



### Editor's Corner

Membership of our landscape society goes from strength to strength and I hope you would agree that this newsletter reflects the wide ranging activities undertaken by the membership. It is particularly nice for me as editor to receive contributions from non committee members and I would like to thank Tracey, Harry, Hilary and Monty for their items. I wonder if any other members would consider writing a short piece on an interesting place they have visited or alternatively submitting a photo montage. The deadline for contributions for the next newsletter is 31st July 2007.

Alongside the newsletter you will have received a number of enclosures. If any of the following items are missing please let me know as soon as possible:

Poster for January Lecture  
Meal at MD's restaurant  
Field Visit Applications  
North Yorkshire Weekend

Please Display  
Return by Friday 2nd February  
Return by Monday 12th February  
Return by Thursday 15th February

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Bedford Weekend



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## Message from the Chair



As we come to the end of our twentieth anniversary year, the committee are working out a programme, to ensure the 21st year is equally successful for the society. As you will see from this newsletter our forthcoming lecture programme contains a good blend of speakers drawn from across the academic world together with some excellent local speakers. Many thanks to Rachel McGuicken for her hard work in liaising with all our speakers and lecture venues. The field visit programme for the summer of 2007 contains a range of fascinating venues spread across the summer months which are sure to prove popular with many of our members. Thanks to Mike Headon for carrying out this demanding and time-consuming task so effectively.

Sharon Varey is arranging two social events during the course of the year. This aspect of our activities is relatively new but those that have been arranged to date have proved very successful. Thanks to Sharon for her hard work and initiative in developing these events.

The need to find a new base for our lectures has progressed relatively painlessly and for the foreseeable future the majority of our lectures will be held at the Grosvenor Museum. The new venue has been well received by members, particularly the chance to chat with others informally over a cup of tea or coffee after the lecture. The downside of the change has been the need to meet the cost of venues to host our meetings since the University of Chester provided

us with free accommodation for twenty years. Our treasurer, Mike Kennerley is handling the new arrangements with his usual high level of competence although the depletion in our financial resources as we adjust to the new arrangements will be a feature of our financial planning over the next few years.

Members will have noted that many of our lecturers present their subject matter with the use of a laptop computer, projector and PowerPoint software. We saw a need for the society to provide suitable equipment for lecturers either as a back up for the Grosvenor Museum's equipment or for use when our meetings are held at other venues such as Stanley Palace. This equipment proved too expensive for our limited budget and so the committee decided to make a bid for funding to the National Lottery. We have just heard that we have been awarded £1746 by the National Lottery's "Awards for All" fund as dedicated expenditure to fund new IT equipment to meet our needs. In recognition of this, we shall be using their logo on all future publicity.

Finally on behalf of all the committee, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a happy and prosperous New Year.

Ray Jones

## Social Events



### Thursday 1st March 2007 - Society Dinner (8:00pm)

Join us for a three course meal in historic surroundings at MD's Restaurant in Watergate Street (above Katie's Tearooms). Pre dinner drinks are available from 7:30pm for those that wish for a more leisurely start to the evening.

Why not whet your appetite with the enclosed menu. The cost will be £19.95 per person. Please note this does not include drinks.

To book a place please return the enclosed booking form no later than Friday 2nd February 2007.

### Sunday 24th June 2007 - Treasure Hunt, Garden Party and Auction

Why not join us for this landscape orientated treasure hunt around a few Cheshire villages. Find out who is the biggest buff at the garden party, which will follow. During the party our illustrious president will host an auction to raise additional funds for the society.

Further details will follow in the spring.

Alternative date if bad weather defeats us is Sunday 15th July 2007.



## Competition Winners

In our summer newsletter we asked members to locate the shop/studio run by Chambré Hardman. Book tokens and applause to Margaret Wilson and Alan Comyns who 'dead heated' in recalling the shop in St. Werburgh Street.

Yorkshire being a big place some motoring and some walking will be unavoidable but for those to whom the final itinerary does not appeal alternative "pick-n-mix" destinations are possible like Castle Howard. Hilary and Monty will return home on Monday and on the return journey will be willing to show any others joining them the remains of Skipsea Fort and the splendours of Beverley Minster, stopping to view the medieval Monks Dike Canal, excavated by Meaux Abbey monks to get access to their granges.



We shall stay at The Hackness Grange Hotel in the North Yorkshire National Park where costs will be £59.99 per person per night. (These are somewhat higher than last year but choice of suitable locations for our trip is limited). Copies of the hotel brochure are available on request from Hilary and Monty.

Deposits of £20 per person plus £5 administration fee (**non refundable**) are required by **Feb. 15th** and final payments by **Aug 16th**.

Places are limited so early booking is advised. Please use the enclosed booking form, which must be sent **direct** to Hilary and Monty at the address given.

Contact details for any queries: Telephone 01352 780202  
Email [cordwell@virtual-chester.net](mailto:cordwell@virtual-chester.net)

Hilary and Monty Cordwell

## Probate Inventories and the Landscape (part 1)

As anybody who has analysed a selection of these documents will know, probate inventories are fascinating. They literally bring the past to life. They focus on people and their possessions and in so doing offer a window into former societies and the way people lived. Drawn up shortly after a person's death, probate inventories list the individual's personal property with those of farmers listing livestock, crops, produce, tools and equipment.

Over 200 inventories survive for the rural parish of Baschurch in north west Shropshire and these offer a wealth of information regarding the farming economy of the parish from the third decade of the sixteenth century through to the mid eighteenth century. On a personal level however it can often be difficult to link the individuals in the records to the early modern landscape. This is often due to the fragmentary survival of land records and maps in this period. This short article will focus upon just one individual and show how inventories can be linked to the landscape.

Thomas Shelvock of the township of Prescott died in October 1688. He appears to have been a wealthy yeoman for his inventory amounted to £145 5s 0d. The value of his farming enterprise was more or less divided equally between livestock (worth £46 0s 0d) and crops (£42 15s 0d). In his barn he had considerable stocks of rye (worth £18), barley (£6), oats (£1 10s 0d) and peas (£1) along with £10 of corn in the ground. He owned eight milk cows and was producing butter and cheese for commercial sale for he had stocks worth £5. As well as owning four calves and two young beasts, Shelvock additionally owned a flock of 53 sheep (worth £8) and a number of pigs. He also had a stock of wool. Thomas Shelvock's inventory thus gives the impression of a substantial mixed farming enterprise.

At the time of his death his possessions amounted to £41 suggesting that Thomas was quite a wealthy individual. Yet his inventory reveals few details about the house he lived in. It had a parlour and a room known as the 'house' (a common term used in the north and Midlands often indicating a room that functioned as a hall). Additionally there was a backhouse. This information would on the surface suggest quite a humble abode for a relatively prosperous yeoman – a picture that is confirmed by the hearth tax records for 1662 which record that Thomas Shelvock's house possessed just one hearth.



After his death Thomas Shelvock's farm passed to his wife Katherine and then to their daughter Mary who married William Weston. Their son Thomas died without issue and so the farm passed to his sister Alice who married John Cooke. The farm then remained in the Cooke family for three generations until it was purchased by R.A. Slaney Esq. Details regarding the specific plots of land are specified in a number of land records dating from 1691 and the farm lands remained unaltered until the nineteenth century. Using these documents alongside a parish survey of 1794 it is possible to identify Thomas Shelvock's farm. This is shown in brown on the accompanying map. His farm lands were not inconsiderable, amounting to 69 acres 2 roods and 20 perches. However the map demonstrates the very fragmented nature of the lands held, a situation which persisted in Prescott until the 1830s. One could speculate whether these fragmented farmlands actually lent themselves to mixed farming, at a time when many others in the locality were beginning to specialise in dairying.

By the time of Thomas's death the Shelvock's were an established farming family in Prescott. It is possible to trace the family back to the mid sixteenth century when they were tenants of Thomas Onslow and were paying an annual rent of 23s 11d. This was the largest rental recorded in the township suggesting that the Shelvock's were substantial farmers in the sixteenth century. This is also borne out by the inventory of Richard Shelvock who died in 1597. Although described as a husbandman, Richard owned four oxen, four milk cows, five young beasts, two horses, a large flock of sheep, pigs and poultry amounting to £45 17s 6d. His crops were valued at £19 17s 8, once again suggesting a considerable mixed farming enterprise.

Probate inventories reveal much about life in the early modern period and when they are used in conjunction with other forms of evidence can really enhance our picture of the landscape in former times.

Sharon Varey

## **Weekend Visit 2007**

### **North Yorkshire**

**Friday 21st - Sunday 23rd September**  
**Leaders : Hilary and Monty Cordwell**



Preparations are now in hand for the 2007 annual weekend field trip to North Yorkshire to be led by Hilary and Monty Cordwell. The itinerary is not yet finalised but at present the intention is to visit the classic deserted medieval village of Wharram Percy (English Heritage) and the seventeenth century Ravenscar Alum Workings (National Trust) on the coast between Whitby and Scarborough. On the spectacular cliff top site at Scarborough Castle we shall see the remains of a Roman Signal Station. (The grave of Anne Bronte is easily seen close by). The Church of St Peter and St Paul in Pickering has perhaps the most extensive wall paintings (c.1450) to survive the Reformation. A few miles to the north up on the open Wheeldale Moor can be seen the exposed remains of a Roman road aligned to join the Roman forts of Cawthorn and Lease Rigg. To the east lie the curious remains of prehistoric ranch boundaries. About ten miles south of Scarborough in Rudstone churchyard stands the ancient Rudstone Monolith, the tallest standing stone in Britain. (The grave of the authoress Winifred Holtby lies in the churchyard).

commercial and marine heritage, having studied the subject for many years. He will lead an evening field visit to the old Port of Chester, and explore places where goods were made, trading took place and ships were built. We will have the opportunity to examine map and other pictorial evidence and use the new Millennium walkway connecting historic sites along the riverbank during the walk.

Meet at County Hall Car Park outside the Cheshire Regimental Headquarters at **6.30 p.m.**

**Sunday 5 August 2007: Brymbo Heritage Site (Leader: Gordon Watkinson)**

Clearance and redevelopment at Brymbo in the area of the steelworks and associated coal-mines has brought to light fascinating physical evidence of industrial activity in the area stretching back to John Wilkinson's activities in the eighteenth century. This includes the Bottle Chimney, the supply reservoir at Top Brymbo Pool, and Old Penrhos Engine House. In addition, there is the evidence of two centuries of further iron- and steel-making on the site, which only ceased in 1991.

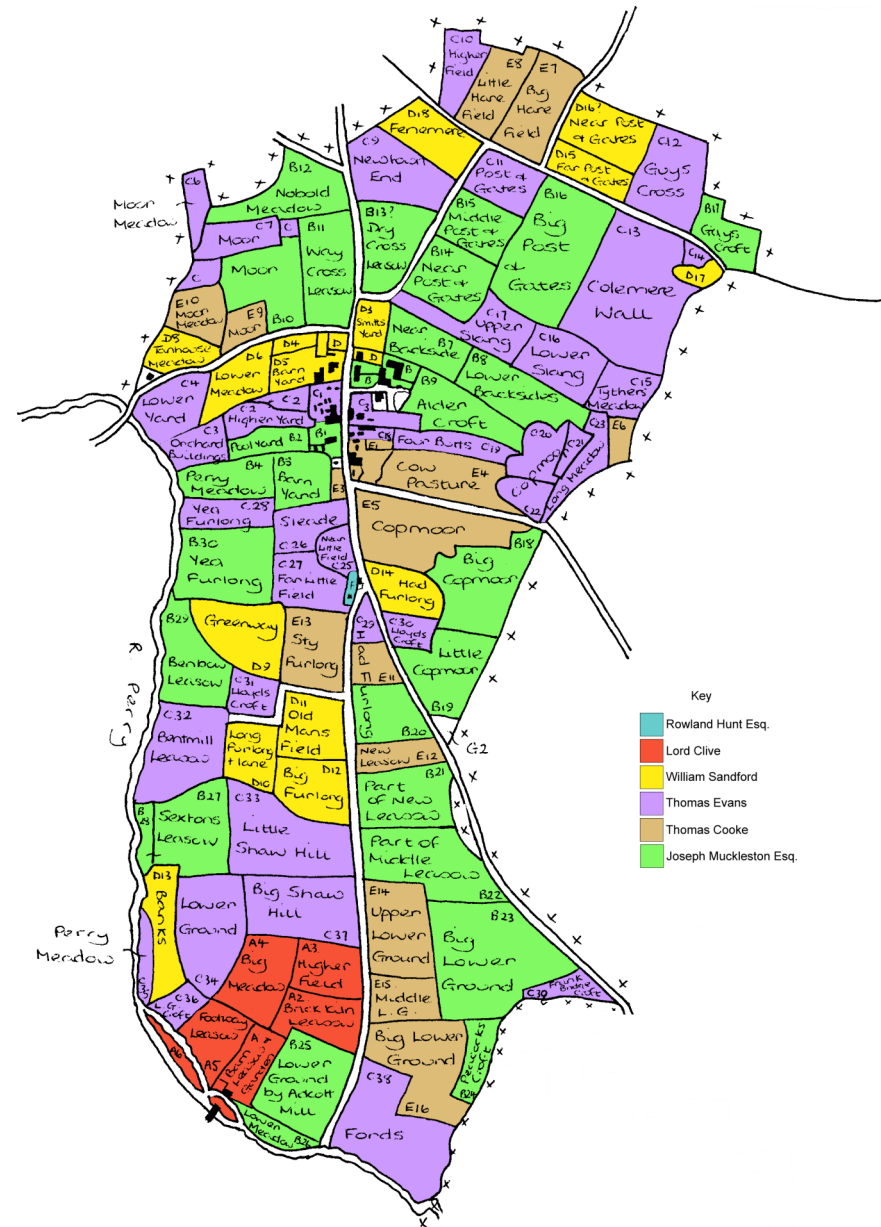
This is a large site undergoing development and includes rough ground, some of which will be crossed using four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Meet at **2 p.m.** at the site entrance. More detailed joining instructions will be sent to participants.

**Important Booking Information**

We are implementing a new booking system for the 2007 season whereby all applications for field visits are to be received by Mike Headon by Monday 12 February. A place on each visit is not guaranteed to all applicants.

A separate draw will be made for each visit where applications exceed places, to determine which members will be granted places. For this reason, PLEASE DO NOT send any money with the application form. Field visit fees will be requested with your confirmation letter.



Mike Headon

Land Ownership in Prescott, Baschurch, 1794

# Time Team



The Poulton Research Project is the only multi-period archaeological site in the North West which is open throughout the year. Working closely with West Cheshire College and Daresbury Laboratory, Poulton introduces students to field archaeology. The site spans an incredible 9000 years, with finds ranging from carefully worked pre-historic flints to 17th century artefacts from the Civil War.

In 1995 a landscape archaeology research project was jointly established between Liverpool University and Chester Archaeology (Mike Emery, Keith Matthews and David Gibbins). The project has evolved into a community based project, while at the same time offering a valuable training experience for undergraduates during the summer months. Many volunteers go on to study archaeology full time and often return to share their expertise with Mike and his team.

Channel 4's 'Time Team' were at Poulton from the 20th to the 22nd of June 2006. They were searching for the 'lost' Abbey, which some people believed was buried under the remains of Poulton Hall. Limited excavations in 1998 had been unable to resolve the mystery. Everyone was hoping that Time Team's experts could help to locate the precise location of the Abbey, which was founded by 1153 but abandoned early in the 13th century.

My husband, Colin, has been an enthusiastic volunteer at Poulton for some years and although he didn't expect to be digging with Time Team he took a few days holiday to go and observe them in action. Luckily



for him after an hour or two on site a cry went up "Can anyone use a mattock?". Colin and his friend Andy trudged off to help and to their delight and for "continuity reasons" found themselves sharing a trench with Time Team archaeologist Brigid Gallagher for the next three days.

Fortunately the weather was not too wet and filming went ahead without too many complications, with some intriguing



Follow in the footsteps of Victorian trippers; here is a chance to explore a secluded landscape in North Staffordshire. There are crags, rocks, reservoirs, "clouds" and a "silver lake", with man-made features along the way. There may even be a chance sighting of a wallaby as well!

Meet at 11.00 a.m. at a venue to be advised. More detailed joining instructions will be sent to participants.

## **Saturday 16 June 2007: The President's Visit: Religious Sites in Shropshire (Leader: Professor Graeme White)**

This visit will take in various buildings in and around Shrewsbury, which encapsulate different aspects of the Christian faith and approaches to worship.

Our first stop will be at **Haughmond Abbey** north-east of Shrewsbury. This is accessible off the B5062, running east from the A49 as it begins to bypass Shrewsbury. This is a comparatively rare example of a well-surviving house of Augustinian canons, originally founded in 1135.

We shall then double back to **Battlefield Church**, just north of Shrewsbury, Built in 1406 to commemorate the fallen of the battle of Shrewsbury (Harry Hotspur v. Henry IV), it stands as testimony to the late-medieval belief in the value of establishing chantries to ensure that prayers would be said for the souls of the dead.

In **Shrewsbury** itself, we shall visit the remains of the Benedictine **Abbey** in the town centre and **St Chad's Church**, erected in the 1790s as a 'preaching church' with a large circular nave, completely different in design from its medieval predecessor. In the afternoon, there will be a visit to **Langley Chapel**, north-east of Church Stretton, which is a fine and rare example of a complete seventeenth-century Anglican church.

Lunch can be taken at one of the many cafes or hostelrys in the town centre.

Meet at Haughmond Abbey at 10.30 a.m.

## **Wednesday 4 July 2007: The Old Port of Chester (Leader: David Cummings)**

*Please note that this is a mid-week evening field visit*

David Cummings, our guide, has an extensive knowledge of Chester's





## Field Visit Programme

### Saturday 31 March 2007: The Urban Geology of Port Sunlight (Leader: Norman Harrison)

Port Sunlight is a compact area in where a number of interesting Geological and Geomorphological features are to be seen. The Geology, although physically small in size, is varied and derived from many places. The walk is on level ground and there is no need for any protective wear other than waterproofs should it be raining.

The location is described in the Liverpool Geological Society's Rock Around Wirral book if anyone wants to read up about it before the trip (obtainable from Norman at CSLH lectures!)

Meet outside the Gladstone Theatre (near the Railway Station) at 2 p.m.

### Saturday 21 April 2007: Ruthin and Denbigh: including a visit to Nantclwyd House (Leaders: Phil Ebbrell and Mike Headon)

Nantclwyd House was probably constructed in the late medieval period by a Ruthin merchant, enlarged in Elizabethan times and enlarged again in the decades after the Civil War. There were more alterations in the Georgian and Victorian periods, as well as from the 1930s to the 1950s. We will be given a guided tour by Phil Ebbrell, Conservation Architect for Denbighshire.

Ruthin and Denbigh were both originally Welsh strongholds on hill-tops above the Vale of Clwyd. They came under Norman control following the Edwardian conquest, and were re-founded as English boroughs. In both cases, the planning of the towns was constrained and their subsequent history strongly influenced by their hilly topography.

All walking will be in urban areas, but some of it is quite steep in both towns.

Meet at the Peers Monument Clock Tower in St Peter's Square at 10.30 a.m.

*Please note: this field visit will be limited to 20 people.*

### Saturday 19 May 2007: Staffordshire Dales (Leaders: Jennifer and Mike Kennerley)

discoveries. Although not involved in the dig itself (my role was simply to appear with bacon sandwiches in the mornings) it was fascinating to see how the Time Team crew reconciled the need to make good television with a desire to portray the archaeology accurately. So what did they find? I'm afraid you'll have to wait until the Time Team episode featuring Poulton is broadcast on 1<sup>st</sup> April.



If you are finding out more Poulton, or about volunteer, why website at [www.poultonproject.org](http://www.poultonproject.org)



interested in about the site at becoming a not visit their

Tracey Todhunter

# A ... Z of Landscape History

## A is for ... Abbeys



West door of the priory church at Much Wenlock, Shropshire (from the east)

Strictly speaking, we should differentiate between *abbeys*, governed more-or-less autonomously by an abbot, and *priories*, governed by a prior, who was (in theory) subservient to the abbot of the mother-house. The layout of the monastic site itself depended on the Order – Carthusians had cottage-like cells, Gilbertines had two of everything since they were for both men and women – but all had a church, a chapter-house, a cloister, a refectory, a dormitory, an infirmary and a rere-dorter (or toilet block – a clue to water supplies). However, outside the precinct, monasteries owned and developed gardens, fish-ponds, farms, mills, deer-parks, rabbit warrens and sheep runs, and all of these had an effect on the landscape.

### Why not visit

Cheshire: Norton (Augustinian); Shropshire: Buildwas (Cistercian), Haughmond (Augustinian), Wenlock (Cluniac), Whiteladies (Augustinian nuns); North East Wales: Basingwerk (Cistercian), Valle Crucis (Cistercian).

### Further information

James Bond, *Monastic Landscapes* (Stroud, Tempus, 2004) – this book won the BAA prize for Archaeological Book of the Year, 2004; for a brief introduction, Geoffrey N. Wright, *Discovering Abbeys and Priories* (4<sup>th</sup> edn, Princes Risborough, Shire, 2004). See also the various publications of Mick Aston.

## B is for ... Bridges

Please note all lectures are in the Grosvenor Museum at 7:30pm, except for April which will be held at Stanley Palace starting at 7:30pm.

Looking even further ahead you may wish to make a note of these dates for 2008:

January 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 – Anthony Annakin-Smith – ‘Neston-Collieries, 1759-1855’

February 25<sup>th</sup> 2008 - Dr. Jane Laughton – ‘Medieval Chester’

March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008 – Dai Morgan Evans – ‘So, exactly where did the Bluestones of Stonehenge come from?’

Rachel McGuicken



### Interesting Fact

For the seven lectures of the 2005-2006 winter season we had a total of 121 fee paying visitors. A record amount. Thanks to everyone who displays our posters.

Mike Kennerley



Following the success of Fred's lecture to the Society's and Royal Geographical Society's joint event in 2005, we are pleased to announce his return to talk, once again, to both Societies.

**September 24<sup>th</sup> - Wirral Villages: From Eastham to Landican - Gavin Hunter**

Gavin was recommended by the University of Chester. He is a Wirral local historian, and frequently gives talks in Cheshire. He successfully completed the MA in Landscape, Heritage & Society at Chester some years ago, and may well be known to some of you.

**October 29<sup>th</sup> - Gainford: An Anglo Saxon Estate in County Durham? - Dr David Petts**

David has barely got his feet under the table at Chester, but has willingly agreed to talk to the Society to share some of his knowledge and research gained and undertaken while at Durham University.

After graduating from the University of York, David spent some time working as a field archaeologist on a number of major sites in the south of England. He then began post-graduate study in the Department of Archaeology, University of Reading, completing first an MA in Roman Archaeology and then a PhD on the relationship between burial and religious change in early medieval western Britain. He has since worked in both commercial and local government archaeology on a series of important projects, including post-excavation work on nationally significant excavations in the Thames Valley, the digitisation of the Sites and Monuments Records for County Durham and Northumberland, and two major projects setting the agenda for research into the archaeology of North-East England and Hadrian's Wall.

Current research includes an exploration of sundials in Anglo-Saxon England, the use of space in early ecclesiastical sites in Western Britain, as well as an exploration of the archaeology and landscape of Valle Crucis in North Wales.

David's most recent publication, with co-author C. Gerrard, was *'The North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment English Heritage'*, (Durham County Council, 2006).

**November 26<sup>th</sup> - TBA - Stuart Ainsworth**

Known as Time Team's 'lumps and bumps' man, and 'landscape detective', Stewart barely needs an introduction!

Stewart is an archaeological investigator, and joined English Heritage in 1985. He is now head of their Landscape Investigation Team, based in York. A local resident in Chester, we value a break in his busy schedule to talk to the Society.



Great Barford Bridge, Bedfordshire

A bridge links a track on one side of an obstacle (usually a river or stream) with a continuation of the track on the other side of the obstacle. Because it is overcoming an obstacle, its structure is more complex than that of the track, so it requires more maintenance and is always in more danger of destruction. Hence, there is generally more documentation about bridges, which can give us useful information about networks of roads and tracks. Despite this, the exact history of bridges is usually very difficult to establish (the one in the illustration is an exception). Were Llanrwst and Bangor-on-Dee bridges really the work of Inigo Jones, as all locals will claim? There is little evidence. Settlements grew up at bridges and were often named from them: Handbridge was originally simply Bridge.

**Why not visit**

Cheshire: the Old Dee Bridge and the Grosvenor Bridge in Chester, the Iron Bridge near Aldford, the bridge between Farndon and Holt, the railway viaduct at Stockport, the canal bridges at Wrenbury; Shropshire: the English Bridge at Shrewsbury, Atcham bridge, Ludford Bridge in Ludlow, Ironbridge; North East Wales: Pontcysyllte and Chirk aqueducts, Llangollen bridge, Bangor-on-Dee bridge.

**Further information**

Bridges are usually treated in books on roads such as Chris Taylor's *Roads and Tracks of Britain* (Dent, 1979) or Paul Hindle's *Medieval Roads* (Shire, 1989) and *Roads and Tracks for Historians* (Phillimore, 2001). E.M. Hatt's *Bridges* (National Benzole Books/Chatto & Windus, 1963) is an absolute delight - if you can find it. A. Blackwall's *Historic Bridges of Shropshire*, (Shrewsbury, Shropshire County Council & Shropshire Libraries, 1985).

**C is for ... Castles**



Castle Acre, Norfolk

We all know that castles were first built for defence, but, with the coming of gunpowder warfare, their defensive importance declined and thereafter they became indicators of power and status. Castles were among the most expensive structures ever built, and yet they were only involved in active warfare for a tiny proportion of their existence. As well as status, recent studies have also emphasised the importance of castles in the context of their landscape settings; for castles influenced their surrounding landscapes in the same way that abbeys did.

#### **Why not visit**

Cheshire: Beeston, Chester, Halton, Peckforton; Shropshire: Acton Burnell, Bridgnorth, Clun, Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Stokesay, Whittington; North East Wales: Caergwrle, Ewloe, Chirk, Flint, Rhuddlan, Denbigh.

#### **Further information**

For an up-to-date discussion of castles and landscapes, see "Castle Studies and the Landscape Agenda" by O. H. Creighton and R. A. Higham in *Landscape History* 26, (2004), pp. 5-18 – obtainable from our Library. For a more traditional view of castles, try P. S. Fry, *Castles of the British Isles* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, David & Charles, 1990); more succinctly, B. H. St J. O'Neil, *Castles* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, HMSO, 1973). See also the various publications by R. Liddiard.

Mike Headon

## Looking Forward - The Year Ahead Lectures, Visits and Social Events



### Lecture Programme

#### **January 29<sup>th</sup> - Thelwall - No Mean City - Mike Taylor**

Mike is a member of the Society, his synopsis is as follows:

"At first sight, Thelwall seems to have little to distinguish it from many other small agricultural communities in Cheshire. However, its location alongside the Mersey, the richness of its land, its proximity to Warrington and the multitude of historic communication routes running through the parish have all contributed to a surprisingly impressive building heritage much of it still preserved in a pleasant rural landscape. The parish is seen through the eyes of a metallurgist and spare-time small-holder so be prepared for the occasional engineering or bucolic digression."

The title for the lecture was the working title of a book about Thelwall, which the author, Robert Westall, was writing when he died. Mike was given his notes by his literary executor, and as Mike says, he has "so far singularly failed to finish the book because I get ever more drawn into the history of the place".

#### **February 26<sup>th</sup> - Tramping the Fields and Trawling the Archives: Investigations in West Cheshire - Doug Hayns**

Doug is a renowned local historian, who has published many articles on Cheshire history, and is actively involved in Cheshire Local History Association.

#### **March 26<sup>th</sup> - Landscape and Society in the Kingdom of Gwynedd in the Middle Ages - David Longley**

Further to the 2006 field visit held in Anglesey, we are fortunate to include David in our lecture programme for 2007. David is an archaeologist, and Director of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT). He is author of several articles, including, 'Medieval Settlement and Landscape Change on Anglesey' in *Landscape History*, 23, (2001).

#### **April 19<sup>th</sup> - 'From Chester to the Centre of the Earth' - Dr Fred Broadhurst**

Dr Fred Broadhurst is a retired Geologist from Manchester University. This is a joint lecture with the Royal Geographical Society which will be held at Stanley Palace.



Market Hall, Rushton

extravagant entertaining prevented completion, but allowed us to admire the unfinished structure and superb stonemasonry after our guided approach through the planned gardens and orchard. In the tiny township of Geddington we viewed one of the few surviving exquisitely carved Eleanor crosses erected to mark the overnight resting places of the body of Edward I's beloved wife en route to Westminster Abbey.

The afternoon saw us glimpsing Rushton Hall, a major seat of the Tresham family, before admiring the quirky Triangular Lodge redolent with Catholic symbolism. There remained Rothwell with its huge and impractical Market Hall, again the work of that compulsive builder Tresham. The massive church, banded with alternating ironstone and limestone, was long, light and lofty. More unusually, it houses in the crypt an ossuary where the more inquisitive of the party examined skulls galore, noting unusual features, marks of disease and signs of more violent death. It was time to wrap up the weekend with a visit to the Jesus Hospital almshouses founded in 1585. For all their age, still sound, attractive and useful - just like the CSLH visitors!



Dovecote, Willington

## Castell Henllys



During the summer we visited Castell Henllys, an Iron Age Hillfort where roundhouses and other buildings have been reconstructed on their original foundations. This was the location of the BBC series "Surviving the Iron Age." The Hillfort is sited within the beautiful and historic landscape of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in West Wales, Britain's only coastal National Park.

The name Castell Henllys means castle of the prince's court. At the site, four roundhouses and a granary have been reconstructed on their original Iron Age foundations. The first of these, known as the 'Old Roundhouse' was built more than twenty years ago and is the longest standing reconstructed Iron Age roundhouse in Britain. The latest project, the 'Chieftain's House' has a wonderful interior full of hand woven blankets, decorations and a wood fire at the centre. Although the interiors have been "imaginatively" decorated it is still possible to get a good idea of what life must have been like for our Iron Age ancestors.

We took advantage of the free guided tour and ours was led by a qualified archaeologist, who had an interest in experimental archaeology. He was able to pitch his talk to keep us both entertained and informed. However a self guided tour is also available.

Several areas of the site have yet to be excavated, money as always being an issue. The development of the site as a "rural interpretation facility" helps to fund research and excavation, while also providing information to visitors who may know nothing of the sophistication of our Iron Age predecessors. Castell Henllys hosts one of the largest training excavations in Britain. For six weeks every summer, students from all over the world join the dig to learn the principles and methods of archaeological excavation directed by the University of York.

There is definitely something here for all the family to enjoy and the supervised children's activities were well run and informative. We watched eight year old boys concentrating on learning to spin and cooking flat bread over a wood fire. This site is definitely worth a visit if you are in the area, but take a picnic, as refreshments are limited.



# Weekend Visit 2006 Bedford &

# the Borders of Northamptonshire

Lyveden New Bield



Lyveden New Bield



Cockayne Hatley Church

Bedford, a town isolated by road works and diversions. How to reach base at the Embankment Hotel? Leader Mike H to the rescue, by recce and directions to outclass any satellite navigation system. Once refreshed, a short tour of the town taking in the history, architecture and local museum.

screen and in the chancel the wonderful Flemish carvings from an abbey wrecked by Napoleon; they were all there and much more besides.



Stables, Willington

Saturday opened with a crash course on dove-keeping at the dramatic Willington dovecote, once home to 3000 birds. The nearby stable-block was no less grandiose and housed the dated graffiti of John Bunyan. Gostwick's Perpendicular St Lawrence's church rounded off Willington, but nothing could have prepared us for the delights of Cockayne Hatley church, a monument to the sport of collectomania personified by Henry Cockayne Cust. The Flemish carving of St Nicholas, whose story we learned from our guide, 13th century stained glass windows, misericords, the depiction of medieval musical instruments on the displaced rood

After lunch by the Great Ouse Navigation, it was off to Chicksands, a priory once home to the Gilbertines, the only purely English Order. A somewhat surreal experience, viewing as a tightly chaperoned party a 19th century structure now used as an Officers' Mess for all British Military Intelligence chiefs and in the middle of a former key Cold War intelligence centre. Wrest Park, which followed, was much more traditional viewing; a truly magnificent garden with major water features, an 18th century pavilion and a bowls hut that would have passed as a mansion in the north.



Triangular Lodge, Rushton

Sunday morning saw us motoring through sparsely populated countryside to Lyveden New Bield, the intended dream summerhouse of the staunch Catholic Thomas Tresham, whose fines as a recusant and his



Wrest Park Gardens



Bowling Green Hut!



Eleanor Cross