Wycoller Bridge, Lancashire - find out more on page 26

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman’s Message</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester &amp; the Landscape of NE Wales</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society Snippets</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A..Z of Landscape History</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire History Day</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwysaney Hall Estate</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Year Ahead:</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Programme</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Visits</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Break</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Publications</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor’s Corner</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Grosvenor Museum Lecture Theatre has proved a very successful venue for our lectures with average attendances continuing to rise. Our 2008 lecture programme included a variety of topics covering aspects of landscape history dating from prehistoric times to the 20th century. Our 2009 programme looks equally attractive with speakers drawn from the variety of academic disciplines that contribute to our knowledge of landscape history. These include history, archaeology, art history and geography reflecting the broad multidisciplinary approach to landscape history taken by our society.

As always our spring/summer field visit programme proved a great success and received very good member support despite indifferent weather at times. Visits were made to Chester itself but also further afield into Staffordshire and North Wales as well as parts of our own county of Cheshire. I’m sure our forthcoming programme of field visits, which are briefly described in this newsletter, will prove equally popular. Preparations for our September study break are well advanced and I feel sure Whalley Abbey will make a superb base from which to explore the hidden gems of the Lancashire countryside.

This is my last ‘message from the Chair’ since my term of office ends at the next AGM in February. The last four years have been eventful for our society with these events dominated by our move from the University of Chester to the Grosvenor Museum. This move necessitated a significant level of financial adjustment for our society. However, thanks to the diligence of the CSLH committee and excellent support for our fund-raising events from our members, we enter 2009 in a much more secure financial position. Thanks too to our President, Professor Graeme White, for his unerring support during what could have been a very difficult period enabling us to maintain good links with the University of Chester where the society was founded over 20 years ago.

On behalf of the committee I would like to wish all our members a happy and prosperous New Year and, on a personal note I look forward to meeting you all once again during 2009.

Ray Jones
The 9th century was a period when political change across both England and Wales brought about a new pattern of settlement and changes in the landscape of the Welsh Borderlands. It has been suggested that Anglo Saxon control extended well beyond the Flintshire dykes following the Mercian invasion of northern Powys in 822 when control may have been extended westwards as far as the Conwy valley since the Powys royal stronghold at Deganwy was destroyed by the Mercians in that year.¹

One major relict feature in the landscape of this period survives near Llangollen in the form of Eliseg’s Pillar. The pillar is the lower section of a round-shafted cross said to be of the “Mercian” type erected around 825 AD by Cyngen, the last king of Powys (died 854). The cross shaft has a long inscription that is no longer legible. However, it was partially decipherable in 1696 when Edward Lluyd, the eminent Welsh antiquary, transcribed the contents for posterity. The inscription traces a genealogy of the Powysian kings to Magnus Maximus and Vortigern. It goes on to list Cyngen’s more recent ancestors including his great grandfather, Eliseg, to whom this monument was dedicated. It describes Eliseg’s recovery of lands lost to the English that must have occurred close to the time of building Offa’s Dyke. It has been suggested that these Welsh attacks may have been those that prompted the erection of the great frontier monument.² The cross was pulled down and broken during the Civil War. The upper section of the cross disappeared but the inscribed lower section was re-erected in situ by a local landowner in 1779 when a burial cist containing a skeleton was found in the mound on which the cross was erected.

Royal stronghold at Deganwy

Chester and the Landscape of North East Wales in the Later Medieval Period
Mercian control of the Borderland political map ended in 829, when the Wessex king, Egbert defeated the Mercians in battle. This event signalled the decline of Mercia as the leading English kingdom and the emergence of Wessex as the dominant kingdom in England. Meanwhile in Gwynedd a new powerful dynasty of kings was to emerge following the accession of Merfyn Frych to the throne in 825. Gwynedd, through the founder’s grandson Rhodri Mawr (“the Great”) was able to take advantage of the weakness of both Mercia and Powys and recover much of the land it had lost in North Wales together with lands to the south in Ceredigion before his death in 878. By 904, Gwynedd had extended its area of influence into South Wales.

Coincidental to these powerful changes, a third major political entity was to emerge following the establishment of a Norse settlement in Dublin in 850. Viking raids had already plagued the kingdom of Wessex in the later years of Egbert’s reign (died 839) and sporadically affected the coast of North Wales, particularly Anglesey. By 871, Scandinavian advances from the east coast of England had resulted in the disappearance of most of the old English kingdoms including the eastern half of Mercia. Chester appears to have survived this eastward advance since the bones of St Werburgh were transported from Hanbury in Staffordshire to what was perceived to be a safer sanctuary in Chester. The comparative security of Chester itself came into question when a Danish army wintered in the settlement in 893. In the following year the Anglo Saxon Chronicle described Chester as “a deserted Roman city in Wirral”. The description is puzzling since archaeological finds in Lower Bridge Street indicate occupation of that area in the late 9th century. Any desertion must therefore have been, at worst, temporary.

In other parts of England, Wessex came under pressure and King Alfred, was forced to retreat to the Somerset marshes. Following an initial victory against the Danes at Edington in 878, Wessex was able to regain much of southern England before Alfred’s death in 899. Gwynedd too managed to survive Scandinavian attacks in the late 9th century and allied itself to Alfred against the invaders in 890. A hoard of 22 pieces of silver, thought to be of Hiberno-Norse origin, were found in Huxley, West Cheshire in 2004 and were described by archaeologists in Cheshire as “the outstanding find of the year”. The hoard contained a silver ingot but was mainly made up of decorated silver bracelets which had been flattened suggesting that they were regarded as bullion. Although the reason for burying the hoard is unclear, their origin probably lies in the turbulent period at the close of the 9th century.

Alfred was able to consolidate his gains against the Scandinavians by constructing a network of defended sites known as burhs. Alfred’s daughter, Aethelflaeda married Aethelred, ealdorman of Mercia, and proceeded to emulate her father’s strategy and construct a line of burhs to defend North Cheshire and the adjacent Saxon settlements in North Wales. The first to be constructed was that of Chester.
in 907, possibly reflecting the town’s key strategic location and the existence of earlier fortifications on the site. Others followed at the former Iron Age fort of Edisbury in 914, Runcorn (915), Thelwall (919) and the westernmost burh at Cledemutha (Rhuddlan) in 921 by Edward the Elder who had seized control of West Mercia in 918. The burh defences once again established a military link between Chester and the lands of North East Wales. The construction of the burh at Rhuddlan suggests that Anglo Saxon control in North East Wales extended at least as far west as the head of navigation of the River Clwyd. This places the lead/silver/iron deposits of what is now northern Flintshire as firmly within Anglo Saxon control although archaeological evidence supporting the continued exploitation of these mineral sources is still to be found.

Rhuddlan - Saxon burh and Norman stronghold

In 904, the Hiberno-Norse were expelled from Dublin. Place-name evidence suggests they established themselves in settlements along the Wirral coast. Possible settlement on the Welsh coast of the Dee Estuary is also indicated by the names Axton, Kelston and Linacre together with a Viking cist burial on the coast at Talacre.\textsuperscript{5}

Michael Wood suggests that the royal decision to establish burhs as planned settlements with their own rectilinear street patterns was an important element in the recovery of urban life in England in the late 10\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{6} There is broad agreement that the creation of the burh at Chester certainly stimulated urban development within the city in this period. It has been suggested that the settlement at Chester was regarded as a royal fortress in the early 9\textsuperscript{th} century and emerged as the key town in the new shire of Cheshire, which included parts of North East
Wales, by 988. As well as acquiring a military and administrative role during the 9th century, Chester emerged as an important centre of industry and trade.

The security provided by the burh led to the establishment of an important mint in Chester possibly by Aethelflaeda, which was flourishing by the reign of Athelstan (924-939). It is interesting to speculate as to why Chester became important as a mint for silver pennies in the 10th century although it is known that Wessex deliberately supported a policy of dispersing mints from London in that period. Given that there is no evidence of a cash economy in Cheshire outside Chester itself, it is plausible that the output of the mint may have been transported by sea to London and to Ireland to finance trade with Dublin. The exact location of the mint is unclear although the discovery of a silver ingot in Lower Bridge Street might suggest that it was in this area of the city. Similarly, the presence of two churches on the south side of the city bearing Scandinavian dedications to St. Bridget (10th century) and St. Olave’s (11th century) reinforces the presence of Scandinavians in this part of Chester. It is also interesting to note that a quarter of the named moneyers in the city bore Scandinavian names. However by 970 the Chester mint appears to have entered a period of decline.

In neighbouring North East Wales a Welsh resurgence was underway under the ruthless Gruffudd ap Llewelyn who seized control of Gwynedd and Powys in 1039 after murdering the ruler of these provinces, He went on to defeat Leofric, Earl of Mercia, in battle at Rhyd-y-Groes near Welshpool, thereby seizing control of lands to the east of Offa’s Dyke that had been under English control for 300 years. He later married Ealdgyth, the daughter of Aelfgar, Leofric’s successor as the Earl of Mercia. Aelfgar had been expelled through the growing influence of the Godwinsons, Earls of Wessex, who were able to dominate English politics in the reign of the ineffectual Edward the Confessor following his accession in 1042. Through a policy of removing other Welsh provincial rulers or by forcing them to flee, Gruffudd ap Llewelyn ruled most of the territory of what is now modern Wales by 1057 making Ealdgyth, his wife, effectively queen of Wales. English inhabitants, from a large area of the Borderland which had fallen under his control, were expelled. The areas of Whitford, Bangor-on-Dee and Hope were now part of Wales. Clearly the emerging threat of Gruffudd ap Llewelyn’s ambition unsettled the English crown leading to an invasion of Wales by Harold Godwinson. The latter defeated the Welsh forces and although Gruffudd ap Llewelyn survived the battle, he was later murdered by his own people. Harold married Ealdgyth, Gruffudd’s widow, but did not annexe North Wales. He appeared content to leave the Welsh dis-united under the control of local rulers, which was the situation that pertained in 1066.

The Normans have been described as “colonists of genius”. In 1071, William I granted the Earldom of Chester to one of his loyal followers, Hugh d’Avranche, who had gained experience in frontier conflict on the borders of Brittany.
William had no intention of annexing Wales but turned a blind eye to the territorial ambitions of his marcher lords. As in Brittany, the marcher lords allocated newly gained territory to castellans who controlled their areas of influence from hastily erected mottes. Mottes have been described as “the prime weapon in the Norman conquest of Wales” providing not only an effective military base but a potent symbol of Norman power. In view of the dis-array in North Wales following the death of Gruffudd ap Llewelyn and Harold Godwinson’s recovery of much formerly English-held territory east of the River Clwyd, the forces of the followers of Hugh d’Avranches made rapid progress in over-running territory along the North Wales coast and in major river valleys. Hugh’s cousin, Robert who held the former burh of Rhuddlan, imprisoned Gruffudd ap Cynan, the ruler of Gwynedd in 1084 and attempted to annex the Welsh province by building a string of mottes close to the coast beyond the River Conwy at Aber, Caernarfon and Aberlleiniog on Anglesey. He created a forward base for his operations at the former British stronghold of Deganwy.

The mottes, and the stone castles that replaced a number of them, have been described as “the most physical manifestation of the Norman Conquest”. In North East Wales, where at least 26 were built, mottes represent the most indelible relict features of this period in the history of the Borderland. The mottes at Overton and the Roft (Marford) have disappeared, whereas that at Hen Blas (Flint) was flattened although excavations during the 1960s identified its site. The mottes of West Cheshire and North East Wales appear to have used local materials for easy and swift construction. In this region, most mottes were constructed of either glacial drift or fluvio-glacial sands and gravels. Thus geology perhaps played as important a part in the siting of mottes as strategic location. Mottes varied considerably in size, the largest were often in key strategic locations such as Twt Hill, Rhuddlan (18m high) and Hawarden (15m). These contrast markedly with the low motte at Prestatyn, which was only 1m in height. 54% of mottes in North East Wales had baileys although those at Mold and Hen Blas (Flint) had two. The Northern Marches had no ring works in contrast to other parts of the Welsh Borderlands. This has been attributed to the personal preference of the Earls of Chester. The distribution of mottes in North East Wales and West Cheshire indicate that they were built to give the Earls of Chester strength in depth against an attack from North Wales.

The expected attack by the Welsh eventually came exposing an inherent weakness in the use of mottes that lay too far from their neighbours. The turning point seems to have been the killing of Robert of Rhuddlan by the Welsh at the foot of the Great Orme in 1093 followed by the escape of Gruffudd ap Cynan, ruler of Gwynedd, from Norman custody. By 1094, all the mottes to the west of the Conwy had fallen to the Welsh.

However, it is clear from the Domesday Survey of 1086 that the western boundary
of Cheshire was fluid and that Chester was still the administrative centre for that part of North East Wales that lay east of the Clwyd. The manuscript also suggests that Robert of Rhuddlan held the lands between the Clwyd and Conwy as “North Wales” for which he paid William I the sum of £40. In these western limits of Cheshire, Robert had established a small borough with a mint and iron mines perhaps suggesting that the mineral wealth of Tegeingl (Englefield) was being exploited. It seems likely that some form of urban settlement already existed at Rhuddlan before 1066 since it was the headquarters of Gruffudd ap Llewelyn until 1063. Gruffudd had been given the lands to the west of the River Dee by Edward the Confessor and had expelled a number of English settlers from the area. However, it is clear that by 1066, the area as far west as Offa’s Dyke was once again under the control of the Earls of Mercia from their regional capital at Chester.

The Domesday Survey indicates that the settlement pattern of West Cheshire and the Welsh borderlands was mainly dispersed with the township being the main unit of sub tenancy. These townships frequently formed part of multiple estates containing a variety of resources that included fisheries, salt houses, mills and churches.
The use of mottes which had proved so successful in the initial Norman advance into North Wales, proved less effective in defending those gains against a determined and organised Welsh opposition that was lacking in 1066. A succession of able rulers of Gwynedd: Gruffudd ap Cynan, Owain Gwynedd, Llewelyn the Great and Llewelyn the Last were able to re-take control of much of North East Wales destroying many of the mottes that had been erected in the two decades following the initial Norman conquest. This brings into question the long term effectiveness of the creation the marcher lordship of Chester in controlling North Wales although their control of Cheshire to the east of the Dee with the exception of Maelor Saesneg remained strong.

Chester was to play an important part in the early stages of the final conquest of Wales in 1282. The pre-conquest years saw the beginnings of action that would improve the chances of lasting success against the Welsh. In 1276, William Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, took control of the king’s army at Chester, an action that was to have a lasting impact upon the Borderland landscape. In order to improve the movement of troops into North Wales, Beauchamp employed an army of woodcutters to widen the “pass” at Pulford between the River Alyn and the Cheshire border. Documentary evidence indicates that the felled timber was sold off commercially. The cutting extended to the north and west of Pulford into the Forest of Swerdewod (now lost) that lay astride of the border between the lands of the Lordship of Hawarden, Dodleston and Bretton. The clearances allowed the passage of troops from Chester in the early summer of 1282 to take the castles of Hope (Caergwrle) and Hawarden, which were in Welsh hands so creating an important foothold in the conquest of the whole of North Wales.

Control of the newly-conquered lands passed from Chester to a series of new smaller marcher lordships, the caputs, which were marked by a series of new stone castles as at Holt, Chirk, Ruthin and Denbigh.

References

13. Burnham, Clwyd & Powys, p.120.

Ray Jones

Society Snippets

STOP PRESS …

Any member wishing to purchase a copy of the CSLH booklet The Lost Gardens of Hoole is urged to do so soon as there are only a few copies left! Price £2.00. These can be purchased at our spring lectures or via the editor.

“Help Wanted”

Is anybody interested in genealogical research? Jennifer and Mike Kennerley are looking for help in researching the Broughton family of Hoole. If you are interested please contact them on 01829 770847.
M is for ... Mills

“No mill, no bread”. Despite this just 18 mills are mentioned in Domesday Book for Cheshire, although there were 5,000 recorded mills in England as a whole. In order to create an efficient mill, a weir was often created. A leat was dug to make the flow more efficient and this was controlled with sluices and embankments. The water turned the wheel and provided a source of power to turn a grindstone for grain (or gorse), or to power other equipment, as in a fulling mill. Wind power was also harnessed, but windmill mounds are few and far between compared with the remains of mill-dams, leats and associated hydrological engineering. Often strange anomalies along a township or parish boundary can be explained by the presence of a former mill or stream.

Why not visit
Cheshire: Bunbury watermill, Stretton watermill near Farndon, Swettenham watermill at The Quinta arboretum; Shropshire: Clun Mill youth hostel, Daniels Mill at Eardington near Bridgnorth, Ditherington Mill industrial site at Shrewsbury, Walcot mill weirs and races near Wroxeter; North-east Wales: mill weir, sluice-gates and leat on the Dee at Llangollen (seen from Bishop’s Walk), Greenfield Valley industrial heritage site, Grove, Marian and Llewerllyd Mills at Dyserth.

Further information
O. Bott, ‘Corn-mill sites in Cheshire’, Cheshire History, nos. 10-11, 13-17 (1982-

N is for … Non-conformity

Pendref Welsh Baptist Chapel, Ruthin, 1827 (renovated 1875)

If you dig out an OS map of the area round Caernarfon (Snowdon, no.115), you’d be forgiven for thinking you were looking at a map of Palestine: Bethel (SH5265) and its satellite Saron, another Saron (4658), little Bethesda (4657), Carmel (4955), Nebo and its satellite Nasareth (4750). None of these are high-level administrative names – they’re all settlements that have grown around chapels built at road junctions. Even without the place-name, the location of a nonconformist chapel may offer clues about landholding – if the local landowner was hostile, then the chapel will be just outside the estate lands. In towns, chapels may demonstrate the architecture of prestige and challenge.

Why not visit

Cheshire: Great Warford near Alderley Edge (Bapt., 1712, rebuilt 1813), the Friends’ Meeting Houses at Bourne St Wilmslow (1830) and Pillory St Nantwich (1725, now Nantwich Players), and the trinity of Unitarian chapels all built c1690
and possibly by the same designer, in Brook St Knutsford, King Edward St Macclesfield, and Dean Row Wilmslow; Shropshire: Bridgnorth (Bapt., 1842), Newport (Cong., 1831, now Trinity Church), Shrewsbury (Unit., 1691, façade 1885), Wem (Cong. Burial Ground, 1834), Wrockwardine Wood in Oakengates (PM, 1863); North-east Wales: the chequered Bettisfield (PM, 1879) and nearby Bronington Chequer (WM, 1822), and two at Llandyrnog: Capel y Dyffryn at Waen (CM/WP, 1836, with tablet to Robert Llwyd), and the Bapt. Chapel (1836) – now a house, complete with graveyard in the front garden. Further afield, do visit the Chapel Museum at Mow Cop in Staffordshire (open afternoons, May to September – check times), and closer to home of course the Wesley Methodist Church in St John St for your Fairtrade shopping!

Further information

O is for … Outbuildings

Gwern Tyno Farm, Colwyn Bay

The outbuildings of a farmstead may include barns, stables, cow-houses, dairies, cart-sheds, granaries, as well as pigsties, brew-houses and poultry-houses. Outbuildings can be arranged in different ways: in a row, in two rows, L-shaped,
U-shaped, round a courtyard, or all over the place. 18th-century agricultural improvers were keen to point out the advantages of efficient layouts, although they recognised that particular farming systems and varying topographical conditions gave rise to different needs. Particular patterns can sometimes be distinguished among farms belonging to the same large estates.

**Why not visit**
Cheshire: Reaseheath College; Shipbrook Hill Farm (Riverside Organic), Whatcroft, Northwich; Sugarbrook Farm, Ashley, Altrincham; Shropshire: Acton Scott Farm, Church Stretton; Attingham Home Farm, Atcham; Park Hall, Oswestry; North Wales: Bodafon Farm Park, Llandudno; Hendre Visitor Centre, Talybont, Bangor (Penrhyn Estate); Foel Farm Park, Brynsiencyn and Henblas Park, Bodorgan in Anglesey.

**Further information**

Mike Headon

---

**Cheshire History Day**  
**Saturday 25th October 2008**

This year’s theme was **Cheshire Gardens, Parks and Gardeners** and once again the event at Northwich Memorial Hall was sold out. CSLH decided to have a stall to promote our society, its lectures and field visits and many delegates commented upon the photographs on display.

The first lecture, entitled ‘Shrines to Savoys: Cultural Influences on the Gardens at
Tatton’ was given by Sam Youd, the gardens manager. This was a very entertaining talk which focused upon the restoration of the Japanese and Kitchen gardens at Tatton. Sam explained the importance of the garden exhibition at White City in 1910 in promoting Japanese ideas of garden design alongside the publication of these ideas by Josiah Conder. One of these publications was purchased by the Egerton family and resulted in the construction of the original Japanese garden at Tatton. The restoration of the garden was the culmination of 14 years planning, a grant of money from Japan and six months hard work. As Sam explained, the restoration of the gardens at Tatton was very much ‘work in progress’.

Elizabeth Davey focused upon the work of Edward Kemp and his ‘Gardens for the People’. Born in Surrey, Kemp is best known for his designs for a number of public parks in the north west. Although focusing upon Birkenhead Park which opened in 1847, Elizabeth also discussed Kemp’s work in Frodsham, Runcorn, Crewe and Congleton. Many members will be particularly familiar with Grosvenor Park in the centre of Chester, another of Kemp’s designs, originally called ‘the new park.’ In addition to public parks, Kemp undertook a number of private commissions during his life time and was also responsible for the layout of numerous cemeteries such as that at Anfield.

Marion Mako spoke about her research on Cheshire gardens. She is co-author with Tim Mowl of the latest book in the Historic Gardens and Landscapes of England series. The book focuses upon 90 historic gardens in the county and includes those at Adlington Hall, Oulton Park (of which only remnants are left in the modern landscape), Rode Hall and Tatton.

Jonathon Pepler concluded the day by outlining the types of evidence available to the researcher of historic gardens. Evidence can be gleaned from title deeds, plans, estate, tithe and O.S. maps, account books, directories, wills and probate inventories. Jonathon suggested that one area of possible future research would be the analysis of wills in order to determine the social profile of gardeners.

All those that attended agreed that it had been a very interesting day and a successful one for promoting CSLH. One added bonus, by the time we had packed up the stand and were heading for our cars – the rain had stopped!

[Editor’s plea – Come on Mike organise a trip to the Japanese garden at Tatton!]

Sharon Varey
The Surrounding Area

This area of Flintshire is classic border country. Here the tribal kingdoms of North Wales fought each other for supremacy, or, all too briefly, combined to resist the invader from the east – Roman, Mercian, Saxon and Norman, they have left their fingerprints on the landscape. The coastal area north and east of the Ystrad Alun were known in medieval Wales as the Middle Country – the Perfeddwlad - the subject of contention first between Gwynedd and Powys and the Lords Marcher, with the English king behind them. To this day traces of the ebb and flow of conquest and re-conquest linger here. In the valley below the present house, an obelisk commemorates the ‘Hallelujah Victory’ of the Christian Britons over the heathen Picts in the fifth century. (Indeed, Gwysaney may take its name from the Hosannas of the triumphant faithful.) The lines of two Mercian dykes, apparently earthwork boundary marks of the eighth century, appear to have been drawn through the modern parish of Mold, possibly even through the modern estate of Gwysaney.¹

The Estate

Gwysaney stands in a remote location high up away from the busy main Mold to Denbigh road on the first foothills of the Welsh mountain, high enough on its ridge to command an excellent panoramic view of the surrounding landscape. Driving out of Mold on the Denbigh Road (A541), after about half mile on the right hand side, there is a small lodge in simple Tudor style. It was built in 1841 and is flanked by curving stone gate piers topped with ornamental coping.² From here the drive winds up a small valley to higher more level ground to the south of the house, where it enters the parkland through gates to the south-west of the house, which also provide access for estate houses and various farming actives. The estate is also accessible by a network of public footpaths.³

The origins of this vast estate and parkland date back to the late Tudor period. In the mid-sixteenth century John ap David, a descendant of the royal house of Powys, took the surname of Davies.⁴ This Welsh gentry family, with interests in agricultural landownership, later had interests in numerous industrial enterprises in Flintshire, including lead mines, coal mines, potteries and brick-works.⁵

The landscape park was developed as a seventeenth-century deer park offering splendid views. The boundary between the grounds and the park is marked by a
ha-ha. Many specimen trees and magnificent sweet chestnuts can be seen. Additionally there are formal Victorian/Edwardian gardens with shrubberies, a water garden and attractive woodland walks through a pinetum. The estate is now purely agricultural and the remaining parkland is permanent pasture with isolated trees, mainly oak.

Gwysaney Hall

The stone house dates back to 1603. At that period it was a symbol for a wealthy landowner to build a large house as a key to his status and prosperity. The seventeenth century front door put up by the staunch royalist Robert Davies (1616-1666) in 1640, still bears marks of the Civil War struggle when Gwysaney was besieged by Sir William Brereton’s Parliamentarian forces. Structural alterations have taken place at various times, principally in 1664, during the 1820s, between 1836 and 1865 and during the 1950s. The stables which are located to the north of the house date from the seventeenth century. Built in stone to match the house, they have mullioned windows and stepped gables, and are arranged around a courtyard.

From the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century it would appear that the Gwysaney estate was neglected and the Hall was leased as a farmhouse, for the Davies family had inherited Llannerch near Denbigh and moved there. In 1789 the estate was divided between two daughters, and Gwysaney was inherited by Mary Puleston of Hafod-y-Wern, Wrexham. Soon after it passed to Bryan Cooke, of Owston, Yorkshire, through marriage to Frances Puleston, and from then until 1888 the owners lived at Owston. Although living in Yorkshire, their son Philip Davies-Cooke, who inherited in 1821, energetically set about reviving the Gwysaney estate. He pulled down the east wing, by then unsafe, and made other structural and internal alterations. Between 1836 and 1865 his son, Philip Bryan
Davies-Cooke, built a two-storey western extension in a similar style. In 1873 landowner returns reveal that Philip Bryan Davies-Cooke, owned 3,454 acres in Flintshire and Denbighshire. During the twentieth century further minor additions and upgrading works were made by Philip Tatton Davies-Cooke. In the latter half of that century the estate was reduced in size. By 1964, the Gwysaney Estate consisted of the house, gardens, demesne and parklands along with twenty-five farms, and 378 acres of woodland. This amounted to 2,000 acres.\(^\text{10}\) The Owston Estate was sold off in 1981.\(^\text{11}\)

The ha-ha boundary between the grounds and park

**References**

4. Flintshire Record Office, Gwysaney MSS (Davies-Cooke).
5. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
11. Flintshire Record Office, Gwysaney MSS (Davies-Cooke).

John Lowe

Fiona is Curator for Denbighshire County Council, which has joint custody of the Sites and Monuments Record with the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Alongside John Manley and Stephen Grenter, Fiona edited The Archaeology of Clwyd (Clwyd County Council, 1991).

Fiona will be talking about a project in the Clwydian and Llantisilio uplands, entitled, Heather and Hillforts Project. Denbighshire County Council succeeded in obtaining a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant for this project. Enhancing the quality of the heather moorlands, through better management and understanding, is a key aim. In addition, little was known about the pattern of hillforts, and the project aims to investigate these within the area of Pen y Cloddiau, Moel Arthur, Moel y Gaer Llanbedr, Foel Fenlli, Moel y Gaer Llantisilio and Caer Drewyn. Prior to the project, which commenced in 2004, little accurate topographical survey existed of these hillforts, and the few excavations, which had taken place, date back to the middle of the 19th century. These sites are very much a part of the modern day landscape. The Offa’s Dyke National Trail crosses three of them and unofficial motorbike access affects another. Many people visit, but are often unaware of their importance. One aim of the Heather and Hillforts project is to address some of these gaps in our understanding, introduce positive management and increase public awareness and understanding of their significance.

23 February 2009: Dr Howard Williams, Senior Lecturer, University of Chester. "Death & The Landscape."

Howard has a BSc in Archaeological Science from the University of Sheffield (1992-1995). He then took an MA in Burial Archaeology at the University of Reading (1995-1996) where he developed his interests in early medieval burial...
practices. He stayed in Reading for his doctoral research, focusing on early Anglo-Saxon cremation burials, supervised by Dr Heinrich Härke (1996-1999). His thesis incorporated both a critique of previous interpretations and a new analysis of cremation graves between the fifth and seventh centuries AD. Howard’s first academic position was as Lecturer in Archaeology at Trinity College Carmarthen (1999-2002) and he subsequently spent a year as Lecturer in Archaeology at Cardiff University (2002-2003). In both these positions he developed a strong research profile in mortuary archaeology as well as teaching expertise in archaeological theory, medieval and landscape archaeology. His move to the University of Exeter in 2003, first as Lecturer and subsequently as Senior Lecturer, allowed Howard to take his research in new directions through both the analysis of mortuary data and field-based research. He joined the Department of History & Archaeology at the University of Chester in February 2008, where he continue to pursue both teaching and research focusing on the archaeology of historic periods.

Howard’s research has developed new perspectives on the theory and analysis of death and memory in the early medieval period (c. AD 400 – 1100). A prolific author, Howard’s work includes a series of book chapters and articles in journals, including the *Journal of Material Culture, Early Medieval Europe* and the *Journal of Social Archaeology*. He has since explored issues of death and memory in relation to other forms of archaeological data, and has edited two books: *Archaeologies of Remembrance: death and memory in past societies* (Springer, 2003) and *Early Medieval Mortuary Practices – Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology & History*, volume 14 (with Sarah Semple, 2007). He has written a book called *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), and is currently writing a book entitled *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Commemoration*. This book goes beyond mortuary practices to consider the diversity of intersections and interactions between early medieval material culture and social memory.


Peter Boughton is the Keeper of Art at the Grosvenor Museum in Chester. He has a degree in history from the University of Hull and a postgraduate diploma in the history of art from the University of London. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and an Associate of the Museums Association. His field of interest is post-medieval Western art, with a particular passion for the Baroque and Rococo. Working at the Grosvenor Museum since 1983, he has created the Art Gallery, the Silver Gallery and eight period rooms, and has acquired over 470 works of art. He has also curated more than 80 exhibitions, ranging from Old Master paintings to contemporary art. His numerous publications include: *Picturesque Chester: The City in Art* and the *Catalogue of Silver in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester*. He is currently working

For this lecture, Peter has selected the cream of the Chester City Grosvenor Museum’s comprehensive collection of Chester topography, in order to effectively comment on the development of the City’s distinctive townscape. The talk provides a thematic exploration of the city’s unique architectural heritage – the cathedral and churches, the city walls and castle, the Rows, and the streets within and beyond the walls.

6 April 2009: Dr Chris Lewis, County Editor for Essex Victoria County History. “The Anglo-Saxon landscape in north east Wales.”

Currently County Editor for Essex Victoria County History, and previously co-editor with Alan Thacker of Cheshire Victoria County History, Chris is still actively researching in and around Cheshire. Chris’s talk, which is currently being revised for publication, was given in Manchester in April 2007 to The Medieval Settlement Research Group.


Highly recommended by the Royal Geographical Society, Hugh is a retired schoolmaster from east Cheshire, and a very popular, sought-after lecturer.

26 October 2009: David Rowe. “Houses of Mold and District.”

Author and speaker, David Rowe published a book at the beginning of 2008, entitled, ‘Around Mold.’ The book presents some of the events and people who made up the life of the historic Welsh market town of Mold, and his talk will examine this Flintshire townscape.


Dan Garner was senior archaeologist for the Chester Amphitheatre Project on behalf of Chester City Council, along with Tony Wilmott of English Heritage. He is now Project Officer of the “Habitats and Hillforts of Cheshire’s Sandstone Ridge Landscape Partnership Project”.

The Habitats and Hillforts steering group is led by Cheshire County Council and includes Cheshire Community Action, English Heritage, Forestry Commission, The National Trust, The Woodland Trust, Vale Royal Borough Council, Cheshire Landscape Trust, a representative from the Training Group and a representative
from the Local Parishes Group. Awarded £1,395,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the money will be used to conserve the Ridge’s six Iron Age hillforts and wildlife habitats. The lighting of a beacon at Beeston Castle in October 2008 marked the start of the ambitious three year project. The project aims to encourage people to visit, learn about and become more involved in the area’s landscape heritage. Around two square kilometres of the 20 square kilometres of the Sandstone Ridge is involved in the project, stretching from Helsby Hill to Maiden Castle at Bickerton.

Flanked by glacial sands and gravels, the Sandstone Ridge has a strong cultural and natural character. The area encompass woodland and heathland, concentrations of peatlands, a chain of historically important hill top Iron Age forts, and evidence of early industrial activity in the form of sandstone quarries and copper mines, all set within a framework of attractive sandstone buildings, boundary walls and sunken lanes.

The Ridge is also a living landscape and a valued economic, social and heritage asset to the 34,000 people who live and work in the area and the many hundreds of thousands who visit it for rest and recreation each year. The Ridge offers spectacular long-distance views across Cheshire to the Welsh mountains, Peak District and Merseyside, and has some of the finest walking in the county. An estimated 1.4 million walking trips are made along its length, utilising the 473 kilometres of rights of way, which include the Sandstone Trail long distance footpath. The area also includes Delamere Forest, Cheshire’s prime countryside recreational destination.

Rachel McGuicken

Field Visit Programme

Sunday 19 April 2009 (full day) : Discovering Medieval Wrexham and Erddig Motte (Leader: Ray Jones)

Settlement on the site of the present town centre in Wrexham probably began with a Mercian occupation of a site adjacent to the River Gwenfro in the mid 7th century. The settlement was not mentioned in Domesday Book but historians believe that, as in other parts of the Borderland, a settlement existed here by the 11th century. The first documentary record of the town dates from 1161.

Wrexham is unusual in that it is a “home-grown” Welsh town unlike most other
medieval towns in North Wales, which were established as “planted” towns by the Norman conquerors. Interestingly, by the close of the Middle Ages, Wrexham was a far more important urban centre than its “planted” neighbours at Holt, Overton and Caergwrle. The history of the medieval settlement is complex but it is still possible to trace urban change through the town’s medieval street pattern which persists to the present day. Urban development over the past 150 years has destroyed most of the medieval built environment but the Late Medieval parish church survives and is worth a visit.

After lunch, we will meet in the Country Park of Erddig to visit the site of Wrexham’s castle, a mid 12th century motte and bailey, the adjacent medieval hunting park of Coed-y-Glyn and the enigmatic Wat's Dyke.

The area we will be visiting in the afternoon involves some walking (about 2.5 miles) and will require suitable footwear since the paths are frequently muddy in April. Also the ascent to the motte site is steep in parts.

Meet at 10.30 am., meeting point to be confirmed.

Saturday 9 May 2009 (afternoon) : Fenn’s, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses (Leader: Dr Joan Daniels)

The Mosses straddle the border between England and Wales, and are a National Nature Reserve, a European Special Area of Conservation, and a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. The Mosses are one of the most southerly raised bogs in Britain, and the third largest.

In addition to this, the site has an unusual history that involves not just peat-digging – from early times, and on an industrial scale until 1990, but also Bronze Age remains and bog bodies, and in more modern times a floating railway, canal engineering, a tramway, and military use in both World Wars.

CSLH visited the site in 1996, but there have been extensive changes in the intervening period. Apart from the historical interest, this is a unique opportunity to observe the progress of an attempt to rapidly reinstate a specific type of natural landscape. Come and spot the four-spot chasers!

The visit will focus on Whixall Moss and will be led by Dr Joan Daniels of Natural England, who manages the site. A large amount of walking over peaty ground will be involved.

Meet 2.00 p.m. at Manor House National Nature Reserve base at SJ505366 near Whixall (detailed instructions nearer the time).
Saturday 30 May 2009 (afternoon) : Gwydir Chapel and its Landscape (Leader: James Berry)

This visit is led by James Berry, a resident of Llanrwst and a WEA lecturer specialising in both local history, with a focus on the development of the landscape, and in the history of the Welsh language – as well as being the proprietor of Berry Books. He is a very entertaining and informative speaker.

Much of the land around Llanrwst belonged to the Wynns of Gwydir Castle, and it is their influence on the landscape that we shall be exploring. We shall not be visiting the castle itself, but we shall walk from Ancaster Square in the centre of Llanrwst to the seventeenth-century Gwydir Chapel, with its remarkable interior decoration and historic associations. (Note – there is a steep ascent via steps and woodland to the chapel; members with mobility difficulties may wish to drive directly to the Chapel, where there is limited parking.) We shall also explore the nearby summerhouse, the ziggurat mound, and the so-called bowling green.

Meet 2.00 p.m. in Ancaster Square, Llanrwst, by the Llanrwst Almshouses Museum.

Saturday 20 June 2009 (full day) : In and Around Bridgnorth (Leader: the President)

This visit focuses on the Shropshire town of Bridgnorth but also takes in the nearby villages of Quatford and Quatt to the south-east.

Bridgnorth originated as a ‘new town’ founded by the Norman earl of Shrewsbury Robert de Belleme but taken over by King Henry I after the earl’s rebellion in 1102. The twelfth-century rectangular stone keep of this castle survives – with a pronounced ‘lean’ – and there are several interesting 18th and 19th century buildings including St Mary Magdalene’s church designed by Telford, and the present version of the bridge across the Severn. The topography, with a ‘high’ and a ‘low’ town, served by a cliff railway and linking cartway, is spectacular.

Quatford is the predecessor of Bridgnorth as a Severn crossing - the ford was replaced by the bridge to the north – while Quatt prospered in the eighteenth century along a coaching route. Both provide a context for an understanding of Bridgnorth itself.

Meet 10.30 a.m. in the grounds of Bridgnorth castle, leave the area at 4.30 p.m. for return journey to Chester.
Saturday 11 July 2009 (full day) : Aspects of the North Shropshire Landscape (Leader: Sharon Varey)

In comparison with many other areas, north Shropshire is a relatively neglected part of the English rural landscape. This visit will focus on a small area within Baschurch parish, approximately seven miles north west of Shrewsbury. The trip will offer an opportunity to visit an unusual low-lying Iron Age hillfort known as the Berth (on private land), remnants of the ‘forgotten’ canal landscape of Weston Wharf and the chance to explore the heart of the parish.

A considerable amount of walking is necessary as the Berth and canal can only be accessed on foot across fields. Please be advised that the lanes and fields can be muddy at times and may contain herds of dairy cows! (wellies or walking boots desirable).

Meet at 10.30am in Baschurch, (detailed arrangements nearer the time).

Saturday 1 August 2009 (full day) : “A Cloud, a Church, and other places – exploring the Staffordshire/Cheshire border” (Leaders: Jennifer and Michael Kennerley)

This trip will be an ecclesiastical, geological and ‘mechanical’ exploration on the Cheshire/ North Staffordshire border. It will follow a trail of spirituality ancient and modern (comparatively speaking), hill top prospects and watery conservation, with a ‘hill start’ near Congleton.

Start time 10.30am, meeting point to be confirmed.

Important Booking Information

The booking form for the above field visits is enclosed with this newsletter and when completed should be returned to Mike Taylor.

Applications are to be received by Mike by Monday 9 February 2009. A draw will then be made for each visit where applications exceed places, to determine which members will participate. Please do not send any money with the application form as fees will be requested with your confirmation letter. More detailed joining instructions will be sent to participants shortly before each visit.
Hidden Gems of Lancashire
Residential Study Visit
Monday 14th - Wednesday 16th September 2009

Leaders: Diane and Mike Johnson, Maggie and Mike Taylor

Our residential visit for 2009 will be based at Whalley Abbey near Clitheroe, a location which will enable us to explore some of the hidden gems of the Lancashire landscape. Our visits will be wide ranging and will explore aspects of the Roman landscape, religious life, medieval buildings, villages ‘that time forgot’ and the industrial heritage of the area.

Whalley Abbey

The organisation and format of our residential visit for 2009 has been chosen carefully to take into consideration many of the comments made by members in our questionnaire earlier this year. Personally recommended by one of our members, Whalley Abbey offers good facilities and excellent food at an unbeatable price. En-suite rooms with tea/coffee making facilities, TV and internet access are located in the Elizabethan manor house which has been used as a conference centre/retreat for many years. The manor house is set amidst the historic ruins of the Cistercian monastery which we aim to explore.

One new feature for our 2009 venture is to hold a series of short talks in the evenings related to the study area. These will be given by various members and topics will include: the landscape and history of Whalley, the evidence of place names and the cotton industry. If any members feel they have any research or knowledge of the area they would like to share with us that would be most
Members Publications

A History of Hargrave and Huxley (ed. John Whittle)

This second edition brings the history of Hargrave and Huxley up to date since several important archaeological discoveries have been made in the vicinity of the River Gowy since the first edition was published back in 1988.

The book relates the story of Hargrave church, which was founded in 1627 by Sir Thomas Moulson. Moulson was a local man who became a Lord Mayor of London after making his fortune trading in Germany. He also founded a school and in his will he left an endowment to provide an income for a teacher and a minister. This endowment eventually became known as The Sir Thomas Moulson Trust, which is still in existence and endeavours to carry out the wishes of its founder.

welcome. It is also hoped that members might like to share any literature they have on the area in order to create a research library for the duration of the visit.

The cost of the visit will be £130 (plus 2-3 entry fees). The price includes our accommodation on a bed, breakfast and evening meal basis (Monday pm to Wednesday am), a cup of tea on arrival, pre-dinner drinks on Monday and Tuesday, a packed lunch on Tuesday, plus ‘barn tea’ during Tuesday afternoon. We aim to meet mid morning on the Monday and finish after lunch on the Wednesday in order to make the most of our visit to the area. The cost does not include lunch on Monday or Wednesday. If you would like to join us on this study break, please complete the booking form included with this newsletter. As accommodation is limited you are advised to book early to avoid disappointment.

Further information is available from:

Diane and Mike Johnson (01352) 741422  johnsons.typedwar@tiscali.co.uk
Maggie and Mike Taylor (07812) 694237 (Temporary number)
The book goes on to describe other buildings, particularly the farms and their inhabitants. The chapter on ‘Memories’ records the results of interviews with numerous residents. The book describes how times have changed and now a milking cow in the pastures is a rare sight in large areas of Cheshire.

Archaeological finds include a 13th century pottery kiln, a silver coin hoard and a hoard of silver bracelets (both dating from the mid to late 10th century).

The 166 page book contains numerous photographs, many in colour, and is available from John (01244 336301) price £12 plus p&p, where applicable.

Editor’s Corner

I am pleased to say that once again it has been a struggle to include everything within this newsletter. My thanks to all those who have contributed in whatever way and however small. I look forward to receiving any contributions for the next edition. Please let me have them by 1st August 2009.

Alongside this newsletter you should have received three enclosures:

- Poster for Spring Lectures Please display if possible
- Field Visit Application Form Return by Monday 9th February
- Residential Field Visit Booking Form Return by Saturday 24th January

REMINDER: the AGM will take place on Monday 23rd February at 7:15pm at the Grosvenor Museum prior to the lecture. Please could any items for the agenda be submitted to the Chairman by the end of January.

Editor: Sharon Varey, Meadow Brook, 49 Peel Crescent, Ashton Hayes, Cheshire, CH3 8DA
Email: editor@chesterlandscapehistory.org.uk

Visit us at www.chesterlandscapehistory.org.uk

© Chester Society for Landscape History, 2007-2009