



Editor's Corner

I hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. My thanks to all those who have contributed in whatever way and however small. All your snippets and photos are greatly appreciated. Please note that the deadline for any contributions for the next newsletter is 25th July 2008.

Alongside the newsletter you should have received two enclosures:

Poster for January Lecture Please Display
Field Visit Application Form Return by Monday 11th February

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Hatching a plan—see page 26



Rudston Monolith

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Message from the Chair



On behalf of CSLH Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a happy and prosperous New Year.

In the four months that have elapsed since our last Newsletter, CSLH has continued to flourish in this, its twenty first year. Despite the poor summer weather our field visits proved a great attraction.

Persistent rain caused the cancellation of our Treasure Hunt/Garden Party on two occasions in the summer but we were finally able to hold the event in the autumn. Our thanks go to Paul and Sharon Varey for hosting this enjoyable function at their home in Ashton Hayes. The mini-auction staged during the garden party raised valuable funds for the Society, as did the draw for the Christmas hamper donated by members of the CSLH Committee along with the secret auction for the donated watercolour painting. Altogether, over £500 was raised; our thanks go again to Sharon for organising these fund-raising activities.

The autumn lecture programme has proved very successful. The “Anthea Allen” Lecture, was this year given by Channel 4’s “Time Team” member Stewart Ainsworth. The event packed the Grosvenor Museum lecture theatre and those attending enjoyed a fascinating insight into the landscape history of “Chester beyond the Amphitheatre”.

Finally I would like to welcome two new members to the committee: Mike and Maggie Taylor. I am sure Mike and Maggie’s enthusiasm for landscape history and their skills will be of great value to the society in the coming years.

As you will see from the newsletter the 2008 programme of lectures and field visits is as varied as ever. I look forward to seeing you at some of the events in the coming year.

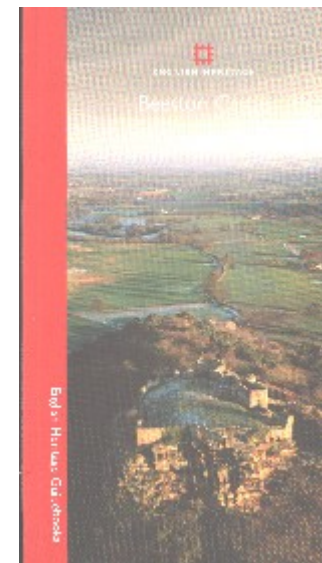
Ray Jones



Members Publications

Rachel McGuicken, member of our Society, was asked by English Heritage, along with Dr Robert Liddiard of The University of East Anglia, to research and write their new Beeston Castle, Cheshire guidebook. Being a local girl, and researching the landscape of Cheshire's medieval castles, Rachel teamed up with Rob to produce this new-style English Heritage guidebook, which should be on sale at both Beeston Castle, and via the English Heritage website, from December 2007.

Robert Liddiard is an expert on the subject of designed castle landscapes. His recent publications include *Castles in Context: Power, Symbolism and Landscape, 1066 to 1500*, (2005) and *The Medieval Park. New Perspectives*, (2007) both published by Windgather Press.



Competition Winners

The Christmas hamper Raffle was won by members Mary and Fred Wright. We hope you enjoyed the contents!! The raffle raised in the region of £140. A big thank you to everyone who bought tickets.

Interesting Fact

Our thanks to the eagle eyed member who spotted this reference to our society’s website on the British Archaeology website. Writing about landscape history on the net they state “... of several local groups, the Chester Society for Landscape History has a good web profile ...”





Treasure Hunt and Garden Party

This long-awaited event, postponed because of the absence of anything resembling summer this year, was finally held on Sunday 14 October 2007. Sharon, Paul and Emma Varey had kindly offered the use of their garden in Ashton Hayes and had also put together the clues for the treasure hunt. The intrepid treasure hunters set out in a (smallish) number of cars with Sharon's cry of "You can't go wrong – there's a map" ringing in their ears. At least everyone made it back, having identified a number of answers to clues along the way – additional fun was had by trying to guess who had set each clue, since Sharon, Paul and Emma had all contributed questions. The honour of winning went to the mighty Tarviners Team Bradley/Bland.



Fingers were kept crossed and the weather stayed dry – if not exactly sunny – so that the garden party went ahead in the garden, with a large variety of dishes and drinks provided by Sharon and other members, all washed down with the Kennerleys' fruit punch. There was certainly lots of lovely food to go round.



Finally, the President demonstrated a previously unsuspected talent as an expert auctioneer, eliciting higher and higher bids for a range of items on offer ranging from books on land-

scape history to guided tours of both Norton Priory and the University of Chester. So, not only did those members who attended have a really good time, but also a substantial amount was raised towards the Society's funds. Any volunteers for next year's event?

Mike Headon

So what were Harry, Mike and Tony plotting?

Answer: A treasure hunt (on foot) around the streets of Chester to be followed by supper at a surprise venue... more details to follow soon.

Chester and the Landscape Development of North Wales (Part 1—Roman Occupation)

Local and even regional histories frequently describe an area that ends rigidly at the county boundaries, or, in the case of studies of the Welsh-English Borderlands, at the national boundary. This situation is understandable owing to the existence of County Record Offices and County Historical Societies, which tend to focus research within the county boundary. Such arrangements are obviously convenient to the researcher but can distort the true historical picture by failing to take into account the flows of people, raw materials, finished goods and ideas across those boundaries. Professor Dorothy Sylvester was clearly aware of this issue in describing the Welsh Borderland as a "contact area"¹ and went on to analyse the historical geography of both sides of the border. In this article, modern county and national boundaries are sidelined in order to examine the relationship between the city of Chester and the landscape of what is now North East Wales.

Chester's impact on the landscape of North East Wales began soon after the building of the Roman legionary fortress at Chester by the 2nd Legion between AD 74 and AD 79 although it is possible that earlier forts on the site played a role in the invasion of North Wales. Roman forces presumably based at Wroxeter (*Viroconium Cornoviorum*), but possibly supported by maritime forces based at Chester, had attacked the Deceangli tribe who inhabited the lands between the Dee and Conwy as early as AD49. It may be the case that the Roman armies were attracted to North East Wales by the existence of silver mines worked by the Deceangli tribe. Silver was produced alongside lead, but in pre-Roman times, the Deceangli would have had no use for lead and concentrated on its more valuable by-product. It is possible that a pre-conquest maritime trade in lead for water pipes may have existed with ports in Romanised Western Europe. Across the Dee Estuary in the Wirral, Meols was engaged in maritime trade with Gaul and Carthage from the 3rd century BC. In his description of the earliest conquest of the Deceangli, Tacitus describes "much booty" perhaps indicative of significant local wealth derived from overseas trade.

Two Roman lead ingots discovered at Chester and now in the Grosvenor Museum were produced in the Dee Estuary area and bear the name "*Deceangli*". A further twenty lead ingots, some bearing the name "*Deceangli*" were discovered in the Mersey near Runcorn possibly lost in transit to an unknown destination. The earliest of these ingots, including the two from Chester can be dated to AD 74, the year that the final conquest of Wales got underway following the temporary withdrawal of forces to deal with the Boudiccan revolt. This possibly indicates that the trade in lead was already well established by this date and thus lead production in Flintshire may have continued after the initial pacification of the area by the Romans in AD 49.

LEAD INGOTS BEARING THE NAME "DECEANGLI"



The foundation of the fortress

Lead ores on Halkyn Mountain produced up to 18 ounces of silver per ton of galena (lead ore)² although the silver content could vary significantly along the line of a single vein of lead ore. It is thus possible that the Romans from 58 AD worked a number of mines for lead and silver which had been already established by the *Deceangli* on Halkyn Mountain and Talargoch, near Prestatyn although, as we have seen, there is little direct evidence for this. There is however, a regional precedent for Roman authorities taking over pre-existing Iron Age industrial concerns, for the salt works at Middlewich (*Salinae*) was under Roman control by AD 75. There is also the possibility (but again with no archaeological evidence to date) that the Romans took over control of pre-existing copper mines at the Great Orme.

The new legionary fortress at Chester would have required lead for its water supplies and there is little doubt that this was obtained from North East Wales. Roman Chester has been described as “the busiest port on the west coast of Britain.”³ The existence of this safe anchorage was no doubt a key factor in the location of a legionary fortress at Chester. The earliest port installations date from the second half of the 1st century and no doubt served as not only a naval base for vessels engaged in operations in the Irish Sea during the conquest of Northern Britain and North Wales, but also served as a harbour for privately owned merchant vessels bringing supplies for the legion and its supporting civilian population in the *canabae legionis*. These supplies included local cargoes such as lead, copper and possibly coal from North Wales. In addition, flat-bottomed barges may have brought in bricks, tiles and pottery from Holt in North East Wales.

For over a century, there has been much debate among historians and archaeologists over the nature of Chester’s Roman harbour installations. An



The Dock Museum

We shall be staying at the Netherwood Hotel in Grange over Sands, where we have been allocated 23 double bedrooms and 1 single.

Should there be more bookings than the hotel can accommodate, there are plenty of cheaper alternatives locally. We shall have the use of the swimming pool and spa, though we have been asked to book times in advance. Members who are unable to stay overnight may join us for the daytime visits on one or more days. Dinner can be taken by day visitors.

You should have already received further details and the booking form under separate cover. Any further queries should be addressed to Carmen on 07762 061071, email: corjan@hotmail.co.uk

Carmen Johnson

Weekend Visit 2008

The South Lakes and Morecambe Bay

Friday 12th - Sunday 14th September
Leader : Carmen Johnson

The visit has been planned to show the extent of man's occupation of this part of the world and the diversification of his activities in a very small area of Britain, starting with the Neolithic period, Iron Age Man, the Romans, the Vikings and other Scandinavian peoples up to more modern times. The archaeological evidence is scant, so we have been fortunate in obtaining the help of local experts to tell the story.

Some of the events are not strictly speaking Landscape History, but have been added to give some idea of what early man saw when he first arrived on these shores. Much of the landscape has been protected from development by either the large estates or the National and Landscape Trusts.

After checking out many of the Medieval sites, Furness Abbey, Piel Island and



Levens Hall

Levens Hall, we will make a huge leap in time to the present day, when we will have the opportunity to view Barrow shipyards, but not the new submarines currently under construction. Instead there are three frigates looking for a good home, being surplus to the requirements of the Saudi navy; suitable for very tall men! The Dock Museum also contains what are thought to be the remains of Roman harbour walls. Dr Shotter, a much more reliable authority, will be telling you more about that.

We will finish with a tour of the newly refurbished Midland Hotel in Morecambe and with tea in the style of pre-second World War.

indicator of the nature of Roman maritime installations in the harbour was discovered when the gasworks were built adjacent to the present course of the River Dee in 1885. At a depth of over 5 metres, a layer of gravel was discovered beneath the silt. This represented the former riverbed in which several worked oak timbers over 3 metres in length were discovered along with Roman artefacts. The timbers had been sharpened to a point at one end and this was covered by a sheath of iron held in place by Roman concrete. The timbers were interpreted as piles belonging to a Roman jetty. One of the lead ingots referred to above was discovered on the former river bed. The discovery of the ingot pointed to an early date for the jetty and the possibly that the ingot had been lost from a ship involved in the coastal trade of the Dee Estuary which may have anchored at this point. Similar timber piles found close to the Watergate may represent the shore end of the Roman jetty. From the available evidence, it would appear that the shoreline in Roman times ran roughly along the line of the later medieval west walls of the city.

The whole of North East Wales, together with some parts of Cheshire fell under the direct control of the legionary headquarters established at Chester (*Deva*). This area of land was extensive and may have included parts of modern day Lancashire and Cumbria.

Some of the greatest innovations introduced into Britain by the Romans lay in the field of materials technology. The Roman legions created a demand for raw materials, which had probably played little part in the pre-Roman economy of Britain. These included lead for water pipes, clay for bricks and tiles and limestone for the production of mortar, plaster and concrete. Thus the establishment of a permanent Roman presence in Chester would have had a significant impact upon the landscape of North East Wales through the exploitation of its mineral wealth to serve the needs of the legionary base and military installations in the command area of the legion.

A new brick, tile and pottery factory was located beside the River Dee at Holt some 12 kms (8 miles) upstream of Chester. This factory, discovered in 1907, supplied not only Chester itself but also legionary auxiliary forts from Caernarfon (*Segontium*) on the Irish Sea coast to Manchester. The works were established by the 20th Legion soon after their arrival in Chester in AD 88. The tiles from Holt, stamped with the wild boar logo of the legion, were also used in the roofing of buildings in industrial complexes in North East Wales guarded by legionary forces. The works appeared to have had a limited life span with closure taking place around AD 130 indicating perhaps the emergence of civilian-run brick and tile works elsewhere in the Chester command area.

In Flintshire, lead mining continued throughout the Roman period and left a permanent imprint on the landscape of Halkyn Mountain. Archaeological evidence supports this conclusion with the discovery of a further lead ingot, the earliest yet found, unearthed in Flintshire in 1950 on the site of a school at Carmel. The ingot was inscribed with the name of a private lead producer or possibly an imperial procurator, *C. Nipius Ascanius*. Other ingots bearing this name have been discovered in the Mendips lead mining area and can be dated to the AD 60s. At

Pentre Oakenholt near Flint, 19 kms (12 miles) from Chester, the remains of a Roman lead smelting works have been excavated presumably using lead brought down from Halkyn Mountain some 7 kms away⁴. Here, the lead ore would have been refined and cast into ingots weighing between 60 and 90 kgs for ease of transport⁵. Roman domestic buildings dating to c.AD 120 were discovered at Pentre Farm, Flint, and excavated during the 1970s and 1980s. The presence of roof tiles of the 20th Legion and pottery from the depot at Holt has been interpreted as indicating the possible residence of a Roman official, who would have represented the interests of the legionary fortress at Chester, and to which at least some of the lead produced would have been taken on boats up the River Dee⁶. No Roman lead mines have been identified with certainty owing to the destruction of evidence by mining activity on the sites in succeeding centuries. However, it seems likely that at least part of the landscape of shallow workings on Halkyn Mountain may have their origins in the Roman period. Lead slag from Dinorben hill fort, which was still occupied during the Roman period, may be indicative of local mining possibly at Ffos-y-bleddiaid, a deep gash in the surface of the limestone in Castell Cawr hill near Abergele although the evidence for this is inconclusive⁷. A number of finds on low lying land below the hillside has been seen as indicative of a possible Roman settlement close to modern Abergele⁸.

Archaeological investigations identified a civilian settlement at Prestatyn during the period of Roman occupation (GR 062818). There was probably a military presence on the site for Roman roof tiles stamped with the logo of the 20th Legion

HALKYN MOUNTAIN : THE LANDSCAPE OF EARLY LEAD/SILVER MINING



have been found on the site of a small bathhouse. An Iron Age farmstead dating to c. 100 BC was also discovered on the site⁹. It is thought that the Roman site was established around AD 75 and initially processed lead ore mined at Talargoch near Meliden. Roman bracelets and coins found on the site of this mine in the 18th

p.m. and to meet up with the walkers. The trip around the built heritage will start at 1.30 p.m.

Please note. Normal booking fee will apply, and members are asked to give a donation on the day to the church which is faced with some rather large restoration costs.

Saturday 9 August 2008 (half day) : Tower (Leader: Mr & Mrs Wynne-Eyton)

This is a rare opportunity to visit this grade-1 listed fifteenth-century fortified tower house near Mold – the only one in north-east Wales - built by Rheinallt Gruffydd ap Bleddyn in the fifteenth century, and the scene of an incident recorded by the poet Lewis Glyn Cothi. We shall be shown round by the present owners, Mr & Mrs Wynne-Eyton, and will afterwards be regaled with tea/coffee, biscuits and cake. Meet at Tower at 2.00 p.m.

*Please note. There is an entrance charge of £5.00 to include refreshment; there will therefore be no field visit fee payable to the Society. Please include this amount in your booking fees **once your place is confirmed**; we'll refund it if you can't come.*

Important Booking Information

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

Applications are to be received by Mike by Monday 11 February 2008. 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.

Mike Headon

The visit will focus on buildings ancient, medieval and (very) modern in and around Lichfield, with an opportunity for members to leave early if they do not wish to complete the full visit (which may last into the early evening, hence the selection of virtually the 'longest day').

We meet outside the west gate of Lichfield Cathedral at 11.00 a.m. (car park nearby) to explore both the outside and the inside of the building, which has examples of every period of medieval architecture and most periods since then. We shall also look at the context of the cathedral, as part of the landscape of the town as a whole. There are plenty of places to have lunch in Lichfield. During the afternoon we shall visit the Roman site of Wall (inn and bathhouse just off 'Watling Street'), the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas with its armed forces memorial opened in October 2007, and the little-known but quite well-preserved Cistercian abbey of Croxden (north-west of Uttoxeter) en route back to Chester.

Saturday 19 July 2008 (full/half day) : Thelwall (Leaders: Mike & Maggie Taylor)

No-one who heard Mike's fascinating lecture on this interesting village last January will want to miss this field trip – and if you didn't hear it, then turn up and discover what you missed! This visit is in three parts - a walk around the parish to see the landscape, lunch in the historic Little Manor followed by a wander around the church and the core of the village. Members are welcome to come and enjoy all three or to miss out the Walk and to come for Lunch and the afternoon Core Visit.

Morning - Walking the Landscape. For those members who like an easy walk of three to four miles, we will be leading a group out past the Manchester Ship Canal, under the Thelwall Viaduct and then rising gently out of the flood plain of the Mersey to pick up the track of the old railway or the Bridgewater Canal (or both) before returning via the old manorial park to our start point. The walk is easy and in July, will probably be fit for decent trainers as well as walking sandals or boots. We will stop in a few places for a brief chat about the landscape.

Lunch - we will arrange for lunch (*a group price has been negotiated – pay on the day*) in the Little Manor at the core of which is a 17th Century house, home of the Percivals. A fact sheet will be available during lunch.

Afternoon - The Built Heritage. This will focus on buildings in the old village but with a drive to view important houses on the outskirts. We will be visiting the church which is a mid-Victorian gem and a talk will be given there. There is a car park at the church and this is only about 200 yards from the Little Manor.

Meet at 10.30 a.m. at a point to be arranged. Members who don't want to join the morning walk should come straight to the Little Manor in time for lunch at 12.30

century strongly support Roman working of the mine¹⁰. It is possible that the Roman ingots originated here¹¹. There is also the tantalising possibility that the inhabitants of the pre-Roman Iron Age site may have worked the area for silver.

A civilian settlement, dating to c. AD 90 was established. This contained three small workshops where bronze was smelted and cast in hearths and furnaces. A significant quantity of slag and bronze scrap has been uncovered at the site together with what may be casting moulds. It is possible that this industry was located here to utilise copper ores from nearby Moel Hiraddug. The tin required was personally imported by sea from Cornwall. Several brooches and pony harness parts, presumably manufactured on the site have also been recovered¹². There is no evidence to support the continued existence of industry on this site after AD 160 although a timber building was in use during the early 4th century, perhaps for agricultural purposes¹³.

A ditch possibly forming the boundary between the civilian *vicus* and the legionary land has been identified at Prestatyn¹⁴. A similar ancient boundary ditch known as the "Great Ditch" lies about 100 metres from the northern edge of the Heronbridge site outside Chester. In medieval times the ditch formed part of the boundary system marking the southern limits of the City of Chester. It is tempting to speculate that these boundaries may have Roman origins and possibly marked the boundary between the legionary and civilian controlled lands at both Prestatyn and the Heronbridge site.

In the 1970s, during the building of the Meadows housing estate in Prestatyn, which stands close to the bathhouse site, several fragments of columns were unearthed. This may indicate that the main part of the settlement lay beneath the estate¹⁵. Nearby, in Prestatyn High Street, an inscribed slate slab was discovered in 1921 bearing the title "one hundred and thirty one". The significance of the inscription is not known. Roman Prestatyn may have had a small harbour on what has been called "Prestatyn Gutter."¹⁶ The "Gutter" remained in use by coastal shipping until modern times¹⁷.

The Roman industrial sites at Holt, Flint and Prestatyn lay close to navigable channels although hard evidence of port installations has yet to be found¹⁸. One inland Roman industrial site in North East Wales linked to Chester's legionary fortress existed at the village of Ffrith. This occupied a valley floor site at the confluence of two small streams, the Afon Cegidog and Nant y Ffrith. A Roman civilian settlement existed at Ffrith and underlies part of the village (GR 100020).¹⁹ Tiles stamped with the logo of the 20th Legion and pottery from the legionary depot at Holt have been found suggesting a military presence, possibly in connection with lead mining in the area. Since there are few productive lead veins in close proximity to Ffrith, it is more likely that limestone quarrying and burning may have been the *raison d'être* for the Ffrith settlement. It has been estimated that 78,000 tons of mortar and 48,000 tons of concrete were required to build the legionary fortress and its outlying civilian suburbs²⁰. Clearly to supply such quantities would have required a considerable degree of industrial activity. This theory is supported by the discovery of a large quantity of Roman artefacts through

chance finds and excavations carried out in 1893, 1910, 1926 and 1967-9²¹.

A Roman bathhouse was thought to exist below the present village²² and a row of buildings running east – west across the site has been identified from a geophysical survey of 1987. A recent short investigation of the site by Channel 4's "Time Team" televised in 2006 showed that neither the row of buildings identified by the geophysical survey nor the bathhouse of the 1967/69 excavation were Roman. Time Team concluded that there probably was a significant Roman settlement at Ffrith. They claimed that their excavations turned up little new evidence of the nature of this settlement but served to re-evaluate previous conclusions²³.

Ffrith lay on the Roman military road from Chester to the auxiliary fort of Caer Gai, and was recorded by Camden when he visited the area in the late 16th century. The earliest coin evidence found to date indicates occupation of the site during the second half of the 2nd century. Coins of the late 4th century recovered from the site suggest continuous occupation and has led to the suggestion that the settlement may have also acted as a small market centre for the surrounding area²⁴.

Roman Road Varae—Segontium at Glascoed, Denbighshire

Chester was a hub for Roman military roads linking the fortress to auxiliary forts in North Wales and North West England. The actual line taken by parts of these roads remains unclear with the exception of the road from *Deva* to *Segontium* (Caernarfon). This road passed close to auxiliary forts at *Varae* (thought to be St Asaph) and *Canovium* in the Conwy Valley²⁵. The route of the Roman highway is followed in part by the modern B5381 and once formed part of the county

Prestatyn Roman Bath House under Excavation



Field Visit Programme

Saturday 8 March 2008 (morning visit) : Weaver Parkway (Leader: Tony Blackledge, Park Ranger)

If you came on the very popular visit to the Old Port of Chester last July, you can't miss this visit to Cheshire's other major river-traffic route. Much of the Weaver Parkway has been reclaimed from former industrial land, a legacy of the Cheshire salt industry, and is now rich in wildlife – look out for the herons, perched on the salt piles across the river, next to Britain's only underground salt mine. Meet outside Tony's office at Wharton (Winsford) at 10.00 a.m.

Sunday 13 April 2008 (half day) : Handbridge (Leader: Len Morgan)

Len Morgan's historical walks through Handbridge are deservedly well known. Although nominally a suburb of Chester, Handbridge has its own distinct identity and history, less known to many people than the history of Chester proper – it's not included in most historical walks around the centre of Chester. So, come and fill in the gaps in your knowledge of the area's history. Meet at the Old Dee Bridge (green area on Handbridge side) at 2.00 p.m.

Sunday 11 May 2008 (full day) : Norton Priory and Halton Castle (Leaders: Norton Priory staff)

The Augustinian priory of Runcorn was founded in 1115 and moved to Norton nineteen years later. The ruins of Norton Priory were the subject of the largest campaign of excavation of any religious house in Europe. As well as the medieval ruins of the Priory itself, we shall also visit the walled garden, and then go on to Halton Castle (not normally open to the public), inextricably linked to Norton Priory and one of only two surviving Norman castles in Cheshire. Meet at 10.00 a.m. at the entrance to Norton Priory.

*Please note. There is an entrance charge of £4.95 (concessions £3.50); there will therefore be no field visit fee payable to the Society. Please include this amount in your booking fees **once your place is confirmed**; we'll refund it if you can't come.*

Sunday 22 June 2008 (full day) : In and around Lichfield (Leader: Professor Graeme White)

Proving to be a popular annual joint event, we welcome, once again, Dr Fred Broadhurst, who will be looking at geographical influences on a landscape relatively close to home. (The lecture will be held at the Grosvenor Museum this year).

September 29 : ‘Cheshire Airfields’ : Tony Barratt

The story of Cheshire’s 11 significant airfields and the marks they have left on the landscape. A Society member, Graduate of the MA in Landscape, Heritage & Society at (what is now) the University of Chester, author and speaker, we welcome back Tony to speak to the Society, on what promises to be both a surprising and interesting subject!

October 27 : ‘Early Historic Sculpture and Landscape: A Case Study of Cladh a’ Bhile’ : Dr. Meggen Gondek

Programme Leader for Archaeology at the University of Chester, Meggen’s main research interests are in the early medieval archaeology of Northwest Britain, particularly Scotland. She also focuses on art and material culture of this period with an emphasis on the production and meaning of early medieval sculpture. Recent projects include the Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project (REAP 2005 – 2006), which examined the archaeological context of a group of Class I Pictish symbol stones from the village of Rhynie, Aberdeenshire. Meggen is an associated (honorary) researcher with the Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot Project (SERF), and is currently Honorary Editor of the Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society. The talk to the Society arises out of Meggen’s recent research and impending publication entitled, “Early Historic Sculpture and Landscape: a case study of Cladh a’ Bhile, Ellary, Mid-Argyll” *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 138, (2006), expected 2007.

November 24 : ‘Ridge & Furrow versus the Hedge & Ditch Presumption: a boundary dispute at Threapwood’ : Professor Graeme White

President of our Society, Professor Graeme White, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FSA, Dean of Learning and Teaching at the University of Chester, proposes to talk to the Society about what could be a ground-breaking (pardon the pun!) and thus, legally precedent-establishing, case, set here in Cheshire.

Rachel McGuicken

boundary between Flintshire and Denbighshire as well as marking a number of parish boundaries. The line of the road is probably the most enduring relict feature in the landscape of the Roman occupation of North East Wales. Another road is thought to have run along the Vale of Clwyd to another auxiliary fort at Ruthin on the site of the castle²⁶ (possibly also the site of an earlier Iron Age fortification).

No major Roman settlement was ever established in North East Wales and unlike their neighbours, the *Cornovii*, the *Deceangli* never achieved *civitas* status. It has been suggested that the legionary fortress (with a possible imperial presence within the fortress) acted as the centre of administration²⁷. It has also been suggested that the *Deceangli* may have been subordinated to the *Cornovii* and were administered from their *civitas* at Wroxeter²⁸.



The departure of Roman forces from Chester at the close of the 4th century was followed by a reversion to tribal society on the part of the remaining Romano-British population and thus the symbiotic link that had existed between Chester and North East Wales was broken. The landscape of Roman occupation gradually decayed and it was not until the arrival of the Normans and the re-establishment of Chester as a military base for the subjugation and control of North Wales that Chester once again influenced the landscape development of its neighbouring region.

1. D. Sylvester, *The Rural Landscape of the Welsh Borderland*, (London, Macmillan, 1969), p.23.
2. *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Flint, Mold and Ruthin* (London, 1890), pp. 179–180.
3. D.J.P. Mason, *Roman Chester*, (Stroud, Tempus, 2001), p.111.
4. D. Atkinson & M.V. Taylor, “Flint Excavation Report”, *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society*, 10 No.1 (1924).

5. P. Carrington, *Chester*, (London, Batsford/English Heritage, 1994), p.47.
6. K. Blockley, "The Romano-British Period" in J. Manley et al (ed), *The Archaeology of Clwyd*, (Mold, Clwyd County Council, 1991), p.121.
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8. N. Jones, M. Walters & P. Frost, "Mountains and Orefields", *Metal Mining Landscapes of Mid and North East Wales*, (York, CBA Research Report 142, 2004), p.13.
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18. Jones & Sylvester, *Clwyd Coastal Survey*, p.3.
19. *Alyn & Deeside Historic Settlements Survey*, (Welshpool, CPAT, 2001).
20. Mason, *Roman Chester*, p.48.
21. Regional Sites & Monuments Record, PRN 100020, (CPAT, 2005).
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23. Channel 4: *Time Team*, Series 13, "Ffrith, Flintshire", (2006).
24. Blockley, "The Romano-British Period", p.126.
25. E. Waddelove, "The Roman Road between Varis (Varae) and Canovium", *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 132, (1983), pp.95-106.
26. Burnham & Davies (eds), *Conquest, Co-existence and Change*, p.3.
27. I. Brown, *Discovering a Welsh Landscape*, (Bollington, Windgather Press, 2004), p.85.
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Looking Forward - The Year Ahead Lectures, Visits and Social Events



Lecture Programme

January 28 : 'Ness Colliery – Birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in West Cheshire' : Anthony Annakin-Smith

Anthony is a Senior Tutor at Marketing Focus (Chartered Marketers), and has recently written and published a book entitled, 'The CIM Student's Practice and Revision Book' (2007). A Graduate of the MA Landscape Heritage & Society at (what is now) The University of Chester, this talk is primarily based on Anthony's dissertation research. In addition, Anthony is author of the publication, 'Wirral Walks, 100 miles of the Best Walks in the Area', and is a well-known, and received, local speaker.

February 25 : 'Homes & Gardens in Medieval Chester – and the people who occupied them' : Dr Jane Laughton

A key contributor to the Chester Rows Research Project, as well as *The Victoria County History: City of Chester: General History and Topography*, Volume 5 part 1, (2003), Jane is a regular speaker on medieval Chester, the subject of her Doctorate, and in particular, the occupational topography of late medieval Chester.

March 31 : 'So, exactly where did the Bluestones of Stonehenge come from?' : Professor Dai Morgan Evans

Following Dai's very successful talk to the Society on Llangar Church in 2006, he returns to discuss a popular subject, based on his recent research. Visiting Professor in Archaeology at the University of Chester, and former Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, Dai will be looking at the Prescelli area of North Pembrokeshire and the history of the extraction of the plain and spotted dolerites (bluestone), both in the identification of the remains of quarries and quarrying techniques, and the uses of the stones. The story will stretch from c. 3000 BC to AD 1875 and covers the dynamics of the whole landscape.

April 28 : 'What has shaped the landscape of Derbyshire?' : Dr. Fred Broadhurst Joint lecture with the Royal Geographical Society

The remaining few visited the site of the deserted village of Wharram Percy. This is possibly the most evocative site ever visited by the Society. The site was first visited by Maurice Beresford in 1948, and can be regarded as effectively the catalyst for the development of the study of deserted settlements in this country. Intensive excavation over 40 years (directed by John Hurst) gradually transformed our knowledge of the process of settlement depopulation. And the ghosts at Wharram Percy are not just medieval – the last excavators were digging through spoil-pits left by the archaeologists of the 1950s!



Many thanks to Monty and Hilary for organising what must surely be the highlight of the year for those members who were able to come.

Mike Headon

Society Snippets



Awards for All



As you will remember the National Lottery’s “Awards for All” fund recently gave us a grant with which to purchase a laptop and projector. During the Autumn Will Woan, the Manchester Regional officer of the scheme has been in touch with the society. He approved our use of the grant saying that the Chester Society for Landscape History “made a good contribution to the social and cultural life of the city”.

Record Turnout

For our last lecture of the year 120 people packed into the Grosvenor Museum Lecture theatre to hear Stuart Ainsworth. This number included 45 visitors, so a big thank you to everyone who put up posters to advertise the event.

A ... Z of Landscape History

G is for ... Gardens



“China” at Biddulph Grange

Few Roman or medieval gardens survive. Tudor gardens aimed for a harmony of line and proportion to mirror the alignment of the house. The knot garden, constructed from an intricate pattern of box hedges, was a Tudor speciality. Gardens in Stuart times echoed the formal French style, with a broad avenue leading to the house and regular parterres. With the coming of the eighteenth century, the fashion moved to the more natural look, with straight lines abolished in favour of curves and open parkland very near the house. The Victorians preferred massed beds of flowers to all that Georgian grass, and modern taste seems to echo this.

Why not visit

Cheshire: Arley Hall (near Northwich), Capesthorpe Hall (near Macclesfield), Rode Hall (near Alsager); Shropshire: Hawkstone Park (Weston-under-Redcastle), Weston Park (near Telford), Wollerton Old Hall (near Market Drayton); North-east Wales: Bodrhyddan (near Rhuddlan), Erddig (Wrexham), Rhual (near Mold).

Further information

A. Eburne & R. Taylor, *How to Read an English Garden* (London, Ebury Press, 2006); A. Taigel & T. Williamson, *Parks and Gardens* (London, Batsford, 1993), E. Whittle, *The Historic Gardens of Wales* (London, HMSO/Cadw, 1992). Garden History Society website: <http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org/>

H is for ... Hill-forts

Old Oswestry (image by permission of Old Oswestry Hillfort Community

gave rise to the most intense debate among the group.

We returned to the hotel along the charming Troutsdale for a stroll in the extensive grounds and an excellent evening meal.

Sunday dawned still dry, though cloudier, and we set off for Scarborough Castle. While the castle is interesting in its own right, our specific aim was the remains of the Roman signal station constructed on the cliff-top inside the castle bailey. It was probably constructed in the mid-4th century, but no-one knows how it was used: whether as an individual warning post for an inland settlement or as one of a linked chain. Then again, we could see 20th century Fylingdales from Wheeldale Moor, and we don't know much about how that's used either!

Roman signal station at Scarborough Castle

Our next site was the amazing monolith standing next to Rudston church – the tallest standing stone in Britain at 25 feet above ground and an unknown length below ground.. It weighs at least 22 tons above ground – so possibly 30 tons in total. The lead cap was added in 1773 for protection. The stone is Jurassic moor grit conglomerate, and it was probably quarried about ten miles away, though how



it was brought to Rudston is, as always with prehistoric stones, a matter of conjecture and argument – as, of course, is why it was erected.

Following another excellent carvery lunch at the Bosville Arms in Rudston – with very tempting and substantial traditional puddings – the group divided, some to visit Sledmere House and estate village, and some to visit Wharram Percy.

Sledmere is the home of the Sykes family (of Sykes-Picot fame). The house is 18th century, but was not all built at once, and thus is interesting as it clearly shows how it was planned and developed over time, to deal with specific problems. It includes an interesting set of follies. It was restored in 1911 after a fire.

Wharram Percy

steepness were not attractive, and World War I put an end to the plan.

After lunch, we all drove to Wheeldale Roman road. This simple statement conceals one of the most exciting aspects of any Society field trip, as the direct route involved negotiating a single-track ford at Grosmont, which had been seriously swollen by the recent heavy rain. Monty and Hilary took the lead, and the rest of the convoy followed, our intrepidity much admired by locals and tourists! We were rewarded by a section of very well-preserved road high on the moors, showing every sign of being Roman, though some claim it as medieval.

Salome and John the Baptist in Pickering church

We then came down south off the moors to Pickering, where some members



managed a quick coffee break after visiting the amazing wall-paintings in SS. Peter & Paul Church, Pickering. Dating from the 1450s, they were revealed in 1852, when plaster was revealed during restoration work. However, the then Vicar had these examples of Popish superstition whitewashed over again! They were uncovered again in 1876, and have been sympathetically restored, so that they are easier to appreciate than other examples of their type. As well as the Passion, a rather attractive Harrowing of Hell, and the Resurrection, they show the stories of Saints George, Christopher, Edmund, Thomas à Becket, and Catherine, not to mention a colourful version of the story of Salome and John the Baptist, and the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy.

Our last stop in the afternoon was at the Cockmoor Dykes – mysterious as many earthworks are, excavation has not revealed exactly when or why they were constructed. The dykes form a set of at least seven parallel banks and ditches, with those on one side wider than those on the other, suggesting that perhaps they were built at different times. The proximity of round barrows (and one long barrow) suggests an original prehistoric origin, possibly to do with estate boundaries, while the presumed later dykes may have been constructed by rabbit warreners. This site

Project)

See: <http://www.shrop.net/oldoswestryhillfort/>



Hill-forts are enclosures with ramparts that were built to protect settlements or stock. The name “fort” is misleading, but whether they were always permanently occupied is a matter of conjecture. Some appear to have functioned as villages, especially locally, for our hill-forts are much larger than those found in south-west England and south Wales. Indeed, the Berth, near Baschurch North Shropshire, has been proposed as the capital settlement of Powys in the seventh century.

Why not visit

Cheshire: Maiden Castle on Bickerton Hill, Helsby Hill promontory fort, Kelsborrow promontory fort on Castle Hill in Delamere; Shropshire: the Berth (near Baschurch), Caer Caradoc (near Church Stretton), Old Oswestry; North-east Wales: Moel Fenli (near Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd), Moel-y-gaer (near Rhosesmor), Penycloddiau (near Llangwyfan).

Further information

Not much published recently. A.H.A. Hogg, *A Guide to the Hill-forts of Britain* (London, Paladin, 1984) is a useful introduction and has a detailed gazetteer of the more interesting sites. T. Rowley, *The Landscape of the Welsh Marches* (London, Michael Joseph, 1986) puts some local hill-forts in context.

For Cheshire, look at:

<http://www2.cheshire.gov.uk/Archaeology/RCP/PrehistoricSitesToVisit.htm>

I is for ... Industrial archaeology



Chester – where the Shropshire Union Canal enters the Dee

The archaeology of the industrial period is the study of mechanical artefacts since 1600; however, some say industrial archaeology is the study of the development of industrial processes – but that would take us back to the first human to make fire. Ironbridge was one of the first areas in the UK to be the subject of a systematic industrial archaeological study. Mines, quarries, ironworks and textile mills leave large and permanent evidence in the landscape. Disused railways and canals tend to decay into the landscape, leaving odd bridges and tracks.

Why not visit

Cheshire: Anderton Boat Lift (near Northwich), Quarry Bank Mill (Styal), Salt Museum (Northwich); Shropshire: Lead-mining landscape around Gravels (A488 south of Minsterley), landscape of mineral extraction on the Cleve Hills, Ironbridge Gorge Museum; North-east Wales: Bersham Heritage Centre & Ironworks (Wrexham), Greenfield Valley Heritage Park (near Holywell), Great Orme Copper Mines, Llandudno.

Further information

Read: J. Alfrey & C.M. Clark, *The Landscape of Industry: Patterns of Change in the Ironbridge Gorge* (London, Routledge, 1993); B. Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire* (Chichester, Phillimore, 2000). The Shire Album series (Princes Risborough, Shire) covers many aspects of industrial archaeology, including *The Salt Industry* (A. & A. Fielding), *Coal Mining* (G. Hayes), *Ironworks* (W.V.K. Gale), *The Cotton Industry* (C. Aspin), *The Woollen Industry* (C. Aspin) and numerous others.

Mike Headon

Weekend visit to North Yorkshire 21-23 September 2007

A band of members set out to drive by various routes to the Hackness Grange Hotel, between Pickering and Scarborough, on Friday 21 September. We were all looking forward to the weekend, especially those of us who had been on weekends organised by Monty and Hilary Cordwell before; we knew that we would be in for a good time, and this helped us face Friday's atrocious weather and lengthy motorway queues with equanimity.

By Saturday morning, the skies had cleared; car shares were arranged, and we set off for the failed resort of Ravenscar, south of Robin Hood's Bay, where we parked and walked down what's now a steep access track, but was planned as an estate road for the resort, to the Peak Alum works.

Peak Alum Works, Ravenscar



The Alum Works operated from 1650 until 1862. Shale obtained from the huge quarry was processed to obtain alum, used in tanning and to fix dyes. There are remains of the living quarters and a small dock as well as the extensive processing plant.

After lunch at the Ravenhall Hotel, which started life as Peak House in 1774, we gathered at the site of Ravenscar railway station to learn about Ravenscar, "the town that never was". The Ravenscar Estate Company bought the site in 1895, hoping to develop a resort to rival Scarborough, but the site's remoteness and