from Linkside to Old Chester Road. Heath Hay, Rough Hay, Pheasants Hay, Partridge Hay present a picture of a poor grazing area.

(b) A wide tract of good arable and meadow land south of the Linkside—Old Chester Road line stretching to Heath Road. In this area, names denoting rough grazing type of land are absent and field titles like Big Mow Field, Fat Meadow and Cow Pasture and the numerous 'crofts' (farmsteads) imply a better type of soil, a more luscious grass cover and arable land.

(c) A section of heath intermixed with conifers and bracken south of Bracken Lane and Heath Road as far as the apex of the southern boundary. The names of Gorsey Hey, Brackenwood, Bracken Lane and Heath Road give substantial present-day evidence of poor land and these are strengthened by the more ancient field names which constantly refer to heath, moor and birch. The heath and poorer vegetation is in places alleviated by better land as evidenced in Far Brandy Hay, Meadow, Croft, Croftons and Acres.

In Rock Park, evidence of field names is so scanty that it is difficult to draw any precise conclusions regarding its mediaeval appearance. The area south and east of the former Derby House (at the eastern end of Rock Lane West) appears as an area of

good arable land. Dacre Hill, on geological evidence and by the confirmation of the names 'The Hurst' and 'Hursts',<sup>30</sup> was well wooded.

The natural regions of Higher Bebington are an interesting commentary on the mediaeval self-sufficiency economy. In earlier mediaeval times, a village had to provide, to a greater or lesser degree, its own fuel, stone, water, food and clothing. Higher Bebington's bounds were well selected to meet these needs. Wells and springs abound in the sandstone basement rock, quarry stone was at hand, wood for fuel and building was present at Dacre Hill and Storeton ridge, while other field names reveal patches of other wooded areas. Wood Hey is a common name while Brandhurst Hay, Thorny Rean, Broomfield and Birchfield all record wood long since cleared. The very word 'field' originally meant a space cleared of its natural vegetation for agricultural purposes and it is reasonable to suppose that some of these 'fields' were denuded of trees while being cleared in mediaeval times.

To provide a balanced economy, a township required many varieties of soil and topographical types. In the township, goats could be grazed in the northern area of heavy boulder clay which gave rise to rough pasture, the central area of good arable land was the mainstay of the village's grain and dairy produce, numerous streams gave good meadow land (compare Big Mow Field and Fat Meadow) and swine could be fed in the wooded heathy area in the south-west of the township. A small strip of the Mersey sea-front gave early fishing opportunities to supplement the monotony of the village diet and the later lucrative ferry rights at both Rock Ferry and New Ferry.<sup>31</sup>

## 2. THE EVIDENCE OF THE FIELD SYSTEMS

Much has been written about field systems in Wirral and various theories have been advanced. Is there any evidence to throw light on the type of field system at work in mediaeval Higher Bebington?

Attempts have been made to prove that the traditional Midland England system of the three open field economy was practised in the Wirral Peninsula<sup>32</sup> but the arguments advanced are generally based on fragmentary evidence.

The chief difficulty in retracing types of field systems and their resultant economy is the fact that the evidence on the ground has been largely obliterated by the enclosure movement which caused numerous hedged closes to supersede the original mediaeval land structure. The enclosure movement could not, however, wipe out all the marks of its predecessor. There was a tendency for hedges to follow the lines of previous rough demarcation. In parts of the Midlands the marks of the ridge and furrow caused by the constant cutting of the ploughshare at the same point in a given field stand out to-day as a silent monument to the old three-field strip system of husbandry.<sup>33</sup> In Wirral, there is no clear-cut

visual evidence. The Peninsula was under forest laws from the 12th century until the time of Edward III. Consequently, it was difficult for a stable agricultural tradition to be carried out.

Although there is no binding evidence that the traditional pattern of the Midland England open field system existed in Wirral, it seems certain that a modified adaptation of the three-field pattern was employed. In part of Cheshire, Lancashire, Westmorland and Cumberland, mediaeval agricultural methods differed from the Midland system and tended to conform more to the Celtic patterns<sup>34</sup> of 'run-rig' and 'infield-outfield.' 'Run-rig' divided arable land into intermixed strips in large open fields much as was performed in the Midland system. The system, however, differed greatly from the traditional open field structure. It was much more fluid in operation. In the Midland open field system, strips of land were permanently allocated to various owners in open fields. In 'run-rig' the less fertile terrain necessitated a re-adjustment of holdings each year. An annual change in the area of arable land took place in order to give each owner an equal share of good and bad land. As the arable land was constantly revised, there were no fixed zones set aside for common land. This fluidity of land use has, in addition, made traces of the mediaeval system difficult to uncover.

Evidence of ancient strips are, however, clearly seen by a study of the field pattern of Higher Bebington Hill. North of the village site, the fields of Thorny Rean and the many Hill Hays all run parallel and are continued eastwards across the present Kings Road in Slade, Fat Meadow, Cow Pasture and Meadow. To the west of these strips the frequent occurrence of the word 'Butts' is further evidence in favour of a 'run-rig' agricultural economy. 'Butt' is commonly used to denote a balk of turf or a stake delimiting one strip from another in both the open field and 'run-rig' systems. Further south, a similar pattern of strips is discernible in the hill slopes with the strips of Broom Field, Sea Hay, Hunstable Dale and Acres. In these three areas, Hill Hay, Sea Hay and Hunstable Dale, the common name is repeated frequently indicating a glimmer of a 'run-rig' economy in that formerly these areas were once large open fields divided into inter-mixed arable strips.<sup>35</sup> The Town Fields in Lower Bebington on the site of Bebington Cemetery and of the Port Sunlight Oval can be attributed to have the same characteristics.

Associated with the Celtic 'run-rig' type of agriculture was the operation of an 'infield-outfield.' The 'infield' lay nearest the farmstead, received all the manure of the farm and was in perpetual tillage. Beyond the infield, the outfield was situated, cultivated usually for oats. The outfield was tilled for many years until the yield was less than the sowing and then laid to waste. A new intake was made and the process of land exhaustion repeated. 'Infield-outfield' cultivation is even more difficult to trace than 'run-rig,' but two possible examples of this economy are evident

in Higher Bebington. To the north-west of Higher Bebington Road the field names Potter Croft, The Croft and Middle Croft indicate the proximity of a farm and were probably 'infields.' Outfield cultivation would be carried on beyond the infields in the heathy area of Gorse Hay and on the site of Moor Field. The associated 'run-rig' system is seen to the east in the strips of Little and Big Short Butts and in Little and Big Mow Fields. A similar 'infield-outfield' seems apparent in the 'infields' of Far, Middle and Near Croftons (between Heath and Stanton Roads) with outfields in the tract of Lower Heath.

### 3. THE EVIDENCE OF DOCUMENTS

The recent discoveries of early Bebington Charters now contained in the John Ryland Library shed a little more illumination on mediaeval Higher Bebington.<sup>36</sup> A large number of the hundred documents have direct reference to the township. They are all legal documents concerned with grants of land and the transfer of land. Their value to legal and constitutional history is considerable but limited from the point of view of learning more about the place and its people. More complete knowledge is gained about Higher Bebington's manorial history, but only a few fragments can be unearthed about its mediaeval appearance.

A document of 1265 can be regarded as typical. It concerns a grant of land from William Lancelin to Richard the Clerk and has a number of interesting features. It includes the following (in translation); "William Lancelin son of Robert Lancelin grants Richard the Clerk, son of Alan de Waleya (Wallasey) . . . for his homage and service one bovate in Parva Bebington (Higher Bebington) viz. that which William, son of Emma formerly held with three selions namely, Wurideland, Estmundes ditch, Koksoteland with two butts in Fulflas and with a cockshoot in Bradegreve and with one fishery."

The word 'selion' is of particular importance and recurs in a number of these documents.<sup>37</sup> A selion is a strip of land for cultivation, usually in the open field system. In this case the strips referred to are probably under the run-rig system of agrarian economy. The use of the word 'butts' gives confirmatory evidence.

The field names, whose precise locations cannot be identified, contain a number of Norse elements. The Norse influence is strengthened by the term 'bovate,' an assessment of land of Scandinavian origin. Estmundes is a personal name, while Koksoteland is a 'cock's head' referring to a plant which probably flourished on the strip during the year it was laid down to pasture. Fulflas, meaning literally a 'foul flash' refers to marsh which was probably situated in the valley where the present day Woodhey is situated.

The reference to 'cockshoot,' which occurs frequently in these documents, indicates an interesting custom. A cockshoot was an area set aside for trapping birds, like the woodcock, by means of nets hidden in a woodland area. It is indeed probable that one of these was situated on the field called 'Cockpit' which was located immediately to the north of the present "Traveller's Rest" in Mount Road. There are, however, other interpretations of this name.

The importance of the fishery to the mediaeval economy of Higher Bebington is striking as mention of fisheries occurs again and again in these thirteenth century documents and the Rock Park littoral of the township was clearly a most valuable area.

Woodland is mentioned in these charters by the many references to "the wood of Bebington" which could either be the coniferous belt of Storeton ridge or the oakwood of the Dacre Hill area. A charter of about 1245 says, referring to a rent clause, "one pig each year of not less than a year old, which shall be sufficiently fed in the wood of Bebington." The work of clearing the ground of its natural vegetation was a continuous process throughout mediaeval times, and is mirrored in Higher Bebington by the frequent documentary allusion to the word 'assart,' a mediaeval word meaning a clearing made for agricultural purposes.

'Sitch' as found to-day in Sitch Cottages, is a very early name indicating the existence of a boundary ditch or stream on Higher Bebington's southern boundary with Poulton-cum-Spital. A further grant of land in the thirteenth century infers that it is alongside the Higher Bebington boundary and in this southern tip, a further cockshoot is recorded. From a document of 1307/8, it can be inferred that there was another cockshoot in the Heath Road area.

The chief interest of these early documents and indeed the majority of the mediaeval papers lies in the manorial history which can be pieced together with a fair degree of accuracy. The history of the Manor of Higher Bebington is outside the scope of this article, but it is relevant to note that the Manor of Higher Bebington and thus the feudal life of the township as a separate entity was well established by at least 1150. The discovery of the early thirteenth century documents gives evidence of three generations earlier than the first lord of the manor, Robert de Bebynton, as recorded in Ormerod's standard History of Cheshire. Ormerod records Robert as living in 1292, but the new evidence indicates the earliest known lord of the manor as "Alan de Parva Bebitona" who was alive in 1190.

Improvement and the extension of agriculture did not always take place against a peaceful backcloth. On the contrary, the forest laws imposed upon Wirral in the thirteenth century were



the signal for years of lawlessness. In addition to general disturbance, there were often outbreaks of local violence. In 1393 for example, a private war between the Lords of the Manors of Tranmere and Higher Bebington involved distress for the peoples of both areas until it was finally terminated by a marriage between the hostile parties. The battle of Flodden Field (1513) brought a great English victory over the Scots but a force of Higher Bebington men lost their lives together with their lord of the manor and his sons. After Flodden the line of the Bebingtons as lords of the manor became extinct.

Evidence of buildings is scanty. A 1594 document mentions a windmill which must have been on the site of Mill Field to the north of Village Road. The great Stanley family built a number of thatched cottages both in Storeton and Higher Bebington in the fifteenth century. Some of these cottages were extant as late as 1930 when the Urban District of Bebington-cum-Bromborough saw fit to demolish all the survivors, including the well known Holly Hall Cottage.<sup>38</sup>

There are numerous documents referring to Derby House in Rock Park. As the chief seat of the Lord of the Manor it appears to have been a most extensive and prosperous estate in mediaeval times. William Webb in his survey of Cheshire in 1612 calls it "a remarkably fine seat for a gentleman." For the most part, however, Higher Bebington was far from prosperous in the long mediaeval period which really lasted until the opening of the nineteenth century. The quarry, while producing lucrative stone was only of very local importance. Its inaccessibility hindered its development and progress. Higher Bebington village was off the track for main routeways; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries no stage-coaches travelled to the village although Storeton appears to be an occasional calling-point. The agrarian economy, while satisfying the needs of the community had too little good land to produce excellent hay and corn harvests. The larger expanses of heath and marsh, if unchecked, could make the township's economy precarious and a poor harvest would bring much suffering.

The tax returns of the late mediaeval period show the small population in terms of houses. Only eleven names appear on the list of house-owners for 'Over Bebynton' in the Wirral Subsidy Roll in 1545 and twenty-four house-owners paid hearth tax, a tax not unlike the modern rating assessment, in a levy of 1663.

The contrast with Rock Park is due in no small measure to the fishery rights enjoyed in this section of the township. These rights were quite lucrative and this coastal area had better contacts by the Mersey for trading. It thus acquired a different outlook from that of the headquarters of the village. Although Rock Park was an essential part of Higher Bebington in mediaeval

times it developed a strong personality of its own for geographical reasons. The seeds were sown for the eventual annexation of Rock Park by Birkenhead in 1877.

#### NOTES

- 21 The term "Anglo-Saxon" is used throughout as the task of separating Anglian and Saxon tribes is nearly impossible in the light of existing evidence.
- 22 Trans. Hist. Soc. L. & C. Vol. C. "Lancashire & Cheshire in the Dark Ages."
- 23 Bebington: 1093 Bebinton: 1298 Bibington: 1428 Bebynton: 1549 Bebbynnton: 1563 Bebyngton: 1629 Bebbington: 1673 Babington.
- 24 For further details see Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches. Vol. 100.
- 25 West Kirby, Meols, Frankby, Irby, Greasby, Thurstaston, Pensby, Thingwall, Arrowe are either pure Norse names or contain Norse elements.
- 26 Tranmere, Claughton, Storeton all contain Norse elements.
- 27 Neston, Ness, Raby, Hargreave all contain Norse elements.
- 28 Tranmere—"Trani melr"—"crane's sandbank."  
Storeton—"Storr"—Old Norse—"large" and Anglo-Saxon "tun."
- 29 The Domesday Book entry under Eastham is presumed by many authorities to include the manors of Bromborough, Lower Bebington, Childer Thornton, Higher Bebington, Netherpool as well as Eastham. Certainly, the area held by Earl Hugh under "Eastham" is very large, being one of 22 hides, includes 21 ploughs and has a total population of 79.
- 30 Compare present Hurstbank off Old Chester Road.
- 31 After the rise of the Port of Liverpool in the latter half of the 15th century.
- 32 Notably those of W. Fergusson Irvine and Eric Rideout in Trans. L. & C. Hist. Soc.
- 33 "Ridge and furrow" land is best exemplified in the Northamptonshire and Leicestershire grassland area.
- 34 H. L. Gray "English Field Systems" and C. S. Orwin "The Open Fields."
- 35 There is an incidental mention of this strip pattern in Trans. L. & C. Hist. Soc. (1897), but the phenomenon is attributed to be that of the Midland Open Field system.
- 36 The Cheshire Sheaf (Vol. 17, beginning page 31) where some of the documents are fully translated and edited by W. Fergusson Irvine.
- 37 H. L. Gray "English Field Systems."
- 38 Information, A. Carlyle Tait.

#### CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS

EXCAVATIONS IN NEWGATE STREET, CHESTER, 1955,  
by F. H. Thompson and F. W. Tobias.

THE CHESTER TANNERS AND PARLIAMENT, 1711-1717,  
by R. C. Gwilliam, M.A.

#### MISCELLANEA:

STONE AXE FROM KINGSLEY.

STONE AXE FROM FRODSHAM.

CIRCULAR HAMMER-STONE FROM FRODSHAM.

FLINT ARROWHEAD FROM MARTON.

FINDS ON COUNTY OFFICES SITE, CHESTER.

COINS—VARIOUS.

QUILLON DAGGER FROM CONGLETON.

CONGLETON HOARD.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHEESHIRE COAT ARMOUR	
By F. E. S. BAKER .....	1
THE ROMAN TOWN BATH HOUSE (Part 1)	
By GRAHAM WEBSTER .....	6
CHEESHIRE WORTHIES, No. 4	
By THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE, M.A., F.R.HIST.S. ....	12
THE CHANGING SCENE IN THE TOWNSHIP OF HIGHER BEBINGTON, WIRRAL	
By G. F. A. WILMOT, M.A. ....	16
THE CHEESHIRE BORDERLAND	
By THE REV. J. E. GORDON CARTLIDGE, F.R.HIST.S. ....	21
CHEESHIRE POETS (1—Lord de Tabley)	
By MALCOLM PITTOCK, M.A. ....	25
WAS WOODCHURCH FOUNDED IN THE SIXTH CENTURY ?	
By THE REV. B. H. C. TURVEY, M.A. ....	31
EXCAVATIONS, 1958	
By F. H. THOMPSON .....	33
THE HISTORICAL ATLAS OF CHEESHIRE	
By THE EDITOR OF "THE HISTORIAN" .....	35
NOTES AND QUERIES .....	40
BOOK REVIEWS .....	42
THE "WORKING RULE" FOR 17TH CENTURY CHEESHIRE COPPER MINERS	
By G. NULTY .....	46
LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES .....	INSIDE BACK COVER

# Cheshire Coat Armour

## PART II.

by F. E. S. BAKER



### Marshalling and Cadency

**I**N the last article, we considered some of the beginnings of coat-armour, from the point of view of a Cheshire gentleman of the mid-twelfth century. We looked at some of the circumstances, which influenced his adoption of a coat-of-arms and at some of the factors governing his choice. Further, we saw how jealously he guarded his coat, once chosen, how he handed it on to his son and how, in one instance, the son (or, maybe, the great-great-great-grandson) defended his ancestral coat-of-arms, in a court of law.

So far, we have been dealing with simple coats-of-arms, i.e., the single coat of a single gentleman. Now, we are going to consider some compound coats, of the next period of heraldic evolution, when coat-armour, while still retaining its military character, was beginning to assume that genealogical significance, which, more than anything else, is responsible for its survival into modern times.

Suppose, then, that our Cheshire gentleman, like the majority of his race, gets married. What then? In most cases, a gentleman of ancient family, bearing a coat-of-arms, inherited from his forefathers, would marry a lady of equally good descent, the daughter of a father, also bearing an inherited coat-of-arms; a gentleman of blood and coat-armour, as the saying went. Naturally, our Cheshire gentleman wished it to be known that his wife, the mother of his sons, to say nothing of his marriageable daughters, was, like himself, of gentle blood, so, somewhat in the same way as a modern gentleman sometimes joins his wife's maiden name, by means of a hyphen, to his own surname, so, towards the end of the 13th century, the custom began of joining the two coats-of-arms together in one shield, by what was known as impalement. Before explaining this curious term, I should, perhaps, remark that this practice appears to have originated with the ladies, the earliest known examples of impalement being the private seals of ladies, who thus joined, in one design, the arms of their husbands and fathers. The men, however, evidently regarded it as a good idea and were not slow in following suit.

The term "impalement" describes the simple division of the shield into two parts, vertically or paleways, i.e., through the line of the Pale; the Pale (fig. 1) being one of the "nine Honourable Ordinaries" (so called by later writers on Heraldry), to which I shall refer in a future article.

In impalement, the arms of the husband, being considered the more important, are usually placed in the dexter, or right-

hand half of the shield; the wife's in the left, or sinister; the terms "dexter" and "sinister," referring to the right and left hands, not of the onlooker, but of the bearer of the shield.

As an example, towards the end of the 14th century, Sir William Brereton, of Brereton, married Margaret, daughter of Henry Done, of Utkinton (Ormerod). The resultant impalement would be as in fig. 2.

Readers, who refer to article 1, of this series, will see that both these coats are differenced versions of Venables, the early Breretons and Dones having been feudal dependants and, possibly, younger sons (Ormerod) of the Baron of Kinderton.

An impaled coat could never become hereditary. The wife's half of it belonged, ultimately, to her brothers and their descendants, more especially, to the eldest brother, to whom alone, as inheritor of his father's lands, the undifferenced coat belonged. Sometimes, however, a wife had no surviving brothers, in which case, she became her father's heir, with the right to transmit his arms to her children. This was done by quartering, and fig. 3 is the arms of Sir Randle Brereton, of Ipstones and Malpas, whose father, Randle, second son of Sir William, married Alice, daughter and heir of William de Ipstones. This Sir Randle, therefore, inherited his mother's estate of Ipstones, as well as his grandfather's Malpas lands and the arms of both families. These quarterings may be seen carved on the oak screen surrounding the tomb of his grandson, Sir Randle Brereton, Chamberlain of Chester (dated 1522), in the Brereton chapel of Malpas parish church. This, incidentally, is one of the finest monuments of its kind in Cheshire (or, indeed, anywhere else) and is illustrated by Crossley, in his "English Church Monuments."

In the later middle ages, it became the rule for the husband of an heiress to bear her arms, instead of by impalement, on a small shield in the centre of his own, called an escutcheon of pretence, in order to show that he had a "pretence," i.e., a just claim, to represent his wife's family. Of late years, it has become customary to speak, loosely, of all "inescutcheons" (as they are properly called) as "escutcheons of pretence" but, except in the circumstance just mentioned, this is quite incorrect. Fig. 4 shows Brereton with Ipstones in an escutcheon of pretence. This might have been borne by Randle, the elder, above-mentioned, while the quartered coat (fig. 3) would be inherited by Sir Randle, the son, on the death of his mother.

Succeeding generations, by marrying heiresses, might add further "quarterings" to the family shield. The arms of heiress No. 2 would be placed in the third quarter, No. 3 in the fourth, after which, the escutcheon would be further divided into six, then eight and so ad infinitum. Sometimes, an heiress would bring several "quarterings" already possessed by her father and these were all "marshalled" in order of precedence. This usually meant in chronological order. The "paternal coat" (the original arms of



the family) usually appeared in the first quarter and, if the total number of "quarterings" were "odd," was repeated in the last, to fill up the shield. Occasionally, the arms of a particular heiress, being considered more honourable than the "paternal coat," was given the place of honour, in its stead. Quarterings are numbered from dexter to sinister and from chief to base, i.e., top to bottom of the shield.

A good example of both quartering and impalement may be seen on another tomb in Malpas church, that of Sir Hugh Cholmondeley (obit 1596) and his son of the same name, who married Mary, daughter and heir of Christopher Holford, of Holford. This shows the son's arms, with ten quarterings, impaling those of his wife, with four. At first sight, this appears incorrect as we should expect the arms of the heiress wife to be borne in an escutcheon of pretence but we must remember that the rules of Heraldry were evolved gradually, over the centuries, and, in some cases, the use of older forms survived long after the first introduction of new customs.

Fig. 5, then, shows an impaled coat (*party per pale*) with, on the dexter side, *Quarterly of ten coats*; 1. Cholmondeley, 2. Cheney, 3. Capenhurst, 4. Dutton, 5. Thornton, 6. Kingsley, 7. Helsby, 8. Hatton, 9. Minshull and, 10. Dorman or Darnam. Sinister side, 1. Holford (a greyhound), 2. Toft, 3. Bulkeley. The 4th quarter represents a boar and the origin of this coat does not appear to be known. Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, who made an official "Visitation" of Cheshire, on behalf of William Flower, Norroy King of Arms, in 1580, suggests that it originated in a mistake, and should really be the greyhound of the first quarter, repeated.

The history of these quarterings is as follows: 1. the paternal coat, *Gules* (red), *in chief two esquires' helmets argent* (silver) *and in base a garb* (wheatsheaf) *or* (gold); thought to have been, originally, three garbs, the founder of the family having been a son of William Belward and an illegitimate daughter of Hugh Kevelliock, Earl of Chester. 2. and 3: William de Cholmondeley, who died 10 Henry IV, married Maud, daughter and heir of Sir John Cheney. This Sir John had married Maud, daughter and co-heir of Thomas de Capenhurst. 4., 5., 6., 7., 8. and 9. all came with the marriage of William's grandson, Richard (temp. Edward IV). with Eleanor, daughter and, ultimately, coheir of Thomas Dutton, of Dutton. The Duttons already quartered Thornton, Kingsley, Helsby, Hatton and Minshull, in right of previous marriages. Lastly, Sir Hugh, the elder, married Anne, daughter and coheir of Sir George Dorman or Darnam. On the Holford side, the 1st quarter is the coat adopted by that branch of the Toft family which acquired the manor and assumed the name of Holford. It is either that of their maternal ancestors, the Lostocks or else the arms of an earlier family of de Holford, of whom all trace has been lost. The 2nd quarter is a differenced

version of Toft, of Toft (the original paternal coat) and the 3rd (*argent, three bulls' heads cabossed sable*) came (temp. Richard II) with the marriage of Thomas Holford and Alice, daughter and heir of William Bulkeley. This and Capenhurst, by the way, are obvious canting coats (see article 1 of this series).

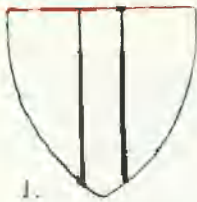
It will be seen that, by a single marriage, the Cholmondeleys acquired "at one fell swoop," as it were, no fewer than six new quarterings, so it is not surprising that, in time, some families accumulated as many as two hundred or more. These, of course, are not all used, except for purely genealogical purposes. Nevertheless, the multiplication of quarterings was a contributory factor in the decline of Heraldry, from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

Impalement is also used when a "gentleman of coat-armour" holds some office or rank, which carries with it a coat-of-arms. A bishop, for instance, impales the arms of his bishopric with his own, those of the bishopric taking precedence, on the dexter side. There are a great many examples to be found, both in the City and County of Chester, of the Diocesan arms (*Gules, three mitres or*), impaling those of various bishops, from the 16th century to the present.

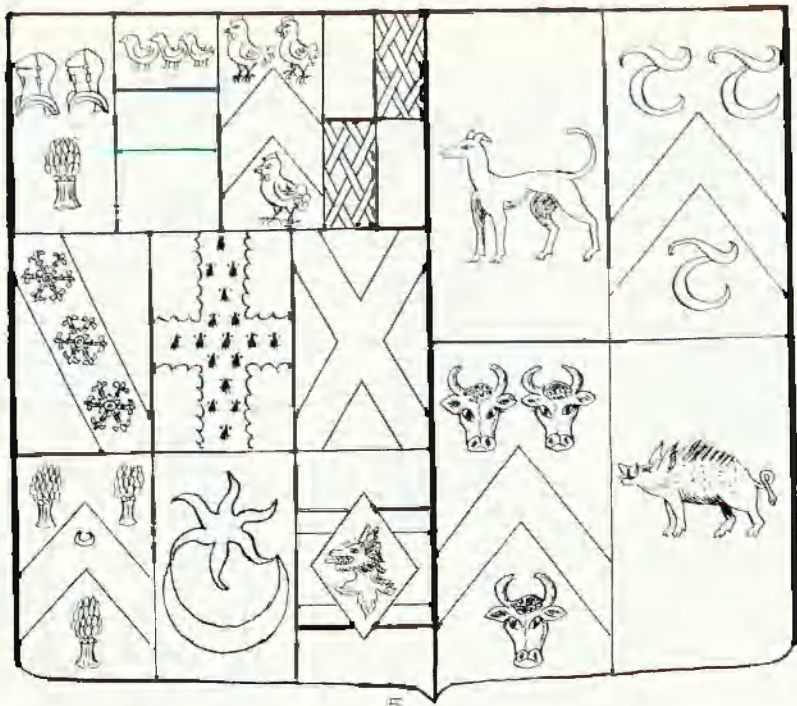
The arms of the City of Chester show us an early form of impalement, i.e., by dimidiation. Each of the two coats, the English Royal Arms and those of the Earl of Chester, is dimidiated "per pale" and one half of each removed. This method had but a short vogue. It led to confusion and ambiguity because certain charges, when dimidiated and conjoined resembled other and quite different charges. The City arms above-mentioned might perchance have lost something, both of beauty and dignity, had the Royal lions appeared on the sinister instead of the dexter side.

Much more could be written on the subject of "marshalling" but space does not permit so we must turn our attention, briefly, to cadency. Although we speak of a "family" coat-of-arms, in actual fact, a coat-of-arms is a purely personal thing and no man may bear another's coat, (not even the eldest son, during his father's lifetime) without a proper "Difference." In the early days of Coat-armour, these "differences" were always, as we have seen already, in several examples, very conspicuous. They included the device of altering the colours and the addition of such things as "bends," "bordures," etc. As time went on, however, a system was evolved, whereby certain quite small "charges" were assigned each to a particular son, to the number of nine. These "differences" or "cadency marks" are borne, usually in the centre of the shield or in the "chief" or upper part, whichever is more convenient. The eldest son, during his father's life, bears a "label" of three points (see illustration). This always appears across the top of the shield. The second son has a crescent (see figs. 3 and 4, Randle Brereton being second son to Sir William). Third son, a mullet (or spur-rowel); fourth son, a martlet (this is a small bird

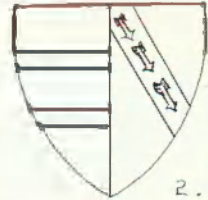
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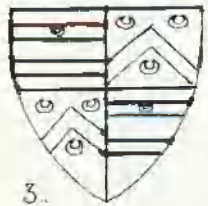
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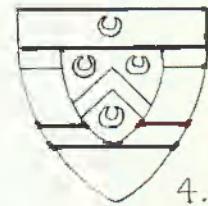
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Drawn by BARBARA BAKER

# The Roman Town Bath House

(PART I)

by GRAHAM WEBSTER

IF one has any doubts about the success of the policy of Romanisation in Britain, one has only to examine the evidence for the bath-houses in town and country. In the forts these buildings were as important and necessary as the barracks themselves, and their use probably part of the Army regulations. But in the civil areas of the province, it was the Britons themselves who built and maintained these structures. While it cannot be said that the practice of bathing in the Roman manner became universal, at least in all the *coloniae*, cantonal capitals and many of the country houses there is ample evidence of its widespread adoption by the upper and Romanised classes of British society. It was thoroughly foreign to the British eyes and of all the ideas brought into the country, the one most likely to be subject to ridicule. The archaeological evidence from at least two sites, Wroxeter, and Wall near Lichfield, clearly shows that the early attempts to introduce the Public Bath-House met with failure. Here we find buildings started in a grand style at the end of the first century and never finished. But, by the middle of the second century conditions had changed, the Britons after a hundred years of Roman rule were prepared to accept the new way of life as a matter of course and from this time forward, these elaborate structures were built and elaborated all over the province.

In other parts of the Roman world bath-houses are much more common. Most of the towns in North Africa were lavishly supplied, Timgad for example having at least thirteen.<sup>1</sup> In Rome itself there is the fantastic number of 856 listed in the *Regionaries*, a fourth century source.<sup>2</sup> It was customary for wealthy patrons to build bath-houses for their towns with a money grant sufficient to enable all the citizens to use them at a nominal charge or completely free. There are many references in classical authors to the part played by the Baths in daily life in Rome and Italy, and some of these have been brought together by Jérôme Carcopino in his delightful book.<sup>3</sup>

Bathing was restricted to the afternoon and Hadrian, always anxious to cut down luxuries, decreed that only invalids could use the Baths before the eighth hour. The Roman day was divided into twelve hours from sunrise to sunset and thus each hour would have varied in length according to the time of the year; the eighth hour being approximately 12-30 to 1-30 p.m.

The Baths usually closed at sunset. Although there were Baths in Rome provided for the exclusive use of women, the

practice of mixed bathing seems to have been allowed in the first century, but was prohibited by Hadrian<sup>4</sup> and thereafter men and women used the Baths at different times. An interesting fragment of a regulation has survived from the silver mines at Vipasca, in Portugal, which states "The lessee of the Baths, or his partner shall entirely at his own expense warm and keep open the baths . . . from sunrise until noon for the women, and from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. for the men, subject to the approval of the procurator who will be in charge of the mines. He shall properly furnish water running into the tank over the heating chambers, up to the highest mark, and in the plunge, for the women as well as for the men. The lessee shall charge each man half an *as* (a small copper coin) and each woman an *as* . . . The bronze articles which he shall use he shall properly wash, dry and coat with fresh grease at least once every thirty days . . ." <sup>5</sup>

One of the most important parts of the *thermae* was the exercise hall or yard (*palaestrae*) where the bathers indulged in all varieties of games and gymnastics to work up a good perspiration before entering the building proper. Here groups of men and women threw balls at one another and played a kind of tennis and basket ball. Some engaged in more strenuous pursuits like the wrestlers who covered themselves with oil and dust. There are even hints of female exponents of these arts, although these may have been exceptional.<sup>6</sup> There is little doubt that apart from the benefit derived by the bathers themselves, this part of the baths must have been an interesting spectacle for the less energetic.

Perhaps the most vivid description of them all comes from the pen of the philosopher Seneca who complains in a letter to Lucilius about the noise which came from the Baths near his lodging. "When the athletic bathers take their dumb-bell exercise, I hear grunts as they strain or affect to strain, hissings and raucous gasps as they expel their breath after holding it; . . . even with the humble massage, I catch the smack of the hand as it meets his shoulders, with a different note according as it alights flat or hollowed. But if a tennis professional comes along and starts scoring the strokes, all's up. Next add the quarrel between some rowdy and the thief caught in the act, and the man who loves his own voice in the Bath; after that the people who jump into the plunge bath with a mighty splash. Besides those whose voices are the real unvarnished thing, if nothing else; you must imagine the remover of superfluous hair emitting from time to time a thin, falsetto howl to advertise his presence, and never silent unless when he is removing hair and making his victim do the howling instead. Then there is the cordial seller with a whole gamut of yells, and the sausage-vendor and the puff pastry man and all the eating-house hawkers crying their wares, each with a distinctive melody of their own."<sup>7</sup>

The Baths themselves consisted of a complicated pattern of rooms at different temperatures and humidity. The Roman method of bathing was not like ours, of wallowing about privately in a small tub, which they would have thought most barbaric, unhygienic and anti-social. Instead, they moved about freely from room to room according to their needs. The nearest modern equivalent is the Turkish Bath which is actually a descendant of the Roman idea having been passed down from the Eastern Roman Empire, which survived into the Middle Ages. The bather left his or her clothes in the undressing room (*apodyterium*) and could proceed to the very hot, wet room (*caldarium*) which was like a steam bath and a comparatively short stay would produce a good perspiration. An invigorating, tonic effect could then be produced by jumping into the cold plunge, but for most bathers who wished to be thoroughly cleansed the next stage would be a scraping with a bronze strigil, a curved implement which removed any surface dirt, with the help of soap and a little lime. One could then be massaged or rubbed with oils and proceed to the warm room (*tepidarium*) to cool off sufficiently to be able to take the open air. There were several variations on the general theme. These included small hot baths where one could stand or sit and have hot or warm water sluiced over one. Small alcoves, curtained off, permitted similar, private ablutions. There was also a room which provided hot, dry heat (*laconicum*) where presumably one could get quickly dry, without being towelled down. All these activities took place with a good deal of social intercourse. One exchanged the latest gossip with one's friends and indulged in various games of chance such as dice-throwing. In all, a most pleasant few hours could be spent for a very modest sum and one emerged in the twilight with a feeling of lightness and vigour which disposed one favourably towards the pleasures of the evening. It is undoubtedly one of the habits of the classical world, the passing of which is a matter of regret. As Carcopino has reflected, "the Imperial Baths brought immense benefit to the people. In their dazzling marble grandeur, the *thermae* were not only the splendid "Palace of Roman Water," but above all the palace of the Roman people, such as our democracies dream of to-day. In them the Romans learned to admire physical cleanliness, useful sports and culture; and thus for many generations they kept decadence at bay by returning to the ancient ideal which had inspired their past greatness and which Juvenal still held before them as a boon to pray for: *mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body).

In order to obtain all these various effects of heat and humidity with adequate water supply and drainage a very elaborate building was required. It is clear, also that its form varied according to conditions of climate. The Roman Empire stretched from the torrid Arabian desert to the cold, damp hills of Scotland, and although the principle remained constant, no single, standardised

plan could possibly suit both these conditions and the variations in between.

A hint of this is seen in the different styles of exercise hall, open in the warm climate, but necessarily roofed in Britain. Also there were many improvements in technique of heating and style of architecture. In particular the development in the use of concrete during the Empire must have had a profound effect on design, enabling the building of lofty, vaulted halls, like those of the great baths of Caracalla, which never cease to stun the visitor. There are technical improvements also to be considered and to which Seneca refers to in a letter<sup>8</sup> when describing the baths of Scipio "in this bath of Scipio there are tiny chinks—you cannot call them windows—cut out of the stone wall in such a way as to admit light without weakening the structure"; nowadays, however, people regard baths as fit only for moths if they have not been so arranged that they receive the sun all day long through the widest of windows, if men cannot bathe and get a coat of tan at the same time, if they cannot look out from their bath tubs over stretches of land and sea.

The bathers of those days did not have water poured over them, nor did it run fresh as if from a hot spring; and they did not believe that it mattered at all how perfectly pure was the water into which they were to leave their dirt. "Ye Gods, what a pleasure it is to enter that dark bath (i.e. of Scipio) covered with a common sort of roof, knowing that therein your hero Cato as aedile or Fabius Maximus, or one of the Cornelii, has warmed the water with his own hands! For this, also, used to be the duty of the noblest aediles—to enter these places to which the populace resorted, and to demand that they be cleaned and warmed to a heat required by considerations of use and health, not the heat that men have recently made fashionable, as great as a conflagration—so much so indeed, that a slave condemned for some criminal offence, now ought to be *bathed* alive! It seems to me that nowadays there is no difference between 'the bath is on fire' and 'the bath is warm'."

In another letter<sup>9</sup> Seneca refers to technical improvements including the use of thin slabs of translucent stone to fill the windows and the *tubulatio* an arrangement of vertical pipes in the walls of a bath to improve the insulation, a point which will be dealt with later. In considering the Roman bath-house, one must thus be aware of the differences in planning and structure due to climate and technical progress, and the picture is in consequence very complex.

One of the first points to be considered is the method of heating and choice of fuel. This would obviously depend on the amount of heat required. Stoking up the great *thermae* in Rome must have been quite an undertaking and it is not surprising to find Martial quipping, "it is 11 o'clock, bath time there the

*thermae* of Nero smoke profusely.”<sup>10</sup> Ausonius, the late Gallic writer in praise of his beloved native land, the Moselle, paints a vivid picture “what of their baths, contrived low down on the verge of the bank, which smoke when Vulcan drawn by the glowing flue, pants forth his flames and whisks them up through the channelled walls, rolling in masses the imprisoned smoke before the scorching blast . . . ”<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to this, Statius wrote “where the languid flame wanders through the hypocaust”<sup>12</sup> and the excavation of the small bath-house at Wall, Staffs., showed a burnt patch, no more than three feet in diameter, where a furnace had been. Here are no great blazing logs and billowing smoke, but a small charcoal fire kept slowly going. It is purely a difference in the internal sizes of the baths. It may also have been necessary to start the fire with wood or shavings and once it got going, charcoal could have continued to provide the necessary heat. In Britain, there was an additional fuel, coal. This substance was regarded by the Romans as one of the marvels of nature. Solinus tells us that the perpetual fire in the temple of Minerva at Bath “never whitens into ash, but as the flame fades, turns into rocky balls.”<sup>13</sup> The use of coal in Roman Britain is well testified on a wide scale, particularly in Somerset.<sup>14</sup> It has never been proved to have been used for heating the hypocaust, but it seems a natural development, providing the structure was sound enough to keep the volatile gases out of the interior of the Baths. In any case, charcoal must have been one of the staple industries of the age, since it provided the means of heating for cooking and must have been relatively inexpensive in a land of forests and cheap labour. The position in N. Africa and other treeless provinces may have been quite another story.

The problems of the bath-house require the attention of a heating engineer, and it is interesting to note that a German of this profession, Fritz Kretschmer, carried out an experimental refring of a Roman hypocaust at Saalburg,<sup>15</sup> with some useful results which will be considered later. The experiment was carried out in a single small room 4.42 by 5.14 metres, with a floor supported on a system of columns. It was, in fact, not part of a bath-house, but a straight forward heated living room. Nevertheless his conclusions are applicable to the baths, as we shall observe.

While in the countryside of Britain, every sizeable villa would have had its own bath-house, in the towns very few have so far been discovered. As the bath-house was a natural meeting place for games and social intercourse, there was little point in the town houses having their own. The older towns of the Empire each had a number of baths for the different sexes and grades of society, and even for the various trade guilds, but in Britain the citizen seems to have been content with a single example to judge from the smaller cantonal capitals of Silchester and Caer-



went. But it is quite possible that in the larger communities such as London and the *coloniae* there may have been more. Our knowledge is at present confined to five examples only:—<sup>16</sup>

1. At Wroxeter, the late first century baths under the Forum, which were never completed.<sup>17</sup>
2. At Wroxeter, the later baths which superseded the first scheme but apparently involved the adaptation of an earlier building, the function of which is obscure.<sup>18</sup>
3. At Silchester, a completely excavated bath-house, but while its plan and parts of its successive phases are apparent, the precise chronology and detailed planning are wanting.<sup>19</sup>
4. At Caerwent where, to date, only the front portion of the building has been investigated.<sup>20</sup>
5. At Wall, Staffs., where a small but almost complete bath-house has been excavated and exposed.<sup>21</sup> It is the only example of a civil establishment which can at present be seen by the public.<sup>22</sup>

(To be continued).

#### NOTES

- 1 Ballue, *LES RUINES DE TIMGAD*, 1911, p. 100.
- 2 T. Ashby, *A TOPOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF ANCIENT ROME*, 1929.
- 3 *DAILY LIFE IN ANCIENT ROME*, chap. ix; now published in the Pelican books.
- 4 S.H.A., *HADRIAN*, 18.
- 5 *LEX METTALI VIPASCENSIS*; C.I.L., II, 5181; I.L.S., 6891; Sutherland, *THE ROMANS IN SPAIN* (1939) p. 196.
- 6 *JUVENAL, SATIRES*, vi, 422.
- 7 *EP.*, 56; Translation by E. Phillips Barker, Oxford, 1932.
- 8 *EP.*, 36, 8, Loeb Trans.
- 9 *EP.*, 90, 25.
- 10 *EPIC.*, x, 48.
- 11 *MOSELLA*, 337, Loeb Trans.
- 12 *SILVAE I*, 5, 58.
- 13 *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*
- 14 *ANT. J.*, xxxv (1955), p. 199.
- 15 *SAALBURG JAHRBUCH* xii (1953), p. 7.
- 16 The *colonia* bath-house at Lincoln has now been discovered and partly excavated (*J.R.S.*, xlviii (1959), p. 136). Full report forthcoming. The small building at *Claesentum* (*EXCAVATIONS AT CLAESENTUM, SOUTH-HAMPTON, 1951-54* (1958)), can hardly be a public bath-house. The baths at Bath (*Aqua Sulis*) are, as a healing centre, very different in character, but there is an orthodox bath-house attached. (*J.R.S.*, xlv. (1955), p. 97).
- 17 D. Atkinson (*REPORT ON EXCAVATIONS AT WROXETER, 1923-27* (1942)), containing a useful summary on bath-houses generally. (Appendix B, p. 333).
- 18 *ARCH.*, 88, p. 177; and more recent work by the writer, not yet published.
- 19 Wright, *URICONIUM* (1872); *ARCH.*, 50 (1887), p. 263.
- 20 *ARCH.*, 80 (1930), p. 229; summarised in *BULLETIN OF THE BOARD OF CELTIC STUDIES*, xx, p. 163.
- 21 *N. STAFFS, F.C. TRANS.*, 1912, p. 139; *BIRMINGHAM ARCH. SOC. TRANS.*, 74 (1956), p. 12; summary in *THE ROMAN SITE AT WALL* (Ministry of Works Guide).
- 22 Under the Guardianship of the Ministry of Works.

# Cheshire Worthies, No. 4

by THE VEN. R. V. H. BURNE, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

**A**BBOT succeeded abbot in fairly quick succession after the founding of the monastery and not one of them stayed long enough to make his mark until we come to Simon de Whitchurch, who ruled from 1265 to 1291, that is, during the last part of Henry III's reign and the first part of Edward III's. His election took place at a critical time, for the Barons' War was in progress and at the moment the Barons were winning; the Battle of Lewes had been fought and both Henry III and Prince Edward were Simon de Montfort's prisoners. For the events which follow we are indebted to the chronicle which was kept in the monastery at this time.

"Brother Simon of Whitchurch . . . succeeded him (Thomas of Capenhurst), being canonically elected by the whole convent on April 28th in the 45th year of his age and the 22nd after assuming the cowl; whose admission Lucas de Taney, then justiciary, at the instigation of certain persons, succeeded in hindering for three weeks, during which time he wasted the goods of the monastery contrary to its liberties. But the Lord Simon de Montfort, when he heard that the said Brother Simon had been canonically elected, graciously admitted him, and by his letters patent addressed to the said Lucas the justiciary, ordered that all the goods of S. Werburgh that had been consumed by him during the whole time of the vacancy, should be fully restored to the abbot elect." And so the abbot was confirmed in his appointment by the Bishop of Lichfield on Whit Monday and invested with his temporalities on the Thursday following at Hereford.

Three days later Prince Edward escaped from captivity and finally defeated the Barons at the Battle of Evesham. This put Abbot Simon in a quandary which taxed his powers of diplomacy to the utmost, for naturally Edward did not take it at all kindly that the abbot had received his fief at the hands of an usurper, and for a long time he was excluded from his own monastery. At last the arrival of the Prince at Beeston Castle gave Simon his chance and his visit to him there was completely successful. "The Lord Edward," says the Chronicle, "contrary to the hope of many, but moved by divine inspiration, graciously admitted the said abbot, and by the advice of the lord James de Audley, then Justiciary of Chester, commanded the revenues of the monastery to be so fully restored to him, that for two casks of wine consumed in the household of the said Lord Edward during the time of his anger against the abbot, he caused two other casks to be taken from the castle at Chester and restored to the said abbot."

This happy relationship was continued throughout the reign. In September, 1275, Edward, now King of England, was staying

at the Bishop's manor of Tarvin and the abbot seized the opportunity to enlist his sympathy and support for the drain they wished to construct leading from the dormitory and discharging into the town ditch. Might they have leave to pierce the City Wall? Leave was given, and the next day the King redeemed his promise, or the promise made on his behalf, to compensate the monks for the damage done to their property in Bog Lane at the outbreak of the war when a ditch being dug round the town totally destroyed the monks' gardens, "done," the monks said, "at the suggestion of a certain cursed fellow named Robert Mercer, then sheriff of the City." The compensation took the form of the moiety of a house between the abbey graveyard and Northgate Street. But this was not all. On the third day the King gave orders that the arrears of the tithe on venison killed in the Forest of La Mare should be paid, which amounted to four harts.

Two years later Edward was at Bromborough, pushing on the building of his castle at Flint. During that time he stayed with the abbot at his manor house at Ince, and the hall in which he was entertained can still be seen, now used as a repository for farm implements. Abbot Simon made good use of his time. Not only did he obtain from the King a promise that the 100 workmen that the monastery had provided for the building of the castle should not be made a precedent, but it must surely have been on this occasion that he asked the King to grant his manor of Bromborough a market and a fair. How else can we account for the fact that a few months later a charter was given, licensing a weekly market on Mondays and an annual three days' fair at S. Barnabas-tide?

The abbot now turned his attention to improving the water supply of the monastery. Up till now (1278) they had apparently depended upon wells, three of which are known, but in September of this year licence was obtained from the King "to make a conduit from a well called Newtoneswell along the highroads to their abbey, and to pierce the town wall if needful." If the Newton which supplied this conduit with water was the Newton by Hoole, it is difficult to see how they persuaded the water to run up hill to the monastery.

It was in this year that Sir John Arneway died. He had been mayor from 1268 to 1277 and has achieved a fictitious fame for his alleged connection with the Miracle Play, his name even occurring in the prologue with which the plays begin. Modern scholarship has demolished this claim and put the plays a century later. His connection with Abbot Simon is over the founding of a chantry, whereby two secular chaplains should celebrate daily for the souls of himself and his wife, one at the altar of S. Leonard in the Abbey Church, and the other in the church of S. Bridget, with music on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

In 1283 the King was back again in Chester with his Queen, having conquered North Wales. On S. Augustine's Day (May 26th) he heard mass in the Abbey Church and offered a "valuable

cloth." It was on this occasion that he took an oath to preserve the liberties of S. Werburgh's. He had reason to be grateful, for the abbey had for the second time provided him with horses, carts and men, the cautious abbot again stipulating that it should not be drawn into a precedent.

In 1282 the water supply was again improved. This was the outcome of a gift from Philip and Isabel Burnell of Malpas, who gave a spring in their field at Christleton, a plot of ground round it and easements for the pipes carrying the water to the monastery. Canon Morris adds that they gave also a cistern, twenty feet square, connected by pipes with a corresponding cistern within the cloisters, but does not give his authority. Certainly the present cistern in the cloister garth is about that size. The licence by Edward I to the monks to carry their conduit through their own and other people's land and through the city wall could hardly have been popular either with the citizens or the landowners, and it is not surprising that one of the latter, Randle de Merton, ventured to cut off the pipes where they crossed his land. The King, however, forced him to make reparation. The gift of the spring is remarkable in view of the fact that the previous year the Burnells had been engaged in a law-suit with the Abbot over the manors of Saughton, Huntington, Cheveley and Broughton, to which they laid claim. In order to retain them the Abbot had to promise to pay £200. He managed to commute this to a promise to provide two chaplains to pray for ever for the soul of Philip Burnell. The scribe who wrote out the agreement evidently thought that the monastery had been badly treated, for he added the comment, "May God with his own balance allot these celebrations (masses) to those to whom they are due."

There are many questions about this Christleton spring to which we should like to know the answer. Why, for example, was it worth while to accept a spring so far away? The "abbot's well," as it is still called, is marked on the ordnance map about 200 yards south of the Whitchurch road behind a house called The Glasshouses. Any cistern there may have been there has disappeared and a small muddy pit or pond has taken its place. How did the monks know that there was sufficient fall between Christleton and their monastery to enable the water to flow? From the map it looks as though the two places were the same height above sea level. Then we should like to know what the pipes were made of and what happened to the water after it had trickled into the reservoir in the cloister garth. How was it circulated round the monastery? In the Canterbury cloisters the monks built a water tower which still stands and the water they introduced is still used by the church cleaners. There must have been some kind of pump to supply, for example, the monks' lavatory outside the refectory, and the drain under the Green for which the King gave a licence is on a much higher level than the cloisters.

In 1288 Abbot Simon was engaged in a dispute with the City authorities about the Fair which was held before the Abbey Gate on S. John Baptist's Day, a dispute which was eventually settled by arbitration. The Abbot had claimed that during the fair nothing could be sold except in front of the Gateway and in the adjoining street, while the citizens held that they could buy and sell elsewhere in the city as they pleased. A compromise was reached of rather a complicated nature by which the citizens were to be allowed to erect stalls for themselves and for hire, provided that they were away from the open space in front of the Abbey gate. For this right the City paid the abbot 46/8 annually.

A further dispute took place next year about the abbot's court (S. Thomas') outside the Northgate, which the City said was a new one. The following is the abbot's reply, taken from the Court Rolls of October 24, 1289.

"The abbot by his attorney said that he and his predecessors from time immemorial had held their free court belonging to this church outside the said gate both for forinsec and extrinsec tenants, pleading in that court all the pleas of which it had cognizance. When any of his tenants *de suburbio* outside the Northgate was accused of any offence in the king's court, attachment was made by the king's officers and the complaint, whatever it was, was determined in the royal court (*curia regia*) of the city. And *vice versa* when any (tenants) wished to proceed in the abbot's court, against any-one for any contract pertaining to such a court, the abbot's bailiffs attached the defendant to the said court and the case proceeded there in accordance with the law of those parts. The abbot asked for an inquiry. A jury to be summoned."

The law moved very slowly in those days. On May 20, 1290, "the jury concerning the abbot's court newly established was adjourned," and on November 13 "the jury in the charges against the abbot of Chester was respited," and that is the last mention of the case.

We may take leave to doubt whether the ordinary monk was much interested in all this litigation. He would be much more interested with the other side of Abbot Simon's work, that is to say, his building operations. Judging by the architecture we conclude that he built the Lady Chapel and may have built the two easternmost bays of the choir. Confirmation that building was going on at this time can be found in the "precept" which Edward I issued to his Justiciar in 1285 authorising him to allow venison from the forests of Delamere and Wirral for the support of the monks "then occupied in the great work of building up their church." The king himself heard mass in S. Werburgh's in 1283 and again on S. Nicholas' Day (December 5) in 1294, which suggests that the old Norman choir had not yet been pulled down.

Continued on page 20

# The Changing Scene in the Township of Higher Bebington, Wirral

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by G. F. A. WILMOT, M.A.

**A**LTHOUGH the traditional medieval period was long since passed by 1800, the Higher Bebington of that year was not fundamentally different from the one of 1100. From the point of view of social history there was a vast difference, but if a man could have lived over those seven hundred years and visited the village again after this lapse of time, he could still have recognised the form and function of the township.

The impact of the industrial revolution had not yet reached Higher Bebington, indeed, the twentieth century had to be awaited before the new type of life was firmly etched upon the township's landscape. Slow ripples of the changing economy gathered steadily in momentum during this century and swung Higher Bebington slowly from the medieval outlook of 1800 towards the threshold of an urban community by 1900.

By 1800 there were perceptible changes which pointed out the future. A new mill was established at the turn of the century and now stands as a forlorn remnant to-day, its sails finally cast down through want of use, having revolved for the last time about 1914. The services of Higher Bebington village had been improved and, for example, a number of beer houses had been established. The well-known "George" and "Royal Oak" had been built during the previous century. The fine old late eighteenth century building of the "George" was pulled down just before World War II, but the "Royal Oak" still stands and proudly bears its foundation date over the front door—1739. Its 1739 foundation is reputed to be on an even earlier site as some Charles II half-crowns were found on this spot some twenty years ago. Coins are notoriously suspect as historical evidence and can often lead the searcher into errors. In this case, however, there appears to be some substance in an ancient foundation for this inn, as the cellars are of a very old type being built into the Keuper sandstone rock. The "Royal Oak" to-day, even though it was rather incongruously modernised about five years ago, still contains much of its original eighteenth century furnishing, doorways and walls.

The Turnpike Road Act of 1787 had the effect of establishing a new and quite distinct community in Higher Bebington. The Act authorised four turnpike roads in Wirral, including the Chester and Mersey Ferries road and a road from Neston to Lower Bebington. Thus the line of the Old Chester Road came into being and with it a new community at Woodhey, sited on the road and near the toll-gate which was immediately to the west of what is now Bebington Station. It is interesting to note that,

although just on the boundary, all of Woodhey was in Higher Bebington and the place took its name from a number of field-names in that area. Much of the original hamlet of Woodhey was clearly visible until March, 1941, when the heavy bombing raid destroyed the majority of the old buildings.

The year 1837 was the first major pointer to the new way of life. The old quarry area was re-organised under Sir T. M. Stanley and quarrying began on extensive commercial lines on the Higher Bebington side of Mount Road. It was on this site that the famous footprints of the Cheirotherium were discovered. In the same year (April) the new company began building a single line railway track called the Storeton Tramway. The line of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles was completed in August of the following year and linked the quarries with a quay, called "The Pier," on Bromborough Pool.<sup>1</sup>

The coming of this line was the first real impact of the industrial revolution to Higher Bebington. The reasons for its opening are two-fold. Storeton stone was in wide demand for the expansion of Liverpool and its docks. Birkenhead was being planned as a new town under the ambitious scheme of William Laird, Sir John Tobin and Thomas Forsyth in which it was envisaged that all the buildings should be made of Storeton stone. The new town was thought of as a "stone city." The buildings in Hamilton Square are throughout of Storeton stone as are some of the buildings in the roads leading to Birkenhead Park. The wonderful vision was, however, considerably dimmed by the end of the century. Nevertheless, in 1837 the demand for Storeton stone appeared to be vast and unceasing.

The second reason really resulted out of fear of competition. The success of the Liverpool to Manchester Railway opened in 1830 and the plans for the London to Birmingham Railway inspired a great deal of interest in linking Liverpool by rail with Birmingham. Among the many plans put forward was one along the route Chester, Birkenhead and even at this time a tunnel was propounded.

Within a month of the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, the redoubtable George Stephenson himself had surveyed a line between Birkenhead and Chester following the approximate route of the line to-day. The Chester promoters favoured this direct and easy route. The Birkenhead and Liverpool party, however, would have none of it. They put forward the fantastic idea of the line traversing the length of the eastern Wirral sandstone ridge via Oxtou, Arno Hill and Storeton. It was claimed that the greater engineering difficulties and high cost would be more than compensated for by the use of the valuable building sandstone.<sup>2</sup> Thus, a bitter quarrel ensued between the two factions for nearly eight years and, in the meantime, the new Storeton Quarry company stepped in with a line of their own, in case the quarry route protagonists might win the day.

The Storeton tramway is full of interest. Not only did it carry the stone for Liverpool's old Philharmonic Hall, Birkenhead's

Town Hall and a host of other famous Merseyside buildings, but its rails were those used by the first passenger railway in the world, the Liverpool to Manchester Railway.

In 1837, the astute Sir Stanley was able to obtain these rails cheaply as the Liverpool and Manchester company had found them too light for the unexpectedly heavy demands of the Lancashire line. Little remains to-day of this important relic of nineteenth century economic history. In 1956, the rails had all but disappeared but the old course of the railway is not too difficult to reconstruct. In Higher Bebington these rails can be seen in Bracken Lane where they crossed the road by means of a one-time level crossing with gatekeeper's house. Further east the "chairs" laid on Storeton stone sleepers are faintly discernible in the Wirral Grammar School playing fields. The tunnel under Storeton Road near the Wishing Gate has all but disappeared and thus a striking feature of a century ago has become but a memory.

While the development of Woodhey and the Storeton tramway were resulting in gradual changes in the central and western portion of Higher Bebington, rapid changes were taking place in the Rock Park sector. An 1805 Act of Parliament instituted by the prominent Mr. White led to a considerable improvement of the coastal area. The old ferry at Rock Ferry was reconstructed and renovated. Mr. White, who, along with George Orred and Thomas Morecroft all claimed to be lord of the manor of the Higher Bebington at that date, made many ferry improvements. Tolls were regularised and contemporary accounts show that an adult was carried for a penny to Liverpool, a carriage for 6d., a horse for 3d., a bull for 2d. and a sheep for 1d.<sup>3</sup> A little later in the century unavailing attempts were made to improve the passage at New Ferry and a pleasure gardens had a short-lived existence in the vain hope of attracting travellers.

By the middle of the century Rock Park had developed into a high class residential area, entirely self-contained and almost wholly a dormitory area for some of the most prominent Merseyside citizens. It is clear from Nathaniel Hawthorne's account of Rock Park in 1853 that it had ceased to have any direct connection with its parent Higher Bebington. Its rural agricultural setting had all but vanished and was now no longer a small centre of self-sufficiency. Its aspect was urban and the stage was set for its annexation by Birkenhead.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's notebook<sup>4</sup> draws the contrast well as he describes a walk to Higher Bebington as a country 'outing' and says on August 29th, 1853; "The ramble was very pleasant along the hedge-lined roads, in which there were flowers blooming, and the varnished holly, certainly one of the most beautiful shrubs in the world, so far as foliage goes. We saw one cottage which I suppose was a hundred years old. It was of stone, filled into a wooden frame the black oak of which was visible like an external skeleton; it had a thatched roof and was whitewashed (probably in Town Lane)—we passed through a village—Higher Bebington,



I believe, with narrow streets and mean houses all of brick and stone and not standing wide apart from each other, as in American country villages, but conjoined."

Here we see the townsman taking a pleasant country walk and being slightly surprised to come upon Higher Bebington, a village which he was not quite sure of by name. Clearly the cleavage between the two areas had become wide indeed.

The coming of the railway which eventually was opened between Birkenhead (Grange Lane) and Chester (Brook Street) by the Chester and Birkenhead Company in 1840 hastened the process of separation between the two areas. After surmounting a number of difficulties with regard to ferry rights for passengers, the new railway had made a considerable development with its traffic by 1850. By that time, the railway had a reasonably convenient access to ferries and had also built a station at Rock Lane (opened in 1846) for the convenience of Rock Park residents.<sup>5</sup>

The actual location of the station of which no trace to-day exists must have been where Rock Lane West crosses the railway. Thus, for a short time Higher Bebington could boast a passenger station of its own before Rock Ferry station was opened on its present site about 1870.

With the ferry route to Liverpool, frequent trains to Birkenhead and Chester, where connections could be obtained for the Midlands, London and North Wales, Rock Park soon became a desirable residential area. It had a countrified aspect but for the mid-nineteenth century England was easy of access for the main trading centres.

The population figures increased rapidly from the first census return in 1801 when 143 persons made of 33 families, living in 32 houses were numbered in the township. In 1831, there were 273 but ten years later the number had grown to 844 and to 1,478 in 1851. Twenty years later, the population had been even further augmented and by 1871, there were 489 families living in 483 houses resulting in a total of 3,172 persons.

But this vast increase in the seventy years under review referred almost entirely to the Rock Park sector. True, there had been a slight natural increase in the old village of Higher Bebington. In 1878, when Rock Park was ceded to Birkenhead, the population of Higher Bebington was estimated at little above 500. Even in 1901, the population of Higher Bebington, then detached from Rock Park, could only muster 1,540.

The inquiry of the Commissioners on the proposals by Birkenhead, termed by the long sounding Birkenhead and Cloughton-cum-Grange, to incorporate Tranmere, Oxtou and Rock Park into its bounds makes interesting reading.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately there is little of direct assistance in the minutes of the inquiry to help in reconstructing the landscape in that year, 1877. Mr. James on behalf of the ratepayers and Mr. Kennion on behalf of the Local Board toiled through the days of the inquiry with great pluck on behalf of Higher Bebington. Pluck was not enough, however, for often their laboured reasoning became confused and ill-attuned.

The plans for the southward territorial expansion of Birkenhead were never in real danger.

It was clearly shown by the Birkenhead protagonists that communications within Higher Bebington were so wretched that Rock Park residents used Birkenhead market, and other facilities in the town. They claimed justifiably that Rock Park was removed from Higher Bebington—the old village existing in another world. Even Woodside ferry had to be used each time the climate showed a touch of asperity, as the Rock Ferry route was deemed unsafe in unstable atmospheric conditions.

Mention was made by the Higher Bebington party of the better roads constructed by Mr. King, lord of the manor, who had made Higher Bebington Hall his seat. He had built King's Road and King's Lane but it was immediately pointed out by the opposition that both were private routeways, impassable in a wet winter and gated where they abutted on publicly-owned roads. Highfield Road seemed overgrown with hedges at the Tranmere boundary and the crossing between the two townships was apparently quite a physical exercise. Athletics in the form of swimming was again a requisite at the north western boundary with Tranmere where King's Road crossed the boundary stream by means of a dilapidated bridge (near the present Cavendish Drive).

What of Higher Bebington village in the later decades of the century? The quarry had expanded and the population to a small extent, but the inquiry of 1877 shows clearly that agriculture was the chief occupation of the villagers. Nevertheless, the energies of Mr. King knew no bounds and from road building he turned his attention to the establishment of a separate Church and Parish for Higher Bebington. This was effected in 1879 when Christ Church was built on King's own road. Thus, the last tenuous link with Lower Bebington was finally broken.

#### NOTES

- 1 The Storeton Tramway is considered in some detail in *The Railway Magazine*, Volumes 81 p. 6 and 91 p. 259.
- 2 The evidence is from the minutes of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway (British Transport Commission Archives) and *Railway Magazine* Volumes 7 p. 221 and 62 p. 265.
- 3 *Trans. Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Soc.* Vol. 22, 1869.
- 4 From Hawthorne's *English Notebook*.
- 5 Rock Lane station first appears in Bradshaw's *Railway Guide* in the Autumn of 1847.
- 6 The full text can be seen at Birkenhead Public Libraries.

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Continued from page 15

Such was Simon de Whitchurch, abbot of S. Werburgh's. We see him as a lawyer, an administrator and a builder, and in these roles he was evidently outstanding. What he was as head of a religious house, and what sort of example he set the brethren of whom he was in charge and how much he had to do with them, how much he left to the prior,—these things we shall probably never know.

# The Cheshire Borderland

ASTBURY AND CONGLETON

by The Rev. J. E. GORDON CARTLIDGE, F.R.HIST.S.

**T**HE history of Cheshire can be contemplated from two contrasting standpoints, viz., from the county's historic centre of administration, that rich storehouse of history, Chester, on the lowland, and from the heights of The Cloud and Mow Cop, from where the county can be seen in all its panorama of vastness and beauty. It is from the highlands that I wish to write of Cheshire history, for here at the summit of either hill, one may look at the vista to the north or south, and visualise the conditions prevailing in this area in the distant past, for we stand betwixt the ancient Forest of Lyme and the swamps then prevailing in the Lowland Zone known as The Cheshire Gap.

The bounds of that forest are clearly defined for us by the place names of the ancient settlements which developed along the foothills and water-meadows between forest and plain.

The name Lyme is derived from the Goidelic *leamham*, elm, and it still survives in "Leominch Street," an old road between Market Drayton and Chesterton, near Newcastle-under-Lyme, a road used by the Romans. The name aptly describes the situation, between the *leom* and *inch*, the water-meadowland. It is found again at Congleton in the old name of the stream which comes down from Biddulph, The Davenynsale, the *Dav-on-innis*, or as it was later known "Dane Inch River." So much for the name of the forest.

About 1195 A.D., Lucian of Chester described the forest as forming one of the boundaries of the Palatinate of Chester, and in the 13th century a Charter of Ranulph, 3rd Earl of Chester, also recognises it as such. Another Charter of 1258, grants certain forest rights "in partibus de Lym in Cestresir," and in the 13th and 14th centuries old Charters give abundant evidence of the bounds of the forest along its western side, where all the towns and villages which sprang up along that boundary were described as "under Lyme."

Let us trace it from North Lancashire to Shropshire. If we begin at Lancaster we find that early Charters of John of Gaunt, in the 14th century describe certain lands as being "extra limam," i.e., beyond the Lyme. In 1379 we find in Lancashire the village of Lymehurst, i.e., Lyme Wood, while at the southern boundary of that county we meet with Ashton-under-Lyme (1305). Crossing over into Cheshire we come to Lyme (the suffix Handley does not appear until 1398). Soon we find ourselves within that portion of the forest which became Macca's territory "Macca's feld" (cf "veldt"), where the old name was dropped, but the moment we leave Macca's territory at the river Dane we must cross it by

Lyme Ford at the foot of The Cloud. Having crossed it we find ourselves in the parish of Astbury, which in old charters of 1351 was Newbold-under-Lyme. Continuing our journey across that parish, we come to Great Moreton-sub-Lyme (Plea Rolls), and as we wend our way towards Rode, we must needs pass through Linton-under-Lyme, to reach the ancient boundary of the parish, Lawton-under-Lyme (12th cent.).

Crossing over into Staffordshire, we leave on our side Burslem, which was *BurwardesLyme* in 1253, and Tunstall, where "The Lyme Heath" was enclosed as late as 1614. Continuing our journey we come to Newcastle-under-Lyme (12th cent.), Madeley-under-Lyme (13th cent.) on to Witemore-under-Lyme (1243). Passing on into Shropshire, we come to the village of Betton-under-Lyme (Shrewsbury Cartulary), Drayton-under-Lyme (1259), Audley (*Alde Lyme*), and Norton-juxta-Lyme (Shrewsbury Cartulary). Other parts of the forest in Derbyshire, were Mackley, "Macca's forest," "Makeney," "Macca's island," and Mackworth, "Macca's farm." Professor Ekwall gives the two Madeleys in Staffordshire and Derbyshire as Mada's forest. Across the Severn on Titterstone Clee, there is an old mountain trackway known as "The Limer's Way," and one is tempted to wonder if it may not be an extension of "The way of the Lyme Folk."

A glimpse of the forest, may be gained from Sir William de Lacy's description of it in 1683, as "an extensive and dense forest, with its waving foliage and dark arched recesses, in some places so extremely dense that all view of the sky was precluded by the elms with their rich branches bending down like clustered grapes." Such was the great Forest of Lyme.

To "view the landscape o'er" from the summit of Cloud or Mow, is to become acutely aware of the existence of a prehistoric trackway, traversing the area at your feet, betwixt the forest behind you, and the plain which can be contemplated in its entirety from Mow Cop, from which the Wrekin is clearly seen beyond the plain. The settlers along this route, have left many of their dug-out canoes, with which they went fishing and fowling in the waters of the swamps. They have been found at various points between Warrington and Buildwas on the Severn, viz., four canoes at Warrington, a paddle at Tytherington, a canoe at Astbury, a canoe and paddle at Baddiley Mere, a canoe at Cholmondeley, a canoe at Oakley Park, on the direct route of the old trackway, a canoe at Loppington, and one unfortunately not preserved, or adequately described, at Buildwas on the Severn.

Another hill-top trackway can still be seen winding its way from the area of the Severn, via Chetwynd, Leominche Street, Chesterton, Red Street, Talke, Mow Cop, Congleton Edge (where it forms the county boundary), Red Lane behind the Cloud, Lyme Ford, on via Clulow Cross, Buxton, and Arbor Low. Yet another trackway can be traced from Kinderton to Astbury, Lambert's Lane, Dial Lane, Earl's Way, to Leek and beyond, and all these routes were under observation from the single-ditched camp on

the Cloud, which may be said to have stood guard over an important junction of roads at the Gateway to the Forest of Lyme, just as the camp on the Wrekin kept watch over this and other routes at the Shropshire end of the Plain.

At such a focal point, therefore, we may reasonably expect to discover from time to time, traces of the travellers on these roads, and of those who made their habitation by its side, and who found a last resting place in its vicinity. The first great discovery of the past was the Long Barrow, known as the Bridestones, in which some person of great importance to his fellow-tribesmen, was laid to rest with full tribal honours. Of his or her identity, and association with this locality, we are entirely ignorant, but either by personal wish or that of the tribe, this vast monument (in its original state) was formed approximately 4000 years ago (2000 B.C.) in the Neolithic period. A very recent discovery of the same period is a stone axe, found at Buglawton, of Bridlington type, made of Group No. 1 rock, of Cornish origin. It was found in 1958 (buried in a former terrace of the River Dane) by my brother James Gordon Cartlidge. A stone hammer, found about 50 years ago at Great Moreton, may be assigned to a period either preceding the Bronze Age, or it may be a carry-over of one culture into another.

To the Bronze Age period we must ascribe the single-ditched camp on the Cloud, and the burial urn found at Astbury by my brother Fred Cartlidge in 1941. This has been ascribed to the Middle Bronze Age (circa. 1400 B.C.). There were two other burials at the same spot, but without urns. Another similar burial urn filled with calcined bones, was found in the parish, and kept in a cupboard at Astbury School for many years, but it was never adequately recorded. The canoe found at Astbury in 1923, and now reposing in the University Museum, Manchester, is also of Bronze Age period (circa. 1500 B.C.), and its presence indicates the existence of settled life at Astbury at that period.

The Late Bronze Age hoard found at Congleton in 1925, would appear to have been part of the stock-in-trade of a travelling bronze-smith, for, to quote the report of my cousin, Ernest Hitchens, B.Sc., at the time of the discovery, "Quite close to the actual spot where the weapons were found, a section of the ground four feet deep was examined. This showed at a depth of eighteen inches, many pieces of charcoal and cinders." The objects consisted of a celt or axe-head, a lunate spear-head, and part of the handle of a knife or dagger (circa 1000 B.C.).

With the Roman period we may well link the various types of quern found at Congleton Edge, which are considered to be probably of Iron Age or Romano-British make. There are excellent reasons for believing them to have been made at some point on the Edge or the Cloud, since they are all of local mill-stone grit.

A Roman lamp of Etruscan design was found about fifty years ago in the limestone quarry at Newbold Astbury, and was kept,

along with a cinerary urn, stone hammer, and a collection of fossils, at Astbury School. The present whereabouts of this collection is at present not known, since the death of Mr. Hitchens, whose property they were.

The Roman Camp at Astbury has never been investigated, but the two roads mentioned by Dr. Gower in 1725, still exist, together with other roads leading from it. At various distances along these roads coins have been found, e.g., at Brindley Farm on the road to Kinderton (this road is constantly referred to in the Churchwardens' and Constables' Accounts), at Biddulph (old road) just off the road from the camp toward Leek, at Newbold, the Roman lamp in the quarry, and at Howey Hill, Congleton, just off the road from the camp known as Lambert's lane, which later becomes Dial Lane and Earlsway.

My great-uncle, Samuel Cartledge, Parish Clerk and School-master of Astbury for over 70 years, who died in 1899, at the age of 96, when I was eleven years old, used to describe to me the events of his own youth, and how, as a youth, he was paid 10d. a day by the farmer at The Bent (the site of the Camp) to throw the remaining sections of the vallum into the fosse, and evidence of these operations can be seen to-day.

Thompson's attempt to locate the camp at Hulme Walfield, instead of at Wallhill is manifestly absurd, for the Camp of 60 statute acres described by Dr. Gower, has to be reduced to a fortification of 26 yards by 40, and the adjoining village of Astbury to the east of the camp, is placed 4 miles away. My great-uncle used to rave about the levelling propensities of the farmer, who probably also levelled the tumuli in the Barrows Field, where the cinerary urn and other burials were found.

He could not forgive, or forget, the fact that he had unconsciously been used to destroy a local historical monument. If his 96 years are combined with the period since I was eleven, it is certain that portions of the camp were in existence in 1790.

About 920 A.D. the district was invaded by the Norse, and Davenport was sacked by Sihtric (afterwards King of York) whose followers appear to have settled here, and their influence is seen in the early form of the name Astbyr, the Norse "byr" for village. It is seen again in the carved stones preserved in the church (Cross?) which are of Ringerike characteristics. The field-names of all the parishes which formed the Old Parish of Astbury, of which I have made a detailed study, are preponderantly Norse, and the local dialect is heavily loaded with Norse words and terms. The common meeting-place of the Norse settlers, the *Gair-thing*, still survives at Girthing Bank, on Congleton Edge, from whence the whole of the settlement area could be seen as they pursued their deliberations.

Here I must stop, in the hope that I have justified my statement that there are two mutually supporting vantage points for the study of Cheshire history.

# Cheshire Poets

## 1. LORD DE TABLEY

by MALCOLM PITTOCK, M.A.

**A**S Mr. Culverwell Brown has pointed out in a previous issue,<sup>1</sup> no outstanding poet has been born in Cheshire: in fact the county has seen few talented writers of any kind. Yet I think it is always interesting to examine the work of a local man of letters even if it is second-rate. So in this article I shall discuss the poems of Lord de Tabley, who, with the exception of William Broome with whom I hope to deal in a subsequent paper, is the most important of Cheshire poets.

Turning up the volume of Lord de Tabley's Collected Poems (1835-95)<sup>2</sup> one is daunted by its bulk: 500 closely printed pages, the product of a poetic career beginning in 1863 and ending with the posthumous publication of his last volume of verse in 1901. And the individual poems seem forbidding, too: two long pseudo-classical closet dramas and a host of pieces with conventional mythological subjects: there is not much of interest here one feels as one flicks through the leaves.

Yet de Tabley, though always classed as a minor writer had a considerable reputation in his own day: his work was praised by contemporary reviewers<sup>3</sup> and Saintsbury writing in the Cambridge History of English Literature maintained that he came close to being a major poet.<sup>4</sup> And when one remembers his works on bookplates, numismatics, and above all on Cheshire flora it is obvious that he must have been a man of wide culture and learning, and one, moreover, "who was never satisfied without obtaining a very considerable proficiency in anything he took up."<sup>5</sup> The letters quoted in the introductory Memoir to "The Flora of Cheshire" reveal too a lively mind not without penetration and humour who had read widely even outside his special interests (his comments on Matthew Arnold, for instance, would be of some interest to literary students even now).<sup>6</sup>

The most cursory reading reveals that de Tabley cannot sustain Saintsbury's claims and confirms one's preliminary fears: the bulk of his poetry is frequently obscurely vague and has a mechanical sonority and a merely verbal pseudo-grandeur. His own comment on poetry in general is indeed applicable to it; "It does not do to look poetry too closely in the face. Best keep at a distance and enjoy the general effect, as of Constantinople from the Golden Horn."<sup>7</sup> And to anyone reasonably well-read in nineteenth century poetry, it is obvious that the dominant influence on his verse is that of Tennyson, whose work de Tabley admired: "Tennyson in his highest classical flights, such as Tithonus and Ulysses, or in his best lyrics such as Maud, appeals to me more, both in youth and in middle age, than any other modern poet."<sup>8</sup>

He could in fact at his best write verse of considerable skill in the Tennysonian manner, especially when he was trying to evoke

the feelings of a classical heroine who has been neglected or abandoned (c.f. Tennyson: "Oenone") or of a hero who having passed his prime still asserted his undaunted courage (c.f. Tennyson: "Ulysses"). How close we can see if we compare the following from the greater poet:

Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the paths  
Of all the western stars, until I die . . .  
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.<sup>9</sup>

with this by his imitator:

The waste is set  
Before me and the darkness. I shall pass  
Upon it with a firm old heart, and turn  
To nameless sleep undaunted as forgot.  
The accident of record cannot change  
The man to lesser, or contract the soul  
That has been, shadow'd outwardly to men  
In functions and in purposes achieved,  
Tho' crusting years have blurr'd its name away.  
That flash of glory, the majestic deed  
Has still its greatness in oblivion  
Great then, and now, and always.<sup>10</sup>

Occasionally within the Tennysonian idiom he achieves a certain memorability of statement:

For, as in dreams that on some purpose verge  
We waken ere that purpose, so our ears  
Shall seldom hear the wind among the boughs  
Whose seed was ours.<sup>11</sup>

But though Tennyson dominates, for besides the innumerable imitations of "Ulysses" and "Oenone" there are examples of the Wordsworth-Tennyson idyll ("The Sale at the Farm") and echoes of "In Memoriam" ("The Ocean Wood"), his is not the only influence. There are echoes of Shakespeare:

If ever, in the waste of time unborn,  
An hour shall come when thou shalt curse our meeting;  
When ruin'd love in ashes of self-scorn  
Smiles a hard smile his own confusion greeting.<sup>12</sup>

of Seventeenth century courtly poetry:

With ardent cheek and earnest breath  
We plighted unenduring vows;  
And bound, instead of amaranth wreath,  
Deciduous roses round our brows.<sup>13</sup>



of Wordsworth (in conception if not quite in manner):

Ambition stings us in the narrow streets  
To push and envy for the public prize.  
Upon the mountains we forget ourselves  
To greatness where no meaner thoughts intrude."<sup>14</sup>

of the Keats of "Hyperion":

That wan king  
Leant to each palm a hoary cheek, and sate,  
His owl-white hairs slid out, his reedy beard  
Held what he wept and thro' its woof each moan  
Trembled in vapour and his lips were set.  
But she, an eloquent presence of despair,  
Drew, regal, all her height.<sup>15</sup>

and of Tom Moore and the writers of *vers de société*:

My red-breast, continue thy song beyond seasons  
When the passage bird's mad lay is over and past;  
Pipe sweet to my lady and trill her my reasons;  
Be thy note weak as dew she will harken at last.<sup>16</sup>

And there are two long Browningsque pieces: "Machiavel in Minimis" and "The Count of Senlis at his Toilet," this last being quite a clever imitation of Browning's method of character revelation through monologue. The Count is a typically reactionary member of the French aristocracy in the days preceding the Revolution, who, living at court an absentee from his estate, is more concerned with his appearance and his love intrigues than with his tenants and their grievances which his valet tries to draw his attention to:

Man, man, is this a time for wrong and right?  
The doublet bulges, the ruff hangs awry,  
Limp as the wool of some damp wether's fleece.  
The feast is ready—they are going down—  
I hear Count Edmund, coxcomb, on the stairs—  
You loiter, varlet, and I'm late: your deed;  
You thrust your charters when I ought to dress;  
Charters indeed. I, that have known it long,  
Have never seen this precious burgh of mine  
Save on the eve of starving thro' my dues,  
At least their song has run so all these years.  
And yet they are fed enough to roar out loud,  
"Behold we starve!" My ruffles: that's the left,  
You idiot—And they breed too, breed like rats.<sup>17</sup>

And has de Tabley's poetry no originality at all? the reader will doubtless be thinking at this point. Yes, for although his diction never escapes from its second-hand quality, in certain of the poems he is able to bring to bear his keen interest in, and observation of natural life. He was a highly accomplished botanist, who also knew a good deal of ornithology and, late in life, even took up the study of conchology.<sup>18</sup> "He had" says his friend "the eyes of a lynx, and his minute critical knowledge (of

botany) was always at his command.”<sup>19</sup> There is, too, an interesting passage in one of his letters in which he criticises the accuracy of Keats’s and Tennyson’s botanical knowledge as it is shown in their poetry.<sup>20</sup>

Even when the subject matter is remote in time and place there are occasionally lines which, surrounded by sonorous vagueness, appear to be based on observation:

Not the broken brows,  
Steep at the river turn and undermined,  
Where from the snags of oak and tortured boughs  
Project, and latticed ribs in skeleton  
Jut from the crumbling margin, hung with weeds.<sup>21</sup>

Sometimes a peat-tarn capped the giant chain ;  
A waste of ice, pale grass, and sodden sedge  
And rotten fangs of rush ; whose tumbled floor  
Festered in moss, and darkened to decay.<sup>22</sup>

and

Descend, my dear one, golden are the groves,  
Where, under umbrage of delicious coves,  
The dusky cygnets sail by sires of snow,  
And moor-hens paddle where the tide is slow.  
And sedge-hair brushes the rosed filbert’s cheek :  
And bunch and reed are mirrored in the creek,  
And tremble in the under-gliding wave.  
The kid comes butting where broad flag-leaves lave  
And drip into the dimpling water-swell :  
He, blinking thro’ the grasses, seems to dwell  
In leaning thirst with eager nostrils wide,  
And sailing fishes watch him, golden-eyed.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps one can detect in this last example the influence of a poet I have not mentioned—George Crabbe.

In other shorter poems, usually in rhyme, natural description appears for its own sake or more usually as the setting for a love poem:

There is a hedge, where round deep ivy root  
The wren creeps darkling in her covert shy ;  
The dunnock trills a hesitating flute,  
And bramble-berries lure the burnished fly.

On either side in rough disorder hang  
Long straws and ears torn from the brushing wain,  
And the strong red thorned roses fix their fang  
And toll, as gleaners toll, the passing grain.

There bindweed lilies cupped in roscate dew,  
And bryony’s polished leaves tuft vine-like fruit,  
And purple-stemmed the honeysuckle grew,  
With intertwined amatory shoot.

And here the dragon-fly in glory is  
Moving in mailed array a burning star,  
And like a white-veiled nun the clematis  
Peeps on the world behind her cloister bar.<sup>24</sup>

In certain of the poems, indeed, the natural description is made to subserve an overall feeling which is itself of interest. There is the mockingly fanciful (if rather heavy-handed) "Study of a Spider" which reveals his observant tenderness:

From holy flower to holy flower  
Thou weavest thine unhallowed bower  
The harmless dewdrops, beaded thin,  
Ripple along thy ropes of sin . . . .  
A glutton of creation's sighs,  
Miser of many miseries,  
Toper, whose lonely feasting chair  
Sways in inhospitable air . . . .  
Ah, venom mouth and shaggy thighs  
Thy paunch grown sleek with sacrifice,  
Thy dolphin back and shoulders round  
Coarse-hairy as some goblin hound . . . .  
I break the toils around thy head  
And from their gibbets take thy dead.<sup>25</sup>

and the rather grimly humorous "A Churchyard Yew" which is only intermittently successful:

The robin whistles on a grave,  
His throat with song distended;  
A butterfly has wended  
To some *hic jacet*, where he clings  
To close and open shuddering wings  
With borders splendid . . . .

The mole is working in her cave,  
By glowworm taper shine,  
She graveward drives her mine.  
And, on a wreath of faded roses,  
A lean old rat to these discloses  
How he shall dine.<sup>26</sup>

But de Tabley's most striking poem is, strangely enough, not about nature at all; it is about a neglected carving he saw while looking through a Roman palace of art. What makes it interesting is that here de Tabley seems to have something interesting to say: he doesn't quite succeed in saying it: there are faults of diction and tone, yet nonetheless the carving takes on a suggestiveness which almost makes it a symbol of an emotional state:

#### THE KNIGHT IN THE WOOD

The thing itself was rough and crudely done,  
Cut in coarse stone, spitefully placed aside  
As merest lumber, where the light was worst  
On a back staircase. Overlooked it lay  
In a great Roman palace crammed with art.

It had no number in the list of gems,  
 Weeded away long since, pushed out and banished,  
 Before insipid Guidos over-sweet  
 And Dolce's rose sensationalities,  
 And curly chirping angels spruce as birds.  
 And yet the motive of this thing ill-hewn  
 And hardly seen *did* touch me. O indeed,  
 The skill-less hand that carved it had belonged  
 To a most yearning and bewildered brain:  
 There was such desolation in the work ;  
 And through its utter failure the thing spoke  
 With more of human message, heart to heart,  
 Than all these faultless, smirking, skin-deep saints,  
 In artificial troubles picturesque,  
 And martyred sweetly, not one curl awry—  
 Listen ; a clumsy knight, who rode alone  
 Upon a stumbling jade in a great wood  
 Belated. The poor beast with head low-bowed  
 Snuffing the treacherous ground. The rider leant  
 Forward to sound the marsh with his lance.  
 You saw the place was deadly ; that doomed pair,  
 The wretched rider and the hide-bound steed,  
 Feared to advance, feared to return—That's all !<sup>27</sup>

#### NOTES

- 1 Cheshire Historian, No. 4, 1954, p. 31.
- 2 London, 1903.
- 3 See "The Poets and the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century, William Morris to Robert Buchanan," ed. A. H. Miles, London, 1915, pp. 184-185.
- 4 Vol. XIII, pp. 203-205.
- 5 The Flora of Cheshire, ed. Spencer Moore, with a biographical notice of the author by Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, 1899, p. XXIII.
- 6 Op. cit., p. XXXIX.
- 7 Op. cit., p. XXIX.
- 8 Op. cit., p. XXXIX.
- 9 "Ulysses," Collected English Verse, ed. Margaret and Ronald Bottrall, London, 1946, pp. 429-430, with the omission of three lines.
- 10 "The Old Warrior," Collected Poems, p. 24.
- 11 "Minos," op. cit., p. 8.
- 12 Sonnet VIII, op. cit., p. 18.
- 13 "Retrospect," op. cit., p. 291.
- 14 "An Old Man's Consolation," op. cit., p. 451.
- 15 "A Wisp of Epic," op. cit., p. 9.
- 16 "The Red-breast," p. 50.
- 17 Op. cit., p. 141-142.
- 18 The Flora of Cheshire, op. cit., pp. XXXIII ; XLIV ; XLVIII.
- 19 Op. cit., p. XXII.
- 20 Op. cit., p. LI.
- 21 "Orpheus in Hades," Collected Poems, p. 364.
- 22 "The Strange Parable," op. cit., p. 135.
- 23 "In Arcadia," op. cit., p. 145.
- 24 "The Hedge," op. cit., p. 454-455.
- 25 Op. cit., pp. 282-283.
- 26 Op. cit., p. 408.
- 27 Op. cit., pp. 302-303.

# Was Woodchurch Founded in the Sixth Century?

by The Rev. B. H. C. TURVEY, M.A.

**T**HERE is strong evidence for supposing that Woodchurch Parish Church was founded circa 600. The reasons for this statement are as follows:—

The adjoining manor of Landican gave its name to the district in which Woodchurch is situated, and also carried the patronage or advowson of its parish church; the smaller manor of Woodchurch was taken out of Landican; and Woodchurch is known to be a comparatively late name. It was at Landican that Domesday Book says there was a priest (and since there never was a church at Landican, this priest may be presumed to have served Woodchurch).

It is well known that the district of Wirral was at one time Celtic in character (the circular churchyard at Woodchurch is possibly a Celtic barrow) and the name Landican suggests Llan (sacred enclosure) prefixed to the name of some Celtic saint. Who was this saint? It is a reasonable surmise that the church may have been popularly known as Llandecwyn Church (like the one near Harlech), and hence by corruption Landican, after the founder St. Tecwyn or Degwyn, contemporary with Cadfan, who died circa 616. Tecwyn came from Brittany into Wales, and may even be identical with the missionary bishop Degan or Tecan, who was born not later than 570 and lived in Ireland, near Wicklow, making journeys to Wales, where he left traces of his name in Pembrokeshire. "The connection of the Hundred of Wirral in ancient times" says Ormerod,<sup>1</sup> "with Ireland and the Isle of Man renders it probable that here landed the first missionaries from Ireland."

According to Prof. Emrys Bowen, the churches of Wales which bear the name of a now forgotten saint—those called by the name of Llan or enclosure, where an early foundation is known to have existed—may safely be assumed as the personal dedication of that man or of his immediate successors.

If this were all, we should still be in the realm of surmise. But there is the further fact that St. Tecwyn's feast day was locally observed (in Wales) on September 14th, as we are told by the reliable antiquaries, Browne Willis ("Survey of Bangor," c. 1740) and Edward Lhuyd (c. 1700).<sup>2</sup> Either this is a very odd coincidence, or it gives us the plain clue to the origin of the present dedication of the parish church to the Holy Cross, which festival also falls on September 14th.

This dedication is well known to have been assumed in place of an earlier lost one. And if the founder's festival was observed

on Holy Cross Day, the former might be gradually ousted by the latter observance, until by a misunderstanding Holy Cross became the new dedication. Forgetful of the existence of St. Tecwyn, the mere fact that a feast was held on September 14th might lead people wrongly to assume a dedication of the church to the Holy Cross because that feast occurs at that date in the Roman calendar, which was a universal rather than a local calendar. If this is the real explanation of the Holy Cross dedication, it certainly seems to make an association with St. Tecwyn as founder very probable. Some may think the explanation so likely that it may be regarded as proof of such a connection.

We may perhaps conjecture Cross Hill, Thingwall, as the site of the first Christian settlement, in view of its significant name. It is only a few hundred yards from the field called Priest's Park on the 1849 tithe map.

The position is further complicated by the revealing, in 1950, of the existence of a previous dedication to St. Peter. This was found on a document, a deed of quitclaim<sup>3</sup> dated c. 1275-80 making specific mention of "the advowson of the church of St. Peter in the vill of Woodchurch." It does not, however, demolish the argument given above; rather it amplifies it.

When the Welsh church finally submitted to Canterbury, Norman bishops were appointed to Welsh sees, and Norman buildings replaced the simple Celtic churches. Even the dedications were changed from the familiar Welsh saints to those of the Roman calendar, with the crowning indignity of the re-dedication of St. David's own cathedral to St. Andrew, until the loving persistence of Welsh devotees caused it to be changed back to St. David's.

Did something like this happen at Woodchurch? namely, an attempt by Roman emissaries to change the name to St. Peter? It may be that the two names, Tecwyn and Peter, vied with each other. One can imagine how the name of St. Peter never really caught on (for the Celts were stubborn in these matters, and Peter's name was redolent of the jurisdiction of an alien see)—one may visualise how this designation was used mostly in official documents, and finally, much later, dropped away altogether, because the fact was re-discovered that the church already had a perfectly good dedication, apparently observed on September 14th. From this it would be a short step (already described) to make the false assumption that the real dedication was Holy Cross because of this significant date!

#### NOTES

1 History of Cheshire, Ormerod, Helsby's edn., 1882.

2 Lives of the British Saints, Baring-Gould & Fisher, Society of Cymmrodorion.

3 Record Society of Lancs. & Ches., Vol 103 (24).

# Excavations, 1958

by F. H. THOMPSON

## I. VALE ROYAL

THE main excavation undertaken by the Grosvenor Museum in 1958 was on the site of the Cistercian Abbey of Vale Royal, between Northwich and Winsford. Founded in 1277 by Edward I, it was in its day one of the greatest English monasteries until its suppression in 1539. The abbey was sold in 1542 to Thomas Holcroft who completely demolished the buildings and with the materials built himself a mansion nearby. The house has been much altered over the years, being last reconstructed in the 19th century, and is now the headquarters of I.C.I. Salt Division.

Some excavation of the abbey church was carried out in 1911-12 by the Manchester architect, Basil Pendleton, who determined the plan of the nave and transepts. He also located the most easterly point of the church and calculated the total length as 421 feet, or 10 feet longer than the church of Fountains Abbey, hitherto thought to be the greatest Cistercian church in Britain. However, the precise plan of the east end at Vale Royal remained unknown, although a contract dated 1359 survives in which the Black Prince promises financial support for the construction of twelve chapels. He had apparently come to the rescue of the abbot and monks who had for many years been struggling on with the building of the church after Edward I had withdrawn his support.

At the suggestion of Mr. Howard Colvin, of St. John's College, Oxford, and with the encouragement and support of I.C.I. and the Ministry of Works, the east end was explored from June to December, 1958. The position was much complicated by the wholesale robbing of the original walls down to foundation levels or lower but enough evidence was obtained to permit a reconstruction of the original plan. Apparently three hexagonal chapels had been built on each side (north and south) of an already existing hexagonal chapel at the east end; between these seven chapels lay six three-sided chapels set back to some extent from the line of the hexagonal structures. This total of thirteen chapels can be explained by the terms of the 1359 contract, which calls for the construction of twelve chapels to the same height as one recently built by the selected architect, William de Helpston. The whole plan is apparently unique in Cistercian architecture, though its derivation from the *chevet* with radiating chapels is clear, and is perhaps a reflection of its late date as compared with other churches of the same order. The sleeper wall of the ambulatory, 10 feet wide, was also located and it is clear that the choir itself was apsidal in plan. The excavation was further complicated by the considerable number of burials (over 20) which were found

in the trenches; all save one were uncoffined and in their simplicity demonstrate the austere nature of the Cistercian rule. Large quantities of decorated floor tiles were also found, together with architectural fragments of sandstone and Purbeck marble, stained glass, lead and two coins, one a silver penny of Henry V and the other a 15th century German token.

## 2. HERONBRIDGE

A Summer School in Archaeology, organised jointly by the Extra-Mural Department of Liverpool University and the Grosvenor Museum, carried out a fortnight's excavation of the Roman site at Heronbridge, near Chester, in July and August, 1958. A detailed examination was carried out of an area previously trenched by Messrs. W. J. Williams and B. R. Hartley; structures of three periods were noted, the first of timber and the later of stone, ranging in date from the late first century to the end of the second. The most notable feature was a circular foundation of stone and an associated lead pipe, which may have been the base for a large water-tank used to supply this industrial site.

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Continued from page 4

of Heraldic breed, although thought by some to be derived from the martin or the swift. It is represented without feet and old writers allege that it was given as a difference to the fourth son because, having no land of his own, on which to set his feet, he must trust, for advancement, to the wings of Virtue and Merit. Fifth son, an annulet (or ring). We might say (although the old writers do not seem to have thought of this one) that *his* only hope was a fortunate marriage. The sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth sons bear a fleur-de-lys, rose, cross moline and double quatrefoil, respectively. All these figures used as "differences," may, also, be borne as independent charges, as in the arms of Ipstones (figs. 3 and 4) but, when this is the case, can usually be distinguished by their size and position.

The daughters of a house are all allowed to use their father's arms, without difference, until their marriage. Ladies, however, do not display arms in a shield but in a lozenge. This is a broader form of the fusil, which, as we have seen (see article 1), symbolises the distaff or spindle. The fusil itself is too long and narrow for the successful display of a coat-of-arms but, when shortened and broadened out a bit, becomes eminently suitable. This gave rise to the saying "the distaff side of the family."

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

The History Committee of The Cheshire Community Council desire it to be known that authors alone are responsible for opinions and statements which are made in their articles.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.



# THE Historical Atlas of Cheshire

by THE EDITOR OF "THE HISTORIAN"

**M**ANY people agree with Henry Ford's dictum—History is bunk. The past is done with; what has happened has, and we can't help it; it is the present that matters and the future we must try to shape. Why worry over spilt milk? Just mop it up and forget how much it cost.

Yet some people can't help asking themselves, what caused it to be spilt? And some are even fanciful enough to find some pattern in the shape it made when spilt. Whose milk was it? What farm produced it? From what sort of a herd had it come? Had it a pedigree? Thus ideas spring into the mind, one chasing the other out, as fox cubs do each other at their earth. For milk and Cheshire are very closely associated and dairying is an industry with a very ancient past.

Sit on the top of Beeston Bluff and admire the green and brown huge chess board stretching towards the horizon around you. The cottages and farms, the churches and mansions being the pawns, the castles, the bishops, kings and queens, scattered about the board. From the farms at the foot of the bluff tracks fan out into the fields made by great herds of cattle in their daily comings and goings through the years.

The buildings decay and are renewed, the cattle serve their purpose and die and their places are taken by the young of the herd, the landscape changes its appearance with the seasons, but its basic shape remains unchanged. Prehistoric man looked out from the top of Beeston and saw the same hills as we do, so did the Saxon who named the hill so graphically "bigge stane," the huge rock, and the Norman scarred its sides to make the dry ditch and to obtain the stone for Randle de Blundeville's Castle of 1220.

The 700 years since have altered it little. It saw fighting in the great Civil War and has been invaded by trippers since the advent of the railway. From its summit, man's roads, canals, and railways can be seen, his town hall and cathedral, his industrial works, his houses, schools and shops, and latest of all, his giant radio telescope. All these have been the result of man's attempt to adapt himself to his environment and his environment to himself.

What thoughts this view inspires about the long journey of man on the prehistoric track, the paved Roman road, the turnpike road, the canal, railway and airway, and soon the space route. Surely this long journey of man is worth recording!

Such was the project that the Local History Committee of the Cheshire Community Council contemplated some seven years ago. It had already embarked upon the task of producing a series of

handbooks to the study of the history of the county, and in 1940 published "Prehistoric Cheshire." This is now sold out. Further progress was stopped by the Second World War, but it was continued again in 1946, when material for "Roman Cheshire" and "Anglo-Saxon Cheshire" was collected. Unfortunately, shortage of money prevented any further progress with them, for such works have an appeal to a limited section of the public only.

To acquire some money, the History Committee felt that they must embark upon a project having a wider appeal, and of a completely fresh nature. What was eventually decided upon was to tell the story of Cheshire through maps. We live in an age of diagrammatic instruction, so everyone is at home with this medium of conveying information. So why not use it for our purpose, and make each map tell its own story symbolically, and amplify this information by a page of text to each map?

Now what sort of information did we seek to convey to the general public? I think answers to questions like the following: What evidence of pre-historic man have we in Cheshire? How did the county fare during the Roman occupation? What evidence do the place-names offer of occupation by invading Anglo-Saxons, Norsemen, and Normans? Where are the oldest Christian monuments in the county? What does the Domesday Survey tell us about Cheshire? Were there many religious houses in the county in medieval times and where were they? What sort of trade was carried on in Cheshire in the Middle Ages? and so on, right up to the present century.

This information was to be embodied in a series of maps of standard size and pattern. The information was to be displayed as graphically as possible with self-explanatory symbols, so that anyone studying a map for a few minutes could obtain certain facts about the county through the ages. Accompanying each map was to be a page of text enlarging upon the contents of the map. By this means, readers would most likely become interested in some topic in the county's history, and to help them to study it further a generous bibliography was to be included, to which they could have recourse in their further study.

Some of the more knowledgeable readers will carp at the outline of the map being the same on each page. They will argue that this is an anachronism, for the coastline has altered during the ages and the area of the county has varied from time to time. These criticisms are true, but they were outweighed by the advantages accruing from uniformity. However, let us consider some of these deviations from the normal.

In pre-glacial times the general course of the Dee was south-flowing and it most likely discharged its waters into the River Severn, until the debris left behind by the melting glaciers formed the Ellesmere Moraine, that hummocky landscape in which the meres of North Shropshire lie. This dammed the southern outlet of the Dee and deflected its course northwards near Overton, to flow in the direction we know so well.

Once Cheshire was the north western corner of the great Saxon kingdom of Mercia and was only sheared from it to become Cheshire in the tenth century. In 1086, the time of the Domesday Survey, the land included under Cheshire comprised an enormous area. It embraced besides the present county, the whole of Flintshire, the eastern portion of Denbighshire, and all south Lancashire.

It was exceptional in another aspect too. It was a county palatine, though Professor Barraclough has shown that it never had absolute palatinate powers. However, it was a kingdom within a kingdom, with its own laws, government and fiscal policy, particularly so, after 1237, when the Crown took possession of the Norman Earldom on the death of John Scot, the last of the Norman Earls. The chronicler in the days of Henry III reporting a visit of the king to the Earldom states that "the King left Chester and returned to England," showing that though a part of England, it was considered a separate entity, and it remained so until 1536. Then justices of the peace for Cheshire were for the first time appointed by the Crown. In 1543 the county sent its first members of parliament to Westminster, and fiscally Cheshire became one with England. Though its palatinate courts continued to function until 1830, it gradually lost its exceptional status, and now is palatinate in name only.

But it is still a favoured county and is closely associated with the Royal Family through the male heir apparent bearing the title Earl of Chester. Pilgrims by the thousand are still drawn to St. Werburgh's and the River Dee continues to attract visitors galore and many romances have had their beginnings upon or in its waters. The Miller of Dee may now be only a folksong memory and the applause of the Roman Amphitheatre has been transferred to the Roodee and the football ground, but parts of the Roman Walls remain, and hundreds of school children imagine they are the XX Legion as they walk the walls. The unique Rows of the City still possess their magnetic power, for thousands of visitors are attracted by the shop-window displays, and some few admire the medieval architecture of those rows not yet renowned for their shop window appeal. Yes, the ancient City, despite its traffic-congested streets, lures travellers from far and near by its old-world charm, its modernity and the civic welcome it gives to trippers. The Atlas deals with the City.

That the County Town should possess such eminent attractions is most desirable, but the county, too, has much of which Cheshire folk are proud, and a few things of which it ought to have been prouder, and have saved from decay or demolition. You all will know in your own districts of buildings now remembered only by photographs.

Another sort of vandalism, this time associated with religion, caused the despoiling of many of the ancient crosses of the county.

Some few suffered at the time of the Reformation, but most of them during the iconoclastic fervour of the Puritans, who purported to find something idolatrous in the carvings on the crosses. By this means we now have fragments only of some sixty Pre-Norman crosses of the county, and many of these fragments are now a great distance from their original sites. For instance, the Cheadle Saxon Cross is now in York Museum.

Few people who visit that Mecca of motor-racing enthusiasts at Oulton know that once, large portions of the famous crosses now erected in the Square at Sandbach played their part as garden ornaments in Oulton Park, when the Hall was in existence and occupied by the Grey-Egerton family. Here they remained until 1816, when they were collected and returned to Sandbach and re-erected by the Manchester architect, Mr. Palmer, under the supervision of the great Dr. George Ormerod, the author of the monumental "History of Cheshire." With donations from the local gentry and the townfolk, the work was completed in the year following the Battle of Waterloo, as a peace memorial and thank offering for a remarkable deliverance.

Originally erected in the eighth century as evidence of the Christianisation of that part of Mercia, they describe in panels of sculpture the Gospel Story and display the decorative motifs and Anglian beasts, whose tails end in complicated knots, the work of Mercian sculptors whose artistry is still most impressive. Sandbach Crosses have a dignity and majesty that excites wonder, but they were not alone in the eighth and ninth centuries of such astounding examples of Mercian art.

In June last year, a wheel-headed cross of the famous Wirral type made some 1000 years ago, was restored from three large fragments that had lain in the church porch at Bromborough for many years, after serving as an ornament in the Rectory Garden before that. This shows that Bromborough is, like Sandbach, an ancient site, its Anglian name meaning "the strong point among the broom."

This strong point was made by that masterful woman, the daughter of Alfred the Great, Alchflaeda, the Lady of the Mercians. This site was fortified to prevent the Norsemen who had entered Wirral, via Ireland and the Isle of Man, as Ingimund had done, in 900, from joining up with the Danes who were entering the county from the east. It proved successful in thwarting this move.

Scandinavians must have infiltrated into Bromborough, because two of its street names are of Norse origin, the Rake, and Mark Rake. Rake is the Norse name for a lane leading to open fields, but the "mark" part of Mark Rake has been the cause of considerable argument for some time. At the entrance to Mark Rake is a building scheduled as an ancient monument and surrounded by an imposing sandstone wall. Many of its coping stones contain

deep grooves like those in the porch of Shotwick church. One school of thought maintains that these grooves were made in sharpening arrow heads, and therefore the mark was the target, at which the arrows were aimed. Others believe that "mark" means a boundary and that this "rake" marked the extent of the glebe land.

Well, last year the only piece of land in Mark Rake unoccupied by houses was purchased by the Walker Brewery Co., and on it has been built an attractive public house. Great interest was evoked by the building of this pub., and this interest was further increased when the sign was put up, depicting Robin Hood and his Merry Men dressed in Lincoln green and equipped with quivers, bows and arrows. And when across the front of the inn appeared in huge letters "The Archers," with equipment for their floodlighting in the evening, the Archery School were jubilant. They were convinced that they were now right in their belief, for surely the Brewery Company had used some of its surplus profits to pay for some research to be done into the origin of the street name. But their jubilation was short-lived, for within a very few weeks of opening, the house was favoured by a visit from that renowned radio family, "The Archers." So the controversy still goes on.

However, whoever is right, it is clear that after the Roman Occupation of Britain, Bromborough received Saxon, Norse and Norman folk, and this is true of Cheshire as a whole. There must have been as much movement of folk as the Middle West of the U.S.A. got in the 1890's. For some 500 years, considerable colonisation was occurring in the county. The Atlas maps show this.

Three maps show Cheshire at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086. There you will find marked upon them the woods and wastelands, the farmlands, towns and industries, and the names of the places where people lived 900 years ago.

Cheshire is a county with very large parishes. For instance, the parish of Sandbach must have covered some eighty square miles until its six daughter churches were established. To save these old parishes from being forgotten you will find an Ancient Parishes map on page thirty-seven of the Atlas.

But, whatever your interests, you will find something in the Atlas to appeal to you. Roman, turnpike and rail roads; inland waterways and trade; the salt industry; the growth of population; the manors of the Tudor and the Georgian gentry; Cheshire in Medieval times; Prehistoric Cheshire. These are some of the many aspects of the county adequately dealt with in the Atlas.

Proof of its popular appeal is the fact that it was one of the best-sellers at Christmas, 1958. Its contents are original and authentic; it is well produced; and is excellent value, for a copy costs only 10/6d. Published by the Cheshire Community Council, it can be obtained from all good booksellers.

# Notes and Queries

Is this the most curious 'canting' coat ?

THE article by Mr. F. E. S. Baker reminds me of what must be one of the most remarkable examples of "punning" or "canting" coat armour. This concerns the well-known Lancashire family of Worthington, which has many roots and branches in Cheshire.

The first Worthington to bear arms adopted the three-pronged forks which were later to appear in varying numbers and different guises. To this day, as everyone knows, the three-pronged fork is used but for one purpose and is known throughout the countryside as a "muck fork."

He appears to have made a pun on the first part of his name, for "worthinge" was once widely used as a provincial word for manure. Witness, for example, the Adlington Mss which surveys the lands and tenements in Stockport of Sir Richard Egerton and his wife, Mary:

"Item it is lawfull for everye man havinge lande in the said felde called Longeshott to leade there worthinge throughe the saide Lacy Crofte after the south syde thereof into the saide crofte called the Clarcks landes and so throughe the saide clarcks landes to there owne grounde into the longeshotte yearlye aboute the rode day beinge the feaste of the invencion of the crosse, but for no other uses. The lyke libertie ys for carriage of Worthinge to be sette uppon the saide crofte called the Clarcks lande and other ways or to any other uses or at any other tymes there are not through the saide Lacy crofte excepte only a foote pathe."

It is difficult to avoid speculation on the character of the Worthington who devised these arms. Was he, I wonder, so fanatic an agriculturist that he cared for nothing but richer crops from his fat manors? Was he so coarse-grained that the pun appealed to his earthy sense of humour . . . ?

Or was he a moralist, perhaps thinking on the lines of "Dust art thou . . . ?" or obsessed with the duty of making two ears of corn grow where only one grew before, his high and worthy principles blinded only by a pathetic lack of even earthy humour?

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The 19th-century roving eye and ear of Robert Holland resulted in his "Cheshire Glossary" and other works for which he is justly renowned. But it appears likely that one of his minor, yet most curious discoveries, has gone unnoticed. It concerns the word "folklore."

When Holland (who then lived at Norton) lectured at Handforth in the 1870's he said: "Until very recently the word 'folklore' was not to be found in any of our dictionaries . . . Mr. W. J.

Thoms, late editor of 'Notes and Queries' was the inventor of this expressive word."

Readers may be able to help with the real problem, which is the identity of Mr. Thoms whom so far I have been unable to trace. It seems likely that his "Notes and Queries" appeared in a Cheshire newspaper, and he may have been a Cheshire man. That would mean Cheshire, the county so rich in folklore, could claim that a Cheshire man coined the word itself!

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### Audley's Squires at the battle of Poitiers

Dr. H. J. Hewitt of Saltash writes, referring to "The story, as told by Froissart, is almost too well-known to quote . . ." that appeared at page 12 of Mr. Baker's article in *THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN*, No. 8, 1958.

'The story is indeed well-known, but is NOT a ground for asserting that the squires were those mentioned, for Froissart does NOT name any squires. It is true that Beltz and Ormerod have adopted these names. It is true also that Ashmole gave currency to the story, but a very careful search will reveal that it is extremely improbable that the four men named were at the battle of Poitiers. In Appendix A of my *THE BLACK PRINCE'S EXPEDITION OF 1355-57* (Manchester University Press, 1958), I have dealt with the matter at some length.'

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**W**HAT I think is the most delightful piece of gossip (be it historical or not) to come my way for some time concerns a modest idea to re-introduce certain "lost" species of wild flowers into the Cheshire countryside.

There are several South Cheshire folk who have carefully nurtured such plants as woad (which must surely have been common enough in the county at one time!) with, for instance, the once common rose plantain. Also cared for in one or two Cheshire gardens are specimens of the attractive little Plymouth strawberry, the type first noted by one of the Tradescants—either senior or junior—who first introduced Michaelmas daisies into this country.

These are some of the flowers, rare to-day, which may soon be planted or sown in the Cheshire properties of the Nature Conservancy. That is, of course, if the Authorities agree!

This reminds me of an extraordinary story repeated to me some years ago in Macclesfield, and it concerns the origin of couch grass which, detested by gardeners, is called "switch" or "scutch" in Cheshire.

The story is that couch grass was introduced to Britain by the Romans, because it was the grass the soldiers preferred to use for filling their palliasses.

Is any reader, I wonder, familiar with this story—or is its origin known?

A final word on plants—the most notable of which to grace the Cheshire scene was the royal fern, so common even in quite recent times that de Tabley's "Flora of Cheshire" records it without undue interest as found throughout the county.

Collectors have been blamed for the way in which this impressive fern has disappeared in the last 50 years. The only specimens left—and they are few enough—are in private gardens such as Tatton Hall.

The nature reserves in Cheshire, especially those like Wybunbury Moss, near Nantwich, would make ideal "nurseries" in which to re-introduce this and other plants.

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## Book Reviews

### HISTORY OF SANDBACH AND DISTRICT

by CYRIL MASSEY, L.R.I.B.A.

**T**HIS is an exciting new history of Sandbach and District, written by a native of the town, in a manner far different from the usual chronological history. It is a guide book, a topographical study, an industrial survey, a compilation of Sandbach Charities, and an architect's notebook of the attractive public buildings of the town erected within the last hundred years.

Natives and residents of Sandbach will enjoy reading it, for they will find their nostalgic emotions stirred by its contents. The Ancient Crosses of Sandbach, its historic houses, its old farms are dealt with as the writer takes the reader on a tour of the streets, the Square, the Commons and the pleasant lanes.

Old boys of its famous Grammar School, endowed nearly 300 years ago, will find delight in the section headed "Education," and folk associated with Betchton, Brereton-cum-Smethwick, Smallwood, Hassall, Holmes Chapel and Goostrey will find much to interest them in the chapters on their respective villages.

It is a book about people and their homes and public buildings. Prominent Sandbachians of fifty years ago are recalled, and their strength of character and, occasionally, their eccentricities revived.

The book is the result of much research and the author's love of the place of his birth. He says very little about Sandbach Crosses for it has been dealt with fully by other writers, but it is unfortunate that he repeats the date 653 A.D. for their original erection, for that is no longer tenable. Experts now agree that this erection took place from fifty to a hundred later.

Containing sixty-four pages and six photographs, the book is well worth buying. Published by the author and printed by Wright Brothers, of Sandbach, it is excellent value for 3/6d.



BOOK REVIEWS—continued.

## DEVA ROMAN CHESTER

by J. H. THOMPSON

PUBLISHED this year by the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, of which the author is the curator, *Deva Roman Chester* is very good value for a modest three shillings. It contains 48 pages of text and line drawings and 16 pages of excellent illustrations, reproduced from photographs taken during the various excavations.

The text is authentic and most readable and tells the story of the Roman fortress of *Deva*, for over three centuries. On the front of the cover is a photographic reproduction of an antefix (an eaves-tile) bearing the wild boar emblem of the Twentieth Legion (*Legion XX Valeria Victrix*) that occupied the fortress for most of its existence.

The material for the text is due to the unremitting labours of many archaeologists, but those of the late Professor Robert Newstead, Mr. Graham Webster, Professor Ian Richmond and the author of the booklet are worthy of special mention. At the beginning of the book is a pull-out plan of the fortress, showing most plainly the characteristic playing card shape (with its layout) of the typical Roman garrison town.

It is a work of clever detection and presents the clues indicative of the fact that the fortress, for the first century of its existence, was made of timber and protected by an earthen rampart, and in its second, replaced by walls and buildings in stone, and re-constructed once more in its third century.

Moreover, the detectives have very often had to work quickly, for Chester, unlike Caerleon, is a modern busy city and the opportunities of leisurely excavation have been very rare. However, it is astounding the amount of knowledge that has been gained about Roman Chester, its walls, barracks, granaries, bath house and headquarters building (*principia*). Plans, too, are afoot for a further investigation into its amphitheatre.

The booklet is a mine of information for the tourist visiting the city; and to the teacher who brings a class of children for a lesson on the spot, it will prove a most valuable and dependable source book.

The author and publishers are to be congratulated upon producing a *vade mecum* of such interest and authenticity. The chapter on Roman Sites near Chester and that detailing the locations of the surviving Roman remains and a list of books for further study add the finishing touches to a little masterpiece.

A. O.

## CHESTER CATHEDRAL

From its founding by Henry VIII  
to the Accession of Queen Victoria

by R. V. H. BURNE

(S.P.C.K., 21s.)

**T**HIS work by Archdeacon Burne is the proof and fruit of years of patient study and research by one living on the spot, and no one could be better qualified to do it. We are often more familiar with the fabric and furnishings of buildings than with the people who supplied them and moulded them, and certainly none can be overlooked when presenting the story of such a familiar building as Chester Cathedral. But material for such a thorough survey often lies hidden behind locked doors. Here it must await not only the arrival of some one with the necessary key but one with a trained historical sense, an intimate knowledge and love of his subject and an undoubted ability to resurrect the characters essential to the understanding of the story.

With a combination of gifts, what would be to the average layman (and parson too) mere dry bones, becomes a great human story reflecting the darker and the lighter sides of life within the Cathedral precincts and beyond.

Chester Cathedral is indeed fortunate in having found such a one in the Archdeacon of Chester. The book originated in a series of lectures delivered to the Chester and North Wales Archaeological, Architectural and Historic Society, which appeared in its journal over a number of years. Now they are grouped together having undergone revision and expansion, which have added still more valuable information.

Too often the published story of our Cathedrals ends at the Reformation. This is a story half told and it gives an entirely false impression. It is a shock to read in the preface for instance that (it is reported) "no one has yet written the post Reformation history of our Cathedrals." This is a most serious omission if it is true. Archdeacon Burne, first in the field then, sets a pace which others would do well to follow, though they will need his gifts to do so at all worthily.

Here is material which could create sheer boredom. Instead it is pulsating with life and far more fascinating than a novel, punctuated with a pretty wit which reveals the characters very often at their best. The masterful wife of Bishop Downham appears suddenly . . . "starting up from her stool" and intervening in the presentation of Thomas Purvis to a vacant prebendal stall.

One is left wondering why she was present at all on such an occasion, let alone allowed to speak. Did memories of her

linger on when Chaderton, the next Bishop, preached that extraordinary sermon (at a wedding, too!) and gave the warning . . . "that the choice of a wife was full of hazard, not unlike as if one in a barrel full of serpents should grope for one fish. If (said he) he 'scape harm of the snakes and light on a fish, he may be thought fortunate. Yet let him not boast, for perhaps it may prove but an eel."

The Archdeacon makes the most of the available evidence and reveals a comparable wit by adding . . . "In spite of this he ventured to plunge his hand into the matrimonial barrel though what sort of fish he brought out history does not relate. We only know her name, Katherine . . ."

That is all we are told, and it may be because virtue has no news value. Elsewhere, however, the writer issues the wise warning to all would-be historians of the danger of guessing when writing history, and he takes great care to follow this principle. Documentary evidence on which the author draws very fully does tend to present a biased picture. Trouble and scandal tend even in Cathedral documents to get first notice by the original compiler, and the "asides" which occasionally slip into the written word were penned by men who never for one moment thought their efforts would be published by the S.P.C.K.!

Archdeacon Burne introduces us to a number of notable sinners connected with the Cathedral's history, but clergy can take courage in learning they were not all parsons. The sinner may be more interesting than the saint, yet he is never whitewashed. Romantic highwaymen, having robbed the Cathedral of its plate and carried it off to York, are shown up as "burglars on horseback," thoroughly unpleasant men who put the Cathedral authorities and a number of other persons to a great deal of expense, inconvenience and worry. But burglars did not always appear as professional highwaymen.

Persons bearing familiar Cheshire names are found unfortunately playing an unworthy part in the vicious rape of the Cathedral lands, and the information about "concealed lands" in the latter half of the 16th century forces one to draw the conclusion that after all Queen Bess in this respect at least certainly did not merit the title Good . . .

The most valuable parts of the book are undoubtedly those which help to throw more light upon that otherwise extremely obscure period between the dissolution of the Benedictine Abbey and the coming of the First English Prayer Book nine years later. And although so much has been lost the Archdeacon preserves what remains of the story with a deep appreciation of its value.

At Chester, at any rate, the new order rose a little phoenix-like and a little slowly from the ashes of the old, nor is it without significance that the reader begins his pilgrimage through three

centuries of that history from the bedroom where the last Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey, Thomas Clarke, who had become the first Dean of the Cathedral, had died.

It is a moving and intimate scene, the body of the dead Abbot /Dean has been taken away, but in his lodgings still lie his personal belongings. Here in a chest, stuffed between a "shurt" and twelve yards of linen cloth and mixed up with his colourful vestments, amices and rochets, is "an English bible." An eloquent symbol of the transitional period upon which we are now entering. In such scenes and circumstances was Chester Cathedral born, and its life has been almost as long as that of the Benedictine Abbey that preceded it . . .

There is no doubt whatever that whilst we have an Archdeacon Burne he must be persuaded to write the story of that Abbey in the same delightful way he has written the story of the Cathedral. What better way than by encouragement, and what better encouragement than to read it for oneself and give the book (another copy, please !) to your best friend, for this is certainly Cheshire's book of the year and will always keep its value and interest.

M. H. R.

Reprinted from The Chester Chronicle of 8th November, 1958, by permission of the Editor and the Reviewer.

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## The 'Working Rule' for 17th century Cheshire copper miners

by G. NULTY

A picture of the industrial life of Cheshire in the late 17th century is given in the documents which Sir Philip de Malpas Grey-Egerton sent to the periodical *Nature* not long after it was founded in 1869.

He wrote: "The documents . . . were written by a German miner, named Brandshagen, who was employed by my ancestor, Sir Philip Egerton, to superintend the attempt to work copper in the new red sandstone strata of Cheshire in the year 1697. As the rules for miners of that age afford so strong a contrast to the unruly behaviour of that class at the present day, they may perhaps interest readers . . ."

The letter, dated Bickerton, September 24th 1697, and signed "J. A. Brandshagen," reads:

"Worthy and most honourable Sir,—Your worship give most humbly thanks for employment meself and my countryman about your Worship mines, which I have enjoyed now above 4 weekes and not to be at all further unacquainted unto your Worship,

I could not forbear to give a true and plain account of what I have observed in this time about these mines, as good as my small understanding in the English language would permit . . . I have this time also endeavoured to blow up the rocks by guns powder, as the best way to kill them, but in the first time I found the elements as air and water where against my designe, the last I have conquered, and I hope I shall do so the other next time when I have occasion for it. I found also some other small things which would not so soon agree with my hands, for there are many years past, that I did work under ground with my own hands, but all these things are now diseased, only that I was lately too covetous and would have more rocks blown up then my powder was able to ; what other blasts for effect have done, your Worship can be informed of it by Mr. Smith. I shall endeavour all what is in my power to serve your Worship with that understanding I have about mines to which I have employed myself now about 15 year, in spending a great deal of money as well for learning as travelling in many places in Europe where good mines are, to come to any perfection of this art. I have received now my things for examination of the oare which I will do as soon as possibly I can come to it in this desolate place, where nothing in the world is to be had for any commodities what soever it may be, and whilst we are strangers here and must buy all things for ready, it is impossible to life of what your Worship has allowed unto us and therefore I doubt not your Worship will make a distinction between workmen and workmen, with which I recommend me into your Worship' favour always remaining your Worship most humble Servant."

Then follows: "For the Right Honourable Sir Phillip Egerton, Knt, these

#### RULES FOR ALL WORKMEN IN GENERAL

One of every Workmen he may be of what sort he will shall come half an hour before the duely time and give a certain number of strucks with a hammer on an Iron plate, erected to this purpose, to give a Signe to the other workmen to come at work, half an hour after he shall doe so att a second time by an other number of strucks and he shall streike no more than the duely strucks by forfeiting 2d . . . and he shall give the signs too late has forfeited 6d and he that shall not doe it att all shall lose all his wages, due to him, and by consent of the mine Lordes shall be turned of from the work.

In the morning before the last struck is done on the Iron plate every workman belonging to the mines must appeare to the appointed place near the work, or he has forfeited 2d . . .

When they are together they may doe a short prayer that God may give his blessing to their work, that it may raise to the honour and glory of Him, and to the benefit and blesnesse of the mines Lordes and their whole familie.

After this everyone must goe to his post, and diligently performe to what the steward shall order him, in doing the contrary he shall be duely punished, and he who shall leave the work within the duely hours or before the signe is given, shall loose 6d or for every half an hour 2d as the steward shall think fit . . .

When it is pay-day, every workmen before he gett money must show to the steward his tools and other things which is trusted in his hands by the lost of all his wages, and if there should be want of any such things, he must leave so much money of his wages as it is worthy in the stewards hand, till he restores the same.

He that hindered one an other in his work it may be in what way it will, either by ill words, quarreling or in other ways, must duely be punished as the steward thinks fitt, because every one must be quiet with his work; have they any thing one against an other they may bring it before the steward, or cleare their things after the work is done att an other place.

No body shall be permitted without leave of the steward to take any oare away for a shewing piece, or under any other pretext, butt he may the same ask from the steward and be content with that he gives him, and if any should do the contrary, he is so heigh to punish as the steward shall think sufficient.

No body shall bring any person or persons not belonging to the mines, either underground or at any other place where the oares or other things are, without permission of the steward, and that by the penalty of one shilling.

Every man must be in a Christian-like behaviour, and he that speeks blasphemes, or gives scandales, or does other things near the mines with which God is offended, shall every time be punished with 4d or more according to his crime.

When it is pay-day, every one must be of a modest behaviour against the steward, and must not murmer against him when his wages is decurted for punishment, butt must bring his complaints (if he has any against it) before the mines Lord, if neverthesse that he has gotton his wages, he must not go from the steward away, till the whole payment is done, and can give wisse that every one has received his due.

No workmen shall make more holy days in the year besides the Sunday, then the Lords of the mines shall allow them, or shall be punished as one that leaves the work for a whole day.

He that turned the hour glasse in a wrong way shall loose one shilling."

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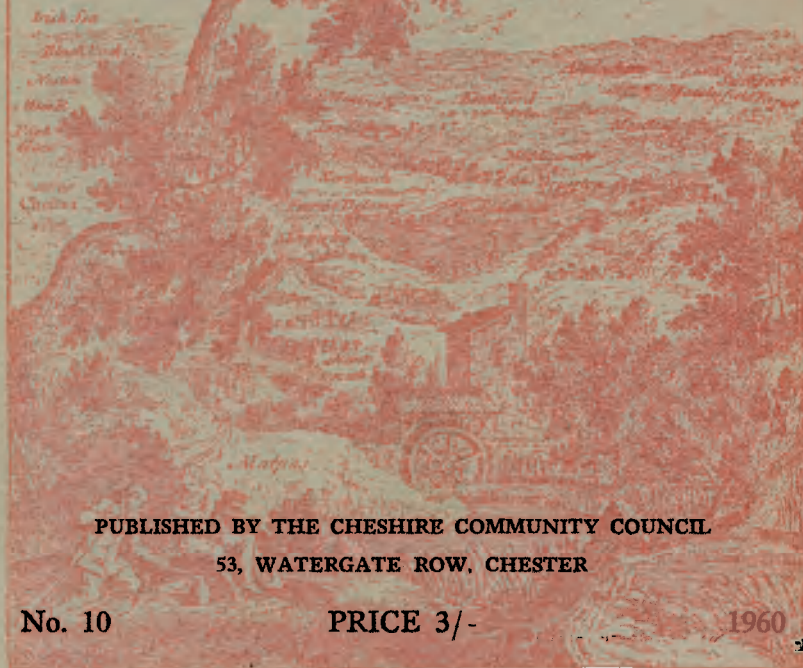
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A MAP OF CHESHIRE North West from LONDON  
*Humbly founded in the 11th Cen<sup>th</sup> the East of Cheshire by Lord Sene of the County*

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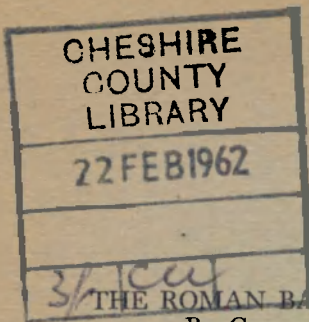
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*From London to Chester. Principal towns from Chester, Altrincham 30, Middle  
wich 20, Congleton 11, Nantwich 11, Frodsham 12, Northwich 16, Wincham 23, Sandbach 23  
Macclesfield 24, Alsop 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.*



# CONTENTS

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	PAGE
THE ROMAN BATH HOUSE (Part II) By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A. ....	1
WIRRAL WHISPERS By ANNE ANDERSON ....	13
WHENCE CAME CHESHIRE FOLK ? By DOROTHY SYLVESTER, M.A. ....	15
THE CHANGING SCENE IN THE TOWNSHIP OF HIGHER BEBINGTON, WIRRAL—The 20th Century By G. F. A. WILMOT, M.A. ....	21
CHESHIRE HISTORY FROM THE COUNTY RECORDS By ELIZABETH E. BEAZLEY ....	25
CHESHIRE COAT ARMOUR By F. E. S. BAKER ....	30
HISTORIC BUILDINGS—Peel Hall, Ashton Hayes By S. JACKSON ....	37
EXCAVATIONS By F. H. THOMPSON ....	41
AUDLEY'S ESQUIRES AT THE BATTLE OF POITIERS By H. J. HEWITT, M.A., PH.D. ....	43
THE CHESHIRE CATS By THE REV. J. E. GORDON CARTLIDGE, F.R.HIST.S. ....	45
CHESHIRE POETS By DR. MALCOLM PITTOCK ....	49
BOOK REVIEW—Shavington ....	56
LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES ....	Inside back cover

# The Roman Town Bath-House

## PART II.

by GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A.



THE early bath-house at Wroxeter (*Viroconium*), built towards the end of the first century and never completed, is important as it shows us a complete plan of a single period. Most Roman public buildings, and especially bath-houses, were added to and altered several times during their long use. Often this introduces complications and makes it difficult to appreciate the original design. We are fortunate too in being able to compare this civil building with one of precisely the same period but built for a military establishment, the *Ala Petriana*, a cavalry regiment, about a thousand strong (fig. 1). At first sight there seems to be little similarity between these two buildings but a detailed comparison soon brings to light the same ideas current at this period.

The only serious conjecture about the plan of the Wroxeter baths concerns the *palaestra* and its relationship to the street. Here the later Forum has removed the evidence, but it seems clear that the street is hardly likely to have been moved very much between the constructing of the two buildings. This can be confirmed by a study of the excavations carried out by Bushe-Fox on the buildings to the south of the Forum and on the same side of the street.<sup>1</sup> There may well have been a monumental gateway giving access from the street into the open courtyard round which there was probably a colonnade. The overall width of the *palaestra* at Wroxeter was almost 250 ft. and its depth probably about 170 ft., large enough in fact to have contained the whole of the bath-house. Here the citizens could have sported themselves or watched others work up a perspiration by vigorous exercise before entering the baths proper.

The front of the baths with its symmetrical arrangement of rooms on each side of the entrance hall (4) strongly suggests a facade with architectural treatment giving the impression of a building of monumental character and proportions. Behind this front range, however, the main building was designed on another axis stretching back at right-angles. This front range is unusual so far in Britain in its extravagant duplication of rooms. On each side of the hall are the changing rooms (3 and 8) and from them one had access to a pair of heated rooms. One of these was circular (1 and 10) but the other was square with a semi-circular apse. There is little doubt that the circular rooms are *laconica* for dry heat and in this form have been shown to have been superseded at the beginning of the second century.<sup>2</sup> The adjoining apsidal room was also heated but evidently not to the same extent. It seems probable that this room was a *tepidarium* and provided a room of intermediate heat between the dressing room

and the hot dry room. If this had also been provided with a basin, as Mr. Atkinson supposed, the two rooms would have formed a small but independent bath suite for those who did not wish to enjoy the free resources of the main bath.

Pursuing a course straight through the hall (No. 4), the bather entered the cold room (*frigidarium*) which had two plunge baths, one on each side in alcoves. This room gave access to the heated parts, first the warm room (*tepidarium*, 7) and a larger hot room with steam heat (*caldarium*, 13) provided in the same way as the cold room with alcove baths but this time, of course, with hot water. The hot room was heated from two stoke holes (*praefurnia*, 14 and 15) and built over the flues would have been the bronze boilers (*testudo*) to provide the hot water vapour.

The whole resolves itself into a very simple plan with striking similarity to the first Silchester baths, but here there is none of the elaborate front with double *laconica* as at Wroxeter. The Silchester building was like the rest of the town excavated between 50 and 75 years ago before the days when chronology became a factor to be carefully assessed. Although it was clear to the excavators that the building was of several periods and a brave attempt was even made to work out the additions and alterations,<sup>3</sup> it was quite beyond their powers to give dates to them. One thing is quite clear about this bath-house, that it was not originally aligned to the street plan, in fact it almost appears to have been built before the street grid was laid out. When this eventually happened, as we know from excavations, at the beginning of the second century,<sup>4</sup> the front of the baths had to be taken down and rebuilt and the excavators found the original portico buried under the road metalling. This rather suggests that the bath-house belongs to the first century, but just how early in that period it is impossible to say without more excavation. The main difference between Silchester and Wroxeter is that the former was completed and went on in use and received numerous additions including doubling the accommodation in the *caldarium* as the needs or the population of the town grew.

The only other bath-house of a tribal centre apart from Wroxeter's second building about which we have any information is Caerwent (*Venta Silurum*), but here alas only a small part has so far been investigated. The exercise area (*palaestra*) shows interesting signs of having been roofed over and made into a basilican-like building with columns supporting the roof, and clearly the circular room mistaken for a storage tank is a *laconicum* of first century form. The main part of the baths is at present buried below the churchyard and modern farm buildings.

At Wroxeter when considering the second baths constructed on the east side of the Forum we are faced with considerable difficulties. The 19th century excavation revealed part of the plan but many of the details are obscure and we have no information of the chronology. Miss K. M. Kenyon made a successful attempt in 1936 to redress the balance but her excavation was

limited. She was able to demonstrate another difficulty inherent in the planning, that the foundations of earlier walls of another and different type of building were used in the second phase. This may well have affected the general plan and helps to explain the inconsistencies and lack of similarity with other bath-houses. Basically there appears to be a range of large rooms some of which were heated and from which two bath ranges project. In the first phase of the bath-house these were identical but at a later stage the western range received the addition of a *caldarium*. One of the really difficult problems of this bath-house is the apparent absence of an exercise area unless this lies to the east, but recent excavations have made this doubtful. Nor is the position of the main entrance very clear. There is no way into the main range from the north and the hole in the upstanding wall is due entirely to stone robbing. The only reasonable solution to this problem is an entrance from the south from the street which forms the southern boundary of the site. This area has not yet been excavated and doubtless contains many surprises. Another difficulty is the relation of the large apparently open plunge bath to the rest of the complex. This building has only been recently discovered although the 19th century excavators found traces and identified it as a reservoir. In size and elaboration it is like nothing else known in Britain. Perhaps it may be better described as a *piscina* or swimming-bath. There are many examples in Italy and North Africa and Pliny describes one in his villa in Tuscany.<sup>5</sup> There is a fairly close parallel at Avenches.<sup>6</sup> This Swiss bath has two apsidal ends and its relationship to the main range is very similar to Wroxeter. This kind of plunge bath would not give the facilities for swimming one finds in the modern equivalent. The depth of water at Wroxeter would have been about three feet and one could wallow in this quite happily and even attempt a few strokes. Any greater depth was presumably considered too dangerous, for one must remember that swimming as a sport and exercise was not so highly regarded in the ancient world as it is to-day.

At the little Roman town of Wall (*Letocetum*) on Watling Street near Lichfield, there is exposed an almost complete civil bath-house. Excavation, in 1956, revealed six main structural phases and the earliest of these was a well-built structure only a small part of which was uncovered as it underlies the later bath-house. This first building was dated by a coin of Vespasian to the end of the first century and there was evidence that it had not been completed. This suggests a parallel to the first baths at Wroxeter and it seems possible that the natives were not at that time yet converted to the idea of a Roman way of life to the extent of putting money into a project for giving them a daily hot bath. For this, or some other reason, the first grandiose project failed and only later at some time in the second century was a bath-house eventually completed and in use. This was a very modest affair giving only the basic essentials and without even a plunge

bath. By the end of that century or the beginning of the next, this had been found inadequate and further rooms added. The later alterations involved moving the position of the main flue, the original one having burnt out. The evidence of the blocking in some of the doors suggests that finally the bath-house became used for domestic purposes but the earlier excavations had removed all the dating evidence for this phase. Wall, unlike the other British structures, has an aqueduct bringing a water supply from a spring on the hillside above the baths. One of the basic needs of the building would have been an ample water supply and drainage system. An interesting detail at Wall is a small lead drain at the level of the basement of the *caldarium*. This shows that enough water penetrated through the thick floor to require such an outlet.

When these plans are put together at the same scale it becomes clear that although there is considerable difference in detail the general pattern is much the same. The size and splendour of the first Wroxeter baths stands out in contrast to the others. Silchester is about half the size and may be compared with the auxiliary bath-house at Red House near Corbridge.<sup>7</sup> This military bath-house is important in preserving a late first century plan unimpaired by later alterations and additions. It was designed for a unit of a thousand and offers a possibility of assessing the numbers expected to use the town baths if one can thus equate civil with military needs. On this basis it would seem that about the same number could be accommodated at Silchester but not of course at the same time or even the same day. The first Wroxeter baths would easily take double the number and it is interesting to note that the second bath-house is about the same size, apart from the *palaestra*. This approximates to the built-up areas of the two towns, the defences at Wroxeter probably enclosed about 200 acres originally and those at Silchester, 107 acres. One cannot obviously pursue this kind of argument very far, since for example it would reduce the bath-house at Wall, a town of only 20 to 30 acres, to very modest dimensions indeed. There was clearly a minimum size and the first building to operate at Wall appears to be about half the size of that of Silchester, but this plan may need to be amended after further excavation.

## CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN

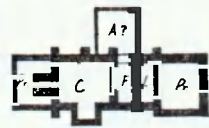
In considering the construction of the bath-house and the methods by which the heat was obtained and circulated one first turns to classical sources. There is a brief description given by Vitruvius, the master builder who was working about 27 B.C.<sup>8</sup> He writes on baths: "We must take care also that the hot baths for men and for women are adjacent and planned with the same aspects. For in this way it will follow that the same furnace and heating system will serve for both baths and their fittings. Three bronze tanks are to be placed above the furnace: one for the hot bath, the second for the tepid bath, a third for the cold bath.

NOTATION

- |                            |              |                        |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| P <sub>1</sub> PRAEFURNIUM | C CALDARIUM  | P <sub>2</sub> PISCINA |
| F FRIGIDARIUM              | L LACONICUM  | A APODYTERIUM          |
| T TEPIDARIUM               | CB COLD BATH |                        |

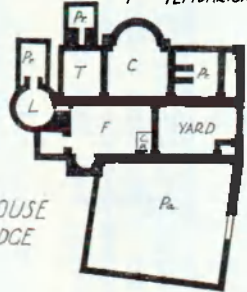
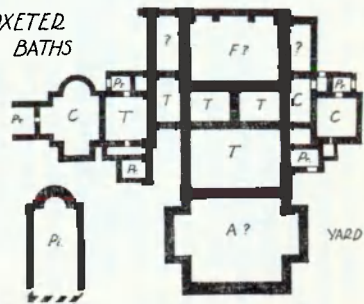
SCALE IN FEET

0 50 100 150

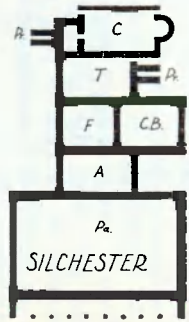


WALL 2ND PHASE

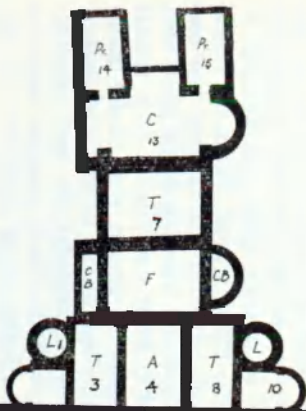
WROXETER  
2ND BATHS



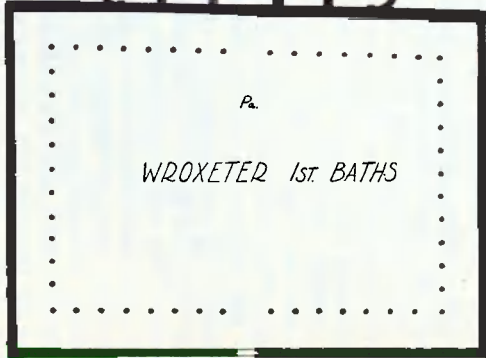
RED HOUSE  
CORBRIDGE



SILCHESTER



WROXETER 1st BATHS



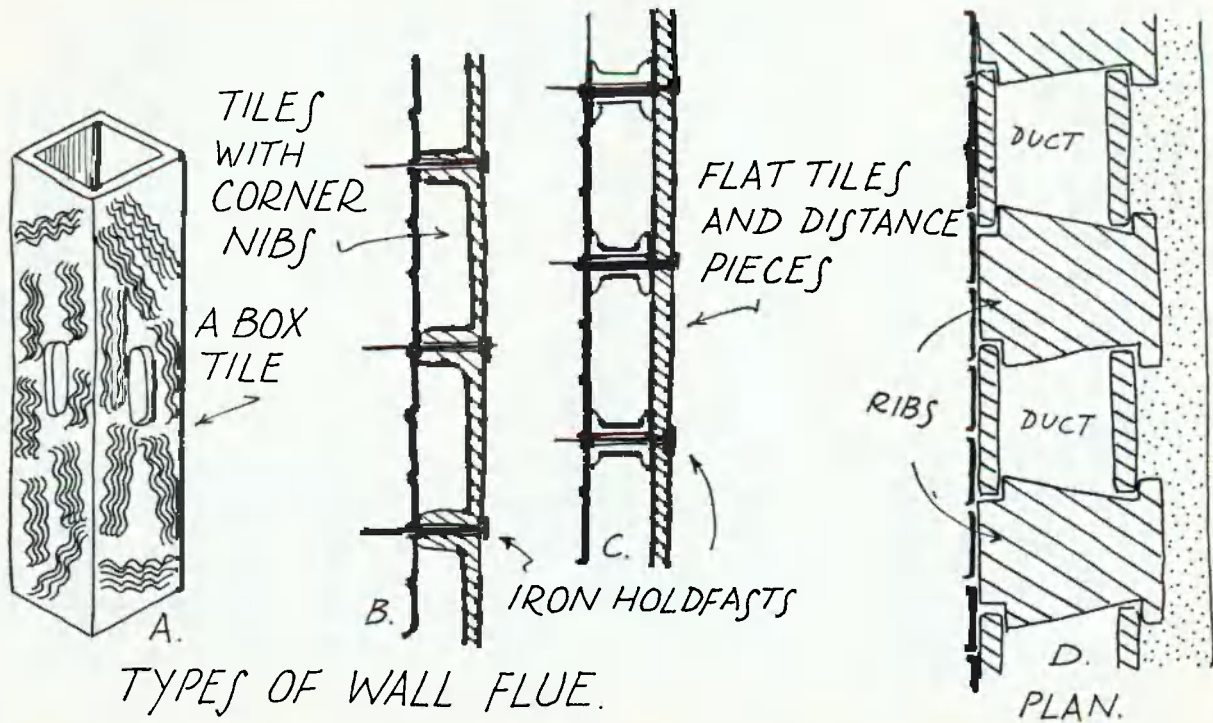
P.

They are to be so arranged that the hot water which flows from the tepid bath into the hot bath may be replaced by a like amount of water flowing down from the cold into the tepid bath. The vaulted chambers which contain the basins are to be heated from the common furnace. The hanging floors of the hot baths are to be made as follows:—first the ground is to be paved with eighteen inch tiles sloping towards the furnace, so that when a ball is thrown in it, it does not rest within, but comes back to the furnace room of itself. Thus the flames will more easily spread under the floor. On this pavement, piers of eight inch bricks are to be built at such intervals that two foot tiles can be placed above. The piers are to be two feet high. They are to be laid in clay worked up with hair, and upon them two foot tiles are to be placed to take the pavement. The vaulted ceilings will be more convenient if they are made of concrete.”<sup>9</sup>

Vitruvius then gives an account of how to deal with the problems of a timber roof and the care necessary to ensure that the heat and moisture does not affect the wood by protecting it with a false ceiling covered with plaster. Unfortunately this account is very short and the only other detail of interest is the method he describes of controlling the heat in the *caldarium*. “In the middle of the dome a light is to be left. From this a bronze tray is hung with chains; by the raising and lowering of the tray from the opening, the sweating is adjusted. The tray should be circular so that the force of the flame and the heat may be diffused equally from the centre over the rounded curve.” Although this sounds rather primitive, some kind of control of this nature is obviously required.

In Britain it is very rare that any Roman buildings survive much above floor level. There is the little known bath-house of the fort at Ravenglass in Cumberland where parts of the walls remain almost up to their full original height with traces of at least five small windows with internal splays.<sup>10</sup> One has to go to the continent and in particular Italy to study baths in any detail but unfortunately these structures have not been adequately published and in general only small-scale plans are available.<sup>11</sup> A notable exception to this are the Hunting Baths at Lepcis Magna in Tripoli. This building, only 100 yards from the sea-shore, was covered by drifting sand and was found and excavated by the Italians in 1932-3, and has been the subject of a special study.<sup>12</sup> By this remarkable chance, the greater part of the building had been preserved including some of the domed and vaulted roofs. The structural details, and in particular the roof construction, are most illuminating and with their help one can begin to visualise some of the British examples. It is clear that by the closing years of the second century, the Roman builders had moved a long way from the classical ideas of Vitruvius. One is now in the new age of concrete and the startling innovations in this medium introduced in Italy during the reign of Hadrian have now become the accepted form in the lesser provincial build-



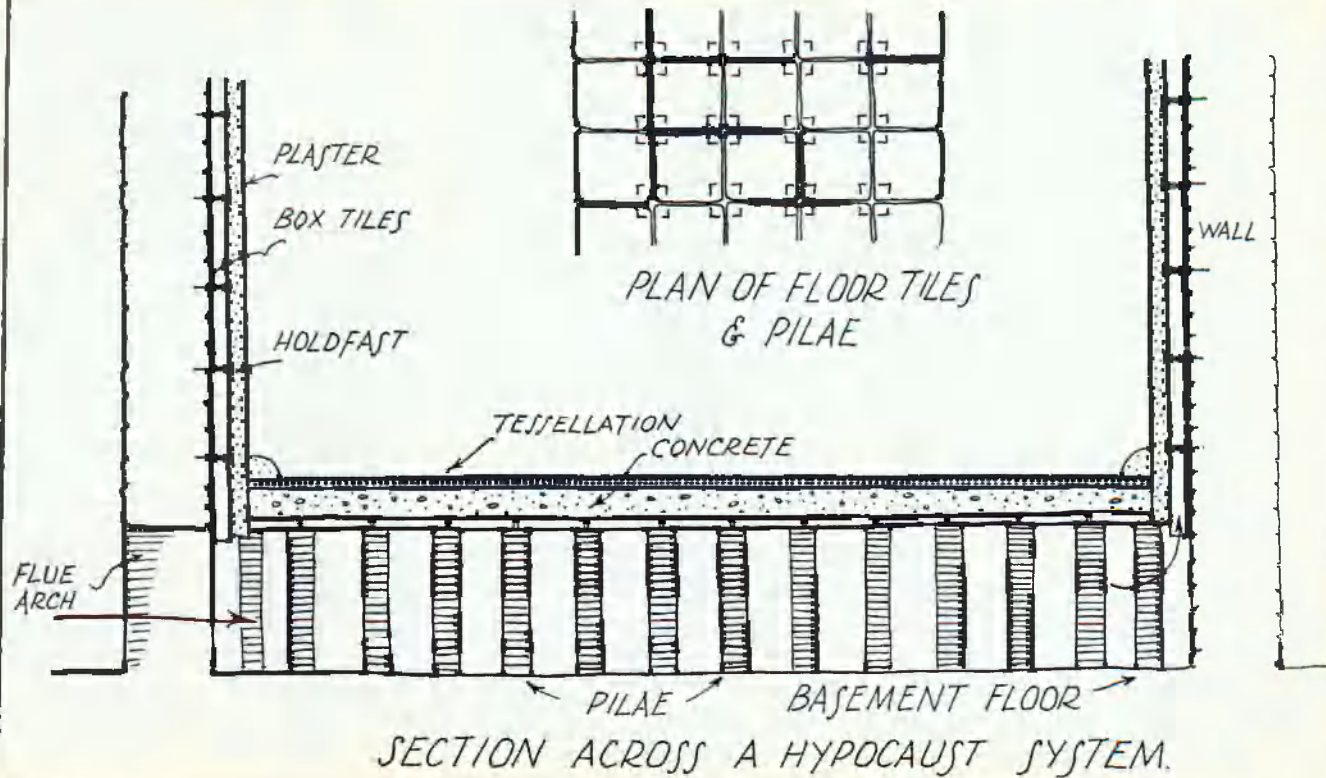


TYPES OF WALL FLUE.

ings. The free use of concrete was particularly well suited to bath-house construction with its multiplicity of complete and semi-vaults and domes needed for the different types of heated rooms. One is no longer concerned with the appearance from without, with the classical facade dominating the whole structure, but basic functionalism related to the inner planning and structure. Just how far these ideas penetrated into the British province is difficult to say but certainly their impact must have been felt. One can see in the early Wroxeter baths that the builders were much concerned with the front facade and the severely symmetrical arrangement shows a subservience to the classical approach. We need to know much more about the later civil bath-houses in Britain before it can be agreed that new conceptions were being developed here as well as in the wealthier provinces.

### CONSTRUCTIONAL DETAILS

There are many examples of the hypocaust system of heating introduced into Britain by the Romans. Almost every house of any size and pretension has at least a heated room and the method here is the same as that used in the bath-house. The idea is that of the "hanging floor" of Vitruvius. First a semi-basement is excavated and given a solid floor on which are erected columns of tiles usually about 9 inches square. These columns (*pilae*) are so spaced that a system of large tiles, each about 2 feet square, can rest upon them and on these upper tiles a concrete floor is laid, often as much as 9 to 12 inches thick and this again can be covered with a tessellated or mosaic pavement (fig. 3). The height of the columns varies considerably and this may be proportional to the amount of heat required and possibly might also be associated with the kind of fuel used, i.e., charcoal or wood. In the heated room of a house it is normal to find the columns only 2 to 3 feet high and in a small bath-house they are 3 to 4 feet high, but in a public bath-house like that at Wroxeter of the second period, they are as much as 6 to 7 feet. The stoke yard is on the outside of the building and the heat generated in the stoke hole (*prae-furnium*) usually at the end of a substantial flue arched over and which supported the large external boiler stand fed from a permanent supply source. The flue entered the building by an arch below the suspended floor. Inside the building and by the flue one usually finds more tile supports for boilers fed in turn from the external tank, along the lines suggested by Vitruvius. It is very rare that the actual bronze boiler (*testudo*) is found in position, but as one might expect such is the case at Pompeii in the Stabian Baths, on the women's side. It was of semi-cylindrical section and built over the flue in the thickness of the wall and it supplied hot water direct to one of the plunge baths. Some means was also needed for the supply of water-vapour in the *caldarium* and this could have been done by means of a shallow basin let into the floor near the flue. The water in the plunge baths could hardly have been hot enough for this purpose. It is



SECTION ACROSS A HYPOCAUST SYSTEM.

when we come to these interesting plumbing details that information is wanting.

The heat was induced into the basement by a system of vertical flues placed into or against the walls of the building. These provided the necessary draught to draw in the heat from the stoke hole. In the case of the modest heat needed in a living room or *tepidarium*, there are normally only flues in the corners, or if it is a large room, at intervals. These flues are built into chases either left by the builders for the purpose or cut into the wall. They were taken down below the floor and presumably found an outlet through the wall at about eaves level. In the older baths at Rome it is evident from a letter of Seneca<sup>13</sup> that heavy condensation on the walls of the *caldarium* must have been rather unpleasant for the bathers, not only was the water, now much cooled, running down the walls on to the floor but it was also dripping constantly from the vaulted roof. The problem was solved at some time in the first century by heating the walls with a jacket of flues all the way round (*tubulatio*). There was a difficult technical problem in this method when it came to the roof. This was solved in a variety of ways. The flues could hardly have finished half-way up the wall without an outlet as Mr. G. Boon has suggested,<sup>14</sup> because in this case no heat would have circulated at all. On the other hand it is not likely that every flue was given unimpeded draught. Some outlet was very necessary and in the case of Lepcis it is interesting to see that there are four flues emerging through the flat part of the roof below the domes of the plunge baths of the *caldarium*.<sup>15</sup> The jacketing thus stopped at the springing of the vault and was connected horizontally and provided with these outlets. There is evidence from the military bath-houses in Britain of an elaborate form of vaulting in which the flues were continued in the ribs by means of an ingenious system of tiles (fig. 2d).<sup>16</sup> Similar types of tile have been found at York but re-used in a tiled grave (now in the Yorkshire Museum).

The commonest form of jacketing is with the box-tile (fig. 2a). This is a rectangular box about 2 to 3 feet high, in which there are slots for ease of handling and the exterior is covered with combed markings to give a key for the plaster which covered the jacket. An alternative to this is the roller stamped impressions some makers gave to their box-tiles. These interesting designs, some of them quite decorative, are restricted to southern Britain.<sup>17</sup> These box-tiles were probably expensive and it is hardly surprising to find more economical means of achieving the same results. Two flat tiles with projecting ribs give the same effect if they are nailed together in position (fig. 2b) but there is also an even simpler version using completely flat tiles with bobbin-like distance pieces pierced to take the holdfast which spikes the whole assembly to the wall (fig. 2c). It is often from a careful study of the embedded parts of the iron holdfasts that we can reconstruct the jacketing, all other trace of which has disappeared.

In Britain one finds a great variety of building materials used in bath-houses. To lighten the heavy roof vaulting tufa was sometimes used. This material which occurs naturally can be either of volcanic or organic origin. It is light and can be sawn and its modern equivalent is the breeze-block. One of the difficult problems in a bath would have been that of waterproofing the floors. The Roman builders soon found that a serviceable kind of concrete which was fairly watertight could be obtained from mixing pounded bricks or tile with lime, the resultant compounds give a stable water-resistant material.<sup>18</sup> The floors of most bath-houses have this kind of covering or bedding for the *tesserae* with large half-round mouldings round the edges where floor meets wall. There are also slabs of fine sandstone or even marble lining the plunge baths and always an attempt at internal decoration with painted wall plaster. In this medium it is becoming clear that Britain was not far behind the other provinces.<sup>19</sup>

#### THE GERMAN EXPERIMENT<sup>20</sup>

In the winter of 1951/52 a German heating engineer, Fritz Kretzschmer, performed an experiment at Saalburg. A small room in the reconstructed Roman fort was used 5.14 by 4.42 metres which originally had been merely a heated living room with a pillared hypocaust. In this was now fixed round the walls a jacket of flues (*tubulatio*). Both charcoal and wood were used and it was found that the former was better for the smaller type of hypocaust and only about one kilogram per hour was needed on an average. The fire was started with split box wood and almost immediately charcoal added. Two and a half hours later the flue was closed down to a slit 8 cm. wide. "The visible flames," he writes, "now disappeared and the burning became a kind of glowing similar to that of a coke fire. I can find no better description than the one Statius had given '*Ubi languidus ignis inerrat aedibus et tenuem volunt hypocausta vaporem.*'"<sup>21</sup> The fire remained like this to the end of the experiment, the door was always closed except during short moments for stoking. . . . Stoking, once the fire had started, was needed only two or three times a day. There was very little ash in the stoke hole and the absence of a forced draught caused no soot or ash to be deposited inside. This explains the clean appearance of a hypocaust system which has caused many an excavator to wonder if it had ever been used. During the experiment the room temperature rose steadily from 10 degrees C. up to about 23 degrees C.

As Kretzschmer points out, this is a very economical form of heating as it makes full use of the hot air whereas in a normal modern fire or stove most of the fuel is used for heating the chimney and outside atmosphere rather than the interior of the house. Clearly also this experiment was designed only for a small heated room. The large bath-houses would have needed much greater heat and a better draught and in this context the blazing logs of Ausonius become understandable.

In the bath-house of the ancient world, a social facility was provided which has no modern parallel. The Middle Ages in Europe saw a return to primitive conditions of dirt and squalor, with its attendant plagues and disease. Christianity imposed strong mental fetters which maintained ignorance and a limited outlook even in the more intelligent. But the dawn of modern ideas which has swept much of this outmoded thinking away has failed to restore many of the classical conceptions. In architecture and landscape planning we have to-day slipped lamentably backwards and in spite of great scientific and technical advance the communal baths with its invigorating system of hot and cold rooms, dry and humid as required, remains forgotten, and mourned only by the antiquary. Do we learn from history that we learn nothing from history?

#### NOTES

- 1 *Excavations on the Site of the Roman Town at Wroxeter in 1912*, 13, 14.
- 2 *J. R. S.*, (1927) xvii, p. 220.
- 3 *Arch.*, lix, p. 341.
- 4 *Arch.*
- 5 *Ep.*, V, 6.
- 6 *Ur-Schweiz*, xxii (1958) p. 17.
- 7 *Arch. Ael.*, 4, xxxvii (1959) p. 85.
- 8 *De Architectura*, Bk. V, Chap. 5.
- 9 *Loeb*, Trans., 1931.
- 10 R. G. Collingwood, *Roman Eskdale*, p. 45; *Cumb. and West Trans.*
- 11 Daremberg-Saglio, *Thermae*.  
*Dictionnaire des antiquites grecques et romaines*.
- 12 *Arch.*, 93 (1949) p. 165.
- 13 *Ep.*, 90, 25.
- 14 *Roman Silchester*, 1957, p. 110.
- 15 *Pls.* xxxvii d, and xlvi.
- 16 As at Chesters; *Handbook to the Roman Wall*, 10th Ed., p. 94.
- 17 A. W. G. Lowther, *A Study of the Patterns on Roman Flue-tiles and their Distribution*.
- 18 *Arch. J.*, cxi (1954) p. 127.
- 19 Joan Liversidge, "Wall Painting in Roman Britain," *Antiquity and Survival*, ii (1958) p. 373.
- 20 *Saalburg Jahrbuch*, xii, 1953.
- 21 The languid flame wanders aimlessly through the hypocaust without speed.

#### NOTES AND QUERIES

Miss A. C. Walsh of Chelford referring to the origin of the word *folklore* (see p. 41 *The Cheshire Historian*, No. 9) writes: "*Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* gives W. J. Thoms (1803-85) as editor of *The Athenaeum* and the word *folklore* as coined in 1846." She adds "I have never read that he had any Cheshire connection."

Dr. Malcolm Pittock of Crewe writes: "I am afraid that the surmise that Mr. Thoms, editor of *Notes and Queries* was a local man is very unlikely. The *O.E.D.*, by the way, gives the first use of *folklore* as 1840."

Continued on page 40

# Wirral Whispers

by ANNE ANDERSON

## MR. ORANGE

IN "Poulton-Lancelyn," published eleven years ago by Roger Lancelyn Green, items are given from the account books of Priscilla Greene. In 1711, she records the entrance into school life of the son and heir as follows:—

"When Neddy went forst to school, for  
Entranc . . . . . 00. 02. 06. and  
his schoolmaster is Mr. Orange."

One naturally wonders how far from home this little seven-year-old boy's school was situated.

In the first volume of *The Cheshire Sheaf* it is interesting to note:—

"Mr. Orange's school was kept at the house in St. John's Churchyard which adjoined the fine old porch, and impinged on the west aisle. The house was afterwards pulled down by the late Marquis of Westminster."

## TRANMERE WOOD FOR BOTANISTS

Mr. J. E. Allison, in a series entitled *Early Claughton and Its Neighbours*, now running in Christ Church Parish Magazine, transforms for us a familiar spot in Birkenhead:—

"Beyond Whetstone Lane, the southern slope was covered with the trees of Tranmere Wood, of which the only remaining trace lies in the name."

Merseyside's first book on local wild flowers, published in 1839, has a note about the locality:—

"Tranmere Wood should be diligently examined in the early spring, as it abounds with most of the favourite spring flowers so welcome to the botanist after the long winter. Tranmere Wood is an excellent field for mosses, lichen and fungi during the winter; but particularly for mosses of the commoner species which delight in moist, shady conditions. These are to be found there during the winter."

The book specially mentions wood anemone, common daffodils, millet grass and small wood reed as growing in or near the wood.

Can you imagine gathering wild daffodils in Lower Tranmere to-day?

## MOCK BEGGAR HALL

Leasowe Castle, on the north west coast of Wirral, was erected in 1593, and was known originally as "New Hall." Later, however, it was called Mock Beggar Hall, a very ancient sailor's nickname for a large, lone, inhospitable house. It may have been derived from the original appellation of the coast, which it yet retains, to the entrance to the Mersey; but it seems more likely that Mock Beggar Wharf took its name from the Hall.

*The Cheshire Sheaf* states that the term was not uncommon.

A large mansion at Aldford (Cheshire) and another at Clayton, Ipswich, were so called.

Nor was the name restricted to inhospitable mansions, but also applied to groups of rocks which, in the distance, had the form of towers and chimneys of large houses; as, for example, Grand Tor, Robin Hood's Stride and Mock Beggar Hall, near Matlock, Derbyshire.

## LOCAL WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Have you ever bought butter by the "DISH"?

The term is, we believe, restricted to Cheshire.

The weight of a "dish" of butter as it used to be sold in Chester Market was one and a half pounds.

These early country measures have fallen out of use, but how interesting they are.

Potatoes used to be sold by the measure, the weight of the measure, however, differed according to its use.

A measure of potatoes purchased at a seed shop for planting was sixty pounds. Purchased in the market for eating, it was eighty-four pounds. At farmhouses, it reached the generous figure of ninety pounds. Cheese was a hundred and twelve pounds to the hundred weight; but a factor got the "long hundred," nearly a hundred and twenty pounds. We talk of the length of an Irish mile; but the Cheshire acre is two and a half times more than the ordinary measure.

## "GOD'S CROFT"

The Cheshire prophet, Nixon, stated that when the tribulations he had forecast came to pass, the only safe place to be in would be "God's Croft."

Where is God's Croft?

There is a farm of that name between Frodsham and Helsby. There is also a safe and sheltered cove between Eastham and Frodsham, which used to be known by that name.

*The Cheshire Sheaf*, however, throws new light on the subject, for there we read:—

"Mr. Joseph Mayer printed the following article for circulation among friends:—

"The famous Nixon sitting on Storeton Hill was asked by his friend, the miller, where a man should find safety on the Judgment Day? The seer replied, "In God's Croft betwixt Mersey and Dee." This mystic utterance was long accepted in its literal meaning and it gave solace to generations of honest yeomen who dwelt on the promontory upon which the prophet looked. In our day, persons trained to the guessing of riddles have ingeniously found another interpretation. By this interpretation they are brought to signify that between Mercy and Condemnation (spelt with the initial D after the

Continued on page 20



# Whence Come Cheshire Folk ?

by DOROTHY SYLVESTER, M.A.

OUR own origins are among the most fascinating of the many unanswered questions which history poses. We know something of the history of early movement in the country as a whole, but far less about the period between the later Norman kings and the Tudors, when Englishmen ceased to be distinguished as Saxons, Norse, Danes, and Normans and became merged into a nation: a nation, moreover, which was on the whole tied by the social and economic conditions prevailing in manor and borough, and unable to move at will from place to place. During the sixteenth century, the keeping of parish registers recording baptisms, marriages, and burials became compulsory, and a phase was thus initiated in which it became possible, if not easy, to trace family history and link it with the parish or parishes concerned.

We have no evidence that Cheshire was inhabited prior to the second millenium B.C., but during the Neolithic period Cheshire became a highway between North Wales, the Trent valley, and the Peak District, and we may assume that it was thinly populated by the short, dark Iberian people who came into Britain from the western Mediterranean countries during the few hundred years preceding the Bronze Age.

These Iberian or Mediterranean folk, who were among the earliest, if not the earliest, in this area, were succeeded by wave upon wave of people of the type who for centuries continued to sail to Britain across the Bay of Biscay, and to use the western peninsulas of France and Britain as stepping stones on their migratory routes. They formed the basis of the population of Highland Britain and until the Anglo-Saxon invasions, inhabited wide portions of the lowlands as well. When, from the fifth century of the Christian era, predominantly Nordic types flooded in, and penetrated the plains by way of the south—and east—flowing rivers, the short, dark peoples were forced westwards to take refuge in the hills, or survived as minority groups in marsh and woodland.

But although in the south-east of England only pockets of the aboriginal inhabitants survived, in Wales, the Pennines, Cornwall, Devon, and the Welsh Borderland the population remained predominantly Mediterranean, fairer Anglo-Saxons declining in numbers in the more westerly and more inaccessible regions.

In Cheshire and Lancashire the Anglian invasion was late and comparatively sparse, dating probably from some years after the Battle of Chester which gave the Northumbrians victory over the British of the northern Welsh Border (*circa* A.D. 615). In the late Old English period, occasional Anglian villages still lay widely separated by stretches of country in which the hamlets

and the scattered homesteads of the British Cornovii formed a characteristic pattern, for prior to its penetration by Northumbrian and Mercian invaders, the Cheshire area had been part of the kingdom of Powys, and perhaps at one time of Teyrnllwg.

British or Celtic place-names, dialect words, and settlement forms have persisted from that time, and despite Border forays, our relationships with Wales have generally been close, the more so perhaps because Cheshire itself only became part of the English realm in 1536. Yet the scatter of English place-names is wide, and in addition there are Irish-Norse names in north Wirral, and Danish place-name elements in eastern Cheshire. The Domesday landholders of Cheshire included many with Scandinavian names, and a preponderance of Normans who from the date of the Conquest constituted the new land-owning class.

It is possible to trace the ancestry of some Cheshire families back to the Norman Conquest, and many more manorial families can go back a few hundred years. In answer to the question "Whence come Cheshire folk?" the county families offer the least difficulty.

But to answer the question for the rest of the population is a far harder task, for it is almost impossible to trace the antecedents of most families before the introduction of parish registers in the sixteenth century. Even supposing the registers of the church or churches in question survive, the building up of a genealogical tree is a complex task and involves long and patient searching. To do this type of enquiry for one or two families is sufficiently demanding, but to attempt it on a scale large enough to permit sociological and regional results to be forthcoming, would prove a herculean enterprise. Nevertheless, parish registers constitute a valuable and little used reservoir of research material for the social historian and geographer.

Between the early registers and the first Census of Population of 1801 there is a long interval, and it is only from this later date that any accurate calculations can be made of the increase in population and of the extent of population movements. In addition to the bare statistics, several of the early Census volumes include most interesting footnotes about unusual migrations, the source of groups of workers, and other matters of human interest which are like a flash of light across the impersonal figures of the Census columns.

As the nineteenth century advanced, it became increasingly fashionable to compile local directories, and for Cheshire, White's *Directory* was written almost 200 years after Leycester's *History*. In fact most of Leycester's lists of charterers and freeholders in the Bucklow Hundred (Book II, *Particular Remarks concerning Cheshire*, 1673) were compiled for the year 1660 or, more infrequently, for 1666. Thus White's *Directory of Cheshire*, 1860, makes possible some comparison of the same places with a 200 year interval, and makes available lists of Cheshire surnames other

than those of manorial families for most of the villages of Bucklow Hundred.

A comparison of surnames listed for the same places in 1660 and 1860 is by no means devoid of surprises. In Barnton, Cogshall, Mere, Oilerton, and Thelwall, not a single name is common to the two lists. True, neither list is complete, and cottagers are omitted in both cases. Five rural centres are also a small sample on which to judge results, but they are by no means exceptional, and the same surnames crop up in neighbouring townships. Hence, even allowing for the failure of the male line in some families, the sample seems to suggest that there was rather more local movement of people in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries in remote rural areas than might have been supposed. No doubt the acquisition, loss, and exchange of land was a major factor involved in the earlier part of the two hundred years.

Having failed to establish continuity of occupation by the same families in the smaller places, what results are to be found in the larger villages? Unfortunately, Leycester includes no lists for Knutsford, but in the case of Lymm the names Percival, Ditchfield, Steel, Rowlinson, and Davies are common to the 1666 and 1860 lists, though the last four in 1666 were charterers from other places as in the case of Steel who came from Reddish, and Rowlinson who was "of Statham."

The lovely village of Mobberley is still more rewarding, for the names Symcock, Hewitt, Burgess, Holland, Blackshaw, and Mallory occur at each date. A Mallory was Rector in 1860, and it was a Mallory of Mobberley who will go proudly down to history because he met his death in the assault on the summit of Everest.

A very fruitful line of enquiry could be followed were surnames to be listed from neighbouring groups of parishes, following the registers through their span of the last few centuries, noting those which were new and those which occurred continuously, and might thus be termed typical Cheshire surnames. For example, a comparison of a number of lists in White enables one to pick out such names as Dodd, Dutton, Bourne, Podmore, Cartwright, Clarke, Henshall, Crewe, Green, Proudlove, Shaw, Barratt, Fitton, Holland, Lea, Wainwright, Bowyer, Stubbs, Whittaker, Barlow, Hulse, and Platt as surnames which are met with again and again in the County. A similar method could be employed for earlier periods using documents such as the Inquisitions Post Mortem, the registers, and private estate collections of deeds and rentals.

Many of the names selected from White are found in other parts of England, but among them are some which are obviously local in origin: the surnames which are also the names of places in the County, such as Dutton, Lea, and Crewe.

Not only at that date, but at many earlier ones, there are references to Welsh surnames, and this suggests another line of

enquiry as to the origin of Cheshire folk. In how many cases are the surnames traceable ultimately to Wales or to identifiable places in England or elsewhere?

A search through White soon reveals places in which Welsh surnames were to be found in 1860. In Audlem there were at that date three families named Jones, two named Davies, two named Evans, and others called Morgan, Edwards, and Thomas. In Tattenhall fifteen out of a total of 109 householders listed bore Welsh names; in Eastham, eight out of twenty-five. Of 150 names in the Tarporley directory, some fifteen were Welsh, and the same number were Cheshire village names, but in Tattenhall only six surnames derived from Cheshire villages.

Leycester's lists revealed a few Welsh surnames, but one must remember that true surnames were not generally current in Wales at that date and that the comparison of numbers of Welshmen with others is unsound from this source. But by 1860, the names Jones, Williams, Hughes, Evans, Davies, Roberts, Morgan, Edwards, and Povey were often to be met with in Cheshire. And, after all, we can never know how many Cheshire folk derive from British stock as distinct from Anglian, Scandinavian, or Norman, and who therefore are as 'Welsh' in origin as those who bear a Welsh name.

Another quick test of the regionalization of surnames can be made by perusing the telephone directories. For example, the Stoke-on-Trent directory shows that, although south-east Cheshire and north-west Staffordshire adjoin, there are striking differences in the frequency and range of surnames. Staffordshire place-names are comparatively rare as surnames in the Cheshire area, and Cheshire ones numerous. Indeed for south-east Cheshire, quite distant Cheshire village names are recognizable as surnames, while in the Potteries comparatively distant Staffordshire village names far outnumber more adjacent Cheshire ones. One point of interest is that whereas the surname Salt is frequently found in north-west Staffordshire, it is almost unknown in Cheshire.

Apart from the parish registers, all the sources so far quoted suffer from the common disadvantage of being incomplete as records of the families in any given place. Statistically, they are therefore of only limited value. But Eardley's *Almanac* published for a series of years a complete house-by-house directory of Crewe residents, and offers a rich quarry for this type of study. The town has grown up entirely within the last 120 years, and when the 1917 *Almanac* was published, from which the ensuing lists have been made, was an urban centre of only some seventy-five years' growth. Socially it can claim perhaps to be unique, and that was truer in 1917 than now, when over half the working population was employed by the railway company.

One would have supposed that this very fact would have made possible a greater recruitment of distant labour than in the average industrial town, and no doubt a certain number of families did come to Crewe from comparatively remote parts of the country.

But if this was the case, the proportion and range of Cheshire village and town names among Crewe surnames is all the more interesting.

In 1850, Crewe was only an infant town, but already there were families settled there whose names were to persist through the next hundred years: Allen, Allman, Bailey, Cooke, Dale, Foster, Hall, Harding, Lindop, Manley, Mason, Tomkinson, Tomlinson, Vickers, Webb, Wood, and Yoxall among them. Welsh names too were comparatively numerous including Edwards, Ellis, Evans, Griffith(s), Jones, Lewis, Morris, Roberts, and Williams, and by 1860 there were added Humphries, Lloyd, Morgan, and Thomas. In the complete 1917 list, Jones occurred more often than any other surname (occupying four pages), the Davieses filled two and a half pages (the Smiths only two), and the Thomases came fourth with a page and a half to their credit.

Among early Crewe families with Cheshire village surnames were Breretons, Duttons and Edges. A number of the people with Cheshire village names may have reached Crewe, not direct from the place in question, but indirectly. But an examination of the Wybunbury parish registers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries revealed something of the extent to which Crewe names had been found prior to the industrial era in the immediate locality.

An analysis of surnames traceable to various counties and to Wales and Scotland in this *Almanac* may thus be assumed to have considerable interest, and a count has been made for Crewe for 1917. At that date, the surnames based on place-names in Cheshire far outnumber those deriving from any other county. They were: Ashley, Astbury, Astle(s), Baddiley, Bagguley, Bebbington, Beeston, Bickerton, Birtles, Bostock, Bowdon, Broomhall, Bramhall, Brereton, Burton (possibly Staffordshire), Clutton, Copenhall, Crewe, Dutton, Edgeley (possibly Shropshire), Edleston, Hassall, Hough, Huxley, Kelsall, Lawton, Lea, Mellor (possibly Lancashire), Mottram, Partington, Peover, Poole, Pownall, Ravenscroft, Sandbach, Smallwood (possibly Staffordshire), Snelson (possibly Buckinghamshire), Runcorn, Timperley, and Whitby (possibly Yorkshire). Although some may well not have reached Crewe direct from the place after which they were named, the cumulative evidence of their Cheshire origin is too strong to be resisted.

By contrast, no other county can muster a list of more than fifteen surnames of this type occurring in Crewe in 1917, Lancashire heading all others with fourteen definitely and one possibly Lancashire in origin. They are: Chatterton, Cheetham, Eccles, Halliwell, Lancaster, Leyland, Litherland, Oldham, Pemberton, Pennington, Prestwich, Turton, and Whalley. Staffordshire provides the names Betley, Burslem, Hanley (possibly Worcestershire), Lichfield, Penk, Podmore, and Tunstall, all but two of which are within twenty miles of Crewe. Lesser lists are associated with Derbyshire (Brassington, Buxton, Cresswell, Hayfield); Yorkshire (Latham, Wakefield); Shropshire (Adderley, Badger, Pitchford);

Leicestershire (Shenton); Hertfordshire (Hitchin); Essex (Chignall); Wiltshire (Salisbury); Flintshire (Buckley); and Monmouthshire (Rumney).

By 1917 Hughes, James, Price, Maddock(s), Maddox, Phil(l)ips, Powell, and Owen were added to the list of Welsh patronymics. There was also a relatively modest number of Scottish names including Campbell, Mavor, and forty-three 'Macs,' but with the exception of five McDonalds, only an occasional Scottish name was repeated. Irish names were remarkably rare, especially—or perhaps in view of—the number of Irish casual labourers who came over for the harvest in the later nineteenth century. It is evident that few of them settled.

There seems little doubt that the majority of Crewe's immigrants were Cheshire folk, with Welsh and Lancastrians next in order of importance.

Once more the effectiveness of the Ellesmere moraine and the Pennines acting as barriers to human movement, as well as physical watersheds, is remarkably demonstrated. Cheshire looks principally west and north, but is to a remarkable degree self-contained.

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Continued from page 14

frank old fashion) sinful men may hope to be saved. This reading is now accepted, and dwellers in this part are deprived of the comforting assurance of the future which their forefathers held."

#### "CHARLIE TREES"

At a recent visit of The Bromborough Society to the Welsh mansion "Garthewin," attention was drawn to a group of ancient Scots Pines known as "Charlie Trees," in the glorious vista of wood and mountain stretching out before the Hall. They had been planted to show the Wynne's allegiance to the Jacobite cause.

It was most intriguing to note in an old copy of *The Sheaf* that an advertisement appeared in *The Chester Chronicle* of 14th January, 1791, which was worded as follows:—

"R. Wynne Esq.'s CYCLE will be held at the Eagles Inn, Wrexham on Monday the 17th inst. Dinner at three O'clock. Gartherwin Jan. 6th 1791."

In the *Cambrian Quarterly Magazine* for April 1829, it is stated that THE CYCLE, the members of which are gentlemen resident in the neighbourhood was, originally, a secret assembly for the purpose of furthering the pretensions of Prince Charles Edward to the crown of Great Britain. It has now become a merely social meeting.

# The Changing Scene in the Township of Higher Bebington, Wirral

by G. F. A. WILMOT, M.A.

## TWENTIETH CENTURY

I have tried to emphasise that the medieval economy of Higher Bebington died but slowly. The progressive ideas of the new quarry company and the urbanisation of Rock Park had changed the area to some extent but in 1900, Higher Bebington was still very much of a village. Stripped of Rock Park, its activities had tended in the period 1880-1900, to become even more concentrated upon the village proper. The area was still remote from its neighbours owing to poor transport facilities, even the quarry tramway remained until its closure as a purely stone carrying undertaking.

Thus, in 1897, E. W. Cox speaking to the Lancashire and Cheshire Historic Society in Liverpool<sup>1</sup> could perhaps be forgiven for thinking that the villagers of Higher Bebington spoke a Welsh "patois," an idea from which stemmed his romantic theme that Higher Bebington was an enclave of the ancient Celts. The language of the villagers had become so untouched from external influences that it had taken on an archaic foreign sounding form, in striking contrast to the expanding urban areas of Merseyside, only two miles away to the north.

In appearance, Higher Bebington was typical of many Cheshire villages in the rural fastnesses of the County. The "conjoined" cottages of Nathaniel Hawthorne were still there and at the Mount Road-Village Road crossroads stood three farmhouses. The farm in the south-western angle remains, but much renovated to-day. Of the others no trace remains, except a gatepost of the 1752 farmstead, leaning sadly at a forlorn angle, a reminder of a forgotten day, on the north-east side of the cross-roads.

Woodhey in 1900 looked as it had fifty years before. The relegated importance of the old Chester Road with the cutting of the new link, had left the hamlet rather as a vestigial remain. Scattered farmsteads stood on the southern boundary where an old inn (The Needless Inn) now the Needless Farm served a dispersed community.

But the township of Higher Bebington was on the brink of great changes. The population of the area remained steady—1,504 in 1901: 1,689 in 1911, and 1,765 in 1921. An estimated figure for 1931<sup>2</sup> would be in the nature of 5,000 and to-day the population is presumed to be over 15,000.

The final closure of the quarry in 1921, which for so long had kept Higher Bebington a distinct community, led, paradoxically, the way for this expansion. There was a general de-population in the area of the villagers whose forbears had for generations made a livelihood from quarrying and farming. Agriculture

declined because of the attractions of employment in urban Merseyside. With the disappearance of the traditional industries, the tide of the ever-advancing Merseyside suburbia could not be stemmed.

The King's Park estate, a fifty acre strip bounded by King's Road, King's Lane and the Northern stream boundary was sold by auction in 1917, although the tithe had been vested in the Church by Mr. King. This area was completely built over by 1926. King's Road and King's Lane were improved and were no longer gated private roads. The Estate was cut off from reasonable transport facilities until 1928 when Birkenhead Corporation ran a service to the Borough boundary at Cavendish Drive.

The urbanisation of the area led to a re-forging of the link with Lower Bebington as administrative changes in 1924 combined a number of urban districts, including Higher and Lower Bebington into Bebington-cum-Bromborough Urban District Council. Meanwhile, the north-western slopes of the township were being developed and a new road—Thornton Road—was laid out by Lord Leverhulme to replace the heavily burdened footpath. Soon the Crosville 'bus service to Parkgate was using this new route. The Woodhey sector was receiving attention in the period about 1930 and a number of houses were built to the north side of Town Lane.

A significant development between 1930 and 1935 was the linking of the King's Park estate with the village proper by the making of a good road from King's Lane to Gorsey Hey. Previously the only link had been a muddy trackway, impassable in a wet winter.

The years 1930-1935 were ones of tremendous growth in Higher Bebington. The areas around the Parish Church, the village itself, Gorsey Hey and Brackenwood as far as the Lower Bebington boundary were all built over at this time. Tragically, on the other hand, in the zeal for building and modernisation, many remnants of bygone Higher Bebington were pulled down without ceremony in the same period.

Building continued apace until the war. 'Bus services had been extended by 1932 to Gorsey Hey and by 1934 to New Ferry. The fields on the west side of the King's Park estate gave way to new roads and the Broadway area estate at this time. The southern area was affected in a different fashion by the turning over of a tract of farmland south of Brackenwood into a golf course, but the expansion of the Cross Lane estate in Lower Bebington spread out a few tentacles of bricks and mortar into this sector of Higher Bebington.

The new urban status of the Urban District of Bebington-cum-Bromborough, resulted in the Municipal Borough status being accorded to Bebington by the granting of a Charter in 1935.<sup>3</sup> Higher Bebington's identity as a separate community was thus further obscured by this later administrative change which made the new Borough a much larger administrative unit than the older former Urban District.



The Second World War had the effect akin to stopping a moving film show and giving a ten year pause in the picture of Higher Bebington. Bombing, although affecting the area on a number of occasions, had with the exception of the older property of the Woodhey area, left few lasting scars on the township.

Since the war, the process of urbanisation has become complete. The township is now almost wholly suburban. After having made good war damage, building has taken the form of filling in the few remaining blanks in the continuous pattern of houses. The most significant development has been to the south of Gorsey Hey where a whole new housing area has been developed from the poor heathy land. It is rapidly encroaching on the land of the only remaining farm in the township—the Needless Farm on the southern boundary. Woodhey is being re-planned, the gaps in Higher Bebington Road are being filled, as is the land for so long waste between King's Lane and the Parish Church.

Thus, the urban revolution has been wrought in 30 years. An integrated transport network takes residents to all parts of Wirral and the only classes who live and work in Higher Bebington are those concerned with general services, food distribution, shops, nursing, teaching and administration. One farm remains and there are a few scattered holdings.

#### NOTES

1 Transactions Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Soc., 1897.

2 In 1931, the figures are not separated for the Urban District of Bebington-cum-Bromborough.

3 The older name *Bebington* was decided upon for the whole Borough and the more recent name of Bromborough omitted from the title.

#### CONCLUSION

The past has been swept away before the seemingly endless tide of new houses. The village community is all but forgotten. Higher Bebington ceases to-day to exist as a definable unit. Soon, even the old Higher Bebington will be forgotten as the last few remnants of former days finally disappear.

But, before the area becomes wholly accepted as simply part of the present great Merseyside dormitory, go out and try and piece together something of the past while time still remains. For it is only by an understanding of the past that the contemporary scene can be fully understood and appreciated. Only in this way can the personality of an area come truly to life.

And, before it is too late, take a walk in the summer twilight along Mount Road ridge. The long shadows of the pine woods conjure the idea of a much denser woodland and the hills of Wales look near and full of foreboding as if ready for the dreaded border incursions of a millenium ago. To the east of the road, a vision of the old village can be conjured.

Go to the Tranmere boundary at King's Road. Look over the allotments where the old stream remains, if somewhat parched. As in Anglo-Saxon times, the stream is still an important boundary, and now is a Borough and Parliamentary divide, even though

the original reasons for its choice have for centuries been no longer operative.

The past is still there and can never be really eradicated. In the present Higher Bebington, however, it is extraordinarily difficult to re-discover. The exercise is almost akin to ghost hunting.

#### APPENDIX

##### Enemy Air Raids affecting the Township of Higher Bebington

This is not an official list but every effort has been taken to ensure absolute accuracy. The majority of the facts were checked at the time.

508 alerts or raids took place during the war, the first being on 25th June, 1940 (12.30-1.20 a.m.), and the last on 29th December, 1944 (8.10-8.30 a.m.).

Night of	Areas affected
2/3 September, 1940	Incendiary bombs at Woodhey and bombs near southern boundary.
6/7 September, 1940	Bombs in the Gorsey Hey area.
26/27 September, 1940	Bombs at Kirkway, off Broadway.
21/22 October, 1940	Bombs in Gorsey Hey area.
2/3 November, 1940	Scattered incendiary bombs in Gorsey Hey area.
28/29 November, 1940	Bombs in Heyville Road, off Higher Bebington Road.
21/22 December, 1940	Incendiary bombs in Woodhey area.
8/9 February, 1941	Unexploded bomb discovered in King's Lane (presumed dropped on 8/9 February).
12/13 March, 1941	Heavy bombing raid on the Cheshire side of the Mersey and many bomb and landmine incidents in Higher Bebington. Serious damage by land mines on Storeton ridge and near the Prenton boundary. A number of bombs on the King's Park estate and near the Tranmere boundary. The old Woodhey area destroyed by land mines. Gorsey Hey area and Lower Bebington boundary many bomb incidents and one land mine. Rock Park severely affected.
13/14 March, 1941	Many small incidents, chiefly due to incendiary bombs.
7/8 April, 1941	Pinewoods along the Storeton ridge set alight from Higher Bebington village to the Prenton boundary. Bombs in King's Lane allotments and in Woodhey area.
26/27 April, 1941	Incendiary bombs in King's Park estate and in Higher Bebington village.
1/2 May, 1941	Bombs in Rock Lane West, King's Road near the Church and incendiary bombs in King's Park and village areas.
2/3 May, 1941	Four bombs in the King's Park estate.
3/4 May, 1941	Incendiary bombs in Woodhey area.
5/6 May, 1941	Bomb incident in Woodhey area.
6/7 May, 1941	Many bombs in Rock Park area.
31 May/1 June, 1941	Bomb incidents in Rock Park area.
24/25 June, 1941	Rock Park area affected by high explosive and incendiary bombs. Pinewoods along Storeton ridge again set alight.
22/23 October, 1941	King's Park area and village affected by bombs. Parish Church closed for one week because of unexploded bomb in Vicarage grounds.
1/2 November, 1941	Heavy bomb dropped in Town Lane, causing a 70 foot crater. Bombs in village and in south area. Incendiary bombs at Brackenwood and Woodhey. Incidents also in Rock Park.

# Cheshire History from the County Records

by ELIZABETH E. BEAZLEY

(ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST)

A survey of the Cheshire County Records has already appeared in *The Cheshire Historian* (No. 3, 1953). The aim of the present article is to illustrate the sort of information which can be extracted from those records, and to give some indication of the many aspects of local history touched on by them.

Of the official records housed at the County Record Office, Chester Castle, the largest accumulation, apart from the administrative records of the County Council itself, is that of the Court of Quarter Sessions, whose records date from 1559 to the present date.

Until the Local Government reforms of the nineteenth century and the development of the structure of local government as we know it to-day, local administration as well as justice was the concern and responsibility of the Justices of the Peace in Quarter Sessions. From the reigns of Henry VIII, and more particularly of Queen Elizabeth I, the sphere of influence of the Justices was increasingly extended, so that in time it came to cover the upkeep and repair of roads and bridges, the licensing and control of ale houses, the regulation of wages and prices and weights and measures, poor law administration, the carrying out of legislation relating to papists, and many other functions. The local Justices were, in fact, the organ for carrying out the policy and legislation of the central government, and at a time when the lack of adequate communications made supervision from the centre comparatively negligible, the power and authority of the Justices in their own localities was of considerable significance—they were in fact, as F. W. Maitland has called them, the "Rulers of the County."

In any detailed study of Cheshire from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, the records of the Court of Quarter Sessions are therefore of considerable importance. The topographer and parish historian will find references to specific places and localities, roads, bridges, alehouses, dissenters' meeting places, etc: in the constables' presentments, petitions, recognisances, registers of places certified for religious worship, alehouse licences and in the miscellaneous papers found in the general Sessions files. The genealogist will find commissions of the peace, jury lists, sacramental certificates and rolls of names of subscribers to the oaths of abjuration and allegiance, lists of names of those who paid hair powder tax, registers of gamekeepers and many other sources. The general historian will find evidence of local repercussions to national trends and events, such as the religious climate in the seventeenth century, the civil war, poor law administration, wages and prices, the incidence of plague, etc.

Details of the classes of records with covering dates have been given in *The Cheshire Historian* already referred to. A printed Calendar of the Records to 1760 with selected Abstracts was printed by the Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society in 1940, and includes an index of surnames, places and subjects referred to in the Abstracts. Illustrations of the many functions of the Justices will be found in this publication.

Besides the order books, files of general administrative papers, registers, rolls, etc., various other classes of documents came under the cognisance of the Justices in Quarter Sessions, and these include the Deposited Plans, Navigation Papers, Turnpike Trust Papers, Enclosure Awards, Land Tax Assessments, Poll Books and Registers of Electors.

The Deposited Plans, which since 1792 were deposited with the Clerk of the Peace under Parliamentary standing orders, relate to Electric, Gas and Waterworks schemes, Canals, Railways and Roads. The plans, which number some 845, are generally accompanied by a book of reference. A card index to these plans is available at the Record Office.

The Navigation Papers concern the Rivers Dee, Irwell, Mersey and Weaver, and include Minutes, Accounts, Appointments, Registers of Vessels, etc. A calendar of these papers up to 1760 is included in the Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society's publication referred to above. Further information about the Weaver Navigation is accessible in the Minute Books, Account Books and Tonnage Books of the Weaver Commissioners and Trustees now deposited at the Record Office, which date from 1721.

The Turnpike Trust papers, which give some valuable evidence on this phase in the history of road maintenance and development, consist of order books, minutes, accounts and returns of income and expenditure, mainly for the Chester-Tarvin, Chester-Frodsham and Chester-Northop roads.

The Enclosure Awards, of which the County Record Office holds originals or copies of 75 items, are valuable sources of information as to rights of way, the course and breadth of highways, the ownership of hedges and fences and for information regarding allotments of land for public purposes such as watering places, stone pits, marl, etc. A detailed Map is included with the majority of the Awards and this, with the Award, gives useful information as to the distribution of land ownership. An index of the Awards is available at the Record Office.

The Land Tax Assessments (1780-1832) take their origin from the act of 20 George III (1780) which laid down that only persons assessed to the land tax could claim to vote. Duplicates of the annual assessments for each parish were sent to the Clerk of the Peace as evidence of voters' qualifications. These records are a valuable source for the names of landowners and occupiers for this period, and they also give a brief description of the property with the sum assessed.

The Poll Books (1714-22) give the names of voters at the election for knights of the shire and state for which candidate each

voter elected. The Registers of Electors date from the Representation of the People Act of 2-3 William IV (1832), and these give the name of the voter, the nature of his qualification and the situation of his property in the parish, hamlet or street—the Registers varying in detail and format with successive electoral legislation.

Of the “unofficial” collections of documents at the County Record Office—viz. those which do not form part of the official archives of the County Council or Court of Quarter Sessions, the largest class is the Chester Probate Records, which number some 50,000 items, and date from 1545 to 1857. The wills, inventories, administration bonds and related documents of persons of Cheshire residence only are now housed at the Record Office, while those of persons of Lancashire residence are at the Lancashire Record Office at Preston. Indices of the wills, etc., to 1820 have been printed by the Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, and a typescript index and ms. card index at the Record Office has been completed to 1857.

These records, which are of primary importance to the genealogical searcher, are often also of interest to the social and economic historian. The wills themselves, besides giving information of the immediate family and connections of the testator, generally make reference to the location of his/her property. They are, too, often a source of information about local schools and charities, and mention is frequently made of local churches, roads, bridges, etc. From 1810 onwards the date of the death of the testator or testatrix is generally shown. Inventories generally accompany the wills up to the early eighteenth century and later examples are occasionally found. These give a unique record of contemporary prices and values as well as providing a valuable indication of the possessions connected with particular classes and trades. The appraisers often enter into considerable detail about the goods of the deceased, and sometimes in the case of larger houses even the individual rooms are indicated. The inventory of William Gandy of Over Whitley, yeoman, 1625, includes the following items:—two steares £8, ten kine £30, six twinters £13, foure draught horses £10-10, wheat unthresht £6, wheele timber at Cookes house 8/-, geese and hennes 16/-, pewter £4, pott brasse £4-10, pan brasse £4-6-8, skellets, one kettle one warming pan two candlesticks one brasen ladle 12/-, In Mr. Walthalls Chamber one truckle bed 5/-, in the Chamber over the hall featherbeds boulsters and pillowes £6, in the parlour one carpet for the table one carpet for the cupboard, curtaines and rodds £1-10, one fowling peece 10/-, sakes twilshets spinning wheels and other such like things £1, seaven silver spoones which are laid for pawne £2. In many cases the stock in trade is minutely listed, as in the case of Robert Blease of Chester, apothecary, whose inventory, dated 1632, gives a valuable list of contemporary drugs.

Mention must be made of the many private collections held either by gift or on loan deposit. Of these, the largest collection is that deposited by the Earl of Rocksavage, M.C., consisting of

some 32 deed boxes, of which six have so far been calendared. These include medieval deeds and manorial papers, deeds, settlements and leases, estate papers, correspondence, accounts, etc., and the six boxes calendared relate to the following parishes or townships:—Cholmondeley, Chorley, Egerton, Ridley, Bickley, Norbury, Wrenbury, Bradley nr. Malpas, Coddington, Edge, Larkton, Malpas, Overton nr. Malpas, Tushingam, Wigland, Hampton, Baddington, Bickerton, Edleston, Sound, Halton, Runcorn, Alvanley, Bradley, Frodsham, Kingsley, Netherton, Overton and Woodhouses. The documents date from the late 12th century and include many interesting medieval deeds, which besides being valuable sources for the study of the early history of Cheshire families, often give considerable details about the boundaries of the property granted or leased and are valuable material for the detailed study of early land ownership and research into the early forms of place and field names. There is a number of examples of early English deeds (prior to 1460), and some good examples of early heraldic seals. The collection also contains some 14th century bailiffs' accounts for the Manor of Bickley, 16th and 17th century Court rolls, estreats of fines, presentments, etc., for the Manors of Cholmondeley, Bickley and Malpas, and 18th century removal orders, certificates of legal residence and apprenticeship indentures of poor persons—e.g., the apprenticeship of James Chesworth, a poor child of Cholmondeley, to Joseph Guest of Hampton, a blacksmith, 1787, and of John Dod, a poor boy of Cholmondeley, aged 12, to John Crosby of Chester, cordwainer, who is to "teach and instruct him in the business of shoemaking and in the employment of a menial servant," 1782.

A large number of early deeds are also to be found in the Vernon Collection and these mainly relate to Bradwall, Bridgemere, Chester, Christleton, Cotton, Eccleston, Haslington, Kinder-ton, Lostock Gralam, Middlewich, Moston, Northwich, Rostherne, Sproston and Tarporley. A copy of the calendar to the deeds, made in 1832, is available at the Record Office.

The Brooke of Norton Collection, which has been fully calendared, consists of some 1,729 documents dating from 1553 to 1891, and concerns the Norton estates in and around Acton, Halton, Norton and Runcorn.

Other areas which are well documented include Frodsham (early ordnance survey maps in the Linaker Colln., deeds, etc., Birch Cullimore Colln.), Neston, Leighton, Prenton and Willaston (Hayes Lyon Colln.), Sandbach (Wilson Colln., Wickham Colln.), Barnston, Brimstage and Oxton (Earl of Shrewsbury's Colln.), Nantwich (Wilbraham of Nantwich Colln., Ellison deeds, Nixson deeds), Stockport (Warren of Poynton papers in the Vernon Colln.). The Delves Broughton Colln. contains eighteenth and nineteenth century deeds to Basford, Batherton, Blakenhall, Bridgemere, Buerton, Checkley, Chorlton, Doddington, Haslington, Hatherton, Hough, Hunsterson, Lea, Rope, Shavington, Stapeley, Weston and Wybunbury. The collection includes an interesting folder of estate maps by John Probert, 1762.

An antiquary's collection which should be mentioned is the Crewe (Cowper) and Condover (Cowper) Collection, most of which consists of documents accumulated or written by William Cowper of Overleigh (1701-67), antiquarian and one time Mayor of Chester. This collection comprises original works by William Cowper on the history of Chester and Cheshire, verses and short memoranda by, and letters to him, historical papers which he collected, and a series of original and copy letters, accounts, etc., accumulated by Thomas Cowper during his term of office as Mayor of Chester, 1641-2. The majority of these last items relate to the quartering of troops in Chester and their embarkation to Ireland in connection with the Irish Rebellion. The collection also includes a contemporary copy of the Visitation of Cheshire by William Flower, 1580, with later additions, and the original of Malbon's Account of the Civil War, which has been printed by the Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society (Vol. xix).

Another Antiquarian's collection, that of the late Mr. J. H. E. Bennett, of Heswall, has recently come to the Cheshire Record Office. Mr. Bennett's notebooks, some 46 in number, contain valuable information on the genealogy of his own and other local families, topographical information on Chester and Cheshire, newspaper cuttings, transcripts of the parish registers of St. John the Baptist, Chester, and part of the Bromborough Registers, and copies of the monumental inscriptions of St. John the Baptist, Chester, St. Mary on the Hill, Chester, Christleton, Backford, Shotwick, St. Michael's, Chester, Bruera, Eccleston, Dodleston, Plumestall, Pulford, Aldford, St. Bridget's, Chester, and St. Martin's, Chester—the transcripts and monumental inscriptions having been made in conjunction with Alderman P. H. Lawson, of Chester.

Smaller collections include those given or deposited by the Town Clerk, Bebington (lists, orders and other papers relating to 16th century musters in Wirral), the National Trust (deeds relating to Eddisbury Hall, nr. Macclesfield, 1808-1934), and Major R. K. Lingard Guthrie (correspondence, account book and other papers of John Bradshaw the Regicide and his brother Henry, including a hitherto unknown published broadsheet containing an Epitaph on John Bradshaw, 1602—19th century).

A collection of Maps of the County includes those of Blaeu (1645), Speed (1662—a reprint of the Map of 1610), Morden (1675), Bowen (1763), Burdett (1777) and Bryant (1831—the first large scale map of the County before the Ordnance Survey Maps).

It is hoped that this article will have done something to stimulate interest in the wealth of material available at the Cheshire Record Office. All the records referred to are available for inspection by genuine research workers, but Quarter Sessions Records of less than 100 years ago, can be referred to only with special permission. A small search fee is charged for inspection of certain classes of the Quarter Sessions Records. The Record Office is open from Monday to Friday during the following hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

# Cheshire Coat Armour

## PART III

by F. E. S. BAKER

### THE EXTERNAL ORNAMENTS

**W**HEN Heraldry was in its hey-day, the device painted on the shield was often also embroidered on the surcoat, which was worn over the armour, giving rise to the term "coat-of-arms." The changing fashion in surcoats, as revealed in many a monumental effigy in our parish churches, makes an interesting study in itself but is somewhat outside the scope of this series.

As the use of coat-armour in warfare declined and the era of what has been called "paper heraldry" saw armorial bearings employed more for ornamental purposes, various other objects were brought in to accompany the shield, in order to make a decorative design. These are now usually referred to as the "external ornaments." To-day, they include the crest; helmet and mantling (or lambrequin); wreath, chapeau, crest-coronet, motto and supporters, although these last are confined, with certain exceptions, to the arms of peers, knights of the Garter and Knights Grand Cross of other Orders. Supporters have sometimes been granted to corporations and other public bodies and a few such use them without authority. Peers may also display the coronet appropriate to their rank (fig. 9) and knights of the various Orders are allowed to encircle the shield with the Garter or the Collar of their Order, as the case may be.

The first of the "external ornaments" to appear on the scene was the crest. Although not so old as the shield, isolated examples of crests are known, according to Fox-Davies, dating from as early as the late 12th century. Their use did not become anything like general, however, until the last quarter of the 14th. It must, of course, be remembered, here, that we are speaking of the hereditary, heraldic crest and not of such ornamental or defensive additions to the helmet as were worn by Roman soldiers and others, from the dawn of history.

The first heraldic crest seems to have been merely a plume of feathers or "panache," as in the arms of Arderne (fig. 1). Another early form was a thin, fan-like erection, something like a cock's comb, the Latin for which (*crista*) gives us the word "crest" (fig. 2). Sometimes these "fan" crests, which were variously shaped, were painted with the arms or with a part of them, when there was not room for the whole. Afterwards, the fans were cut into the shape of the design (fig. 4, Honford) and, later still, crests were made of wood or leather in three-dimensional form and fastened to the top of the helmet (fig. 3). Some of them attained quite massive proportions but it is thought that these were not used in actual warfare but, only in tournaments and for ceremonial



purposes. From the 16th century onwards, a great many quite ridiculous crests were introduced, which could not possibly be mounted on a helmet at all.

Although crests are hereditary, they have never been as unvariable as the "coat-of-arms" and there are many more instances of families bearing different crests at different periods than there are of the shield device being changed (figs. 2 and 3 are both Audley crests of different periods). A probable explanation of this is that while, by quartering, several coats could be borne, simultaneously, in one shield, a man, having only one head, could wear but one helmet at once and, consequently, was limited to one crest for actual use. The acquisition, by marriage, of a new quartering, presumably, carried with it a right to the accompanying crest and, of several crests, which might be inherited, a choice had to be made. Sometimes, an older crest would be retained (on paper) long after a new one had been adopted for actual use and, nowadays, many families claim the right to two or more crests. In Germany, as many as seventeen are recorded for one person. Examples of Cheshire crests include the well-known Ass's Head of Mainwaring, the (canting) Stork of Starkie, the Bear's Head of Brereton and the famous Felon's Head of the Davenports, said to be a reminder of the days when, as Grand Serjeants and Chief Foresters of Macclesfield, they had the right to hang criminals. On the staircase of Capesthorpe Hall, is a representation of this crest (fig. 5), which the Davenport of that day had made in the likeness of Mr. Gladstone, of whom he, evidently, disapproved.

Neither crest nor helmet is ever borne by a lady or a clergyman, although a bishop may ensign his arms with a mitre and a crest would be included in a grant of arms to a clergyman (in the margin of the patent), to be borne by his successors if laymen.

The crest is placed upon or issues from a wreath, a chapeau or a coronet (sometimes wreath and coronet appear together). The first (figs. 5 and 8) is a twisted skein of coloured silk and silver or gold thread and concerning its origin and purpose there is some doubt and much difference of opinion. It seems to have served to conceal the join between helm and crest and the fact that the colours of the earliest wreaths usually differed from those of the arms has given rise to two suggestions; the first, that the colours of the wreath, termed, in early grants, "the livery colours," were, in fact, just that; the colours worn by servants and retainers. The second suggestion is that the wreath originated in the "ladies' favours" (scarf, ribbon, sleeve, etc.) worn in tournaments. Some of the early crests rise from a plain fillet so, perhaps, the lady's sleeve (or whatever it was) may have been twisted round the fillet, to form the wreath of two colours, which we see to-day. Wreaths of three colours are recorded but are rare. In modern Heraldry, the term "livery colours" refers to the principal colour and metal of the arms and, nowadays, wreaths are almost invariably of these two tinctures.

The chapeau or cap of maintenance (figs. 4 and 9) appears to have been some sort of mark of dignity or rank but just what its significance was is not certainly known. Early crests, rising from chapeaux, however, appear to be mainly confined to peers and it is probable that the velvet cap contained in the royal crown and in the coronets of peers developed out of the chapeau. The chapeau or cap of maintenance of Edward, 11th Earl of Chester (or should we say "the Black Prince"?) may still be seen on his ceremonial helmet, in Canterbury Cathedral. Although, during the 17th century, the lax usage of the time allowed the chapeau to "all sorts and conditions of men," it is now only granted to peers.

The crest coronet (figs. 1 and 3) must not be confused with the peer's coronet of rank. Though frequently referred to as a "ducal coronet," it differs from the coronet of a Duke. Coronets of rank are of comparatively recent origin, the present regulations dating only from the time of Charles II, but ornamental coronets, worn on the helmet by all ranks from knight upwards, were common at least as early as the 14th century. A good example is that on the effigy of Sir Hugh Calveley, in Bunbury church. Although common enough in early times, the "ducal" crest-coronet is never seen in modern heraldry but two other forms of coronet, the "mural" and "naval" crowns are sometimes granted to high-ranking officers of H.M. Forces.

The heraldic helmet has taken many forms through the centuries and space precludes anything like a full discussion of these, here. The present rules, dating from about 1600, are that the full-face, open helmet of gold is restricted to the sovereign and royal princes, the sovereign's alone having six bars. Peers' helmets are of silver, shown in profile, with five gold bars (fig. 9), although Porny, writing in 1770, gives five bars for Dukes and Marquises only; other ranks, four bars. Baronets' and knights' helmets are of steel, full-face and open-fronted, without bars (fig. 10), whilst those of esquires and gentlemen are of steel, in profile and closed.

Mention of the helmet leads, naturally, to the lambrequin or mantling, the textile covering, which is attached to it. Opinion is still divided as to its origin but Fox-Davies, Wagner and others concur in regarding it as a protection against the sun (probably first used in the Crusades), something like the képi of the French Foreign Legion. It is pointed out, too, that a textile fabric would have considerable deadening effect against a sword blow and this is said to account for the torn and jagged appearance invariably portrayed in armorial representations of lambrequins. The actual lambrequin used in battle was, probably, comparatively short (figs. 1, 2 and 8) but the ornamental or "paper" variety often assumes considerable proportions (figs. 9 and 10). The rules governing the colours of lambrequins have varied at different periods and the Scottish regulations (like a good deal of Scottish heraldry) still differ from the English. At one time *gules* (red) lined with *argent* (silver) (as fig. 10) was usual for commoners with an *ermine*



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Drawn by BARBARA BAKER

lining for peers. At present, the rule, in England, is that all mantlings shall be "of the livery colours," that is of the principal colour and metal of the arms. Scots peers still line theirs with *ermine*. The mantling of cloth-of-gold is reserved for the Royal family, that of the sovereign and Prince of Wales being gold, lined with ermine and those of other members of the Royal family, gold, lined with silver. Queen Elizabeth I was the first to adopt the gold lambrequin, previous sovereigns using *gules*, lined *ermine*.

Towards the end of the 13th century, the engravers of armorial seals began to fill in the spaces between the circular seal and the shield with foliage and then with weird and wonderful animals, which, by their position on either side of the shield, appeared to support it (figs. 6 and 7). These seem to have been the earliest "supporters." Nowadays, in England, the use of supporters is confined to peers and others as stated above, although there are some exceptions. In Cheshire, the Dones claimed supporters (fig. 8), presumably in right of their hereditary office of Chief Forester of Delamere, whilst, in Scotland, clan chiefs and numerous others claim this right.

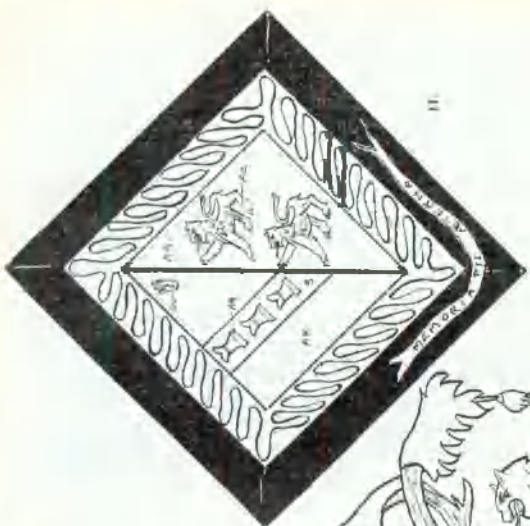
Sometimes, supporters are made to stand upon a mound or other object. This is called a "compartment."

The motto is not, strictly speaking, heraldic but most coats-of-arms are accompanied by a scroll bearing some brief legend; sometimes a family war-cry; often a Latin, French or English phrase, containing a pun on the name.

The whole of the armorial bearings to which anyone is entitled is termed his *achievement* of arms. Figs. 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9 are all achievements, the last being that of the first Lord Egerton of Tatton, as given by Ormerod. This word achievement came into use at a time when Heraldry was in decline, and fictitious, if undeniably romantic, stories were being told to account for the origins of coat-armour. Derived from the French *achevement* and, at that time, usually spelt, in English, with two "ts," *atchievement*, it became corrupted into *hatchment*, when applied to the funeral achievements displayed at the elaborate obsequies of the 17th century.

Originally, the custom was to carry the dead man's armour, sword, shield, helmet, etc., at his funeral, and these were afterwards hung over his tomb as in the case of the Black Prince, at Canterbury. Later, a board, painted with the whole *achievement*, was substituted and this was displayed over the door of the deceased's house for twelve months, after which it often found its way into the parish church, where many of them remain to this day. Hatchments form quite an interesting study and can tell us, at a glance, something about the deceased person. The board itself is lozenge-shaped and contains all the armorial bearings of the deceased. In the case of a single gentleman, the whole background is black but the hatchmen of a married man shows his arms impaled with those of his widow and only the dexter

11.



12.



9.

10.



Drawn by BARBARA BAKER

half of the lozenge is black (fig. 10). If both parties have departed this vale, then the whole background will be black but a widow's hatchment displays the impaled arms in a lozenge (fig. 11), that of a widower, in a shield. Single ladies also bear arms in a lozenge and the whole backgrounds of their hatchments are black. The hatchment of a wife, who predeceases her husband, of course, shows the impaled arms, with the black background on the wife's side only.

Fig. 10 shows the hatchment, in Stoke (or Stoak) church, in Wirral, of Sir Henry Bunbury, Bart., who died 12th February, 1732. The arms are, Bunbury, *argent, on a bend sable, three chess-roads of the first, in chief, a sinister (left) hand erect, coupéd (cut) at the wrist, gules* (being the badge of a Baronet of Great Britain) impaling Hanmer, *argent, two lions passant azure*. Fig. 11 is the hatchment of his widow, Susanna, daughter of William Hanmer, of Bettisfield, Flints. In passing, since 1801, no Baronets of Great Britain have been created and the badge (sometimes called the red hand of Ulster)<sup>1</sup> now pertains to Baronets of the United Kingdom. These two hatchments are good specimens of their period but not altogether typical in the absence of the skulls, bones, hour-glasses and cherubs, with which most of them are profusely decorated. The mottoes on hatchments are not, usually, those of the families concerned but, generally, contain some suitable moral sentiment, such as *In Coelo Quies, In Heaven, Rest* (a great favourite, this) or *Firmum in Vita Nihil, Nothing in Life is Sure* (fig. 10).

Also in Stoke church, is a painted panel (fig. 12), in memory of Dulcibella, daughter of Thomas Bunbury, of Stanney. This is not a hatchment but the arms (those of a single lady) are similarly treated.

Stoke church contains the largest collection of painted armorial panels in Cheshire. They were rescued from the coal-hole and replaced in the church through the intervention of Mr. Raymond Richards, the author of "Cheshire Churches." The present Vicar tells me that some of them, like that at nearby Backford, are the work of Randal Holme III and, being done without due authority from the College of Arms, were ordered, by Sir William Dugdale (Garter) to be destroyed. The order was, however, not carried out.

Note—1 The order of Baronets was originally created as a means of raising money for the plantation of Ulster.

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#### EDITORIAL NOTES

The History Committee of the Cheshire Community Council desire it to be known that authors alone are responsible for opinions expressed and statements made in their articles. The copyright of the articles is vested in each respective author.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

An index to Nos. 1—10 of "The Cheshire Historian" is included in this issue.

# Historic Buildings

PEEL HALL, ASHTON HAYES

by S. JACKSON

COMMANDING the valley of the Ashton Brook, with a wide view across to Beeston Castle and westwards to the Welsh Hills, Peel Hall lies midway between Barrow and Ashton Hayes. In Domesday Book the Saxon Toret was lord of both Ashton and Barrow, and if he had a defence work of any kind this is a most likely site.

The word *Peel*, variously spelt *pele*, *pale*, and *pyle*, was used to describe a watch tower or moated defence work. The Peel Hall moat which existed until a few years ago was typical of the *motte and bailey* type described by Harvey in "The Castles and Walled Towns of England," by Hamilton Thompson in "Military Architecture during the Middle Ages," and by G. T. Clark, one of the highest authorities on military architecture.

The "motte and bailey" consisted of a mound of earth surrounded by a moat and protected by a palisade. Outside the moat were one or more enclosures or *baileys*, also protected by an earthwork and a wooden palisade. The baileys were intended to give protection to the cattle or the men at arms. It is almost certain that where there is evidence of a moat, and near to it a field known as a *bailey field*, the site is that of an old Norman fort. In the rental of the third Henry Hardware of Peel, dated 1610, are two fields named the *Great Bailefield* and the *Little Bailefield*, adjoining the moat; evidence which suggests the site was in use in Norman times. Another name in the Hardware Rental is that of the *Towne Trees* and yet another *The Dovecote*, both of which would add further evidence to the suggestion.

The present Hall was built in 1637 on the site of, or near to, an older mansion, probably a black and white residence, which is described by William Webb, the historian, as "the goodly ancient house called the *Peele* or the "Pile." On Saxon's map of 1577, the oldest known map of Cheshire, it is prominently marked as "The Pyle," and at that time must evidently have been a house of some importance. This older mansion was a Cholmondeley heritage, and when the first Henry Hardware took up residence there about 1560, we are told he held it from the Cholmondeleys. The first four Hardwares lived in this older building, and it was during this period that it became Hardware property. The new Hall of 1637 was built at the instigation of the fourth Henry Hardware.

Though its glory has departed and the Hall is but a shadow of its former self, enough remains to give us an idea of the magnificence and solidity of the original mansion. The date 1637 and the remnants of some fine stone carving now to be seen on the west wall, were once part of the interior of the building.

Enough of the building remains to show that it was built in the Italian style of architecture. The date of its erection is contemporary with the great architect Inigo Jones, and if it was not built to his actual design, it was certainly to the design of Webb or another of his pupils. Jones modelled all his famous buildings on Palladio, and this style is often called Palladian. Square in structure, solid and imposing, dignified and restrained in its detail, it was certainly built to last. Its hipped roof has none of the gable ends of the Elizabethan period, but is characteristic of the simplicity of its style. The elevation of the rooms is such that it leaves no doubt as to the original broad flight of steps to an imposing entrance, both of which disappeared in the partial demolition carried out by Booth Grey at the beginning of the 19th century.

Inside, enough remains of a "Pillar and Portico" type of archway for one to form a mental reconstruction of what must have been a good example of a Palladian interior. Here a heavy iron-studded oak door, there a stout oak staircase, magnificent oak beams over a foot thick, wide fireplaces with single stones two feet thick and six feet long, massive stone corbels, and stone-mullioned windows all tell a story of former splendour.

The revetment of the moat and the bridge over it appear to have been constructed at the same time as the 1637 mansion, and it is reasonable to suppose that the work of that date was in the nature of repair work. Within the living memory of an old Ashton inhabitant, the foundations of a building were removed from the mound in the centre of the moat. Now very much dilapidated, the brick garden wall, with its scalloped ornamentation, was until twenty years or so, standing in good repair.

Peel Hall, once the home of the famous Puritan Mayor of Chester, Henry Hardware, and later the home of the fearless and jolly Democratic Mayor of Chester, Colonel Roger Whitley, is now partly uninhabited and partly used as a farm house.

### THE FIRST HENRY HARDWARE

MAYOR OF CHESTER IN 1559 AND IN 1575

To raise the standard of conduct as well as the standard of living, to encourage decency and to discourage roguery, to clear away old-standing abuses, to introduce reforms calculated to benefit health, happiness, and culture of the community, and to set an example of integrity and selfless devotion to duty, it has been well said, should be the aim of every man who aspires to public office.

Chester has been fortunate in having had a long succession of such public men, and amongst them the two Henry Hardwares, father and son, of Peel Hall, in the Village of Ashton, are outstanding.

The first Henry Hardware was the son of an iron-merchant named William Elcocks who had changed his name to Hardware.

The first Henry grew to manhood during the reigns of Henry VIII, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth.



He would witness the abolition of the monastery in Chester ; would see the installation of the ex-abbot of the old St. Werburgh's Abbey as the first dean of the new cathedral ; and would be among the first people to have the opportunity of reading the Bible translated into English, or of attending a church in which the first Book of Common Prayer in English was used. In the five years of Mary's reign he would hear of the burnings-at-stake of the protestant martyrs, and he would certainly know the details of the burning of George Marsh at Boughton and the vain attempt to save him.

In this atmosphere he reached manhood's estate, married the daughter of Henry Gee, a Mayor of Chester, came to live at Peel Hall, and began to take a very lively interest in the affairs of Chester. By the time that Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, he had thrown himself whole-heartedly into the work of the City Council, and in the following year, 1559, and again in 1575, he occupied the mayor's chair.

The very earliest memorial in Tarvin Church is a brass tablet placed on the north side of the chancel. A small round perforation in the tablet is thought to have been made by a bullet fired during the Civil War. In black letters is the following inscription :

“Henry Hardware here interred is, that Alderman was of late  
In the Citty of Chester, where he was a most grave magistrate,  
Within that Citty the Sword before him twice had borne.

He ruled with prudente policye as Citizens grave can well  
inform,

And so deceased the V of March 1584.”

That he was “a most grave magistrate” his two sheriffs had good reason to discover, for not only was he conscientious in his own duties, but he insisted on those under him being equally conscientious in theirs.

These two sheriffs, David Dymock and William Golburne, were brought by the mayor into court charged with “refusing to levy fines and americiaments and receive entreaties.” Their punishment gives some idea of the way in which Hardware ruled during his term of office. Each of them was sentenced to a fine of £40 and imprisonment. The mayor was certainly out to discourage roguery and to clear away abuses which were all too prevalent at that time.

Henry Hardware, and his father-in-law, Henry Gee, rendered Chester a never-to-be-forgotten service in the preservation of what has come to be known as the “Hardware Chartulary,” about which James Hall, in “Royal Charters and Grants to the City of Chester,” writes :—

“Chester is fortunate in possessing to-day an unbroken series of original charters commencing in the latter half of the 12th century, when kings first began to grant charters to English towns, and ending towards the 17th century, when royal charters ceased. Not only have these charters been in safe-keeping and known to lawyers and antiquaries all through the centuries, but

as far back as 32 Henry VIII (1540) during the mayoralty of Henry Gee, they were transcribed in a paper book and again copied in 18 Elizabeth (1575) during the mayoralty of Henry Hardware, into a bulky volume of vellum strongly bound in leather, which also contains copies of the later charters and other records of local importance. This Hardware Chartulary, formerly kept at the Pentice in Chester, is still preserved among the City muniments."

In private life Henry Hardware was a merchant dealing in "Spanyshe Iron" as he calls it in his will. The late J. P. Ryland, in a paper entitled "Merchants' Marks," which was read to the Historic Society in 1910, wrote:—

"Henry Hardware, a merchant whose dealings consisted most in Iron-ware, used a mark contrary to all other of our merchants; which consisted only in one perpendicular stroak, at whose top on the sinister side was fixed a W, under it on the right side of the line an H on the left an E, both conjoynd, under them a D, and at the bottom an A with the line throwe it."

Evidently his enterprise in "Spanyshe Iron" prospered, for he bought land in Flowkersbrooke outside the Northgate of Chester, some property in Bridge Street, a town residence in Watergate Street, and Bromborough Court. Peel Hall he held from the Cholmondeley family, whilst property in Mouldsworth came to him through his wife, and by purchase from William Sneade.

His daughter Elizabeth married first an alderman of Chester named John Cooper, and after his death the Tarvin Puritan, John Bruen of Stapleford. His son Henry succeeded his father and himself became a famous Mayor of Chester—more famous even than his father.

Such then was the first of the Hardware family which for nearly two centuries resided first at Peel Hall and later at Mouldsworth Hall, and which had a tremendous influence on the people of Chester and the surrounding districts.

## NOTES AND QUERIES (continued from p. 12)

### LORD AUDLEY'S SQUIRES

I am obliged to Dr. Hewitt for drawing attention to something which, for lack of space, had to be omitted from my first article.

The identity of the four squires is, of course, not known, although Ormerod and others have "adopted" certain individuals, whose claim cannot be substantiated. I am sorry if I gave the impression of following Ormerod in this but I deliberately did not name individuals but only families, whose younger sons may, possibly, have supplied Lord Audley's squires. F. C. Beazley, writing in 1924, said ". . . . John de Delves of Whitmore and Robert de Dutton of Maer, both Staffordshire men and tenants of Audley, cadets of Cheshire families, were more likely to have been two of the squires . . . ."

# Excavations

by F. H. THOMPSON

## 1. BOLLAND'S COURT, CHESTER

**D**URING the early part of 1959, facilities were given by Messrs. Richard Jones Ltd. for the investigation of cellars in old property in Bolland's Court, behind their Bridge Street premises. Ultimately, this property will disappear through the construction of a road linking White Friars and Commonhall Street, and it was hoped to gain some preliminary idea of the archaeological possibilities along its line. Two trenches were eventually completed, at right angles to each other, and yielded useful results. The original construction of the cellars had removed all but the earliest Roman level, but in this were found post-holes of two timber buildings, running from east to west, probably barrack-buildings of the Agricolan fortress. Examination of the rock floor of another cellar further west showed traces of the same buildings, and it was also possible to connect the new discovery with what had been noted during the limited excavation nearby in 1954 (see *Cheshire Historian* No. 5, p. 20).

## 2. MESSRS. WOOLWORTH, EASTGATE STREET, CHESTER

The rebuilding of the rear of Messrs. Woolworth's premises in Eastgate Street, excavation for which began in March, 1959, provided a good opportunity for archaeological investigation of an area within the Roman fortress. The site extended almost 60 yards inwards from the line of the present city wall, which here coincides with the line of the Roman defences, and it was hoped that the builders' stanchion holes and trenches would reveal considerable traces of Roman military structures. This proved to be the case and, in succession from east to west, the following features were noted: the earth rampart of the Agricolan fortress, with at least two stone ovens built against its rear face; the *intervallum* road running behind the rampart; the walls of a stone barrack-building running from north to south; and the surface of the lane between this building and the next one to the west. In the circumstances, dating of the structures was difficult but it is thought that the barrack-building belonged to the reconstruction of the fortress in stone early in the second century. No traces of the earlier timber period were noted, and only fragmentary remains of later walls which, being at a higher level, had been badly disturbed by the cutting of medieval and later pits and the foundations of recent buildings. However, the recovery of seven coins, ranging in date from the late second to the late fourth century, suggests that the Roman occupation was maintained. Much pottery was recovered, largely of first and second century date, and two stone column bases from the area of the barrack-building. Medieval and later pottery was also found, and on the north side of the site the presence of several human burials was thought to be connected with the Cathedral, perhaps in its pre-Reformation phase as a Benedictine abbey.

### 3. WATERGATE HOUSE, CHESTER

The garden of Watergate House lies on the south side of Watergate Street immediately inside the line of the city wall. The site falls outside the Roman fortress but excavation in 1949 had shown traces of a Roman building standing in what is generally held to have been the harbour area. The decision to use the site for a new office building instigated a preliminary archaeological excavation which lasted from April until June, 1959; thereafter the site was kept under observation during the contractors' operations.

The main result was the tracing of much of the Roman building already known to exist on the site. It ran from east to west and extended for at least 130 feet (its full length has still to be determined). Its width internally was only 19 feet and there was an apparent absence of cross-walls which suggests that the building was not residential, at least originally. Its walls were of mortared sandstone masonry, 3 feet wide at the foundations, and it was probably built c. A.D. 100; at the western end there were traces of earlier timber buildings but it was not possible to determine their plan.

On the north side, the stone building was bordered by the road leading from the west gate of the fortress to the harbour area; behind the building, to the south, there seems to have been a stream, the bed of which was deliberately filled up in early Roman times. At its western end, close to where the stream must have once joined the estuary, a short length of a sandstone and mortar wall was found at a depth of 15 to 18 feet, perhaps representing the pier of a bridge carrying the harbour wall across the stream.

At some later stage in the second century, additions were made to the original stone building. These took the form of four walls running north from its north wall and encroaching on the width of the harbour road; again, the full plan of these extensions has still to be determined. Associated with them was a massively built stone drain running from east to west and passing beneath two of the extension walls. The building as a whole does not seem to have outlasted the end of the second century but its fate is uncertain.

The site produced pottery in profusion, all of late first and second century date. In addition, a number of interesting small finds was recovered, coins, brooches and other metal objects.

### 4. HERONBRIDGE, NEAR CHESTER

As in 1958, a fortnight's summer school in archaeology, organised by Liverpool University and the Grosvenor Museum, took place at the Roman site of Heronbridge in the summer of 1959. The area selected for excavation lay on the west side of Watling Street and traces of timber and stone buildings were found, probably of the same semi-industrial character as in previous years. The most notable find was a silver coin of the Emperor Trajan.

# Audley's Esquires at the Battle of Poitiers

by H. J. HEWITT, M.A., Ph.D.

**H**ISTORIANS seldom set out with the purpose of destroying legends. In the course of their normal work, however, they are obliged to test accepted statements by reference both to the general framework of events and to the sources. Anyone who makes a serious study of the campaigns leading up to the Battle of Poitiers is bound to examine a story that has pleased generations of Cheshire men—the story that the famous Sir James Audley, whose exploits in the battle are so colourfully described by Froissart, was accompanied on that occasion by four esquires, namely Delves of Doddington, Foulshurst of Barthomley, Hawkestone of Wrinehill and Dutton of Dutton.

The story has appeared a score of times in newspaper articles and magazines. It is mentioned in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (article Audley, Sir James), in Beltz G. F. *Memorials of the Order of the Garter*, p. 79, n. 1, in Ashmole, Elias: *The Institution, Laws and Ceremonies of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, p. 705. In the second edition of Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, the editor, Helsby, adds a very cautious footnote to p. 519 ('the esquires are said traditionally to be,' etc.). In his *Records of an Old Cheshire Family* (1908), Sir Delves Louis Broughton naturally included the story.

Backed by so many authorities, the story has been regarded as beyond doubt. Yet on investigation, its truth appears less and less probable.

Some writers appeal direct to Froissart as the authority. Froissart's account is in Volume V, 457-466 of Lettenhove's edition. In Lord Berner's translation modernised by G. C. Macaulay (Globe edition, 130-131), the passage runs "Sirs, it hath pleased my lord the prince to give me five hundred marks of revenues by year in heritage, for the which gift I have done him but small service with my body. Sirs, behold here these four squires who hath always served me truly and especially this day : that honour that I have is by their valiantness. Wherefore I will reward them : I give and resign into their hands the gift that my lord the prince hath given me of five hundred marks of yearly revenues . . ."

Froissart does not name the esquires.

At the material date (September, 1356), John Delves was lieutenant to the Justice of Chester. The Justice himself, Bartholomew de Burghersh, accompanied the prince to Gascony and it is inherently quite improbable that the prince would have allowed both of these officials to be away from the county at the same time.

Moreover, most if not all of the officers in the prince's personal retinue are mentioned in contemporary records as receiving their pay and later as receiving rewards for service. If Delves was in Gascony at this time, he would have been in the prince's retinue.

There is, however, no record of his pay or reward.

Further, it was usual for the men who went overseas with the prince or the king to ask for, and receive, letters of protection (for their property during their absence). No such letters have been found for Delves or Dutton or Hawkestone. As for Foulshurst, the Chamberlain of Chester was directed to make out letters of protection<sup>1</sup> in his favour in June, 1355. He was to 'go *with the king* to the war in parts beyond the sea.' If—as is very likely—he went with the king, then he was not at the Battle of Poitiers.

We turn from negative evidence to positive. Two of Audley's squires are mentioned in Henxte worth's journal<sup>2</sup>—a day book of cash payments made to the army in Gascony and therefore indisputable evidence. They are Laurence Pecche and John Welles.

Delves was in England in July, 1356, and engaged on his normal work in Chester and London. Letters from the prince's central office dated 3rd, 9th, 10th July, direct him to deal with various matters (including the causeys in Nantwich).<sup>3</sup> Letters patent dated 16th and 17th July appoint him to a commission of the peace for the county of Salop.<sup>4</sup> These instructions and this appointment cannot be reconciled with an intention to allow him to go to Gascony. Concerning his activities in August and September, I have no evidence, but a note in the prince's register dated 20th October, London, states that certain business was done 'by the advice of John de Delves,' and he was in London on 12th November.<sup>5</sup> In view of his office and the specific work and dates quoted, it seems quite improbable that he left England, was present at the Battle of Poitiers on 19th September, and returned to England again in the autumn without leaving any trace of permission to go overseas, letters of protection, pay or reward for service from the prince.

As regards Thomas de Dutton, he was Sheriff of Chester and, in the period Michaelmas, 1356, to Midsummer, 1357, he paid over to the Chamberlain the estreats of the County Courts as in the preceding and succeeding years.<sup>6</sup> He too appears to have been engaged on normal activities in Cheshire at the date of the battle.

To sum up, there is no contemporary evidence that any of the four men were at Poitiers. All the evidence we have leads to the conclusion that Delves and Dutton were engaged in administrative work at home and that Foulshurst was on service with the king. For Hawkestone, I have no evidence at this time.

The legend may be traced back to the work of Ashmole which appeared in 1672. Ashmole cited as his authority 'Lib MS penes W. Flower nuper Norroy King of Arms.' William Flower was appointed Norroy in 1562 and died in 1588. Nothing is known about this MS to-day at the College of Arms.

1 Black Prince's Register III, 207.

2 MS (at the Duchy of Cornwall Office) sections 6 and 68.

3 B.P.R. III, 229, 230.

4 Cal Pat Rolls, 1354-58, 388, 449.

5 B.P.R. II, 101 and III, 231.

6 Cheshire Chamberlains Accounts, 208, 224, 203, 238.

# The Cheshire Cats

by J. E. GORDON CARTLIDGE, F.R.Hist.S.

IT is surely time that the Cheshire Cat was rescued from the realm of children's fantasy, however beautiful and entrancing it may be, and from the realm of imagination as to its origin. There are three sources of information which may help us to effect the rescue, viz.:—

- 1—Archaeology, which reveals to us long forgotten details of the unrecorded memory of the Race.
- 2—Recorded History, which may be described as the Diary of the Race.
- 3—Folklore, which provides us with faint strands or wisps of memory which have survived orally from generation to generation, tending to become warped and patternless in the age-long process.

These three strands have become so entwined, that, at times, they are difficult to disentangle, nevertheless it still remains true that "a threefold cord is not easily broken."

The first essential is the obliteration from our minds, of all ideas of county, for we must deal with eras prior to the formation of shires by the Saxons, eras when tribal boundaries were the lines of demarcation which bear no resemblance to the later county boundaries.

Dr. Wingfield Stratford, in his book *The History of British Civilizations* says "New blood came to Britain principally by the South-Eastern Gate, and we acquired what is even more important, new ideas, from Mediterranean traffickers, no doubt mainly recruited among those Phoenician dwellers on the coast of Syria, whom Dr. L. A. Waddell, in *The Phoenician Origin of the Britons, Scots, and Anglo-Saxons*, gives reasons for believing to be of the Aryan-Hittite, or *Khatti* stock." He deciphered an inscription on the Newton Stone in the North of Scotland in parallel Celtic-Ogham-Phoenician lettering.

Dr. R. G. Collingwood, in his book *Roman Britain*, also says in the opening chapter "Towards the close of the third millenium before Christ, in the Neolithic Age, great stone monuments were being erected in this country on a scale implying considerable wealth, a high degree of civilization, and a very definite system of religious beliefs. These Megalithic monuments, there is good reason to think, were a fashion introduced by people sailing up the Atlantic coast from the Iberian Peninsula, and making their landfall in the south-west of Britain; many of them settled in Cornwall or worked their way by degrees northwards to either Wales and Scotland, where they settled upon the western headlands and islands, and so to the extreme north of Scotland, or else to Ireland which is densely covered with their remains; but many others landed on the coast of Dorset, and established a

great megalithic culture on Salisbury Plain and the Cotswolds. The most powerful factor in the distribution of early man in the highland zone, was height above sea-level, or rather, above the level of more or less permanent excessive surface water. Throughout the highland zone there are groups and belts of megalithic remains, in Cornwall near Land's End, in Wales towards the headlands of Pembrokeshire, and Carnarvonshire and in Anglesey, on the Cumberland coast, in Galloway and Firth of Clyde; then in the Isle of Skye, and there are many near the northern coasts of Caithness and the Orkneys. Inland, except for an important group on the limestone plateau of Derbyshire, they are conspicuously rare. The Atlantic route between Britain and Spain belonged at its British end to the highland zone, it was the pathway by which early civilizations reached Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, and the west and north of Scotland."

From all this we gather that there was a definite relationship of Race and Culture, between the early inhabitants of Cornwall and the settlers along the western coastline right up to the North of Scotland, and that contact was maintained by the sea route.

It is sufficient for our purpose to confine our attention to the two sections of these immigrants, one of which settled on the headlands of North Wales, Anglesey, and Wirral, and which spread far inland to occupy the area now known as Cheshire and Shropshire; and the other which occupied the headlands of Caithness and Sutherland, which in turn spread far inland; both were sectors of the tribe of the Cornovii.

It is fairly obvious that the term "Folk of the Headland" applied to the inhabitants of Cornwall and the Cornovii of the Midlands and Caithness and Sutherland, (*Corn* or *Horn*) could only have been applied to them *after* they had settled upon the headlands, and we must try to discover the original name of the tribe. Fortunately, the northern sector retained its original name, and bestowed it upon the headland they occupied, and it became attached to the rest of the territory which they occupied, *Cataness*—the Headland of the Cats, is now Caithness and Sutherland. The Gaelic name of the Shetlands and Caithness is *Cat*, and *The Keiths* or *Cats* have left their name in Inchkeith and Dalkeith, and to this day every Caithness or Sutherland man is *Catach* while the Gaelic title of the Duke of Sutherland is *Diuc Chat*, i.e., the Duke of the Cats.

That the Midland sector of the tribe also retained their identity as Cats, is quite clear from a study of places and things to which the Cat name is attached. Here are a few examples from the Midland area which was occupied by them:—

- Chatburn, Lancs.—Chatteburn in 1251—Ceatta's or Catt stream.
- Chatcull, Staffs.—Chatculne in 1199—Ceatta's or Catt kiln.
- Chatford, Salop.—Chattefort in 1255—Ceatta's or Catt ford.
- Chat Moss, Lancs.—Catemoss in 1277—Ceatta's or Catt moss.
- Chatsworth, Derby—Chattesworth in 1276—Ceatta's worth or village.



Chatwall, Salop—Chatwelle in 1185—Ceatta's well or stream.  
 Chatwell, Staffs.—Chatwelle in 1327—Ceatta's well or stream.  
 Cats Tor, Derby—Ceatta's hill or Hill of the Cat folk.  
 Cattenhall, Ches.—Catenhale in 1130—Catta's Halh or corner piece.  
 Catstone, Ches.—large rock at The Cloud, Congleton.  
 Cattesoak, Ches.—At Hulme Walfield, Congleton.  
 Catshill, Staffs.—Catteslowe 13th cent.—Cats' burial mound.  
 Catterton, Salop—No early form available.  
 Catsley, Salop—Cateschesleie D.B.—Catta's leah or pasture land  
 —cf Catach, as applied to a Caithness man.  
 Ketley, Salop—Cattelega 1177—Catta's leah or pasture land.  
 Chetton, Salop—Catinton D.B.—Ceatta or Cats ton or farm.  
 Chetwynd, Salop—Catewinde D.B.—Ceatta or Cats winding path.  
 Catshill, Salop—At Ford, the site of the church, a burial mound.

Many other instances could be quoted, but these are sufficient to prove that streams, kilns, fords, mossland, worth, villages, wells and burial mounds imply the presence of persons rather than the wild cats to which they are so frequently attributed. On the other hand, when we realise that the total population of England as late as 600 A.D., was one million persons, or two hundred thousand families, the number of persons deemed to have borne the name Ceatta is surprising. It is much more likely to be a tribal designation, than a personal one.

But whence did the Cornovii, the people of the headlands, get the name of "The Cats"? It may have been a memory of the origin of the tribe, for if Dr. Waddell is correct in his suggestion that these early immigrants were of the *Khatti* stock, i.e., of Aryan-Hittite origin, they may have been familiar with the worship of the Egyptian Cat-goddess Hathor, and the Cat would therefore have been a tribal deity. It is certainly true that the Iberians of Spain worshipped a goddess comparable to Hathor before they migrated to Britain. The northern sector would be near neighbours of the ORC-pig tribe who gave their name to the Orkneys, and the Carini sheepfolk of the west of Scotland, and the Epidii of Argyleshire, who worshipped a horse-god, whose sacred stones with sculptured horses still survive in Scotland, and they themselves gave their tribal name to the headland and called it Cat-Ness—Caithness. The southern sector would be familiar with the Boar of the Roman Legion.

Another highly probable source of the name, is the worship in the West of England of the goddess *Cat-Anna*, of whom Donald Mackenzie writes in his book *Ancient Man in Britain*, "An old West of England goddess was remembered until recently in Leicestershire as "Black Anna"—Black Anny or Cat Anna. She frequented a cave on the Dane Hills, above which grew an oak tree. In the branches of the tree she concealed herself, so that she might pounce unawares on human beings. Shepherds attri-

buted to her the loss of lambs, and mothers the loss of children.

The supernatural monster had one eye—and talons instead of hands. That the worship of Cat-Anna was not unknown to these early immigrants is proved by the existence of “The Catstone” and “Old Hannah’s Cave” at The Cloud, Congleton, Cattoak at Hulme Wallfield and Hannah’s Hollow between Congleton and Astbury.

The reference to the Dane Hills is probably a reference to the Danaan Hills of Celtic mythology. That this goddess was also known among the other immigrants of the western headlands, is proved by the record that Saint David destroyed the “Maen Cetti”—Cat Stone, at Cefn-y-Bryn in Gower, which was an object of worship to the people of the Gower Peninsula.

At the “Cats Stane” in Edinburgh, cist burials were found nearby, and certain ritual performances concerning cats had formerly been held there.

In one of the Welsh poems, published under the title of “The Four Ancient Books of Wales,” it is recorded that CAI, one of the most authentic of Arthur’s champions, killed the Cath Palug.

In the Chronicles of John de Fordun (circa 1385), a Chantry Priest of the Cathedral of Aberdeen (Skene), and probably a native of Dunbar, or the vicinity of the Cat Craig, one and a half miles east of Dunbar, a fuller account of the contest is given:—

“It so happened that one of King Arthur’s soldiers, Kay, had to fight an enormous Tom-cat, which, seeing the soldier prepared to fight with it obstinately, climbed to the top of the great rock, and coming down after having made its claws wondrous sharp for the fight, it gashed the rock with clefts and winding paths beyond belief. Kay killed the Cat.”

Fordun does not definitely associate the contest with the Cat Craig, but it would seem to be implied. The Cat Craig at Dunbar has since been quarried away for lime, and it was the light of the Cat Craig lime-kiln which drew two small vessels of the Royal Navy to ship-wreck on this coast in 1810, it having been mistaken for one of the light-houses.

From this account we see the antiquity and persistence of the Cat Anna myth, and of the name Caith or Keith (Cat). Fordun’s account is part and parcel of his opposition to the Saxon King’s presence in that part of the then Kingdom of Northumbria, and it is not without interest to Cheshire people to note that King Athelstan was closely associated with Sihtric, who was driven out of his Norse kingdom of Dublin, and who came to England and burnt Davenport, on the river Dane near Congleton, afterwards becoming King of York, and on the death of his cousin, he also became King of Northumbria.

A pocket of people of Iberian characteristics still flourishes at Biddulph Moor in the vicinity of The Cloud.

Limitations of space forbid fuller treatment of this long-neglected subject, but I hope that sufficient evidence has been given

Continued on page 55

# Cheshire Poets

## 2. WILLIAM BROOME

by DR. MALCOLM PITTOCK

“THE name of William Broome has not met with the respect it deserves; among his fellow shiremen it has been treated with ungrateful neglect, for an association with such names as his adds more lustre to county annals than all the pomp and glory of heraldic or ancestral honours.”<sup>1</sup>

So wrote Thomas Barlow in his short memoir of the poet published over a hundred years ago. Thomas Barlow is a little too enthusiastic, however, for Broome is by no means a great poet and his connection with the county is tenuous, since, though he was born here, he spent all his adult life elsewhere, and his poetry shows no trace of local influence. Still, nevertheless, it may be of interest to “fellow shiremen” to recall the life of Broome and assess his poetry.

Broome was born the son of a farmer in Haslington in 1689 and was baptised on May 9th of that year, possibly at Barthomley. He was sent to Eton where he was captain of the school for a whole year before entering St. John’s College, Cambridge as a subsizar on July 3rd, 1708: (a sizar, which he soon afterwards became, was a poor student who had to perform certain duties to contribute to his upkeep; apparently Broome had been very unlucky: during his last year at school, when he could have entered the university as a scholar, there had been no vacancy). He obtained his B.A. in 1712, his A.M.—as it then was (the same reversed abbreviation is used at Harvard to-day)—in 1716, and later, on the occasion of the King’s visit to Cambridge in 1728 obtained the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

He was first preferred to a living at Sturston in Suffolk—for in those days many graduates became clergymen—and in 1716 married a rich widow, Elizabeth Clarke, by whom he had four children, three sons and a daughter, all except one of whom died before he did (one of his poems is entitled *Melancholy, An Ode Occasioned by the Death of a Beloved Daughter*). In 1728, perhaps on account of a flattering reference to Sir Robert Walpole in one of his poems: “Why flames the star on Walpole’s generous breast/ Not that he’s highest, but because he’s best/ Fond to oblige in blessing others, blest”<sup>2</sup> and because, too, he had taken the precaution of dedicating his volume of poems published in 1727 to Lord Townshend, the Secretary of State, he was presented to the Rectory of Pulham. Later he obtained a third living at Oakley Magna and a fourth at Eye through Lord Cornwallis, a local nobleman, whose chaplain he was, and who was married to Lord Townshend’s sister. It is not clear whether in that age of widespread pluralism he actually retained all four of the livings, but

he certainly retained those at Pulham, Oakley Magna and Eye,<sup>3</sup> until his death at Bath from asthma in 1745. He left substantial property to his wife on condition that she remained a widow while at her death his property was to revert to his son with part entailed on Lord Cornwallis in the event of the son's having no issue. One other clause of his will is of interest: apparently his brother owed him £340 and had repaid him neither principal nor interest: Broome therefore offered his brother the option of paying his sisters a £100 each as a legacy within a year of his death or of transferring the bond to them.<sup>4</sup>

Broome's literary career began at university where he was well known for his passion for poetry, being known as "the poet" by his friends.<sup>5</sup> Some of his poems date from this period and he also contributed some Latin verses to a polyglot university publication *Congratulatio Academiae Cantabrigiensis* published in 1713 on the occasion of the Treaty of Utrecht.<sup>6</sup> Later he contributed to a prose version of the *Iliad* based largely on Madam Dacier's French version<sup>7</sup> and his verses began to appear in the Miscellanies published by Lintot the bookseller.<sup>8</sup>

As Broome was a good Greek scholar, Pope, who had become acquainted with him, made use of his help in his versions of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; to the first he contributed the lion's share of the notes and to the second the whole of the notes and the translation of eight of the books. The full story of his relations with Pope is a very long and rather tedious one. It is, however, worth giving in outline.

After he had translated the whole of the *Iliad* Pope did not relish translating the whole of the *Odyssey* as well so he employed not only Broome but another minor poet, Elijah Fenton, as his coadjutors. Broome and Fenton were to translate 12 books<sup>9</sup> and Pope was to translate the other twelve. Pope, however, did not want it to be generally known that the translation was not wholly by him as that would have reduced its market value, so he was annoyed with Broome when he let it be known to various of his acquaintances that he was helping Pope.<sup>10</sup> When, as a result, the information leaked out, Pope was severely criticised.<sup>11</sup> Pope, however, persuaded Broome to sign a false statement which was added as a postscript to the *Odyssey* in which to make Pope's share appear the greater; he stated that he and Fenton had translated only five books between them.<sup>12</sup> To make matters worse, both Broome and Fenton received very inadequate remuneration for their services, for, of the £4,500 which Pope, despite the disclosures, had received for his translation only £500 were paid to Broome and £300 to Fenton. It is not surprising that there followed a period of hostility between Pope and Broome: Pope made fun of his verses in his *Treatise on the Bathos or the Art of Sinking in Poetry*<sup>14</sup> and included him in the first version of the *Dunciad*.<sup>15</sup> Later, he patched up his breach with Broome, removing the offensive reference in the *Dunciad* and pretending

that he had not been aware of the authorship of the verses he had made fun of in the *Bathos*.<sup>16</sup> It is a complicated and slightly squalid story which the curious reader can follow in full in Pope's published correspondence.

Meanwhile Broome had brought out a collection of his own verse, *Poems on Several Occasions*, in 1727<sup>17</sup> which included along with some new ones the poems he had published in the *Miscellanies*. He received £35 for his work, but the volume was not a great success and when Broome brought out a revised edition of it in 1739, he did so at his own expense.<sup>18</sup> A further edition with revisions and additions appeared in 1743,<sup>19</sup> and a posthumous one in 1750 which appears to have been a reprint of the 1739 edition though it may have included a translation of some of the Odes of Anacreon which Broome contributed towards the end of his life to *The Gentleman's Magazine*.<sup>20</sup> Broome, in fact, spent a great deal of time revising his poems and at various times called on Pope, Fenton, and another minor poet, Christopher Pitt,<sup>21</sup> for their suggestions.

But poor Broome, try as he would, could become nothing better than an elegant versifier producing conventional verses in conformity with the taste of his time. His poems consist of biblical paraphrases, complimentary and even raffish *vers de societe*, grovellingly servile verses dedicated to patrons and influential friends, translations from classical poets;<sup>22</sup> pastorals; turgid meditations on grand themes; prologues and epilogues; in fact the usual stock in trade. His translations of parts of the *Iliad* into blank verse are however interesting as they must be among the first attempts to render Homer in the style of Milton. His verse is however very derivative and frequently echoes Pope and Milton as well as the work of more minor figures.<sup>23</sup>

Broome was at his best in certain of his complimentary poems where he shows a certain graceful tenderness, which though expressed in strictly conventional terms is still attractive. His poem *The Rosebud: To the Right Honourable Lady Jane Wharton*, which is still anthologised, gives a very good impression of his rather fragile and faded charm:

. . . But thou, fair nymph, thyself survey  
In this sweet offspring of a day:  
That miracle of face must fail;  
Thy charms are sweet, but charms are frail:  
At morn they bloom, at evening die:  
Though Sickness yet a while forbears,  
Yet Time destroys what Sickness spares.  
Now Helen lives alone in fame,  
And Cleopatra's but a name.  
Time must indent that Heavenly brow,  
And thou must be, what they are now.

Scarcely less charming is his poem, *To Belinda on her Sickness and Recovery*:

Sure never pain such beauty wore,  
 Or look'd so amiable before !  
 You graces give to a disease,  
 Adorn the pain, to make it please :  
 Thus burning incense sheds perfumes,  
 Still fragrant as it still consumes ; . . .  
 And yet how well did she sustain,  
 And greatly triumph o'er her pain !  
 So flowers, when blasting winds invade,  
 Breathe sweet, and beautifully fade.

*Poverty and Poetry* and the *Widow and Virgin Sisters* show him capable of writing light doggerel verse perhaps influenced by Swift as a quotation from the first named will show :

'Twas sung of old how one Amphion  
 Could by his verses tame a lion,  
 And, by his strange enchanting tunes,  
 Make bears or wolves dance rigadoons :  
 His songs could call the timbers down,  
 And form it into house or town ; . . .  
 What dire malignant planet sheds,  
 Ye bards, his influence on your heads ?  
 Lawyers by endless controversies,  
 Consume unthinking clients' purses,  
 As Pharaoh's kine, which strange and odd is,  
 Devour'd the plump and well-fed bodies.

Too often, however, Broome is either servile :

Sing, Muse—and oh ! may Townshend deign to view  
 What the Muse sings, to Townshend this is due !  
 Who, carrying with him all the world admires,  
 From all the world illustriously retires.<sup>24</sup>

(which is the counterpart of his prose dedication of his volume of poems to the same gentleman "the affectionate father, the indulgent master, the condescending and benevolent friend, patron, and companion, can only be described by those who see you act in all those relations. I could with delight enlarge upon this amiable part of your character, but am sensible that no part of your time is so ill-spent as in reading what I write")  
 forcible-feeble :

"See ! hosts of spoilers seize their prey !  
 See ! Slaughter marks in blood his way !  
 See ! how embattled Babylon,  
 Like an unruly deluge rushes on !  
 Lo ! the field with millions swarms !  
 I hear their shouts ! their clanking arms !  
 Now the conflicting hosts engage,  
 With more than mortal rage !—  
 Oh ! Heaven ! I faint-I die !—  
 The yielding powers of Israel fly !—<sup>25</sup>

or merely dull :

Happy, thou Flandria, on whose fertile plains,  
 In wanton pride luxurious Plenty reigns ;  
 Happy ! had Heaven bestow'd one blessing more,  
 And plac'd thee distant from the Gallic power !  
 But now in vain thy lawns attract the view,  
 They but invite the victor to subdue :  
 War, horrid war, the sylvan scene invades,  
 And angry trumpets pierce the woodland shades.<sup>26</sup>

His translation of the *Odyssey* is often quite spirited and bears out what Dr. Johnson said of him: "he had such power of words and numbers as fitted him for translation."<sup>27</sup> Very rarely do we find a couplet as bad as the following:

When lo ! we reached old Ocean's utmost bounds,  
 Where rocks control his waves with ever-during mounds.<sup>28</sup>

Of course his part of the translation was revised by Pope, but we do not know to what extent.<sup>29</sup> This description of Scylla shows him at his vigorous best:

When lo ! fierce Scylla stooped to seize her prey,  
 Stretched her dire jaws, and swept six men away.  
 Chiefs of renown ! loud echoing shrieks arise :  
 I turn, and view them quivering in the skies ;  
 They call, and aid with out-stretched arms implore ;  
 In vain they call ! those arms are stretched no more.  
 As from some rock that overhangs the flood,  
 The silent fisher casts the insidious food,  
 With fraudulent care he waits the finny prize,  
 And sudden lifts it quivering to the skies :  
 So the foul monster lifts her prey on high,  
 So pant the wretches struggling in the sky :  
 In the wide dungeon she devours her food,  
 And the flesh trembles while she churns the blood.<sup>30</sup>

As a letter writer Broome was uneven: his letters are usually affected in sentiment and phraseology, but occasionally there are felicitous passages as this describing Fenton who was notoriously lazy:

The lazy Mr Fenton has obeyed your commands, and wrote for the notes in a huge long letter, of at least three lines. I am now in hopes that he will not lose the use of writing and speaking. I will tell you a true story: when he was with me at Sturston he often fished; this gave him an opportunity of sitting still and being silent; but he left off because the fish bit. He could not bear the fatigue of pulling up the rod and baiting the hook.<sup>31</sup>

There is evidence that Broome was uneasily aware that despite his ambition to be a poet he was not a good one. With a certain false humility he often expresses a modest view of his merits while making it clear that he would like to be contradicted. The critical preface to his poems begins by warning readers that his poems

are faulty; and yet he does all he can to protect himself against attack from fault-finding critics. But perhaps we had better leave Broome himself to have the last word:

If the critics rail at them (the poems) I am resolved not to believe one word they say. Nature has furnished us poetasters with a secret magnifying glass that beautifies every line.<sup>32</sup> However, to be a bad poet is no sin; it may be a folly. If it be a sin, I have heartily repented of it, and whatever the critics have done, I am sure heaven has heartily forgiven it.<sup>33</sup>

#### NOTES

- 1 *A Memoir of The Poet Dr. William Broome*, London, 1854. Unless otherwise stated the details of Broome's life are taken from this memoir.
- 2 *An Epistle to My Friend Mr Elijah Fenton, Author of Mariamne a Tragedy*, 1726. As soon as his volume of verse containing this poem was published, Broome ostentatiously sent a copy to Walpole. See *The Works of Alexander Pope*, Introd. and notes by Whitwell Elwin, vol. 8, p. 131, note.
- 3 *Barlow, op. cit.*, p. 14 states that he held these three livings; according to *Elwin*, p. 20, he became the holder of three rectories and a vicarage which supposes that he still kept the living at Sturston. Dr. Johnson's account of this phase of Broome's career in his *Life of Broome, Lives of the Poets*, is inaccurate. Broome actually refused a living in Devonshire! See *Elwin, op. cit.*, p. 143.
- 4 *Barlow, op. cit.*, pp. 16ff. His son died without an heir and the estate passed to Lord Cornwallis.
- 5 See *Dr Johnson, op. cit.*
- 6 *Elwin, op. cit.*, p. 139, note.
- 7 See *Johnson, op. cit.*, and *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*.
- 8 *Elwin, op. cit.*, pp. 87-88, note.
- 9 Broome translated Bks. 2, 6, 8, 11, 12, 16, 18, 23, and Fenton Bks. 1, 4, 19 and 20. Parts of Bks. 10 and 15 are also not by Pope but by a third assistant; see *Elwin, op. cit.*, p. 125, note. Broome also translated the end of Bk. 17; see *Elwin, op. cit.*, p. 104, note.
- 10 See for example *Elwin*, p. 85 and note; pl. 37 and note; p. 142 and note.
- 11 See *Elwin*, p. 102, footnote.
- 12 See *Elwin*, p. 126, footnote.
- 13 See *Elwin*, p. 129, footnote. Pope also allowed Broome to keep the £70 14s. he had collected in subscriptions from personal friends.
- 14 See *Elwin*, pp. 144-145 and footnotes for the full story. The extent of Broome's hostility can be gauged from the letters on pp. 146-151 of *Elwin*.
- 15 The offending lines were:  
Hibernian politics, O Swift, thy doom,  
And Pope's translating three whole years with Broome.  
These were later changed to:  
Hibernian politics, O Swift, thy fate,  
And Pope's nine years to comment and translate.
- 16 See *Elwin*, pp. 162, 178.
- 17 *Poems on Several Occasions*, London, 1727. A copy of this original edition is in Chester Public Library.
- 18 *Poems on Several Occasions, second edition*, London, 1739, with large alterations and additions. There is a copy of this in the Manchester Central Reference Library. See *Elwin*, p. 169, footnote.



- 19 This edition I have not seen. The edition of Broome in *Chalmer's Poets*, 1810, is a reprint of the 1750 edition, with "Additions and alterations made by the author in 1743, but not copied in the edition of 1750," which are not incorporated in the text but printed at the foot of the page. All quotations are from the Chalmer's edition.
- 20 I do not know for certain; all the later editions of Broome, however, include them.
- 21 See *Elwin*, p. 87 footnote, p. 97; pp. 130ff., 134ff., 183ff. It is only fair to say that he did not always take their advice.
- 22 Notably parts of Homer's *Iliad* (this is quite apart from the work he did for Pope) Hesiod, Horace and Apollonius Rhodius.
- 23 See *Johnson*, *op. cit.*, for his derivativeness generally.
- 24 *Daphnis and Lycidas: A Pastoral. To the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Townshend of Rainham in Norfolk.*
- 25 *Habakkuk, Chap III Paraphrased.* An Ode written in 1710 as an exercise. It is interesting to note that in the various editions of his poems Broome tried continually to improve this poem written originally when he was little more than 20; he only succeeds in making it more bombastic.
- 26 *A Poem on the Seat of War in Flanders Chiefly with Relation to the Sieges With the Praise of Peace and Retirement written in 1710.*
- 27 *op. cit.*
- 28 *Bk. 11*, 11, 13-14.
- 29 For conflicting evidence on this point see *Elwin*, p. 77; pp. 122-123 footnote.
- 30 *Bk. 12*, 11, 294-307. Gilbert Wakefield, the eighteenth century critic, had a high opinion of his merits as a translator of Homer; see *Elwin*, p. 100 footnote.
- 31 See *Elwin*, p. 111.
- 32 *Elwin*, p. 127.
- 33 *Elwin*, p. 169.

Continued from page 48

to counteract the oft-times ludicrous attempts to explain the origin of the Cheshire Cat, as a subject of humour and fantasy.

It is one of those entanglements of archaeology, history and Folklore, which serves to perpetuate the faint wisps of a long forgotten racial memory of the early inhabitants of the area now covered by Cheshire and Shropshire.

As in the delightful reference to the Cheshire Cat in "Alice in Wonderland," the cat disappeared until nothing was left but the grin, so the real history of the Cheshire Cat has disappeared, and many of the attempts to locate its origin would undoubtedly perpetuate "The Grin," for they are of the type which would make any Cat laugh. One thing is certain, that however mixed the race has become with the passage of time, Cheshire remains the land of smiles.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### SHAVINGTON — THE STORY OF A CHESHIRE VILLAGE

by GEOFFREY NULTY

Editor, "The Nantwich Guardian"

Assistant Editor, "The Historical Atlas of Cheshire"

Published for the Parish Council of Shavington by J. C. Stanley, Parish Clerk, The Laurels, Main Road, Shavington, Crewe, this story of a village is outstanding for value and interest. It consists of 67 closely packed pages, copiously illustrated, and contains three maps. How so attractive and informative a history has been produced at so low a figure (5s., by post 5/6d.) is a source of surprise, until one realises that its author has received no fee for his research and labour, but, unstintingly, has given his time and effort out of love for the village in which he lives.

How this history was inspired by a minesweeper, *H.M.S. Shavington*, is told on page 5 of the book. The result of the inspiration is cause for pride on the part of the Shavington Parish Council, its publishers, and Mr. Nulty, its author. I know of no other Parish Council to publish a village history. As far as Cheshire is concerned Shavington is first in the field. May other parish councils emulate Shavington's achievement!

The book is one of the most ambitious village histories to be published in Cheshire during this century, and a notable (if not unique) feature is the inclusion of the "Tithe" Map of 1839. This is particularly important to Shavington for it shows the village as it was at the dawn of the railway era, and immediately before the opening of the Crewe Railway Works in 1843. To those who regard Shavington as a mere "railway colony," the book will prove an eye-opener.

The author has more than justified his claim that *Santune* of the Domesday Survey is Shavington and not Sound as some controversialists assert. His Domesday Book extract and his observations upon it are most instructive and illuminating.

Chapters on the Woodnoth Family and its most famous connection, Nicholas Ferrar, follow. Subsequent chapters deal with the parish church of Wybunbury, the story of Non-Conformity in Shavington and the Charities.

A fascinating chapter entitled "Fields and Their Names" deals in a most entrancing manner with a pull-out tithe map of the township and the key to it on pages 38 to 43. Field-names are often very puzzling and provoking. Those of the Shavington Tithe Map are no exception, as witness *Yolk of Egg*, *Ollen*, *Rough Key*, and *Big Wimping*. These puzzles are solved in scholarly fashion by the author. And on page 65, other place-names in Shavington are explained.

"The Railway Era" and "In This Century" are further chapters in this delightful book, followed by one dealing with Shavington Parish Council and its activities, and this naturally leads on to the final chapter of the book, "The Village To-day."

The author, in submitting the book for review, declared "I found Shavington a fascinating study because of the contrast between the early manorial village and the sudden 'invasion' of the railway workers, then the emergence of the 'garden village' of to-day with its rising community spirit." This epitome of the story of Shavington will serve as a fitting conclusion to this review of a remarkable, most readable, and exciting publication. It merits success. May it have a sale phenomenal for village histories! No lover of Cheshire should be without a copy.

A. O.

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