THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Maelor Saesneg

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERIZATION

Iscoyd Park. *Photo CPAT 1321.16.*

CPAT Report No 525

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by W J Britnell
March 2003

The study was undertaken during the 2002/03 financial year (project CPAT 761)
with funding provided by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.

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Preface

Natural forces and human activity acting together over the last six thousand years have contributed to produce a landscape of great beauty and variety in Wales, a national asset that is essential both to our national identity and to our individual 'sense of place' and well-being. The diversity and imprint of human activity on the landscape is everywhere to be seen, from the enigmatic stone monuments of the prehistoric period and the magnificent castles and abbeys of the medieval period, to quite commonplace and typical features like field boundaries that can often be of great age. But the landscape is more than just attractive scenery or a record of the past; it also provides a place for us to live, work and sustain ourselves, through farming, forestry, tourism and so on, processes that all shape, and will continue to shape, the landscape.

Recognising and raising awareness of the importance and wealth of the historic fabric of the landscape has been the central theme and message of the non-statutory, *Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales*, the first part of which, covering thirty-six 'outstanding' landscapes, was published in January 1998. This is being compiled as a joint initiative between Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), working in collaboration with the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and the Welsh unitary authorities.

The *Historic Landscapes Register* provides a first step, a national overview of the historic content of the Welsh landscape. The next step, so essential to the process of informing the way in which aspects of the historic landscape may be managed, is to make available more detailed information about the character of this landscape at a more local level. This is achieved through a process known as historic landscape characterisation which has been developed in Wales jointly by Cadw, the CCW and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts. This involves the identification of geographically definable and mappable areas of historic character, as determined by the range and distribution of surviving archaeological and historical features and the main types of historical land use patterns or his-

Rhagair

Mae'r grymoedd nuturiol a'r gweithgaredd dynol a fu'n gweithredu ar y cyd dros y chwe mil o flynydddoedd diwethaf wedi cyfrannu at y broses o gynhyrchu tirwedd o harddwch ac amrywiaeth hynod yng Ngymru, ased cenedlaehtol sy'n hanfodol i ni o ran ein hunaniaeth henedlaethol a hefyd o ran ein lles a'n 'hymdeimlad o berthyn i le' unigol. Gellir gweld ymhobman yr amrywiaeth a'r olion a adawyd ar y tirwedd gan weithgaredd dynol, o henebion cerrig enigmatig y cyfnod cynhanesyddol a chestyll ac abatai gwych y cyfnod canoloesol, i'r nodweddion eithaf cyffredin a nodweddiadol fel ffiniau caeau a all yn aml fod yn hen iawn. Ond nid dim ond golygyfeydd deniadol neu gofnod o'r gorffennol yn unig yw'r tirwedd; mae hyfyd yn darparu lle i ni fyw, gweithio a chynnal ein hunain ynddo, drwy gyfrwng amaeth, coedwigaeth, twristiaeth ac ati, oll yn broseau sy'n llunio, ac a fydd yn yn parhau i lunio'r tirwedd.

Bu cydnabod a chodi ymwybyddiaeth o bwysigrwydd a chyfoeth ffarig hanessyddol y tirwedd yn thema ac yn neges ganolog y gofrestr anstatudol, Cofrestr o Dirweddau o Ddiddordeb Hanesyddol Eithriadol Yng Nghymru, *y cynoeddwyd y rhan gyntaf ohoni, sy'n cwmaus trideg chwech o dirweddau 'eithriadol' ym mis Ionawr 1998. Caiff y Gofrestr ei llunio fel menter ar y cyd rhwng Cadw, Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru a'r Cyngor Rhyngwladol ar Henebion a Safleoedd (ICOMOS) sy'n gweithio mewn cydweithrediad â phedair Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Cymru, y Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru ac awdurdodau unedol Cymru.*

Cofrestr o Dirweddau o Ddiddordeb Hanesyddol *yw'r cam cyntaf, trosolwg cenedlaethol o gynnwys hanesyddol tirwedd Cymru. Y cam nesaf, mor hanfodol i'r broses o lywio'r modd y gellir rheoli agweddau ar y tirwedd cenedlaethol, yw trefnu bod gwybodaeth fwy manwl ar gael ynglyn â chymeriad y tirwedd hwn ar lefel fwy lleol. Cyflawnir hyn drwy broses a elwir yn nodweddiad tirweddau hanesyddol y gellir eu diffinio a'u mapio'n ddaearyddol, yn ôl yr hyn a benderfynir gan ystod a dosbarthiad y nodweddion archeolegol a hanesyddol sy'n goroesi a'r prif fathau o batrymau defnydd tir hanesyddol neu 'themâe' hanesyddol sydd wedi llunio'r ardal. Nodir nodweddion hanesyddol allweddol yr ardal*

toric 'themes' that have shaped the area. The key historic characteristics of the area are then identified along with recommendations for their positive management.

This report is one of a series of landscape characterisation exercises being undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts with grant-aid from Cadw. These studies will initially concentrate on those areas identified on the *Historic Landscapes Register*, although it is accepted that the whole of the Welsh landscape can be said to be, in one way or another, historic. Information is being prepared in a form which is compatible to the CCW's landscape assessment and decision making methodology, known as *LANDMAP*. It will be made available to a wide range of organisations and will feed into various initiatives to protect and manage the Welsh countryside, most notably the *Tir Gofal* agri-environment scheme. It is also seen as making a particularly important contribution to raising awareness and heightening a feeling of local distinctiveness.

The *Historic Landscapes Register* and these characterisation exercises fully acknowledge the dynamic and evolving nature of the landscape. They promote the view that protecting the legacy of the past in the landscape is not to be achieved by preventing change or fossilising the landscape but rather by informing the process of change, creating tomorrow's landscapes without necessarily sacrificing the best of yesterday's.

felly ynghyd ag argymhellion ar gyfer eu rheli'n gadarnhaol.

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn un o gyfres o ymarfeirion nodweddiad tirweddau hanesyddol yr ymngmeirir ag ef gan Ymddiriedolaethau Archaeoloegol Cymru gyda chymorth grant gan Cadw. Bydd yr astudiaethau hyn yn canolbwyntio yn y lle cyntaf ar yr ardaloedd hynny a nodwyd yn y Gofestr o Ddiddordeb Hanessyddol, *er y caiff ei dderbyn bod modd disgrifio tirwedd Cymru gyfan, mewn un ffordd neu'r llall, fel yn hanesyddol. Mae gwybodaeth yn cael ei pharatoi ar ffurf sy'n cydweddau â methodoleg asesu tirweddau a gwneud penderfyniadau Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru, sef* LANDMAP. *Bydd ar gael i ystod eang o sefydliadau a chaiff ei fwydo i fentrau amrywiol er mwyn diogelu a rheoli cefn gwlad Cymru, yn bennaf y cynllun agri-amgylcheddol sef,* Tir Gofal. *Caiff ei weld hefyd yn gwneud cyfraniad arbennig o bwysig i'r broses o godi ymwybyddiaeth a dwyshau'r ymdeimlad o arbenigrwydd lleol.*

Cydnabydda'r Gofestr o Dirweddau o Ddiddordeb Hanessyddol *a'r ymarfeirion nodweddiad hyn yn llawn natur ddeinamig y tirwedd sy'n parhau i esblygu. Hyrwyddant y farn mai nid trwy rwystro newid neu ffosileiddio'r tirwedd y mae diogelu treftadaeth y gorffennol yn y tirwedd, ond yn hytrach drwy lywio'r broses o newid, gan greu tirweddau'r dyfodol heb o anghenraid abethu tirweddau gorau'r gorffennol.*

Richard Avent
Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments

Richard Kelly
Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru/Countryside Council for Wales

Introduction

THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This study is a contribution to the overall historic landscape initiative currently being funded by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, the Countryside Council for Wales and ICOMOS UK. Its principal aim is to provide information to aid the management of the historic landscape. The following uses of historic landscape characterization were identified by Cadw:

- Planning, including large-scale intrusions such as roads, windfarms, mineral extraction, large-scale landfill/waste disposal, reclamation, water schemes, major settlement schemes, and major industrial developments

- Landscape management by large corporate landowners, farmers, industrial companies, water and electricity companies, the forestry industry, and the National Trust

- Advice to conservation bodies such as Cadw, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency, local authorities, national parks

- Local landscape conservation initiatives and management agreements by Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales, local authorities

- To enhance our understanding of the historic aspects of landscape, stimulating further research, raising public perception of the landscape, and the preparation of policy statements by public bodies

EVOLVING HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERIZATION METHODOLOGY

Historic landscape characterization is a contribution towards the overall historic landscape initiative currently being funded by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, the Countryside Council for Wales and ICOMOS UK. Its principal aim is to provide information to aid the management of the historic environment.

Historical landscape characteristics are the tangible evidence of the activities and habits of the people who occupied, developed, used and shaped the land to serve human needs in the past; they reflect the beliefs, attitudes, traditions and values of these people. They include the physical remains of all aspects of human activities and the exploitation in the past (above and below ground, known and potential), and our understanding, interpretation and even perception of those remains. They may reflect a variety of activities occurring at one time, or evolving functions in different periods of time.

The Countryside Commission (in its document *Views from the Past*, 1996) states that as managers we should be concerned with the historic character of the present landscape, and not with the study of the past for its own sake. It places the idea of 'historic landscape character' at the centre of these ideas. Characterization is defined as the process of identifying and defining the particular characteristics which make each area distinctive, and is rapidly emerging as the basis for describing and understanding the environment. Historic landscape characterization is one dimension of this approach: it sets out to identify the principal historic components within the current landscape. It is the great depth of human activity which underpins much of that which we feel is important and helps to give an idea of its local distinctiveness.

The term 'historic character' is generally preferred to 'historic landscape', as it is now accepted that all landscape is historic in that it reflects, to a greater or lesser degree, the processes which have occurred in history and which have formed its present appearance.

At present there is no standard, accepted methodology for establishing the historical characterization of landscape, but work on Llyn and elsewhere in Wales has suggested a practical approach based on considering the evidence as a series of themes which may provide an answer. At a landscape level, what is significant in historical terms includes field boundary patterns (whether they are irregular or regular, their size, their date etc); settlement patterns (whether they are scattered, nucleated, their date of origin etc); the relict remains of earlier periods which are to be found in upland or marginal landscapes; the effect of 18th- and 19th-century estates on the landscape; the impact of industry, military installations and so on.

The dominant historic themes or patterns in a locality help define local historic character. The combination of these characteristics give an area its local distinctiveness, and it is the definition of areas of local distinctiveness which leads to the definition of 'character areas'.

The concept of 'character areas' differs somewhat from comparable studies in England, which are based on 'historic landscape types', where the predominant form of the present landscape is identified principally by the existing patterns of enclosures within areas of landscape.

The process of characterization adopted here can be summarised as follows:

one or more dominant patterns	→	coherent character
coherent character with definable limits	→	character area
one or more character areas	→	historic landscape area

Characterization is a practical tool intended to aid management in its broadest forms. In order to be of any practical use, this has to be translated into the management of 'landscape tangibles' (ie the evidence for historical processes and periods in the present landscape). It is essential, therefore, that the key historic landscape characteristics are features and/or patterns to which can be applied management prescriptions whose success or otherwise can be measured for monitoring purposes.

The reports emanating from this work contain a number of elements: the description of each character area split into three parts — historical background, key historic landscape characteristics, and key historic landscape management priorities — accompanied by a map and a photograph. The historical background provides a straightforward description of the archaeological and historical development of the area. The section on key historic landscape characteristics lists the principal characteristics which make that area distinctive and which future management should therefore concentrate on. The section on key historic landscape management priorities begins to define the scope for creative action within a number of initiatives (including LANDMAP, Unitary Development Plans, and Tir Gofal, the all-Wales agri-environment scheme) which can sustain or even enhance elements considered essential to the historic character of the areas.

MANAGING HISTORIC CHARACTER

Rural land-use change

There have been many pressures on the rural environment and the countryside over the last 50 years as a result of changes in land use and shifting priorities for agriculture (the principal rural land use). Agricultural

intensification and the maximization of productivity were the priorities up until the mid-1980s, and as a consequence the character of rural landscapes changed dramatically during this period as hedgerows and trees were removed to create more efficient farming systems. Reclamation of the hills and marginal land led to the removal of significant upstanding archaeological sites and palimpsest landscapes.

Currently, due to agricultural overproduction and a general greater awareness of and concern for the quality and protection of the rural environment, the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy provides a number of incentives to farmers and landowners to manage their land in an environmentally sensitive manner. The all-Wales Tir Gofal scheme includes provision for the conservation of certain habitats as well as sites and features of archaeological and historic landscape interest.

However, of the estimated 27,000 farms in Wales, only about 600 farms per year are currently entering into such agreements, which leaves the vast majority outside any formal management scheme, and so many important archaeological sites and landscape features continue to be lost. The challenge therefore is to identify historic landscape priorities for conservation, protection, enhancement or even restoration both within the scheme and without it.

Three of the principal advantages of an approach using character areas are that (a) it is able to identify and map both local distinctiveness and national importance; (b) by identifying physical features which can be managed it can feed directly into land management and development planning strategies; and (c) it sets the management of individual features within their local landscape context, allowing emphasis to be placed on those features which best define local landscape character. It can assist in management plans by setting priorities for management and enhancement, highlighting intrinsic values, and encouraging links to multi-purpose management.

Characterization is about management: if we are going to manage effectively, we must know what is there, what is important and what we want to do with it. Character areas can tell us what is distinctive (ie important both locally and nationally) about a particular area, and therefore what needs to be managed in order to retain that area's distinctiveness (character).

General considerations

Positive management should be aimed at halting and, if necessary, reversing any trends that can be shown to be causing unacceptable damage to the historic landscape resource. If at the same time management can actually enhance the historic landscape, then that is even better. It is essential that such management is continuous, and contains provisions for monitoring and review.

One of the basic tenets underpinning management is that we should be aiming to continue (rather than halt) the past evolution of the landscape: to do this we must first identify what is important and significant in historic landscape terms. It is the overall historic character of the present landscape (as evidenced in important and significant groupings and patterns) which we should aim to retain, but in order to do this we must concentrate management actions at the level of individual components. We must identify, conserve and enhance the local and regional historic diversity of our landscapes.

Agri-environment and other rural initiatives offer the opportunity to integrate the needs of the historic environment with modern land-use requirements to produce a workable, effective management system. More importantly, they should result in a working, viable landscape, which should provide ways and means for the various human activities in an area to be integrated with each other and with conservation, at the same time providing opportunities for study, research, education, interpretation and quiet enjoyment.

This means that sites and features of historic landscape interest are positively managed for their own sake, rather than just left unimproved. It is important that the management of such features is integral to the management of the farm, or the scheme, as a whole, rather than an isolated, unrelated activity.

By working at the most basic level, management can be used to retain the general historic character of the area.

management of components boundaries, buildings, archaeological sites etc	→	retain character	→	conserve diversity and character

A management plan should specify conservation objectives for a site/area and how they will be monitored: it should identify points at which some response will be made if monitoring shows that a feature is changing: it should establish what activities/processes will be the subject of monitoring: it should establish what management of on-going activities is required; and identify the types of development or activities which might adversely affect the site.

Not all the sites and features which comprise the historic environment require the same detailed level of management: some sites can be adequately managed by the application of simple, general strategies, while more complex sites merit more detailed, site-specific, problem-led responses.

General mechanisms

It is envisaged that characterization has many potential applications to management including the following:

- assisting in developing landscape conservation and enhancement projects, by identifying elements and patterns of the historic environment which are considered either typical of a local area (provide local distinctiveness) or are of particular importance (rare at a national level)
- targeting resources within grant-aid by government and other organisations towards conserving elements and patterns of the historic environment in the same way
- developing policies for unitary development plans
- assisting in determining planning applications, especially large-scale developments such as roads, windfarms, mineral extraction, large-scale landfill, waste disposal, reclamation, water schemes, major settlement and major industrial development
- aiding the management of land by farmers, and large corporate landowners such as industrial companies, water or electricity companies, the forestry industry and the National Trust
- providing baseline information for local areas against which future change can be monitored, for example as part of the Tir Gofal scheme
- providing general information not already on the SMR which can be used to inform advice given as part of a number of rural initiatives such as Tir Gofal, Woodland Grant Schemes etc
- providing advice in a rural framework to conservation agencies including Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency, local authorities, national parks and others
- providing information to a number of wider initiatives, including contributing to our academic under-

- providing information to a number of wider initiatives, including contributing to our academic understanding of landscape, stimulating further research, raising public perception of the landscape, and the preparation of policy statements by public bodies

Specific mechanisms

Tir Gofal is open to applications from farmers throughout Wales. Within the scheme, payments will be made to farmers for observing 'codes of good environmental practice', one of which is care and enhancement of the historic environment. As the scheme is a 'whole farm' scheme, it will allow archaeological management strategies sensitive to the character of the landscape as a whole to be integrated with farming practices. Characterization is useful for monitoring purposes, as it sets out the wider historic environment framework within which individual farm plans will sit. It can also help prioritise management within a broader landscape context.

Unitary Development Plans address 'land use' issues and are currently being compiled by unitary authorities in Wales and England.

Countryside strategies are the responsibility of local authorities (together with others), which have a general duty under section 1 of the Countryside Act, 1981, to have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside in the exercise of their functions relating to land. Countryside strategies principally address management of the countryside in areas outside settlement limits, but they are also a mechanism, at least in part, of implementing development plan policies. In Wales, such strategies are supported by the Countryside Council for Wales and in England by the Countryside Agency.

Local authorities have a number of powers which have implications for the management of the historic environment including the power to establish Country Parks (section 7 of the Countryside Act 1968); the ability to declare Local Nature Reserves (section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the ability to enter into access agreements with landowners (section 64 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the ability to buy derelict land (often of industrial archaeological interest) for reclamation purposes (section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949); the duty to make Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate (section 198 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990); and the duty to apply The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 which controls the removal of certain important hedgerows (from section 97 of the Environment Act 1995). Other powers are treated separately below.

Local Agenda 21 programme At Rio, governments committed themselves to setting up national targets for safeguarding and improving the environment. Local Agenda 21 and Local Biodiversity Action Plans provide the means of meeting these targets, and of promoting the principles of sustainable development, at a local level. Both initiatives are about embracing a conscientious vision of the long-term future by identifying what matters locally and paying serious attention to the global costs of maintaining local lifestyles.

This has implications for archaeology and the historic environment. At a local level, sense of place is a fundamental aspect of quality of life. The present-day landscape underpins our sense of the place in which we live. Much of its character and distinctiveness is derived from the historic environment (archaeology and the built heritage in all its forms). The historic environment is of course both fragile and non-renewable. We have a responsibility to maintain it so that future generations can also appreciate and benefit from it in the same way that we do. However, the landscape is not static. Just as today's landscape is a product of the changing relationships between people and their environment through time, so it must be allowed to continue to change.

The point of sustainability is that it promotes change which meets the needs of the future whilst retaining the integrity of the historic environment. In order to do so decisions have to be made about the relative importance of different elements. Traditionally, evaluation has been based on individual sites, with particular examples being selected out for special protection (known as scheduling). However, it is the sum total of archaeological features not individual sites which give landscape its grain and it is often the more ordinary features that create 'local distinctiveness'. In order to ensure that decisions about the future of the historic environment are made on a secure basis, sound information needs to be gathered. Historic landscape characterization work of the kind being carried out by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts provides historic environment audits, from which decisions of this kind can be made.

Biodiversity Action Plans Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are a means by which Local Government Authorities can implement the biodiversity recommendations established after the Rio Summit. They achieve this by building up local partnerships and taking account of both national and local biodiversity priorities to develop strategies for the conservation of species and habitats of local significance. As we are still at the early stages of our involvement, more information will be forthcoming at a later date, but it is already obvious that the type of general information coming from characterization projects will be able to feed into such plans.

At a general level, archaeology is of relevance to LBAPs because it raises awareness of the historical origins of the contemporary environment. There are no purely 'natural' environments in Britain; the landscape is the product of millennia of human activity. Our knowledge of the changing relationship between people and their environment through history allows us to understand the land-use activities which have led to the creation of contemporary landscapes, and comment from an informed historical perspective on those practices which could be encouraged in order to protect and conserve particular landscapes and ecosystems.

Access is a key issue in the countryside, if we are to enjoy the landscape and all its inherent interests and in turn engender understanding and respect for the countryside and the way it works. In addition to the rights of way network, a bill has recently been passed by Parliament with proposals to provide greater public access to open areas of countryside. As many of the best-preserved and most fragile palimpsest archaeological sites and landscapes lie within open areas of countryside, this has potential implications for archaeological management.

Historic landscape characterization can identify these areas (ie where there are well-preserved yet fragile archaeological remains) and thus highlight the potential management problems if the areas are 'opened up' to public access. It may even be that such areas could be excluded from unfettered access under new legislation, either permanently or on a temporary basis.

Characterization also has the potential to inform leaflets, trails and other interpretative material.

Leisure strategy Historic landscape characterization may have a bearing on local authority leisure strategies.

Tourism The Tourist Boards for Wales and England have the strategic responsibility for encouraging people to visit the borderlands and for the provision of tourist facilities. In recent years tourism has become one of the most important growth sectors of the economy. Unitary authorities all have a tourism strategy of some description, and historic characterization has a part to play in sustainable 'green tourism' in that it can help identify local distinctiveness which can be used both to attract visitors (by way of advertising), create atmosphere and to inform quality initiatives such as local walks, guides and other recreational activities. It

can also direct visitors to areas with a robust historic environment, and away from those which are particularly fragile.

Management agreements In addition, local authorities have the ability (under section 39 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981) to enter into management agreements with landowners. This is an area which could be explored further from the historic environment perspective, as such agreements could cover not only individual monuments but also historic landscape characteristics (such as boundary types).

Other local authority programmes Local authorities have programmes for economic development, highways maintenance, environmental education and coastal protection. These would all benefit from the information which is being compiled through the characterization projects, and, in the other direction, the safeguarding of the historic environment would benefit from those drawing up these programmes having direct access to historic landscape characterization data. In fact, information at this broad level would probably be more useful than detailed, site-specific SMR data.

Forestry Commission Information from characterization projects will be invaluable in contributing to national and regional indicative forestry strategies, indicating where new proposals for planting are likely to be acceptable (or unacceptable) from an historic environment perspective. On a day to day basis, it can provide information at a landscape level which can inform proposals for new planting. It will be particularly useful when considering proposals under any of the challenge schemes.

Environment Agency is responsible for producing Local Environment Action Plans (LEAPs) and Catchment Management Plans (CMPs). The historic environment does not have a high profile in either of these, and both could therefore benefit from information which characterization can provide.

Other bodies Historic landscape characterization information can be used to educate and inform a wide range of organisations and individuals including statutory agencies, voluntary bodies (RSPB, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, National Trust) town councils, community councils, farming unions and others. It is our experience that often it is easier to explain the importance of, and inherent interest of, the historic environment by using historic characterization, than by the more traditional means of individual archaeological sites and excavations.

Local distinctiveness and a sense of place, which are of undoubted interest to people, can all be conveyed by such means, and the potential importance of this aspect of characterization cannot be emphasised too strongly.

David Thompson and Dafydd Gwyn
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Summary of the Maelor Saesneg historic landscape area

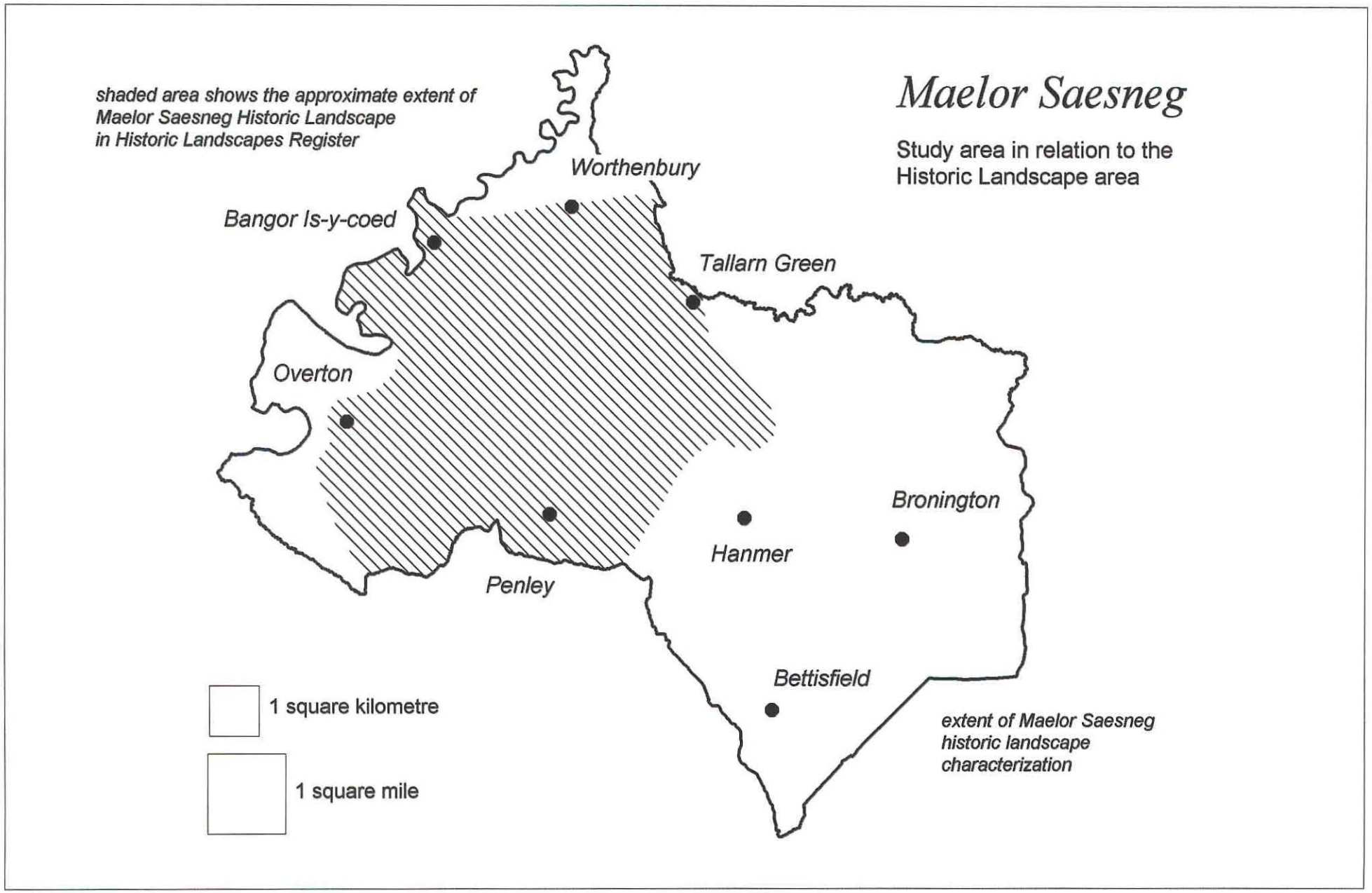
Maelor Saesneg represents a diverse and well-preserved historic landscape. The following description, taken from the *Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales* (Cadw 2001, 16–19), identifies the essential historic landscape themes in the historic character area that are considered in greater detail in the sections which follow.

Geographically, *Maelor Saesneg* is that part of the pre-1974 county of Flintshire south east of the River Dee, formerly known as Flintshire Detached, and lying on the western fringes of the North Shropshire and South Cheshire plain. Topographically the landscape is uncharacteristic of Wales, with very little by way of prominent higher ground occurring, the otherwise flat or gently undulating surface of the plain reflecting the disposition in many places of extensive underlying deposits of materials left after the Ice Age. The surface of the plain drops almost indiscernibly from about 80m above OD at points along the southern limits of the area described here, to about 15m above OD on the flood plain of the River Dee which bounds the area on the north and west. The settlement pattern and economy of the area also owe much to influences from across the border in Cheshire, and consequently the historic character of the landscape is uncommon in Welsh terms, being more typical of the English border than of Wales and far more English than Welsh — as its name might suggest. Historically, the majority of *Maelor Saesneg* would have been subject to similar land use patterns with open fields divided into strips surrounding small medieval settlements. More recently, however, a distinction has arisen between the predominantly pastoral economy in the west and the arable fields of the east. As a result of arable farming, much of the landscape has been changed, with boundaries being removed to create larger fields and ploughing levelling all trace of former field system earthworks. Accordingly, the integrity of the historic landscape is best preserved in the western part of the area described here. Even so, in Welsh terms the scale of survival of this remarkable medieval field and cultivation pattern make this a very rare and valuable landscape. The area encompasses a number of historic settlements with their origins in the medieval or early medieval periods. To the west are the small towns of Bangor-on-Dee and Overton; Worthenbury (noted as the site of a possible Saxon burgh, and thus a great rarity in Wales) lies on the northern side; Penley and Lightwood Green to the south; and Horseman's Green and Tallarn Green to the east. Many of these minor settlements tend to be small linear developments tightly packed along what must be assumed to be a pre-existing road network. Many are characterized by the red-brick houses and cottages locally typical of the 18th and 19th centuries. However, most possess one or two black-and white timber buildings indicating earlier origins, as might be inferred from the elaborate field systems surrounding many of these hamlets. One exception to this pattern is Bangor-on-Dee which, while having many architectural similarities with its neighbours, clearly has a much older pedigree. Here was the site of a Dark Age monastery where the Venerable Bede records that 2000 monks were massacred, though the site of this is now lost. The town has a scattering of medieval buildings and a fine 15th-century stone bridge spanning the River Dee; today the town is perhaps better known for its racecourse, the only one in North Wales. In addition to these settlements, there are several splendid late medieval hall houses such as Althrey and Penley Old Hall, together with a significant number of early medieval moated sites, as for example at Halghton Lodge and Peartree Lane. Most moated sites were of manorial status, being the residences of lords or their stewards, or occasionally belonging to church institutions. Dating evidence indicates that this distinctive settlement form was introduced into the area in the 12th century with a proliferation of sites appearing in the 13th and early 14th centuries, thereafter continuing to be built and remaining in use until the 16th century. Their defensive capabilities were negligible; instead their function appears to have been to proclaim the high status of their occupants, with the moats most likely to have been used for keeping fish and game birds, watering stock, and for ornament. However, it is the legacy of medieval agriculture which gives this landscape area its most distinctive characteristic. The

land use pattern is currently one of small hedged fields, often arranged in narrow strips, many of which retain the ridge and furrow earthworks of medieval cultivation. Such earthworks were the result of arable cultivation during the medieval period when the land surrounding settlements was divided into strips within large open fields and worked in common by the villagers. Although the ridge-and-furrow visible today was created by ploughing these strips, the pattern of small enclosed and hedged fields occurred later. Over time, the open fields were gradually enclosed, the new field boundaries often reflecting the shape of the former strips, producing typically long narrow fields. In some areas, however, such as those to the north of Sandy Lane and near Mulsford, the patterns of medieval cultivation are more complex and often at odds with later boundaries. The predominantly pastoral agriculture of more recent centuries has effectively fossilized the field patterns, retaining the ridge and furrow earthworks and the later hedged fields, and leaving a distinctly medieval feel to the landscape. Many of these fields contain small ponds and although the origin and use of these is not clear, it is possible that they may be clay pits, perhaps each one providing building material for a local medieval building. These field systems should not be seen in isolation, however, since the settlements to which they belong are as much a part of the historic landscape. With the exception of Bangor on Dee and Overton, the settlement pattern remains one of small nucleated villages and hamlets which have changed little in plan since their medieval origins, adding coherence and integrity to the historic character of this very unusual, albeit still thriving and predominantly agricultural, Welsh landscape.

Summary

Reference number	HLW (C) 7
Index map number	41
OS Map	Landranger 117, 126
Former county	Clwyd
Unitary authority	Wrexham
Principal area designations	The area includes: Halghton Lodge moated site, Lightwood Farm moated site, Pear Tree Lane moat and fishpond, Penley Hall moated site and Tallarn Green moated site Scheduled Ancient Monuments; Bangor-on-Dee, Overton-on-Dee and Worthenbury Conservation Areas.
Criteria	2
Contents and significance	This generally flat, fertile lowland area forming the western fringes of the North Shropshire and South Cheshire plain in the detached part of the former county of Flint, presents a landscape which is geographically and historically quite uncharacteristic in Wales and is, therefore, very rare and valuable. The area has a uniform, but distinctive range of medieval settlements comprising small towns, villages, hamlets and moated sites, most of which are surrounded by remarkable and extensive survivals of medieval open field systems with characteristic ridge-and-furrow cultivation patterns, their extents often fossilized and still traceable by the disposition of later hedged enclosures.


Maelor Saesneg
Study area in relation to the Historic Landscape area
shaded area shows the approximate extent of Maelor Saesneg Historic Landscape in Historic Landscapes Register
Worthenbury
Bangor Is-y-coed
Tallarn Green
Overton
Bronington
Hanmer
Penley
Bettisfield
1 square kilometre
1 square mile
extent of Maelor Saesneg historic landscape characterization

Map 1.

About this study

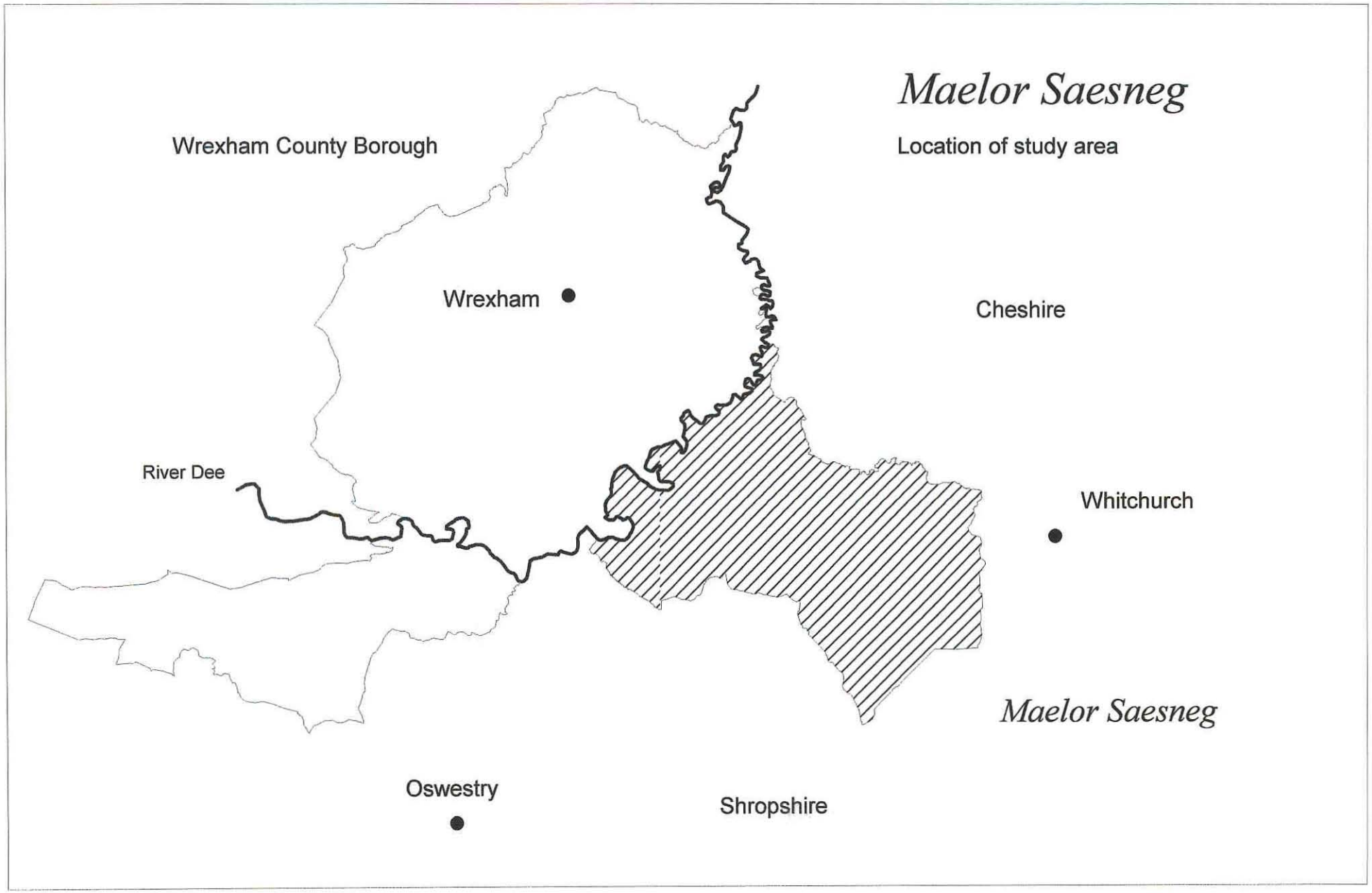
The purpose of the present study is to provide a fuller and more detailed characterization of the *Maelor Saesneg* historic landscape area. The *Maelor Saesneg* ***historic landscape area*** defined in Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales covers parts of the five modern communities of Bangor Is-y-coed, Overton, Willington Worthenbury, Hanmer, and Maelor South. For convenience, the present studies covers a larger area which encompasses the whole of the historic area of *Maelor Saesneg* to the east of the River Dee (Map 1), which include the whole of the five communities, together with the community of Bronington, all of which fall within the Wrexham unitary authority area (Map 2). The *Maelor Saesneg* historic landscape area remains that defined in the Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest.

Summary of methodology

A MapInfo 6 workspace was created, within which the Regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) held and maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust could be interrogated against modern Ordnance Survey (OS) raster (1:10,000) and vector (LandLine) map-bases. About 145 new SMR records were created for structures and features of historical and archaeological interest other than buildings shown on these maps as well as upon modern OS 1:25,000 paper maps (Explorer series) and on OS first edition 6-inch maps.

A total of 874 MapInfo polygons were drawn, representing ***historic landscape types*** defining settlements, field types and other land use types. These were classified according to a system devised for the project (see Appendix 1 and Map 3), which formed base-level data for this study. A topographical model of the area was also created (see Map 6) as a tool for landscape analysis. Special studies were also undertaken within the area of marl pits/ponds and ridge and furrow, both of which are particularly characteristic of the past land-use history of *Maelor Saesneg*. Accordingly, polygonal data were created for approximately 19.95 square kilometres of ridge and furrow visible on a variety of aerial photographs and from fieldwork records of the area (see Map 10) and point data was created for over 2,200 records of marl-pits/ponds from the paper and digital map sources listed above (see Map 11). These datasets, combined with information derived from a survey of some of the published and unpublished secondary sources relating to the history, archaeology and building history of the area, contributed to a thematic narrative of landscape development within the area of *Maelor Saesneg* from the earliest times up to the present day.

As part of the historic landscape characterization process a total of 17 ***historic landscape character areas*** were defined (see Map 4), representing discrete geographical areas of broadly consistent historic character represented physically by a dominant field pattern or form of settlement, for example, informed by the datasets noted above, or by historical associations (Cadw & CCW 2003). The character areas are primarily intended as a means of describing rather than classifying the historic elements of the landscape, though a number share generic characteristics at varying levels. Bangor Is-y-coed (1115) and Overton (1118), for example, are both relatively large nucleated settlements which were founded in the medieval period which are considered to form character areas in their own right. The remaining nucleated settlements within *Maelor Saesneg* have a lesser landscape dimension and are viewed for the purposes of this study as components of the landscapes within which they fall. Thus, the Eglwys Cross (1125) character area is seen as a predominantly agricultural landscape which includes a number of roadside and 'green' settlements. Ywern (1114) is a distinctive floodplain landscape bordering the River Dee, whilst Emral (1121) and Gredington (1124) and to a lesser extent Bryn-y-Pys (1117) are landscapes characterized by parkland and former parkland. Fenn's Moss (1129) is dominated by the raised bog and Stimmy Heath (1128) is characterized by post-medieval drainage and enclosure. The remaining character areas are predominantly agricultural but with subtle differences signifying different land use and tenurial histories. Halghton (1120) forms a large coherent block of strip fields and remnant ridge and furrow and moated sites, suggesting derivation from medieval manorial open field agriculture. Knolton (1119), Penley (1123), Brynhovah (1116), Higher Lanes (1126) and Iscoyd (1127) include smaller


Maelor Saesneg
Location of study area
Wrexham County Borough
Wrexham
Cheshire
River Dee
Whitchurch
Maelor Saesneg
Oswestry
Shropshire

Map 2.

blocks of strip fields and ridge and furrow combined with more irregular field patterns suggesting a process of piecemeal enclosure. Mulsford (1122), Eglwys Cross (1125), and Bettisfield (1130) are characterized by irregular field patterns suggesting piecemeal enclosure and freehold tenure were dominant in these areas.

The study has been primarily desk-based, but limited fieldwork was undertaken to test the validity of the desk-based assessment and to provide ground-based photography. A single aircraft flight was undertaken to provide the aerial photography presented in this report. Condition recording of archaeological sites within the study area was beyond the scope of the project and was not attempted.

Presentation of this report

The results of the study are presented in two sections in this report. The next section provides a thematic narrative of the development of the *Maelor Saesneg* landscape. This is followed by a description of individual historic landscape character areas, accompanied by a list of essential sources and a location map. Photographs of character areas are presented in the section after that.

In the absence of a condition survey of the historic landscape features in Maelor Saesneg no attempt has been made to evaluate the historic landscape elements considered in this report or to formulate detailed management prescriptions, though a number of key historic landscape management issues are identified in the case of each of the character areas.

A bilingual version of the report will be available in due course on the CPAT web site (**www.cpat.org.uk**) as part of the historic landscape characterization initiative, a consideration that has influenced the format and layout of this printed report to some extent. An illustrated leaflet about the historic landscape will also be produced to draw attention to the information available on the internet.

Relationship between this study and the Wrexham LANDMAP project

It is anticipated that this study will inform and contribute to the current Wrexham LANDMAP project being undertaken by Wrexham County Borough Council in conjunction with the Countryside Council for Wales (Wrexham County Borough 2003). This is being carried out according to the LANDMAP methodology which is primarily a hierarchical system for classifying the modern landscape (CCW 2001). The ***historic landscape types*** shown in Map 3 can be considered to be akin to LANDMAP's History and Archaeology Level 4 aspect areas (historic landscape detail). The ***historic landscape character areas*** defined in this report have no precise equivalent within the LANDMAP methodology, but might usefully be thought of as falling between LANDMAP Level 3 and Level 4.

An illustration of the relationship between the current study and the Wrexham LANDMAP project is given in Map 5 which shows the historic landscape types created for the purposes of this study, with a suggested classification in terms of LANDMAP Level 3 (version 2, forthcoming) (see Appendix 2).

Recommendations for further work

The *Maelor Saesneg* landscape is currently undergoing a process of rapid change resulting from the demand for new and converted housing around the fringes of the Wrexham conurbation and from improvements being made to agricultural land.

Regionally distinct aspects of the *Maelor Saesneg* historic landscape which are particularly vulnerable to these processes at the present time can be highlighted as follows:

- The larger medieval nucleated settlements and their environs including associated medieval open fields where much new housing has taken place.

- 'Green' settlements, the history of many of which is poorly understood, where much new infill housing is taking place.
- Complexes of farm buildings, many of which are unrecorded yet undergoing conversion.
- Ridge and furrow cultivation, much of which appears to have been levelled or degraded.
- Marl pits and ponds, many of which have been infilled or are accumulating modern rubbish.

The landscape of *Maelor Saesneg* has undergone many equally dramatic changes in the past. It is clearly inappropriate to resist all change, but it is important to manage change in a way that enables distinctive and characteristic elements of the historic landscape to be taken into account and either preserved or recorded.

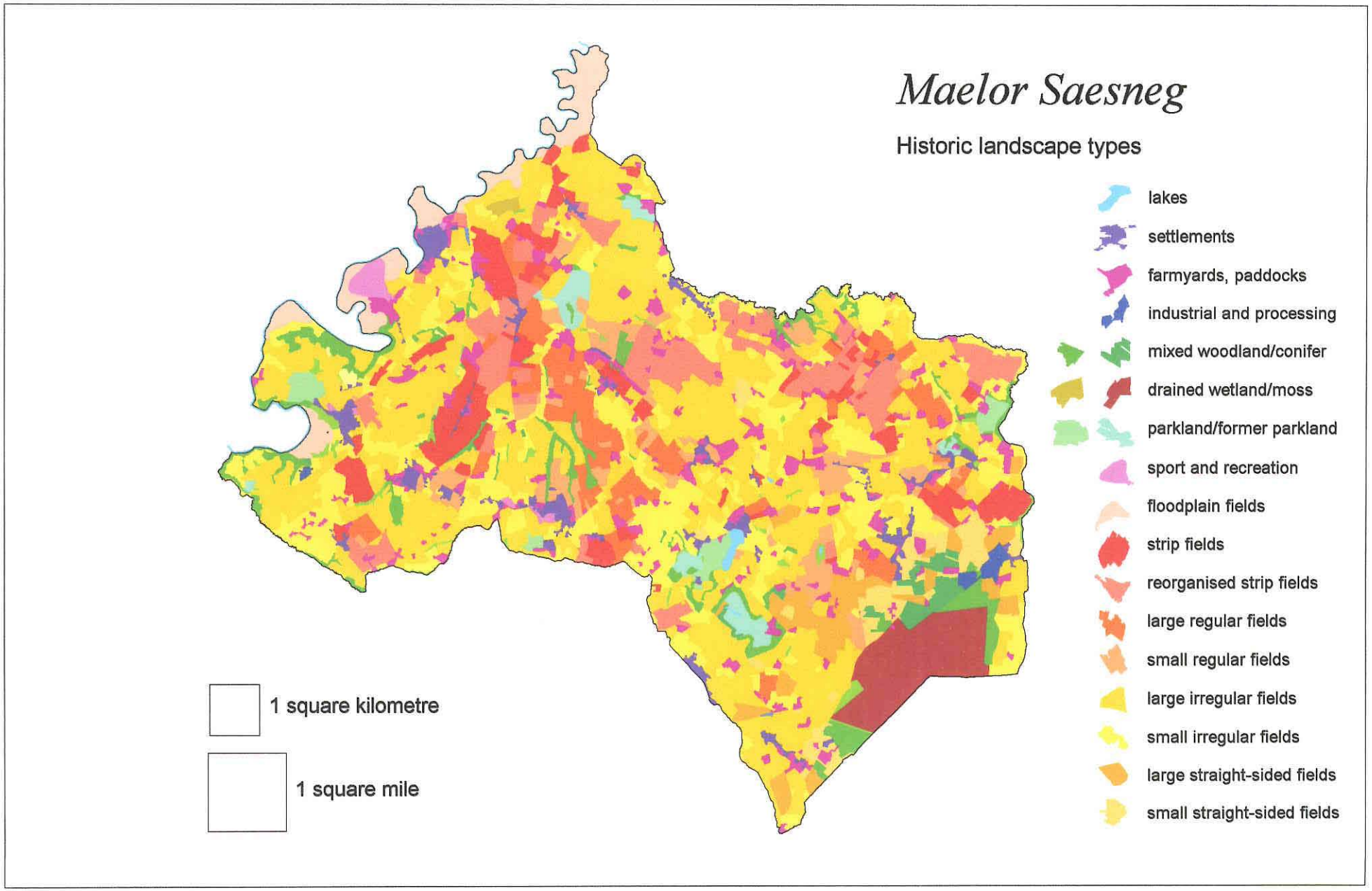
As noted above, most of this study has of necessity been desk-based, with relatively little opportunity for carrying out fieldwork assessment. Much is based on written or photographic records which in some instances date back many decades and consequently the condition of many of the historic landscape elements described in this report is unknown. A condition survey of sites of archaeological and historic interest in the area is urgently needed, paying particular attention to the aspects highlighted above, and also taking into account new and improved information to be gleaned from aerial photography, documentary and cartographic sources. This would permit a formal evaluation of the historic landscape elements in *Maelor Saesneg* to be undertaken.

Note on place-names

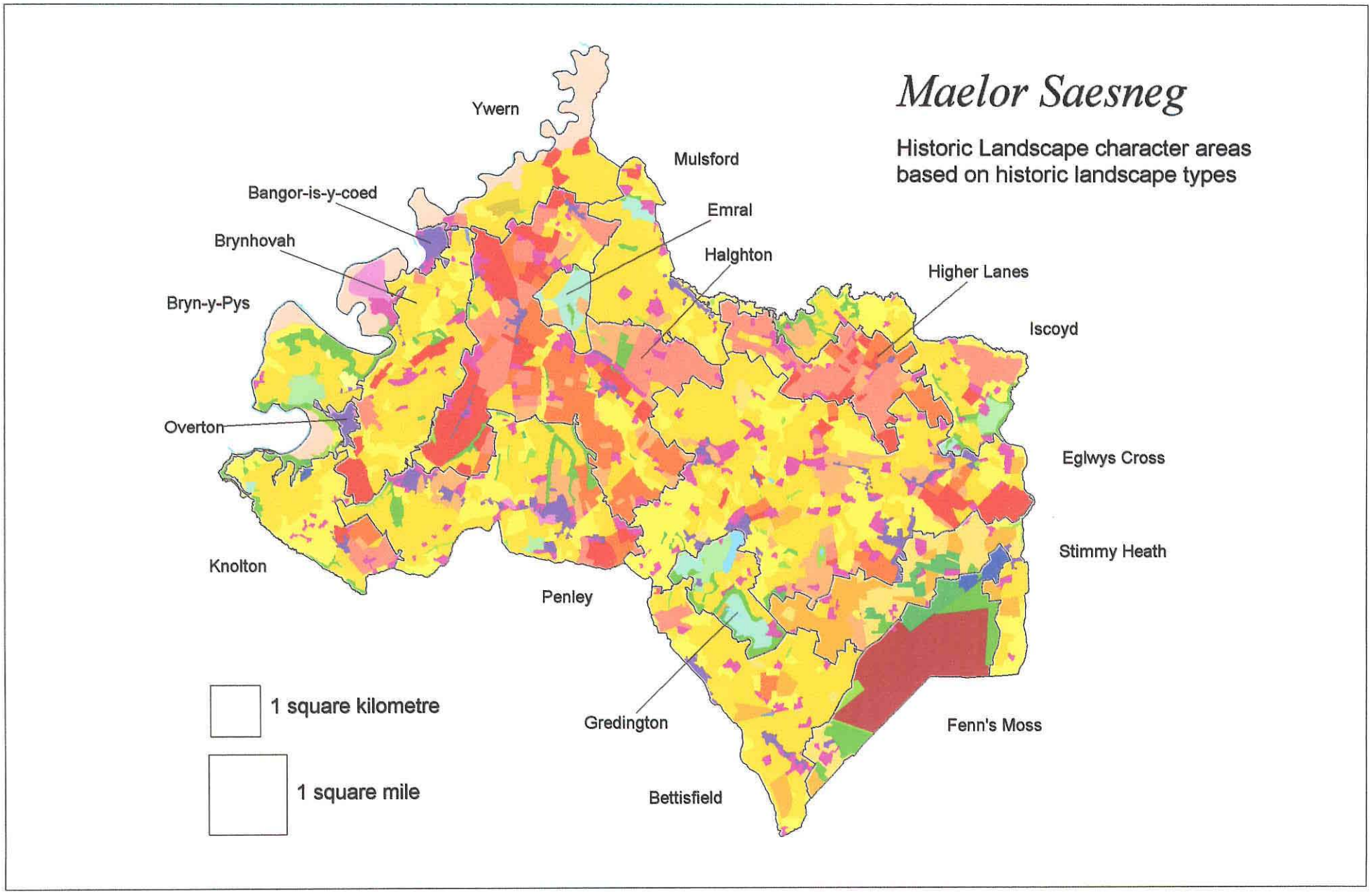
There is some variation in the spelling and punctuation of some of the place-names of *Maelor Saesneg*. Bangor Is-y-coed (the form given here), for example, also appears as Bangor Is-coed and Bangor-on-Dee (to distinguish it from Bangor in north-west Wales). Overton likewise also appears in its modern Welsh form Owrtun or as Overton-on-Dee (to distinguish it from Overton in Cheshire). Fenn's Moss (the form used here) also appears as Fenns Moss.

Acknowledgments

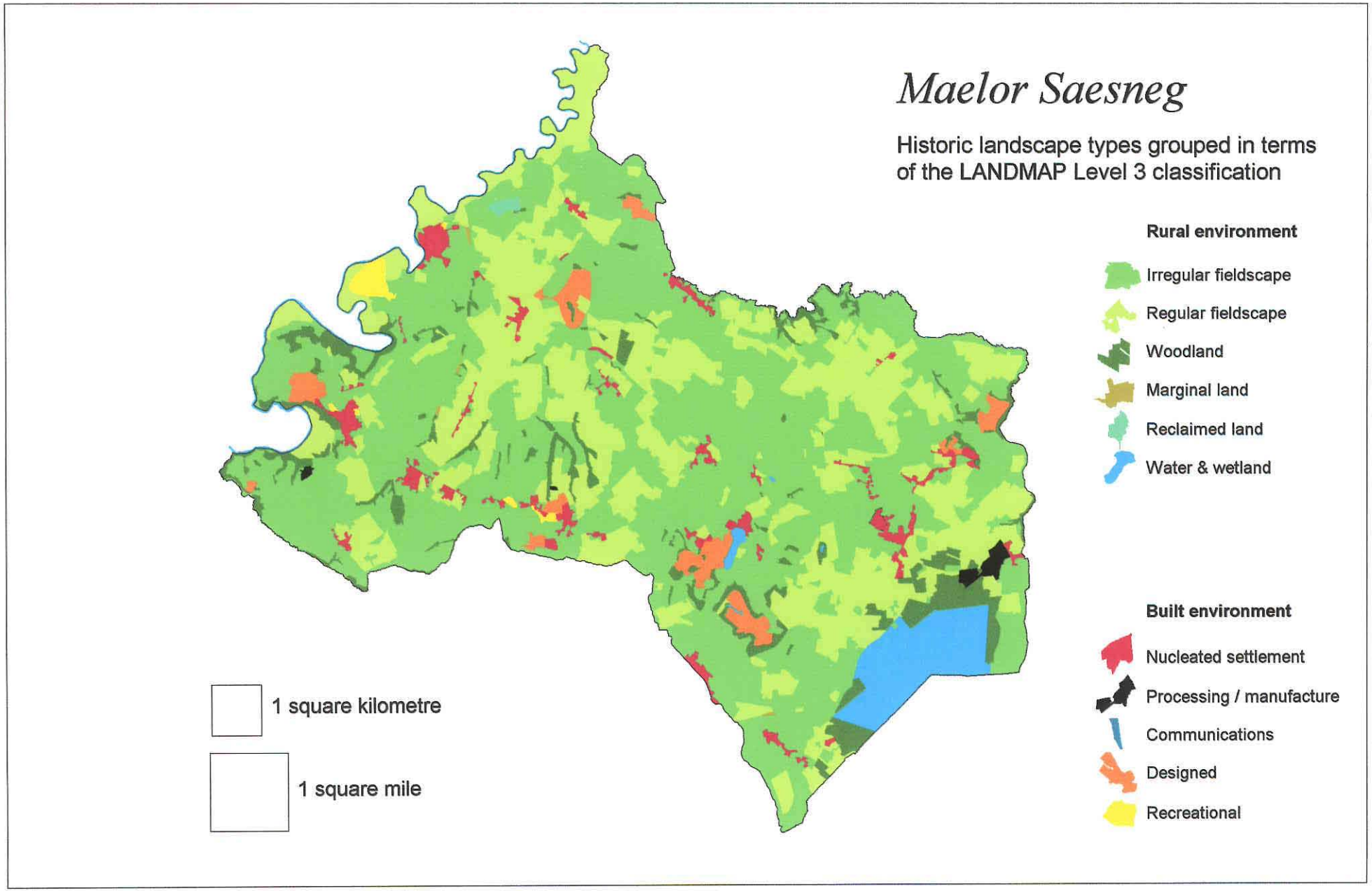
Help during the preparation of this report was given by Chris Martin and by several students undertaking work experience, including Liam Britnell and Robin Tatteshall of the Priory School, Shrewsbury. Aerial photography was undertaken by Nigel Jones. Helpful comments on a draft of this report were provided by Richard Avent and Judith Alfrey of Cadw Welsh Historic Monuments and Ruth Benson and Geoff Foy of Wrexham County Borough Council.


Maelor Saesneg
Historic landscape types
lakes
settlements
farmyards, paddocks
industrial and processing
mixed woodland/conifer
drained wetland/moss
parkland/former parkland
sport and recreation
floodplain fields
strip fields
reorganised strip fields
large regular fields
small regular fields
large irregular fields
small irregular fields
large straight-sided fields
small straight-sided fields
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 3.


Maelor Saesneg
Historic Landscape character areas
based on historic landscape types
Ywern
Mulsford
Bangor-is-y-coed
Emral
Brynhovah
Halghton
Higher Lanes
Bryn-y-Pys
Iscoyd
Overton
Eglwys Cross
Stimmy Heath
Knolton
Penley
Gredington
Fenn's Moss
Bettisfield
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 4.


Maelor Saesneg
Historic landscape types grouped in terms of the LANDMAP Level 3 classification
Rural environment
Irregular fieldscape
Regular fieldscape
Woodland
Marginal land
Reclaimed land
Water & wetland
Built environment
Nucleated settlement
Processing / manufacture
Communications
Designed
Recreational
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 5.

Historic landscape themes within the Maelor Saesneg landscape

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Topography

Maelor Saesneg forms part of the morainic lowlands in the northern borderlands, extending from north Shropshire to southern Cheshire, lying between about 10 and 100m above Ordnance Datum (Map 6). Topographically, it can be subdivided into a number of distinct landscape types — the floodplain and lowlands bordering the River Dee to the north and north-west, the gently undulating central area dissected by minor stream valleys, the more deeply incised valley of the Wych Brook along the northern edge of the area, and finally the extensive raised bog of Fenn's Moss on the border with Shropshire to the south-east.

Geology

The underlying solid geology is Triassic New Red Sandstone, composed of relatively soft red-stained sandstones and marls. Much of the area of overlain by glacial till derived from glacial sandy and clayey glacial till of northern or Irish Sea origin.

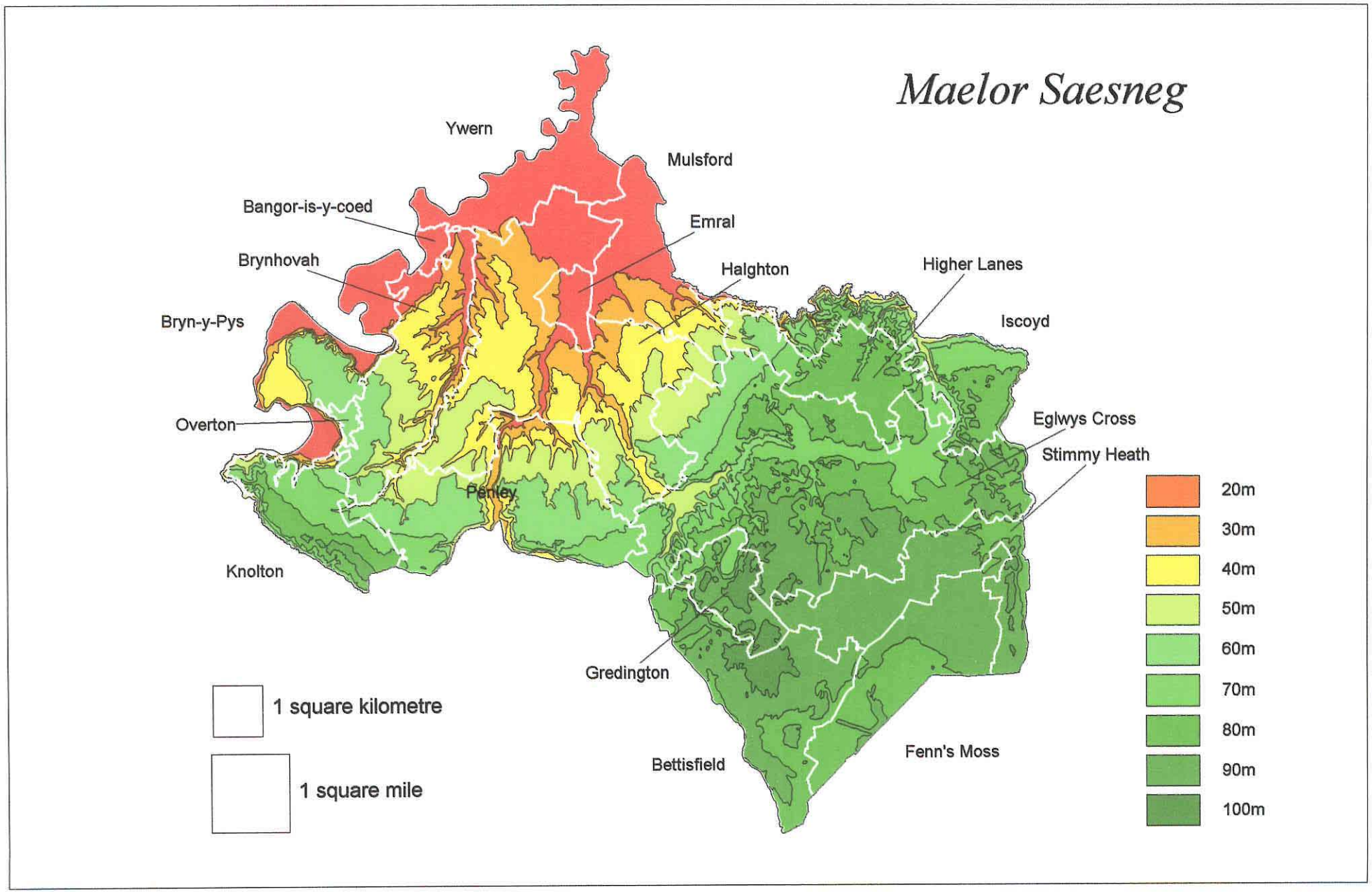
Soils

Soils and hydrology have both had a significant impact upon land-use potential of different parts of the historic landscape area. The flat floodplain of the Dee to the north of Worthenbury is subject to periodic flooding and waterlogging and has gleyed alluvial soils suited to permanent grassland. On the river terrace bordering the Dee to the north and south of Bangor and to the west of Overton are areas of well-drained silty brown alluvial soils and loamy brown earths suited to grassland and arable in areas where flood risk is low. A similar narrow band of deep brown earth is to be found just to the west of Horseman's Green. Most of the rest of the area is covered with seasonally waterlogged and slow draining fine loamy soils and clayey soils, characteristic of glacial tills in the region, that are suited to short-term and permanent grassland and arable in drier areas.

Rivers, streams, meres and bogs

Most of the area of *Maelor Saesneg* is drained by streams running to the north and west which feed the River Dee which delimits the western side of the area. Towards the west is the Mill Brook which rises south of Lightwood Green, skirts the eastern side of Bangor Is-y-coed, and joins the Dee near Dongray Hall. Much of the central part of *Maelor Saesneg* is drained by a series of streams which rise along the southern boundary of the area near Penley and towards the eastern margins near Iscoyd Park which join near Halghton and run northwards as the Emral Brook. At Worthenbury the Emral Brook is joined by a the Wych Brook which rises as the Red Brook near Fenn's Moss, at the south-eastern corner of *Maelor Saeseng*, the two streams mark the national boundary between England and Wales. The Emral Brook and Wych Brook run northwards from Worthenbury as the Worthenbury Brook, which join the River Dee just to the west of Shocklach Green, Cheshire. The south-western part of the area is drained by watercourses draining into the Shell Brook, again marking the national boundary, which joins the Dee just above Erbistock. The south-eastern corner of the area, to the south of Fenn's Moss is drained by streams which feed into the River Roden in Shropshire.

Studies of river meanders in the Dee valley have shown that the River Dee occupied a position close to its present location shortly after the last glaciation, in the process cutting down into the underlying glacial till and creating various landforms and sediments including at least two river terraces and leaving a discontinuous complex of abandoned river channels, meander cut-offs and oxbow lakes. Archaeological and sedimentary evidence suggests that the course of the river has been relatively stable since later prehistoric or Roman times, with many of the meander cut-offs being infilled during the medieval period and with evidence of increasing management of


Maelor Saesneg
Ywern
Mulsford
Bangor-is-y-coed
Emral
Brynhovah
Halghton
Higher Lanes
Bryn-y-Pys
Iscoyd
Overton
Eglwys Cross
Stimmy Heath
Penley
Knolton
Gredington
1 square kilometre
1 square mile
Bettisfield
Fenn's Moss
20m
30m
40m
50m
60m
70m
80m
90m
100m

Map 6.

flow regulation since about 1700.

Vegetation history

Something of the post-glacial vegetation history of *Maelor Saesneg* is known as a result of pollen studies undertaken on the peats of Fenn's Moss in the south-eastern corner of the area, the late post-glacial site at Chelford in the Cheshire basin, and from studies of abandoned river meanders of the River Dee in the area between Worthenbury and Holt. As yet, there is little detailed evidence of the history of vegetation change and land-use history from pollen studies for later prehistoric and more recent periods, though study of old river meanders near Worthenbury suggests that the natural vegetation, possibly from the later prehistoric period, was of open oak and hazel woodland on the drier surrounding areas with areas of damper alder or willow carr woodland adjacent to the floodplain or in adjacent valleys, with sporadic occurrences of lime, elm and holly, with some localised areas of heathland close to the site suggested by heather and ling. Arable and pastoral agriculture became important in the land surrounding the Dee floodplain. Cereal cultivation included possibly wheat and barley but also oats, the latter being typical of Romano-British and later periods. Hemp pollen also identified, probably cultivated for fibre used in rope making, probably before the beginning of the 18th century.

Woodland

Today, residual natural broadleaved woodland or replanted ancient woodland is largely confined to more steeply-sloping ground along the banks and old river terraces of the Dee, along stream valleys south of Lightwood Green and Halghton, along the Red Brook near Iscoyd Park and Wych Brook to the east of Tallarn Green and in the area around Bettisfield Park, south of Hanmer. Small plantations occur here and there, with more extensive broadleaved and coniferous plantations on the heathland around the fringes of Fenn's Moss in the south-east corner of the area.

As noted above, pollen evidence suggests that the earlier natural vegetation, possibly from the later prehistoric period, was of open oak and hazel woodland on the drier surrounding areas with areas of damper alder/willow carr woodland adjacent to the floodplain or in adjacent valley. Both Welsh and English place-names indicate the presence of more extensive natural woodland in the past, especially along the southern and north-eastern boundaries of the area. Many of the sources are relatively late, but some most probably date back to the early medieval period, in perhaps the 7th or 8th centuries. Anglo-Saxon place-names which probably indicate clearings in the woodland include that of Lightwood Green from Old English *leoht* 'bright, light', and the name Penley derived from the name Penda and Old English *leah* 'wood or clearing', which is also present locally in the Welsh form Llannerch Panna, 'Penda's clearing'. The place-name Musley, to the west of Lightwood, possibly also contains the element *leah*. The Domesday survey of 1086 records an extensive area of woodland at Bettisfield, three leagues by two leagues across wide, an area of almost 7 kilometres by 5 kilometres across (a league generally being reckoned to be about one and a half miles). Woodland is also signified in both elements of the Welsh name Bangor Is-y-coed, *bangor* meaning 'wattle enclosure' with the suffix *is-coed*, 'below the wood', to distinguish it from the occurrence of the place-name *bangor* elsewhere in Wales.

Woodland clearance no doubt continued apace during the medieval period from initial clearings as the ancient woodland resources were exploited for fuel and building materials as well as assarting to satisfy a need for more farmland. In a bid to encourage English settlers to occupy the new Edwardian borough of Overton, for example, would-be inhabitants in 1293 were offered free timber for building, timber continuing to be a the principal building material in the area until brick became more commonly available from the later 17th century onwards. Few records of felling have survived in *Maelor Saesneg* during this period, but there are records of extensive areas of native woodland being felled in the Northwood area of north Shropshire, just to the south of Penley, between the later 15th and early 17th centuries, leaving the patchwork of residual woodland that is still visible in this area today. The area of in the neighbourhood of Threapwood on the northern boundary *Maelor Saesneg*, had evidently been more heavily wooded in the past, its name significantly containing the Middle English element *threpen*, giving

the meaning 'disputed or debatable wood', which significantly spanned the border between traditionally Welsh and English territories, which was to retain a reputation as a lawless, extra-parochial territory until well into the 18th century. Thomas Pennant in his *Tour in Wales* published in1784 made particular mention of the 'venerable oaks, the remains of the ancient forest' near Threapwood. The presence of woodland in this area has left a notable legacy of farm names including the English 'wood' or the Welsh *celli* 'grove' including Wood Farm, Middle Wood Farm, Upper Wood Farm, The Gelli, Gelli Farm, and The Woodlands.

English or Welsh woodland names were given to farmsteads elsewhere, as in the case of Althrey Woodhouse, south of Bangor, Argoed (Welsh 'forest edge'), north of Overton, both on the banks of the Dee, and Plas yn Coed ('forest mansion') to the north of Lightwood Green, establishments which were probably all in existence by the end of the 17th century, a time by which the ancient woodland had probably been more or less reduced to the remnants which survive at the present day.

A number of lanes of probable medieval origin have English names identifying particular tree of bush species, such at Holly Bush Lane and Birch Lane. A number of later farms and houses likewise have English names identifying particular wild or cultivated species, including Holly Bush Farm, Oak Farm, Broad Oak Farm, Yew Tree Farm, Cherrytree Farm, Peartree Farm, and The Elms, of which Oak Farm and Peartree farmhouses are an early 17th-century timber-framed buildings, Peartree Farm and Holly Bush Farm significantly superseding earlier moated manor house sites.

Historical perceptions of the Maelor Saesneg landscape

Descriptions and illustrations of the landscape of *Maelor Saesneg* first appear in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and though mostly concerned with the picturesque views along the Dee near Bangor Is-y-coed and Overton Bridge provide some indications of land-use which probably post-date the major change from arable to pastoral farming in many parts of the area which appears to have occurred during the late medieval and early post-medieval periods. Speaking of Bangor Is-y-coed, Samuel Lewis describes 'The adjacent scenery in many places is beautiful and richly picturesque, the noble sweeps of the Dee being frequently overshadowed by thick hanging woods, which fringe its elevated bank', whilst his description of Overton Bridge introduces contemporary perceptions of land-use and potential: 'The surrounding scenery is beautifully picturesque, being composed of a great diversity of features in pleasing combination and agreeable contrast. From a ridge near the village is seen, on one side, an extensive plain of verdant meadows, enlivened by the windings of the River Dee, skirted in front by fertile and richly wooded slopes'. Thomas Pennant, in the late 18th century, makes reference to the remnants of ancient woodland to be seen in the Threapwood area, and also provides the following description of the Hanmer area: 'the part about the little town of *Hanmer* is extremely beautiful; varied with a lake of fifty acres, bounded on all sides with small cultivated eminences, embellished with woods'. Pennant draws special attention to the area around Willington Cross, to the south of Tallarn Green, noting that the country 'which hitherto had been uncommonly wet and dirty, now changes to a sandy soil; and becomes broken into small rising'. Lewis similarly draws attention to differences in land-use in the description of the area around Worthenbury: 'The soil of the higher grounds is in general good loamy clay, producing superior crops of wheat and rich pasturage; that in the lower grounds, which is subject to partial floods from the river and some tributary brooks which intersect it, is formed of alluvial earth'.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES

Secular boundaries

Little is known of the early administrative framework of the area, though it is assumed that *Maelor Saesneg* fell within the Iron Age and subsequent tribal territory of the *Cornovii*. This is thought to have loosely corre-

sponded with boundaries of the post-Roman kingdom of Powys, which as noted below may have extended into the Cheshire plain to a point perhaps midway between Whitchurch and Chester.

Though little is known of the early medieval history of *Maelor Saesneg* it must be assumed that the commote of Maelor and its religious focus on the banks of the Dee at Bangor Is-y-coed had become established as a thriving community by at least the late 6th century. Certainly, the leader of the religious community at Bangor, St Dunawd, had considerable status in the contemporary British church, and led a delegation of bishops and other learned men of the British Church to a meeting in 603 with St Augustine, in his ultimately unsuccessful mission to establish the authority of the Roman church over the native church in Britain.

The early boundaries of the kingdom of Powys are uncertain, but they had almost certainly once extended well into the Shropshire and Cheshire plains. From at least the early 7th century these attractive lowlands along the Dee and extending into the Cheshire Plain came under increasing pressure especially from the expanding Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia to the east and south-east. A degree of cooperation had evidently developed between the native British kingdoms and Mercia at this time, at least in the face of a common enemy, and indeed Bangor Is-y-coed was to figure in the earliest documented event of the 7th century in the West Midlands. At the battle of Chester, about 616, Aethelfrith, king of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria defeated British forces said by Bede to include monks from the monastery of Bangor led by Brocmail (Brochfael), of the royal house of Powys, who some sources say was accompanied by Selyf, son of Cynan. Both leaders appear to have belonged to the Cadelling, a royal dynasty which appears to have ruled over territories in north-east Wales and Chester in the 9th century. The slaughter of a considerable number of British monks at this battle was justified according to Bede, by the recent rejection by the British Church of Augustine's mission to establish the supremacy of the Roman Church.

The subsequent capture of the whole of the Cheshire plain by Aethelfrith's successor, Edwin of Northumbria, was perhaps undertaken with the ambition of also annexing the kingdom of Powys. Though relatively short-lived, this action was to prefigure one of the most momentous events in the history of the native kingdoms of the *Cymru*. Supremacy over the Cheshire plain was to be disputed by Northumbria and Mercia for some years to come, Cadwallon of Gwynedd and Penda of Mercia joining forces at one stage to defeat Edwin. Yet, ultimately, the British kingdoms of Wales were to be cut off once and for all, from those of Cumbria. Political and military power over the region was to become consolidated by Mercia during the course of the second half of the 8th century during the reign of first of Aethelbald and then of Offa, the latter styled 'king of the English'. The construction of Wat's and Offa's Dykes before the end of the 8th centuries was to wrest control of *Maelor Saesneg* from Powys and extend Anglo-Saxon power to an area well to the west of the Dee for several centuries to come. Place-name evidence indicates the establishment of a scattering of Mercian settlements throughout the area during the course of probably at least the 8th to early 11th centuries, if not earlier.

The impact on these settlements of the Danish wars of the 9th and 10th centuries is unknown, though the place-name of Croxton, to the east of Horseman's Green, might betray Norse influence. The name of Worthenbury, containing the Old English element *burh* ('stronghold'), may signify a defensive structure of some kind.

At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066 much of the land to the east of Offa's Dyke along in the northern borderland fell within the Cheshire hundreds of *Exestan* and *Dudestan*, the latter (later known as Broxton) including the area of *Maelor Saesneg* and assessed for tax (hidated). Manors listed in the Domesday survey of 1086 identifies lands at Worthenbury (*Hurdingberie*), Bettisfield (*Bedesfeld*) and Iscoyd (identified as *Burwardestone*), as being held by Edwin, the Saxon earl of Mercia at the time of the conquest in 1066. Domesday also records claims by the church of lost holdings in *Bedesfeld* and *Burwardestone*, some of which has been lost as long ago as the reign of King Cnut (1016–35), which has suggested that the existence of pre-Conquest multiple estates covering a significant proportion of *Maelor Saesneg*, divided between the church and earl Edwin.

Following the Norman conquest these lands formed part of the marcher lordship of Chester held by Earl Hugh of Avranches, one of King William's principal lieutenants, probably with the intention of providing a base for campaigns against the neighbouring Welsh kingdoms, the new lordship said to have been settled by 'a youthful band of warriors in search of adventure and fortunes' at this period. The manors of *Hurdingberie*, *Bedesfeld* and *Burwardestone,* together with extensive lands in the adjacent area of Cheshire were made over to Robert FitzHugh, one of Earl Hugh's principal tenants and probably of Norman origin. The pattern of these holdings, which formed a compact block in the southern half of the Domesday hundred of *Dudestan*, appears to reflect a multiple estate confiscated from Robert's predecessor, the Saxon earl Edwin, possibly taken over with a minimum of administrative disruption.

Robert FitzHugh became a prominent baron in Earl Hugh's wars against the Welsh, and despite the relatively small number of earth and timber castles that have been identified in the area, the military and strategic nature of Robert's holdings in south-west Cheshire and *Maelor Saesneg* is emphasised by the presence of the significant number of unnamed knights (*milites*) which the Domesday survey suggests had been granted land in the area in return for military service. These include three in Bettisfield, two in *Burwardestone*, and one in Worthenbury, who undoubtedly formed the upper echelon of tenants in the district. Other newcomers to the area included three unnamed Frenchmen (*francigenae*) at Worthenbury, who probably occupied a higher social status than the local peasant population.

Little is known of the cultural or linguistic make-up *Maelor Saesneg* at the time of the Domesday survey, though later history suggests that, as perhaps in the pre-Conquest period, it may have continued to accommodate numerous Welsh landholders. Domesday lists various serfs, villains, bordars, oxmen and radmen, the only possible reference to a specifically Welsh underclass being the three 'other men' listed at Bettisfield.

Though annexed by the Anglo-Norman marcher lordship of Chester, the north-eastern boundaries of Wales were still to be a subject of dispute by the kingdom of Powys in the late 11th century. A period of relative tolerance developed between the kingdom of Powys and the English of the borderland developed during the reign of Henry I in the earlier 12th century, turmoil during the reign of Stephen in the years leading up to the middle of the 12th century providing the opportunity for Powys to extend its eastern boundaries into Cheshire and Shropshire into lands it had held before the Conquest, the commote of Maelor (to become known as the lordship of Bromfield, lying on both the western and eastern banks of the Dee) being reabsorbed into the Welsh kingdom at that period. Despite an occasional raid, such as that by the earl of Chester on Maelor in 1177, the territory was to remain in Welsh hands for over a century.

A number of factors were to curtail the freedom and independence of Powys during the 13th century. Its geographical position made it vulnerable to annexation at various times by the expansionist kingdoms of Gwynedd to the west and of England to the east. The sheer size of the kingdom — described by the court poet Gwalchmai as extending 'from the summit of Pumlumon to the gates of Chester, from Bangor Is-coed to the forested fringes of Meirionydd' — had tested the reins of native government during the 12th century, the Welsh custom of partible inheritance gave rise to a number of separate small and ineffectual native lordships during the course of the 13th century. *Maelor Saesneg*, with its relatively rich and productive farmlands bordering the Dee and few natural barriers to east or west, was clearly prized by both parties.

On the death of Madog ap Maredudd in 1160 the kingdom of Powys was split into two, the northern part of the kingdom, inherited by his son Gruffudd Maelor, becoming known as Powys Fadog after Gruffudd's son, Madog. The territory known as *Maelor Saesneg* ('English Maelor'), first recorded in a charter of 1202, became divorced from *Maelor Gymraeg* or ('Welsh *Maelor*') on the west bank of the Dee by separate lordship grants. Gruffudd Maelor, who inherited *Maelor Saesneg* on Madog's death in 1236, entered fully into Anglo-Welsh society, marrying Emma Audley, the daughter of a prominent Shropshire family, and yet remained subject to the power of

the kingdom of Gwynedd, especially under its new leader, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. Something of the character of borderland society at this time is given by the provisions that Gruffudd Maelor was to make for his widow in a charter approved by Llywelyn. Emma would inherit *Maelor Saesneg*, contrary to the normal dower provisions of Welsh law, but the territory was to revert to Welsh lordship upon her death.

In the event, Llywelyn dispossessed Emma of these dower lands following Gruffudd's death, because of her allegiance to the English Crown. Following campaigns against Llywelyn in 1276–77 Edward I endeavoured to extend his control over *Maelor Saesneg*, Welsh control of the territory being finally surrendered following the conquest of Wales by Edward in 1282–83, when *Maelor Saesneg* was seized by the English Crown. By the Statute of Wales of 1284 the various royal estates in north-east Wales – neighbouring *Tegeingl* (Englefield) and Hopedale, and the isolated territory of *Maelor Saesneg* – were amalgamated into the new county of Flint, placed under the wide-ranging military, administrative and judicial powers of the chief justice of Chester, remaining in the personal possession of the crown. In 1286 Edward I granted *Maelor Saesneg* to his queen, Eleanor.

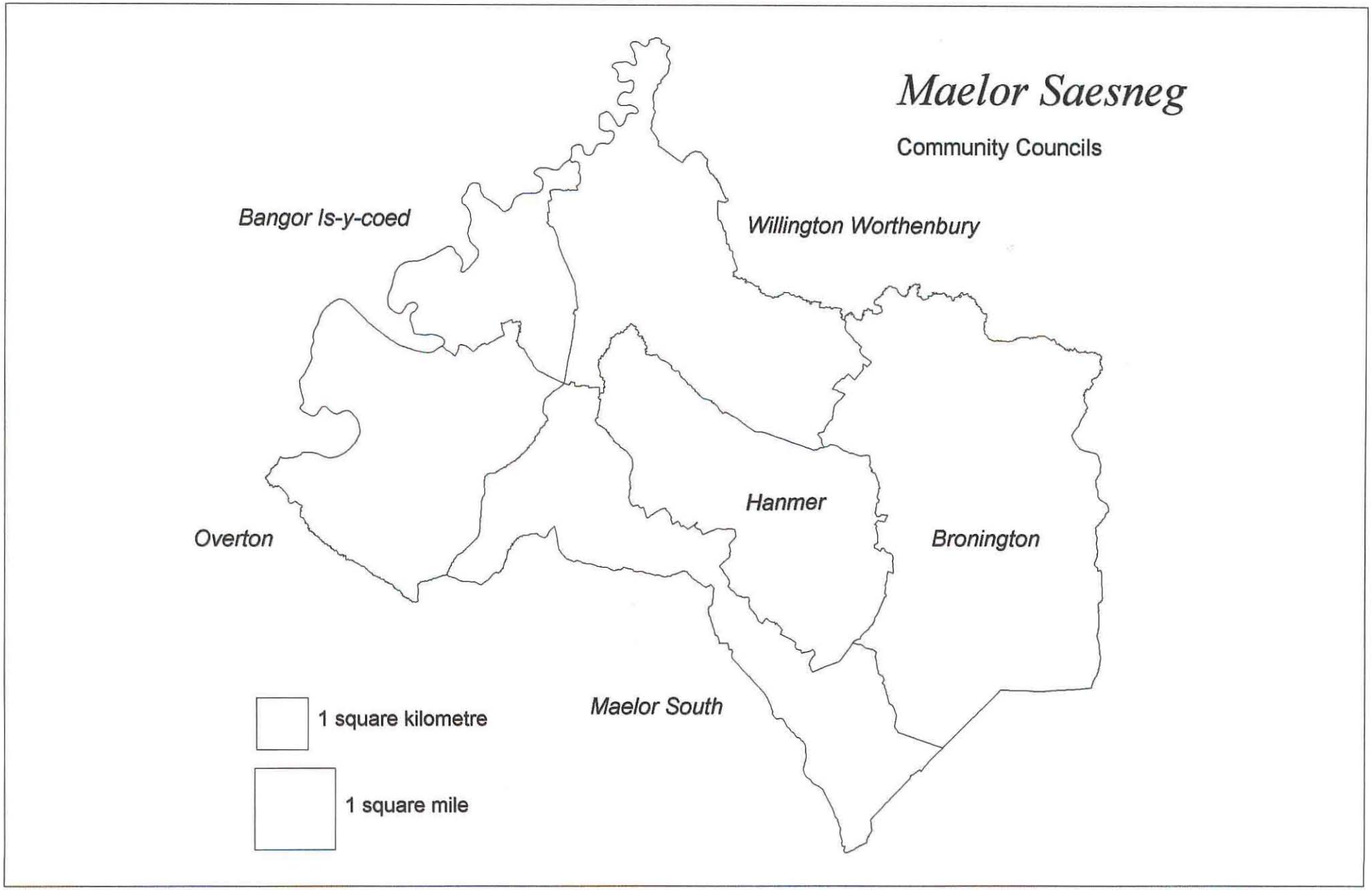
The common Welsh place-name elements *llan* and *tref* are both almost entirely absent in *Maelor Saesneg*, suggesting that the area was more or less entirely administered according to the English manorial system, though the occurrence of Welsh field-names and land measures in early documents betrays a continuing Welsh-speaking element in the population. Manors known to have existed at one time or another within *Maelor Saesneg* include Worthenbury, Bettisfield, Iscoyd, and probably Gredington recorded in the Domesday survey, as noted above, and Hanmer and Overton recorded in later sources. The townships at the time of the tithe survey in the 19th century, in part deriving from the decay of the medieval manorial system comprised the single township parishes of Bangor Is-y-coed and Worthenbury, the three townships of Overton Villa, Overton Foreign and Knolton in the parish of Overton, Penley township in the parish of Ellesmere (Shropshire), Iscoyd township in the parish of Malpas (Shropshire), and Wallington, Halghton, Tybroughton, Bronington, Hanmer and Bettisfield townships in the parish of Hanmer. Despite the absence of township divisions within Worthenbury, the parish included the four hamlets of Mulsford, Broughton, Ywern and Willington, in addition to the parochial village.

In 1309 the lordship was granted to Queen Isabella, consort of Edward II, but when the king seized it in the late 1320s the commote was granted to Ebulo Lestrange. In 1397 Richard II added the county of Flint to his palatinate of Chester and form the new principality of Chester. The territory remained in the personal possession of the crown until the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1542–43, in the reign of Henry VIII, when it formally became absorbed within kingdom of England and Wales, generally sharing a single administrative and legal framework. The creation of Denbighshire from the abolished marcher lordships in north-east Wales cemented the isolation of *Maelor Saesneg* hundred from the rest of Flintshire, becoming known in the modern period as the rural 'Flintshire Detached', for which the medieval borough of Overton became the centre of administration.

As a result of local government reorganisation in 1974 the area became absorbed within the district of Wrexham Maelor in the newly-created county of Clwyd. In the course of further local government reorganisation in 1996 *Maelor Saesneg* became part of the new unitary authority of Wrexham County Borough Council. The lowest tier of civil administration at the present-day is represented by community councils, of which the following fall within *Maelor Saesneg*: Bangor Is-y-coed, Overton, Willington Worthenbury, Hanmer, Maelor South, and Bronington (Map 7).

Ecclesiastical boundaries

The early monastic *clas* church at Bangor Is-y-coed, named *Bancornaburg* by Bede, appears to have been the focus of an extensive ecclesiastical district corresponding with the early Welsh commote of *Maelor*, comparable with the association between the minster churches and hundreds in the neighbouring Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, both probably being staffed by a body of secular priests entitled to various dues. The church had been in existence since at least the late 6th century, its leader Dunawd (anglicised to Dinoot, Dinoth) having sufficient


Maelor Saesneg
Community Councils
Bangor Is-y-coed
Willington Worthenbury
Hanmer
Overton
Bronington
Maelor South
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 7.

status within the British church to lead the of bishops and other learned men to the conference with St Augustine in 603, noted above, which perhaps took place at Bangor itself. There are many indications of British Christianity in the area and it seems likely that British churches preceded some local Anglo-Saxon ones, particularly in west Cheshire, and that there was therefore a degree of continuity between in ecclesiastical organization and settlement between the late British and early Saxon periods

The extent of the early medieval ecclesiastical district belonging to Bangor in the pre-Conquest period is mirrored by the distribution of townships belonging to the parish as late as the early 19th century, comprising those of Bangor Is-y-coed and Is-coed in Flintshire (in *Maelor Saesneg*) to the east of the Dee, and by four Denbighshire townships of Eyton, Royton, Pickhill and Sesswick (in the former *Maelor Gymraeg*) to the west, having formerly also included the parishes of Overton and Worthenbury which had once been dependent chapelries of Bangor Is-y-coed. The eastern part of *Maelor Saesneg* appears to have formed part of a similarly extensive ecclesiastical district centred on the early church dedicated to St Oswald at Malpas, Cheshire, whose medieval parish included the township of Iscoyd to the north-east and whose deanery towards the end of the 13th century included the parish of Hanmer. Penley, on the south-west side of *Maelor Saesneg*, was a township and chapelry within the medieval parish of Ellesmere, Shropshire. The only priest in *Maelor Saesneg* mentioned in the Domesday survey, however, is one with an endowment of land in the manor of Bettisfield (*Bedesfeld*), one of the townships of the ancient parish of Hanmer and probably signifying the existence of St Chad's church at Hanmer itself by that date.

By the Conquest period *Maelor Saesneg* lay within the diocese of Lichfield, a position it occupied apart from a the period between 1075–95 when it belonged to the short-lived diocese of Chester, until 1541 when it was transferred to the new diocese of Chester. Worthenbury, whose chapel is mentioned as early as 1388, was created a separate parish by act of parliament in the second half of the 17th century. Overton, whose church was probably in existence from the beginning of the 1280s, when the planted borough became established, only became a separate parish in 1867.

A number of new parishes were created due to an expanding rural population and the rise in Nonconformism during the course of the 19th century. The new parish of Bronington (sometimes referred to as New Fenns) was created out of the parish of Hanmer in 1836 and the new parish of Bettisfield was likewise created from the parish of Hanmer in 1879, though the new church built at Willington in 1873 remained a part of the parish of Hanmer.

In 1849 the parishes of Bangor Is-y-coed, Bettisfield, Bronington, Hanmer, Overton, and Worthenbury were transferred from the English diocese of Chester to the Welsh diocese of St Asaph.

During the course of the first half of the 19th century there was a notable growth in the number of nonconformist places of worship throughout *Maelor Saesneg* and particularly in the Denominations with dates of erection of chapels are as follows: Welsh Calvinistic Methodist chapels at Crabtree Green (1814); Independent or Congregationalist chapels at Bangor Is-y-coed (1838); Primitive Methodist chapels at Overton (1816), Cloy (1832); Penley Preaching House (not used exclusively for worship); Bettisfield Mill House (*c.* 1845); Bethel Chapel, Hanmer (1850); Willington (1845); Wesleyan Chapel, Overton (1816); Bronington Chequer Wesleyan Chapel (1822); Horseman's Green Chapel (1841); Wesleyan Association meeting places without separate buildings in Bangor township (1850); Independent Dissenter meeting house in Bettisfield.

SETTLEMENT

Prehistoric and Roman Settlement

Environmental evidence from Fenn's Moss and elsewhere is lacking in specific detail about the precise dating and extent of forest clearance and cultivation in *Maelor Saesneg* and there is little other evidence of early settlement during the prehistoric and Roman periods. This may reflect a genuine absence of early settlement in the area, but might alternatively be a reflection of later land use. Intensive arable cultivation and the creation of ridge and furrow in certain areas during the medieval period will have tended to erode any earthwork evidence of early settlement. The subsequent conversion of much of the medieval ploughlands to grassland in the post-medieval period will have reduced the opportunities for the recovery of chance finds from field surfaces and will also have created unfavourable conditions for the recovery of cropmark evidence by aerial photography.

Late Neolithic or Bronze Age activity, perhaps in the period between about 2500–1200 BC is represented by a number of burial mounds, including a single mound at Bryn Rossett (Hanmer) to the east of Horseman's Green, a pair of large mounds within about a hundred metres of each other just to the north of Whitewell (Bronington) and a loosely defined group of three mounds to the west of Iscoyd Park (Bronington) at Warren Tump, Crossfield, and Waenreef Farm. One of the two barrows at Whitewell was dug into in the late 19th century when a probably Bronze Age cinerary urn was found with fragments of human burial. It seems probable that the burial mounds were associated with local farming communities at this period, though no contemporary settlement sites have been found. It is perhaps significant that most of the known sites lie on land that may have been enclosed at a relatively late date, and may therefore have survived because they escaped intensive ploughing during the medieval period. The only prehistoric chance find from the area is a Middle Bronze Age bronze axe of a type known as a palstave found near Iscoyd Hall. A similar palstave was found in Whixall Moss, across the border in Shropshire, embedded in a pine stump, and perhaps significantly indicating early clearance.

Little certain evidence has been forthcoming of later prehistoric settlement or Roman settlement though possible rectangular and subrectangular enclosure sites of these periods may be represented by cropmark evidence recorded by aerial photography near Pigeon House (Hanmer), south-west of Horseman's Green, and on Blackhurst Farm, Bettisfield (Maelor South). Iron Age settlement is perhaps indicated by the earthwork remains of a double bank and ditch defending a slight promontary of less than a hectare in Gwernheylod Wood (Overton) overlooking the banks of the Dee. Roman activity is represented by a single coin of early to mid 2nd-century date at Cloy House (Bangor Is-y-coed) and eight coins of late 3rd and early 4th century date from Eglwys Cross (Hanmer) but the nature or extent of settlements in the area at this date is speculative.

Early medieval settlement

Settlement in at least part of the area in the late 6th century is indicated by the early medieval *clas* at Bangor Is-y-coed, a major regional centre of learning, evangelising and education, sited on a river bluff next to one of the important strategic crossing points across the River Dee. The place-name has as its root the Welsh word *bangor,* meaning 'wattled enclosure', and though one of the few ancient British place-names surviving in *Maelor Saesneg* is first known from Bede's *History of the English Church and People* written in the early 8th century referring to it as the monastery called in the '*lingua Anglorum Bancornaburg*', and elsewhere as *Bancor*. Nothing is known about the form or extent of this important establishment though it appears to have been a complex institution, probably generously endowed with land, housing monks, bishops and learned men, perhaps forming the focus of a dispersed rural community in the surrounding countryside, characteristic of early Welsh settlement patterns. The size of the community is open to speculation, possibly numbering hundreds rather than the thousands mentioned by Bede, many of whom were slaughtered at the battle of Chester in about 616, as noted above. There is some uncertainty whether the institution recovered from this massacre, though it was evidently to retain some

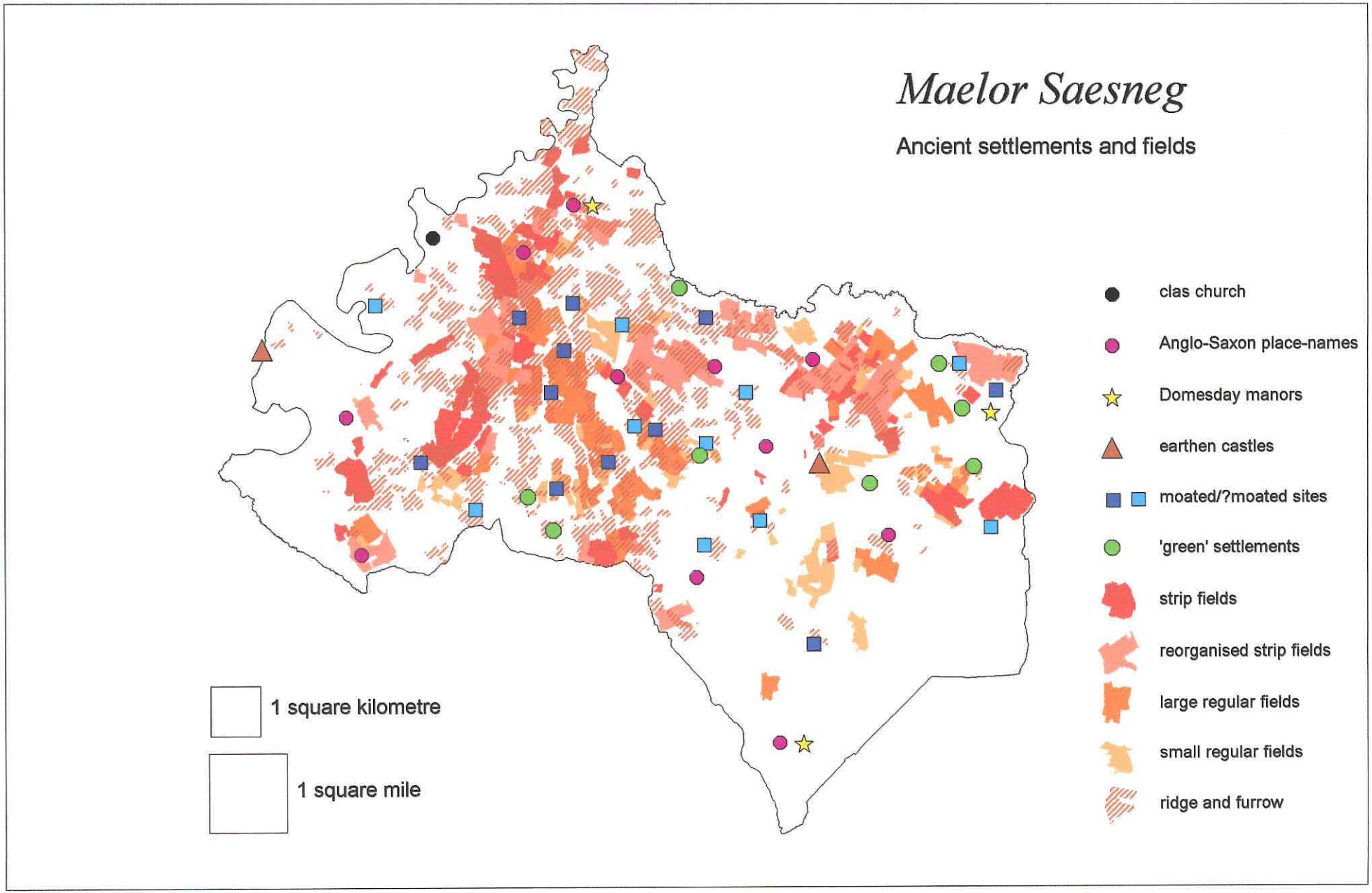
significance as an ecclesiastical centre until well into the Middle Ages even though it appears not to have formed significant centre of population until more recent centuries. The omission of Bangor's name from the Domesday survey of 1086 does not necessarily mean that a settlement had ceased to exist by that date, but it perhaps implies that it had no significant administrative functions. The location of the early settlement at Bangor is uncertain though the local topography has been significantly altered by subsequent changes in the course of the Dee, recent studies of the river meanders suggesting that the river channel has only stabilised along its present course in about the last three centuries.

Maelor Saesneg together with the neighbouring border counties of Cheshire and Shropshire appears to have been fully integrated within the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia by the mid 8th century at the latest. By the later 8th century it fell well within the boundaries of the kingdom demarcated by Offa's Dyke, up to 10km to the west of the Dee. Though many of *Maelor Saesneg's* historic place-names are first recorded in relatively late sources between the 13th and late 17th centuries it appears that many of those with English place-name elements probably represent settlements of one form or another dating to the 8th to 10th centuries, providing important evidence of the settlement history of the area. The Old English place-name elements *–tun* or *ingtun* are found in Bronington, Broughton, Gredington, Halghton, Knolton, Overton, Tybroughton, Willington, Wallington. Some of the names appear to describe the local landscape: Halghton possibly includes the element *healh* ('corner of land'), perhaps the angle between two local streams; Overton, possibly derived from *ofer tun* ('bank'), probably describing the old river bank next to the present village; Knolton, perhaps from *cnoll tun* ('knoll'); and Broughton, possibly including the element *broc* ('brook'), though in each case the absence of early forms of the name makes more certain interpretation impossible. A number of names appear to be of mixed English and Welsh origin, as in the case of Brynhovah which is probably derived from the Welsh *bryn* ('hill') and the Old English *ofer* ('bank'). The nature of these early settlements is open to question. The place-name elements have a potentially broad range of meanings associated with settlement, such as 'enclosure', 'farmstead' and 'estate, village', though it is perhaps significant that none formed the focus of medieval ecclesiastical parishes and only two are associated with nucleated settlements of any size, neither of which probably owe their origin to the Saxon period. Overton was an Edwardian planted town of the 13th century which simply adopted the name of a pre-existing manor, and the present-day settlement at Bronington has the appearance of a relatively late 'green' settlement.

A number of other place-name elements in *Maelor Saseneg* probably have Saxon origins. As noted above, Penley and Musley include the Old English element *-leah* ('wood, clearing in a wood'). The Old English element *-feld* ('field') appears in earlier forms of Bettisfield. Wolvesacre may derive from the personal name *Wulf*, which is known in Old English sources. Hanmer, though first documented in the 13th century, is thought to derive from the Old English personal name *Hagena* , meaning 'Hagena's pool', in reference to the natural lake at here. Many other natural features such as streams (Wych Brook, Millbrook, Emral Brook, Cumbers Brook, Red Brook, Shell Brook), bogs (Cranberry Moss, Fenn's Moss, Cadney Moss), and pools (Croxton Pool) are English in origin, though the name of Llyn Bedydd, east of Hanmer, derives from the Welsh *llyn* ('lake') and *bedydd* ('christening, baptismal'), though the antiquity of the name is unclear.

Of the Saxon place-names noted above only Bettisfield and the lost manor of *Burwardestone* appear in the Domesday Book of 1086. A number came to form townships whilst others became small hamlets or became area names and it seems likely that as Saxon settlements they represented little more than individual holdings or small clusters of holdings within larger estates, though nothing is known of these settlements apart from this place-name evidence. These early settlements are quite widely dispersed throughout *Maelor Saesneg* with the exception of the area around Fenn's Moss, spaced at distances of about 2.5km from each other. It appears to be significant that most of these settlements fall within areas of former arable agriculture, represented either by ridge and furrow or by strip fields (see also section on agriculture below).

Possible evidence of settlements of the 10th century is provided by two further place-names, noted above, the


Maelor Saesneg
Ancient settlements and fields
clas church
Anglo-Saxon place-names
Domesday manors
earthen castles
moated/?moated sites
'green' settlements
strip fields
reorganised strip fields
large regular fields
small regular fields
ridge and furrow
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 8.

place-name Croxton, just to the east of Horseman's Green, which may be derived from an Old Norse root meaning 'crook, bend', and Worthenbury whose name seems to be derived from a compound of *wordig* and *burh*, the former element with meanings encompassing 'enclosure, yard, homestead' and the latter element meaning 'stronghold'. Again there is little evidence apart from the place-name evidence, although possible traces of defensive outworks have been identified to the east of Worthenbury which may form part of a defensive structure.

Medieval settlement

A more detailed picture of settlement in the 11th century emerges from the Domesday survey of 1086 which also provides in some instances details dating back to the years before the Norman conquest in 1066. The relatively small number of manors in *Maelor Saesneg* which are listed in the survey, indicating settlement of some form or another, are Bettisfield (*Bedesfeld*), Worthenbury (*Hurdingberie*), *Burwardestone,* specific reference also being made in Domesday to farmland at Bettisfield, presumably associated with settlement, earlier in the 11th century, held during the reign of King Cnut (1016–35). Each of these three manors were said to have been 'waste' at the time of the conquest, but there is no clear indication of whether this was a condition of long standing or whether or not it was the result of hostilities by possibly Welsh or Norman action. It seems improbable that the Domesday survey provides a reliable guide to the extent of settlement during the later 11th century, however, and there is every likelihood that numerous other contemporary settlements were omitted from the survey for one reason or another. The general picture which emerges from the Domesday survey, however, is that *Maelor Saesneg*, in common with the neighbouring areas of Cheshire and Shropshire, was relatively poor and sparsely populated at this period in comparison with other areas of southern and midland England at this date, possibly still with extensive areas of native woodland surviving.

Many elements of the modern settlement pattern in *Maelor Saesneg*, appear to have their origin the Middle Ages, similar in many respects to neighbouring areas of Cheshire and Shropshire, which have shared a similar topography and farming economy. Distinctive elements in this diverse pattern, quite distinct from those to be found in many other areas of Wales, include large villages, moated halls, and parishes with only a few large farms, occasionally clustered in small hamlets.

Origins of towns and villages

Four medieval nucleated settlements are to be found in *Maelor Saesneg*, and though the history and origins of these settlements were probably quite distinct they each appear to have been ecclesiastical and in some instances manorial centres from an early date. Bangor, Worthenbury and Overton are lowland villages of ancient origin, bordering the lowlands of the Dee, with a similar location to a number of Cheshire villages further downstream, the siting of both Bangor and Overton owing something to the strategic crossing points across the river, as noted above. The siting of Hanmer, next to Hanmer Mere, has a similar location to Ellesmere and Colemere in north Shropshire, whose origin was probably related to the resources provided by this sizeable natural lake which extends to over 17 hectares.

Bangor Is-y-coed is a village of many names, being known variously as *Bangor Dunawd* (after St Dunawd), *Bangor Monachorum* ('Bangor of the monks'), and Bangor-on-Dee, the suffixes in each case added to distinguish it from the cathedral city of Bangor, Caernarvonshire. The form *Bangor Isycoed* ('Bangor below the wood') is first recorded by Lhwyd in the late 17th century. As noted above, the settlement had become a flourishing monastic centre of the British church probably by at least the late 6th century with a self-sufficient community to be numbered perhaps in hundreds. The nature of the settlement which housed this community is quite unknown, and though it is likely to have suffered a severe setback at the battle of Chester in about 616 when numerous of its adherents were massacred. It has remained in existence as a parochial centre perhaps continuously ever since, though as a settlement it appears to have remained relatively small throughout the Middle Ages and failing to attract manorial or other civil administrative functions. Bangor Is-y-coed is omitted from the Domesday survey,

but this should not be taken to imply that there was no settlement or church here in the 11th century. Something of the social structure of the church community in the early 14th century is indicated by two heraldic grave slabs of about 1300, both with swords and *checky* patterned shields, perhaps to be associated with the English family of the Warennes, earls of Surrey and lords of Bromfield and Iâl, though perhaps significantly there are no later, medieval, high-status slabs or effigies and none indicating the graves of prominent ecclesiastics.

Worthenbury (Welsh *Gwrthymp*) likewise appears to have its origins in the early medieval period, and may possibly have formed a small nucleated settlement from the early 10th century onwards when, as noted above, it may have formed a Mercian stronghold. In the 11th century it formed the focus of a non-parochial manor held by the Norman baron, Robert FitzHugh. Again the form of the settlement is unclear, though something of the nature its social structure is given by the Domesday survey, which lists one serf, three villeins, three Frenchmen, one radman, a new mill (presumably with a miller), a knight with an undefined number of men, of which it can perhaps be assumed that some if not all lived in a nucleated settlement in the area of the present village, on level ground on a low spur on the eastern edge of the Dee floodplain. Worthenbury was to remain a chapelry, first mentioned in 1388, within the parish of Bangor Is-y-coed until the late 17th century.

Overton has again been known by several names — Overton Madoc (after Madog ap Meredudd, to distinguish it from Overton in Cheshire) and by its Welsh forms, *Awrtun* , *Owrtyn* and *Owrtyn Fadog*. As noted above, place-name evidence that Overton originated as a Saxon settlement of some kind in perhaps the 8th or 9th century. The settlement lies on flat ground close to an old river scarp above the Dee, its name, first recorded in 1201, being derived from the Old English place-name elements *ofer tun* ('tun on the bank'). The settlement is unmentioned in the Domesday survey of the later 11th century though by the earlier 12th century, following the reabsorption of *Maelor Saesneg* into the kingdom of Powys, it had evidently become an important Welsh manorial centre, a castle being built here by Madog ap Meredudd, ruler of Powys, in about 1138. The site of the castle is unknown but it possibly lay 2 kilometres away from the town, close to the Dee in the Asney area. Whether a reliable witness or not, Leland in the 1530s noted that 'one part ... yet remaineth the Residew is in the bottom of Dee'. The only surviving castle in *Maelor Saesneg*, Mount Cop, near Eglwys Cross (Hanmer) is just under 50 metres in diameter and with no certain traces of a bailey, is prominently sited near the point where the road from Whit church forks to either Bangor Is-y-coed and Overton. The castle appears to have no recorded historical associations, but probably belongs to the late 11th to early 13th century, and like the now missing Overton castle, would have been accompanied by a timber fortification.

Overton had become an important manorial centre forming part of the estate of Gruffudd Maelor, the Welsh ruler of northern Powys by the early 13th century, the Welsh form of the name, *Awrtun*, perhaps significantly being first recorded at about this period. A market was established within the manor at Overton in 1279, shortly after Edward I's earlier campaigns against Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and from this time and perhaps especially following the Edwardian conquest in 1282–83 the present-day nucleated settlement with its grid-like pattern of streets expanded around the medieval marketplace occupying the broader part of High Street, to the north of the church. In 1286 Edward granted *Maelor Saesneg* to Queen Eleanor, who had commissioned glass windows for 'the queen's chapel at Overton', perhaps the earliest reference made to the present church of St Mary. Overton's future as an important regional administrative centre for centuries to come was assured by the borough status conferred upon it by royal charter in 1292, at which time the town's population included fifty-six taxpayers, the boundaries of the borough probably being those of the former parish of Overton. Like many other planted boroughs created in Wales by Edward, English settlers were encouraged to settle, Reginald de Grey, the chief justice of Chester being ordered to go there in 1293 to arrange for the remaining plots to be disposed of, with offers of free timber and land, and exempt from the payment of rents for the first ten years of residence. During the uprising led by Madog ap Llywelyn in 1294, partly in protest at the loss of rights and increases of rents endured by the Welsh tenants of the manor, resentment was expressed by the burning down of the manor, the seat of royal bailiff, and the place where the manorial court was held, which may have either been within the town or at the site

of the lost castle. Although a grant of murage was awarded to the town in 1300 it is perhaps unlikely that a start was ever made on the construction of town defences. By the early 14th century some relatively well-to-do Welsh families were occupying the town, however, as witnessed by the sepulchral slab of *c.* 1300 commemorating Angharad, wife of Einion, within St Mary's Church. In 1331 it was granted with other lands in Maelor to Ebola Estrange of Knockin, Shropshire, brother-in-law of Llywelyn ap Madog, son of the last Welsh ruler of *Maelor Saesneg* and probable steward of the lordship at this date. The town was damaged to such an extent during the revolt of Owain Glyndŵr in 1403 that it was abandoned by its English inhabitants. The consequences of this devastation were evidently long-lasting, its population level still evidently having failed to recover by the 16th century. Despite its borough status and the chantrey established by endowments at St Mary's church, the borough church, Overton was to remain a dependent chapelry of Bangor Is-y-coed throughout the Middle Ages, only becoming a separate parish in 1867.

The medieval village of Hanmer is sited on a glacial moraine in a prominent position at the head of Hanmer Mere, a natural glacial lake which like Ellesmere and Colemere in Shropshire, has given its name to the adjacent settlement. A noted above, the place-name is of Saxon derivation and probably of 8th- to 9th-century origin, but was only first recorded in 1269. The settlement is not named in the Domesday survey of 1086 but is probably to be linked with the manor of Bettisfield (*Bedesfeld*) formerly held by Earl Edwin of Mercia and after the conquest by the Norman baron, Robert FitzHugh, to which a priest with a landed endowment was attached, probably to be associated with the present parish church of St Chad's. As noted above, land in Bettisfield formerly held by the see of Lichfield had been unjustly lost 'in King Cnut's time' (1016–35), possibly pushing back the origins of a nucleated settlement around the church to this period as the *Ecclesia de Hameme*. The church is first specifically recorded in 1110 when it was gifted with other lands to the Augustinian abbey at Haughmond, Shropshire, and is again recorded in the Lincoln Taxation of 1291. The church was substantially rebuilt in 1490 to replace one that had been ruined in 1463, during the Wars of the Roses. By the later medieval period, if not earlier, the church was the focus of an extensive ecclesiastical parish occupying most of the south-eastern portion of *Maelor Saesneg*, and which at one time included the townships of Bettisfield, Bronington, Halghton, Hanmer, Tybroughton, and Willington. By the Middle Ages the village had evidently become the focus of a substantial manor, the possible moated site to the east of the village, the only circular moated site in north-east Wales, possibly being of manorial or ecclesiastical origin. The Hanmers became closely associated with the village from the later 13th century onwards, being a family newly settled in *Maelor Saesneg* during the reign of Edward I which adopted the name of the village of Hanmer as a surname, the manor presumably forming one of their holdings. They were to become one of the prominent borderland families, Sir David Hanmer, father-in-law of Owain Glyndŵr, rising to be one of the chief justices of the King's Bench by 1383. On the dissolution of the monasteries in the mid 16th century, the local property and rights of Haughmond Abbey were purchased by Sir Thomas Hanmer, leading to the growth of one of the important local family estates, initially focused on Hanmer and from the later 16th century on Bettisfield. The village of Hanmer remained relatively small. It comprised no more than twenty-five houses in the late 17th century, which as today were grouped around the church, though elevated to the status of a 'little town' by Thomas Pennant in his *Tour in Wales* published in the late 18th century.

Moated sites

Medieval settlement in the countryside of *Maelor Saesneg* is most clearly represented by a notable concentration of moated sites, of which at least ten and possibly up to twenty sites are known from surviving water-filled earthworks, aerial photography, and historical records. Moated sites were mostly constructed during the period between the 13th and early 14th centuries and less commonly up until the 16th century. With the exception of the possible circular moat near Hanmer, noted above, the other moated sites in the area were square or rectangular in shape and were often sited to ensure that their moats were filled with water, and seem to range in size from about 35–50 metres across internally, with continuous outer ditches between about 6–10 metres wide. None of the sites in *Maelor Saesneg* have been excavated and though few if any have any surviving documentary evidence relating to them it seems probable that each of them enclosed domestic structures and outbuildings. Most of the

moated sites would probably have been accessed by a timber bridge, though traces of a stone bridge or stone bridge abutments are apparent at Penley.

About eleven fairly certain moated sites have been identified in *Maelor Saesneg*, including five in the community of Hanmer (Bryn, Peartree Lane, Halghton Hall, Halghton Lodge, and Haulton Ring), three in Willington Worthenbury (Emral Hall, Holly Bush Farm and Tallarn Green), one in Overton (Lightwood Farm), one in Bronington (Wolvescre Hall), and one in Maelor South (Penley Hall). About a further nine moated sites have been suggested, including two further examples in Hanmer (Horseman's Green, Peartree Farmhouse), two in Willington Worthenbury (Mulsford Hall, Yew Tree Farm), three in Bronington (Fenn's Old Hall, Maes-y-groes, and near Bronington itself), one in Maelor South (Hill Farm), and one in Bangor Is-y-coed (Althrey). A number of other less certain sites are suggested by place-name evidence which, combined with the fact that a number have only been discovered in recent years suggests that further sites still await discovery. Emral possibly had its origins in the 1280s, Sir Roger Puleston (d. 1294) being described in 1283 as 'de Embers-hall'.

The moated settlement is to be seen as very much an English cultural phenomenon, no doubt partly with a practical, defensive purpose as well as symbolising the status or social aspirations of its builder. The obvious historical context for the proliferation of moated sites in *Maelor Saesneg* is the evident expansion of farming which took place in the area in the wake of the Edwardian conquest, in the years shortly after 1284, when the confiscated lands of Welsh tenants being granted to free-holding settlers, and at a time when Edward and his queen were eager to optimise the rentals which could be charged on the Crown lands in Wales. Many of these settlers were perhaps of English origin, like the Hanmers of Hanmer, descended from Sir Thomas de Macclesfield, an officer of Edward I, and the Pulestons of Emral who derived their name from Puleston in Shropshire and trace their beginnings in *Maelor Saesneg* in the 1280s.

The distribution and associations of moated sites in *Maelor Saesneg* appears to confirm the suggestion that they represent a phase of farming expansion during the later 13th and 14th centuries. The distribution of moated sites generally appears to avoid the pre-existing settlements such as the small towns and villages of Bangor Is-y-coed, Worthenbury, Overton or Hanmer, or even the foci of dispersed farms of Saxon origin represented by *–tun* place-names, strongly suggesting that they represent a colonising phase of settlement involving the creation of new farmland by the clearance of woodland and scrub in the surrounding countryside. The landscape context of the moated sites is distinctly agricultural. Many are surrounded by ridge and furrow of probable medieval origin and some were converted into ploughland once they were abandoned.

The social context of the moated sites in *Maelor Saesneg* is reasonably clear from the buildings associated with them, the buildings they were replaced by, or from later historical associations which include a number of the smaller landed families in the area, such as the Pulestons of Emral, the Lloyds of Willington, the Dymocks of Penley and Halghton, and the Hanmers of Hanmer and Bronington. Horseman's Green and Althrey Hall are associated with late medieval high-status aisle-truss halls of the later 15th and earlier 16th centuries, though perhaps replacing earlier mansions which were contemporary with the construction of the moats. Other moated sites were to be replaced by later gentry houses or substantial farms, particularly of the later 17th and earlier 18th centuries, which either overlay the partially infilled moat (as in the case of Emral, Holly Bush, Mulsford, Halghton, Peartree House and Wolvesacre), or were to be built alongside (as at Penley) or at a little distance (as in the case of the apparent replacement of Haulton Ring by Bettisfield Old Hall, just over 1 kilometre away). A similar pattern of moated sites being superseded by fine half-timbered houses is also found across the border in Cheshire and in Shropshire, as in the case of the 16th and 17th-century houses on the south-east side of Whixall Moss at Alkington Hall, Bostock Hall, Sandford Hall and Lowe Hall. Many of the medieval moated sites survived as stable economic units for many centuries, though some (such as Halghton Lodge, Peartree Lane, Bryn and Yew Tree Farm) have no obvious successor, perhaps due to the process of farm amalgamation and the creation of early estates in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Farms

Many of the existing dispersed farms, particularly in some of the outlying areas of *Maelor Saesneg* probably have their origin as the farms and smallholdings of freehold farmers and tenants from the 12th and 13th centuries onwards in a process which probably continued into the early post-medieval period. Many of these farms were probably created by individual effort by woodland clearance or by the reclamation of heathland, and worked by farmers who were not bound by medieval communal regulations and who were probably more dependent upon pastoral farming than upon arable for their subsistence. A number of farms, such as Caelica Farm and Arowry Farm, for example, fall within a landscape of either large or small irregular fields suggesting piecemeal enclosure in the later medieval and early post-medieval periods, beyond the boundaries of the medieval open fields. The context of other farms, such as Gelli Farm, suggests that they originated from continuing woodland clearance.

As we have seen above, English place-name elements in *Maelor Saesneg* are frequent in parish, hamlet, township and locality names. In the case of farm names, however, the situation is quite different, suggesting a much higher Welsh-speaking element in the population than might at first appear. Many of the farm names and field-names encountered in medieval and Tudor documentary sources are of Welsh derivation, whilst many of the English farm names are of relatively recent origin. Examples of modern Welsh farm names or those with Welsh elements to be found in Maelor Saesneg include the following, though not all are necessarily of early origin: Adre-felin, Althrey, Argoed, Arowry, Bron Haul, Bryn, Brynhovah (also containing the Old English element *ofer*), Bryn Rossett, Bryn-y-Pys, Cae-Drinions, Cae-Dyah, Caelica, Gelli, Dolennion, Gwalia, Maesllwyn, Maes-y-groes, and Trostree.

Some potentially early farms are surrounded by their own fields, such as Pen-y-bryn, Nant, Plas yn Coed and Wern, though others lie on or near the modern roadside, some of which probably originated as medieval highways, lanes and trackways.

In most cases all trace of medieval farmhouses and buildings will have been replaced and overlain by later structures and will only survive as buried archaeological evidence, though there appear to be a small number of early abandoned farmsteads represented by building platforms, banks and hollow-ways.

Specialized industrial settlements

Specialized industrial settlements which probably emerged during the early medieval and medieval periods were probably a number of hamlets or holdings along the Wych Brook associated with salt production. At least one of these centres was in production as in the early 11th century, but as yet no certain settlement evidence associated with them has been identified.

Post-medieval and modern settlement

With a predominantly agricultural economy and few natural resources *Maelor Saesneg* escaped the rapid industrial development that engulfed many of the adjacent areas of north-east Wales, and consequently the modern pattern of settlement of small villages and scattered farms shows many elements of direct continuity from the medieval period. A wide variety of different settlement types made their appearance in the landscape of *Maelor Saesneg* between the 16th century and the modern day, representing a broad and diverse social spectrum. New farms and smallholdings were created following the enclosure of former open arable and the drainage and enclosure of the mosses, as estate owners strove to maintain or increase their revenue. New small nucleated settlements resulted from encroachment onto the 'greens' or rapidly diminishing areas of common grazing. Country houses set in parkland sprang up in many areas of the landscape of *Maelor Saesneg*, in many cases in direct succession to medieval manorial centres. As communications improved, new wayside linear settlements sprang up at road junctions, along the turnpike roads, canal and railways, some with more ancient township or area names.

Post-medieval development of medieval towns, villages and farms

By the early 19th century the larger villages of *Maelor Saesneg* had possibly changed relatively little in terms extent or size of population from those they had attained in the Middle Ages. Edward Lhwyd recorded 26 houses in the village of Bangor Is-y-coed in the late 1690s, a settlement dismissed by Daniel Defoe in the early 18th century as 'a poor contemptible village'. By the end of the 19th century it consisted of houses spread along the High Street and beside the Whitchurch Road with a few close to the church on the Overton Road and apart from its medieval church included a cottages, coaching inn, rectory, nonconformist chapel, shop, free school, and brewery, with a station on the Wrexham-Ellesmere line just to the east. During the course of the 20th century the eastern side of the settlement underwent a substantial expansion in new housing.

Overton had become the administrative centre for *Maelor Saesneg* during the Middle Ages. By the 18th century had become relatively prosperous and in architectural terms at least developed something of an urban and picturesque air, evident from the following description from Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* published in the 1830s: 'The village is pleasing and prepossessing in its appearance, and, with its venerable church, as seem from almost every point of view, forms a picturesque and highly interesting feature in the landscape . . . . There is neither trade nor manufacture of any kind carried on . . . . The market has long been discontinued'. By the end of the 19th century the village remained unindustrialised but had acquired a wide range of buildings including workers' cottages, substantial middle-class houses, police station, church school, coaching inn, shops, almshouses, cocoa rooms, estate office for the Bryn-y-Pys estate, Methodist chapel, malthouse, rectory, and cemetery chapel, and was served by the Wrexham-Ellesmere railway with a station at Lightwood Green. During the course of the 20th century housing development expanded over much of the former medieval open field to the east of the settlement. Notable 20th-century buildings include the mock half-timbered public house, Roman Catholic church and council offices.

Edward Lhwyd's description of Hanmer, noted above, suggests that the village has changed relatively little since the end of the 17th century, with the exception of the recent housing development to the east of the main street, and by the end of the 19th century buildings included cottages, inn, vicarage, smithy, Methodist chapel and free school.

Little is known of the early development of Worthenbury, considered by Lewis as being 'entirely agricultural'. Existing buildings in the village suggest that it underwent a spurt of growth during the 18th century, and by the mid 19th century the modern plan is already clearly recognizable, with a number of dwellings grouped around the road junction to the south-east of the village, along the lane past the church towards the Wych Brook, and with several buildings to the south-east. By the end of the 19th century the settlement included estate workers' cottages, one or two larger houses, rectory, church school, malthouse, shop, farmhouse, and a smithy.

New farms from the common and waste

Many of the new farms and smallholdings that appeared in the late medieval and post-medieval periods seem to have resulted from continuing piecemeal enclosure of former open fields and heathland and from the drainage and enclosure of the margins of the mosses.

Many of the later farms and smallholdings of late medieval and post-medieval origin have English names, a high proportion of which fall into a number of distinct patterns, such as those named after greens (eg Big Green Farm, Lightwood Green Farm), those named after trees (eg Yew Tree Farm, Cherrytree Farm), those named after the lanes they lie upon (eg Chapel Lane Farm, Sandy Lane Farm, Drury Lane Farm), and those named after woodland (eg Blackwood Farm, Middle Wood Farm). Some are named from their topographical siting (eg Bank Farm, Brook Farm, Top Farm, Hillside Farm) and some from association with non-agricultural uses (eg Crab Mill Farm, Smithy Farm), but relatively few were given the name of the original owner or tenant.

A high proportion of the later farms and smallholdings lie on public roads, and are often either grouped in small clusters or form diffuse linear patterns, spaced out along a road, as for example along Halghton Lane (Hanmer) and Green Lane (Bangor Is-y-coed).

The origins of many of these farms is poorly documented, though in some instances a general indication is given by the context in which the farm is found or by the dating of the associated farmhouses. A number of farms, for example, such as Dolennion Farm, Higher Lanes Farm, and Old Post Office Farm, appear to overlie earlier strip fields, suggesting that they were created from the enclosure of medieval open fields. In other cases, such as Yew Tree Farm and Smithy Farm, the adjacent field patterns suggest that they were created from the drainage and enclosure of heathland and mosses. Associated farmhouses, which include both timber-framed and brick-built structures, suggest a date range for this phase of settlement activity of between the early 17th and 18th centuries, continuing into the early 19th century in the case of some of the newly-drained land on the edge of the mosses.

Piecemeal clearance and the enclosure of the once more extensive areas of common grazing during the later medieval and early post-medieval periods gradually gave rise to a number of small pockets of unenclosed land from which a number of 'green' settlements emerged, perhaps largely of later 17th- and 18th-century origin, which are considered in the next section.

'Green' settlements

A significant element in the settlement history of *Maelor Saesneg* is the widespread occurrence of the place-name element 'green' indicating an area of common grassy land which appears, for example, in Tallarn Green (Willington Worthenbury), Lightwood Green (Overton), Horseman's Green (Willington Worthenbury), Crabtree Green (Bangor Is-y-coed), Little Green (Bronington), Chapel Green, Far Green, Little Green, Big Green (Maelor South), Kil or Kiln Green, and Mannings Green, Painters Green, Hall Green (Bronington). This English place-name element, perhaps without a direct Welsh equivalent, indicates an area of common grassland and makes its first appearance throughout the English-speaking areas of Britain from the 15th century onwards and which in settlement terms invariably appears to indicate relatively late encroachments of former grassy commons. Lightwood Green, for instance, was not finally enclosed until 1877.

A range of different land-use histories are evidently indicated by the 'green' settlements in *Maelor Saesneg* and the immediately surrounding area. Lightwood (in an open position on a low plateau) and Penley (in flat, open countryside), both of which are associated with 'green' names, appear to indicate woodland clearings which may have originated in the early medieval or medieval periods. Horseman's Green, first appearing in the form 'Horse Math's Green' (again lying in flat, open countryside), is perhaps to be derived from the obsolete English dialect word *math* meaning 'a mowing', suggesting meadow land. Tallarn Green, lying on a narrow spur between the Wych Brook and one of its tributaries, is perhaps derived from Welsh *talwrn* 'place, field'. None of the 'green' names in *Maelor Saesneg* are to be found in medieval documents. Both Horseman's Green (in its earlier form) and Tallarn Green, for example, only being first recorded at the very end of the 17th century, other names first appearing in 18th-century enclosure awards or in the tithe survey of the 1830s and 1840s. Similar names are also to be found in neighbouring parts of Cheshire include Threapwood Green and Shocklach Green. In this context it is significant that Threapwood remained extra-parochial until the early years of the 19th century, as we have seen above contains a place-name element indicating 'debateable land' along the Wych Brook, which forms the boundary between the counties of Cheshire and Flintshire. Shocklach Green occupies another marginal area for settlement, near the floodplain of the Dee, at its confluence with the Wych Brook.

One of the earliest surviving buildings within one of the 'green' settlements of *Maelor Saesneg* is a timber-framed cottage of perhaps the late 16th or early 17th century at Horseman's Green. Elsewhere most of the surviving buildings are of 19th- or 20th-century date, though it is possible that some of the earliest buildings associated with these settlements were relatively low status, timber structures, of a kind which would be less

likely to survive, and possibly as at Lightwood Green, represented by now-abandoned building platforms. Typical of the larger surviving buildings in the 'green' settlements are the earlier 19th-century nonconformist chapels at Horseman's Green and Crabtree Green, the later 19th-century church and vicarage at Tallarn Green, and the Temperance Hall and the Kenyon Cottages for widows also at Tallarn Green.

A number of other settlements in the region appear to be 'green' settlements in all but name. Bronington, for example, being shown on an enclosure map of the 1770s as a group of buildings set around a long central green or common, now occupied by modern dwellings, to the south of the present School Lane, perhaps having simply adopted the township name dating back to the Saxon period.

In terms of the chronology of settlement and the evident expansion of settlement in *Maelor Saesneg* during the medieval period it seems significant that a number of the 'greens' are associated geographically with moated settlements, including those at Lightwood Green, Horseman's Green, Tallarn Green and possibly Little Green (Bronington), which as we have seen appear to be associated with a period of colonising settlement in probably the late 13th and early 14th centuries, and seeming to confirm the suggestion that some of the 'greens' lay in areas that were marginal to earlier settlement. The date at which the 'greens' were first established is uncertain, though it is probably significant that none are associated with an early church or chapel of ease. Many of the 'green' settlements were clearly well established by the late 18th century when the first enclosure maps were being drawn up, which in the case of Tallarn Green and Lightwood Green show a significant number of dwellings set out around the edge of an open area marking the final residue of what had presumably once been a much more extensive common

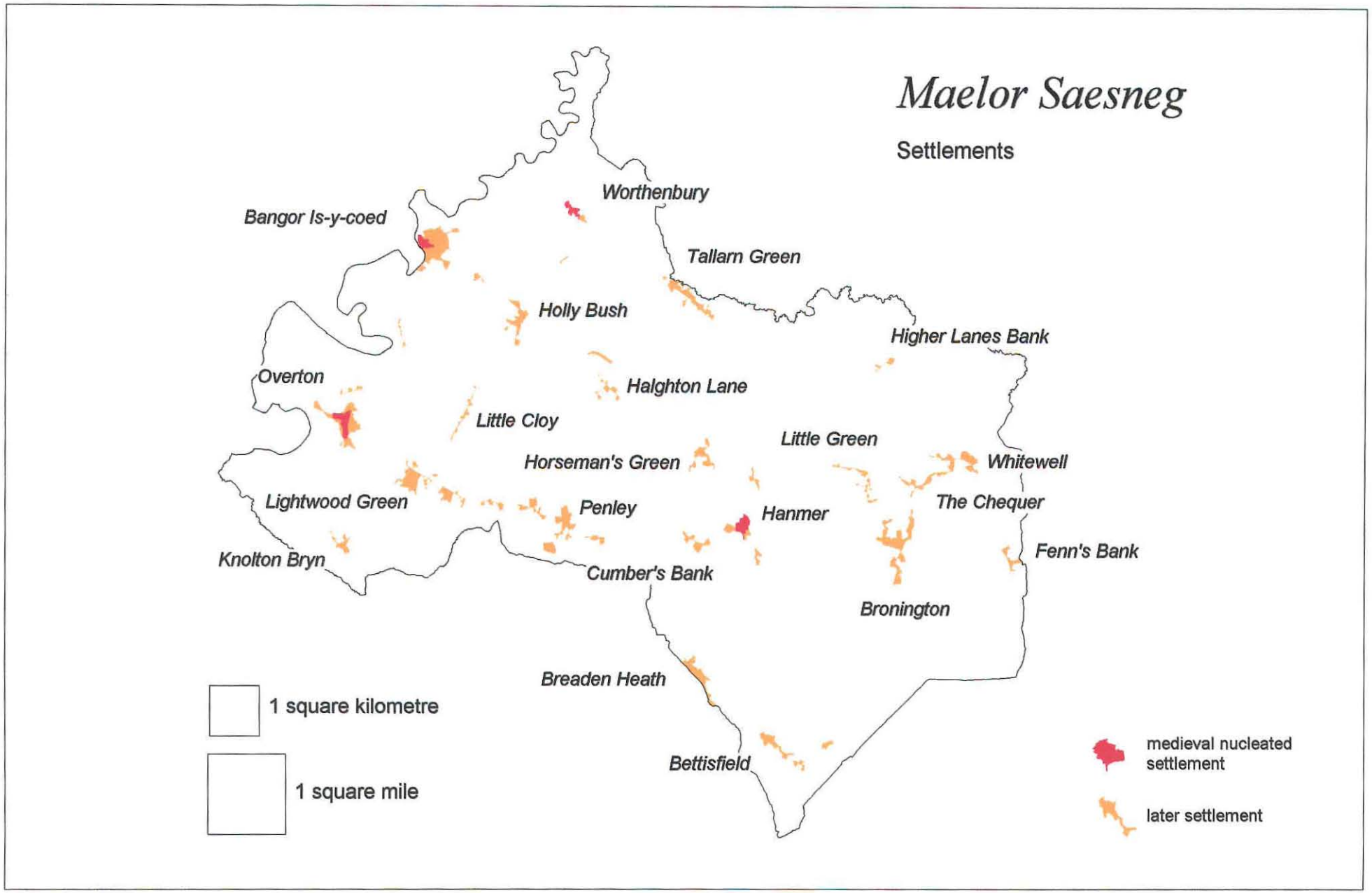
Country houses

A distinctive phase in the settlement history of *Maelor Saesneg* was the emergence of the country houses which sprang up particularly in the period between the mid 18th and 19th centuries, matching similar developments in the neighbouring counties of Cheshire and Shropshire. In many instances these country houses developed in direct succession to medieval manorial centres, though in other cases they were new creations of the late 18th to early 20th century, and often forming the centres of a number of the larger estates that were growing to prominence during this period.

The combination of the country house and ancillary service buildings, set in landscape parks or extensive gardens, and often associated with gate lodges and drives, and estate cottages, has had a significant visual impact upon the landscape in certain areas. Iscoyd Park (Bronington) has survived relatively intact within its landscape park, though in many other instances, old and established family seats at Emral (Bangor Is-y-coed), Broughton (Willington Worthenbury), Gwernheylod, Knolton, and Bryn-y-Pys (Overton), Gredington and Bettisfield Park (Bronington) the original country houses were entirely demolished or substantially reduced in size during the 20th century, leaving only elements of the original parkland, stable blocks or gate lodges. So effective has the transformation been in some instances, as in the case of Bryn-y-Pys, that the name of this once important estate is no longer to be found on modern maps. A number of later country houses have survived, including Llannerch Panna (Penley), renamed Tudor Court, built in the later 19th century, and a series of small country houses on the edge of existing settlements, such as The Brow in Overton, and The Manor and Quinton in Worthenbury.

Wayside linear settlements

Bettisfield (Hanmer) is in many ways typical of some of the later wayside linear settlements in *Maelor Saesneg*, which emerged in the later 18th century. The stimulus to the expansion of Bettisfield was the construction of the Whitchurch branch of the Shropshire Union Canal in the 1790s which resulted in a cluster of houses next to the canal, just to the south of Bettisfield Bridge, together with ribbon development along the minor roads leading to Cadney Moss and Northwood, further stimulated by the construction of the Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch


Maelor Saesneg
Settlements
Worthenbury
Bangor Is-y-coed
Tallarn Green
Holly Bush
Higher Lanes Bank
Overton
Halghton Lane
Little Cloy
Little Green
Horseman's Green
Whitewell
Lightwood Green
Penley
Hanmer
The Chequer
Fenn's Bank
Knolton Bryn
Cumber's Bank
Bronington
Breaden Heath
Bettisfield
1 square kilometre
1 square mile
medieval nucleated settlement
later settlement

Map 9.

Railway in the 1860s, and with some modern residential development. The Chequer (Bronington) began to become established along the Bangor Is-y-coed to Whitchurch turnpike (now the A525), beginning as a scatter of houses and Methodist chapel in the early 19th century. Similar smaller hamlets became established at a number of road junctions, as at Holly Bush (Bangor Is-y-coed) which already consisted as a small cluster of farms and a number of small dwellings in the late 18th and early 19th century.

A different pattern of development is evident at Penley (Overton) which grew up along the Overton to Hanmer road. Until the 1940s the settlement remained relatively dispersed, with little more than a scatter of houses, smithy, and 19th-century school, vicarage, and chapel (now the parish church) and nonconformist chapel serving the surrounding rural community. The settlement was transformed during the course of the Second World War when the US Army hospital (and subsequent Polish Hospital) was built, parts of which still dominates the village.

Modern patterns of settlement

A number of distinct changes in the patterns of settlement have occurred within *Maelor Saesneg* during the last thirty to forty years which has resulted in some impact upon the historic landscape. Many of these changes, though as yet less acute than in many other areas, are typical of the pressures which affect rural areas on the fringes of larger towns and cities throughout Britain, which have arisen from various diverse factors including a decline in the number of people working on the land, the growth in privately-owned vehicles, and the perceived desirability of living in the countryside.

As noted above, the larger nucleated settlements of medieval origin at Bangor Is-y-coed, Overton and Worthenbury have undergone significant expansion during the last few decades, often at the expense of areas of former medieval open fields representing the agricultural basis upon which the settlements were founded. A number of the 'green' and wayside settlements of post-medieval origin, including those at Bronington, Bettisfield, and Tallarn Green, have also undergone expansion in recent year. The boom in post-war agriculture was the spur behind a number of small rural local authority housing schemes such as those at Highfields, Higher Lanes Bank, (Bronington), Welsh View, New Hall Lane (Bronington), and near Top House Farm, south of Hanmer. Increased mechanisation and farm amalgamations has led to the demise of many of the smaller farms and smallholdings in the area, liberating numerous 18th and 19th-century brick-built farmhouses and outbuildings for conversion into dwellings especially in the eastern part of the area for families who no longer have an economic dependence upon agriculture. A emergence of modern roadside bungalows thoughout *Maeor Saesneg* has also led to a nett increase in the number of houses in the countryside, often continuing a pattern of encroachment onto the medieval open fields that began in the early post-medieval period.

For the enjoyment of visitors and those living in the area it important to limit the impact of modern housing upon the historic environment in terms of the sypathetic expansion of existing nucleated settlements and the sensitive conversion of historic farm buildings. Significant measures include those of limiting the physical and visual impact upon important elements of the historic environment including fieldscapes, deposits relating to the early history of nucleated settlements of medieval and post-medieval origin, and aspects of the agricultural history of the area represented by ridge and furrow and marl pits for example.

BUILDINGS IN THE LANDSCAPE

Buildings form an important part of the historic landscape fabric of *Maelor Saesneg*. Relatively little survives from the medieval period, though notable structural remains include parts of St Mary's Church, Overton and St Dunawd's Church, Bangor Is-y-coed, parts of which date from the 14th century and are perhaps the only medieval stonework to have survived in the historic landscape area.

Timber rather than stone was evidently the most commonly-used material for secular buildings in the medieval period of which a number of relatively high-status structures have survived, most notably in the case of the 15th- to 16th-century halls at Horseman's Green (Hanmer) and Althrey (Bangor Is-y-coed) and Penley Old Hall which in many respects appear to be the successors of earlier manorial moated sites, accompanied by an earlier horizon of timber buildings of which no trace survives. Horseman's Green farmhouse had an aisled truss as a central open truss over the hall, with some ornately moulded timberwork. Althrey Hall was likewise built as an aisled hall involving the use of cruck construction and the spere-truss, originally with a central open hearth, with archaeological evidence suggesting that it was built on the site of an earlier building. The present house is probably of early 16th-century origin, being described by John Leland as 'a fair house' in the 1530s, probably built for Richard ap Howel. A portrait in the form of a wallpainting of mid 16th-century date inside the house is thought to be of Richard's son, Elis ap Richard (d. 1558) with his bride Jane Hanmer. Penley Old Hall again appears to have been a hall house, probably of two bays, open to the roof with timber mullioned windows, possibly with a lateral chimney. The interior of the hall was extravagantly decorated, with swirls and various other *trompe l'oeil* motifs, including what appears to be a wall torch set in a bracket. Other traces of relatively high-status cruck-built halls survive elsewhere, as in the case of Llan-y-cefn (Overton). The nature of these buildings clearly expresses the wealth being generated from farming in the region during this period.

Box-framed timber construction continued as the dominant technique during the 16th and 17th centuries for both higher status buildings such as Knolton Hall (Overton) and Willington Cross (Willington Worthenbury) as well as a range of buildings of lesser status. These include a number of farmhouses scattered across the area which originated as a timber-framed structures, such as Buck Farm, Glandeg Farm, Oak Farm, The Fields (Willington Worthenbury), Chapel Farm, New Hall Farm, and Maeslwyn House (Bronington), Gwalia Farm and possibly Lightwood Farm (Overton), Top Farmhouse, Knolton Bryn (Maelor South), and The Cumbers and The Bryn (Hanmer). Surviving lesser houses and workers' cottages of timber-framed construction include White Cottage (Maelor South), and Bridge Cottages (Willington Worthenbury). Other timber-framed buildings were built in towns and villages at this period, including Magpie Cottage (Hanmer), The Stableyard (Bangor), and the tiny half-timbered cottage near the churchyard in Overton, which may have originated as a shop. Other notable smaller half-timbered buildings in Overton include a number in the High Street and Pen-y-llan Street where timber-framing is exposed in rear elevations, and Quinta Cottage. Most early buildings were most probably thatched, the thatched roof at Magpie Cottage (Hanmer) being one of the few examples that still survives.

Timber was also clearly widely used for barns, an important example being the cruck-built structure at Street Lydan (Penley), dated to about 1550, which has now been re-erected at the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagans, which stood on a stone sill and was no doubt typical of many which have since disappeared. Later timber-framed barns of which a significant number are recorded in *Maelor Saesneg*, include a large barn at Althrey Woodhouse (Bangor), probably of 17th-century date, and the outbuildings including a cow-house or stable range at Gwalia Farm and in the stable range at Llan-y-cefn (Overton).

The timber-framed panels would mostly have been infilled with wattle and daub, but as noted below, though unrecorded on the Welsh side of the border, peat appears to have been quite widely used for this purpose in the late medieval and early post medieval periods in the area of the mosses, across the border into Shropshire.

Bricks, both red and brown in colour, became widely used from the later 17th century onwards, generally in conjunction with slated roofs. It appears to have been initially employed for the construction of new and relatively high status buildings, but was subsequently used for refacing and extending many of the existing timber buildings of all kinds and for the infilling of panels in many of the timber-framed buildings that retained their timber elevations. Notable new early brick buildings include Halghton Hall (Hanmer), a brick building with stone dressings and a large doorcase with Doric pilasters, built in 1662, and Bettisfield Old Hall (Bronington), which (as at Plas yn Coed, Overton) were sometimes rendered. During the course of the 18th century brick became the

predominant building material for many more buildings spanning a broad range of social status and functions from gentry houses to humble workers' cottages, and including the terraces of town houses and workers' cottages which form such an important element of Overton's quasi-urban Georgian landscape.

Significant high status brick houses of the 18th century include Iscoyd Park (Bronington), built in about 1740, Hanmer Hall, a large brick farmhouse of 1756, and Hanmer Vicarage, close to the mere, Hollybush Lane Farmhouse, a large double-pile structure with a five-bay front. Some of the houses of this period, such as Gwydyr House in Overton and Argoed Farmhouse (Overton) have details such as stone-coped gables, expressing a refinement in vernacular building traditions stemming from increased prosperity and investment in both town and country at this period. Mulsford Hall (Wilington Worthenbury), with stone quoins and fluted keystones, built on part of the Emral estate, with the inscription 'This house was built by C. Mathews, tenant of J. Puleston Esq. 'Tis for my landlord's good, and my own desire. AD 1746'. The architect is thought to have been the same as for St Deiniol's, the brick-built church of 1736–St at Worthenbury, which with stone dressings for pilaster strips, urn finials, balustrading and keystones, cited as 'the best and most complete Georgian church in Wales'.

The growth of the landed estates in the 18th and 19th centuries gave rise to many new brick-built country houses and associated outbuildings, together with a range of ancillary buildings including lodges, estate cottages, almshouses and other buildings of philanthropic character. Many of the larger country houses originating in this period were also of brick, as at Bryn-y-Pys (Overton) and Emral Hall (Willington Worthenbury), the former demolished in 1956 and the latter 1936, parts of which were re-erected by Clough Williams-Ellis at Portmeirion. Other notable country houses in the area which likewise formed the centre of landed estates shared a similar fate, including Gwernheylod (Overton), Broughton Hall (Willington Worthenbury), and Gredington (Hanmer). Occasionally, isolated monuments of these former country house estates are to be seen, in the form of lodges, stable blocks, walled yards and gardens, icehouses (Emral Hall) and areas of former parkland. More often than not the 19th-century lodges, estate cottages and almhouses were built to be built either in half-timbered or in a stone neo-Gothic style favoured for such buildings. Characteristic buildings of this kind include the Emral Hall lodge (one of three original lodges), The Gelli lodges, Tallarn Green (Willington Worthenbury), the Bryn-y-Pys Estate Office in Overton, a pair of estate cottages at Mannings Green (Bronington) in Tudor style with elaborately decorated brick chimneys, a similar though plainer pair of cottages in Frog Lane, Worthenbury, the Bryn-y-Pys lodges in a neo-vernacular style, the row of eight brick-built cottages with arched doors and windows in Wrexham Road, Overton, and the Methodist Temperance Room and Kenyon Almshouses at Tallarn Green (Willington Worthenbury). Three former gothic-style ashlar almshouses in Salop Road, Overton, again characteristically bear the inscription 'A.D. 1848. These almshouses were erected to the memory of Caroline Bennion, late of Wrexham Fechan by her affectionate sisters. Faithful in the unremitting exercise of charity to the poor and every Christian virtue, she departed this life on 6th February 1847'.

Other 19th-century town and country houses were to be built in a 'revivalist vernacular style', including notable examples of the work by the architect John Douglas who undertook much work on behalf of the Kenyons and whose buildings include the rectory at Bangor Is-y-coed, the parsonage at Tallarn Green, The Gelli (Willington Worthenbury) and Llannerch Panna (Penley), each of which employ half-timbering and brickwork, generally combined with varied rooflines and an asymmetrical design. Earlier 19th-century picturesque design is evident in the case of a number of middle-class houses in Overton, such at The Quinta, with oriel window, decorative bargeboards and arched windows and in the siting of houses such as The Brow and Min-yr-afon (Overton) which exploit riverside locations along the Dee.

The religious revival of the 19th century gave rise to the many new churches and nonconformist chapels which form a distinctive and characteristic element particularly of the rural landscape, ranging from the gothic style of St Mary Magdalene's Church, Penley, rebuilt in sandstone in the 1870s, the late Georgian style of Chequer Methodist Chapel (Bronington) to the corrugated-iron misson church at Knolton (Overton). More unusual is

Holy Trinity, Bronington, a brick church converted from an earlier barn in 1836.

AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

The predominant land use of *Maelor Saesneg* at the present day is largely pastoral, though in recent years there has been a greater emphasis on arable farming in the eastern part of the area, resulting in some loss of boundaries to create larger fields. The sources of evidence for the past history of agriculture and land use history of *Maelor Saesneg* are many and varied and include settlement history, field shapes and sizes, the incidence of ridge and furrow and marl pits (two particularly distinctive features of the *Maelor Saesneg* landscape), the presence of drainage ditches and dykes, and the distribution of woodland. These are further supplemented by pollen evidence, the evidence from documentary sources, place-names and field-names, and the different types of agricultural building which are present.

The topography and soils of many areas has enabled them to be adaptable to either arable or pastoral agriculture, and it is clear that in the past there have been a number of distinct changes from one regime to the other, and that arable farming was once much more extensive. In other areas the land-use potential has always been much more restricted, such as the mosses in the south-eastern part of the area, the steeply wooded river and stream slopes particularly along the northern and south-western boundaries, and the wet meadow lands bordering the Dee.

The present-day field patterns are very much a palimpsest representing a complex pattern of development over many centuries, with different types of fields clearly indicating a number of distinct processes. Patterns of large and small irregular fields, frequently associated with dispersed farms, are characteristic of pioneering settlements or piecemeal clearance and enclosure of woodland and heath, from early medieval times. Groups of strip fields, some forming quite extensive systems and others relatively small and isolated, represent former open fields once associated with medieval manorial systems. The large and often irregular fields bounding the Dee in many instances represent probably represent enclosure of former areas of former common meadow. Areas of large or small straight-sided fields may represent relatively late enclosure of former heathland commons or mosses, land improvement schemes, or in some cases the conversion of former parkland.

Early agriculture

Little direct evidence has yet been found for early land use in the area, though as might be expected, pollen evidence provides some evidence for a general sequence involving woodland clearance possibly in the later prehistoric and Roman periods and the subsequent creation of grassland and woodland environments, but lacks chronological precision. The general scarcity of early settlement evidence perhaps suggests that agriculture was restricted to relatively discrete areas cleared of woodland, though it is possible that the intensive exploitation of the landscape in the medieval and later periods has blanketed out the evidence of early settlement and land use.

Early medieval land use

The earliest reference to land use in *Maelor Saesneg* is given by Bede, who observed that the monks belonging to the early 7th-century British monastic community at Bangor Is-y-coed 'used to live by the labour of their own hands'. Although the size of this self-sufficient community is open to question, it may possibly have run into hundreds, who presumably worked the lands with which it was endowed, though no further evidence of the nature or extent of this agricultural activity is forthcoming.

As noted above, Anglo-Saxon place-name evidence of perhaps the 8th to 10th century, the Domesday survey of

the late 11th century, and other documentary evidence of the late 13th century, all appear to indicate the survival of perhaps relatively extensive areas of woodland in the area up until at least the early Middle Ages. No evidence non-ecclesiastical British settlements contemporary with the monastery at Bangor Is-y-coed has yet been revealed, though it is probable that a number of small, scattered agricultural settlements had already emerged by the early medieval period though the virtual absence of demonstrably early Welsh place-names in the area other than Bangor itself is unhelpful.

A more certain picture of the nature and extent of early medieval settlement emerges from the study of place-names with Anglo-Saxon elements, probably dating to the 8th to 10th centuries, which as we have seen above include Bronington, Broughton, Gredington, Halghton, Knolton, Overton, Tybroughton, Willington, Wallington and Worthenbury, each of which probably formed the focus of an farming community. Of these settlements, however, only Overton and possibly Worthenbury were to develop into any size during the Middle Ages, and it seems probable that at this early period each of them represented no more than a cluster of farmsteads with their associated fields with wooded areas of varying extent between. Indeed, it is probable that by this date that complex patterns of land use were already emerging between those lands more suited to ploughing, those more suited to summer or winter grazing, and the more intractable land that would remain as woodland, heath or mire.

Agriculture at the time of the Norman Conquest

A clearer picture of the agricultural exploitation of the area emerges from the Domesday survey of 1086, compiled by the Norman king, William I. The survey clearly points to the existence of multiple agricultural estates covering a compact block of *Maelor Saesneg* well before the Norman conquest of 1066, divided between the church and Edwin, the Saxon earl of Mercia, comprising manors at Worthenbury, Bettisfield, and Iscoyd, and possibly taken over with a minimum of disruption by their Norman successors, presumably alongside other extensive pre-existing holdings not recorded in Domesday. The three manors at Bettisfield (*Bedesfeld*), Iscoyd (*Burwardestone*) and Worthenbury (*Hurdingberie*) which had land for 8, 14 and 10 plough-teams respectively, each plough-team (*caruca*) representing up to perhaps about (40 hectares) 100 acres of plough land, which in the case of the Worthenbury, for example, suggests that between 30–50 per cent of the extent of the manor was cultivated at that time. It is surprising that so little meadow land is mentioned in *Maelor Saesneg* at this time — only half an acre at Bettisfield and a single acre at Worthenbury — which seems likely to be a gross under-representation. Each of the three recorded manors in *Maelor Saesneg* is said to have been 'wasted' at the time of the Norman Conquest, possibly as a consequence of the kind of punitive devastation known to have been meted out Cheshire and the northern borderland during the conquest period. The effect was probably fairly short-lived, however, since the manors were evidently being brought back into good heart by the latter years of the 11th century, when the Domesday survey was compiled.

The lack of reference in the Domesday survey to estates in other remaining areas of *Maelor Saesneg* does not necessarily imply that they were all composed of forest or waste at this time, since in some instances these lands may have been included in other estates, though the absence of named estates in the central part of the area, suggests that the extensively cultivated areas, characterized by ridge and furrow field systems dating from the Middle Ages onwards, were a later development, and that cultivation in these areas were perhaps limited to the small foci of settlement suggested by Anglo-Saxon place-name evidence.

Agricultural expansion following the Edwardian conquest

Little or no archaeological or documentary evidence for medieval agriculture in the *Maelor Saesneg* is yet apparent for the period of two hundred years between the Domesday survey of the later 11th century and later 13th century. A new and distinct landscape had evidently emerged in many parts of the area by this date, however, dominated, as we have seen above, by moated sites and extensive open fields, and possibly represent-

ing an expansion of farming in the area in the wake of the Edwardian conquest, shortly after 1284.

Lands confiscated from supporters of the deposed Welsh princes were granted to incoming English settlers, who appear to have replaced pre-existing forms of land tenure and management with a system of open field manors based on a familiar English model. Other opportunities were taken for agricultural expansion following the conquest are documented which involved the local Welsh population being deprived of their customary rights to pasture and forest, directly following the Edwardian settlement, sometimes quite illegally. The granting of permission by Edward for felling possibly a substantial swathe of woodland from the pass at Redbrook for strategic purposes in the 1280s is mentioned above, and there are other instances where it was alleged that when king had ordered the widening of roads, Queen Eleanor's bailiff had gone to excessive lengths clearing large tracts of land, turning it into arable, even where the queen had no rights to the area.

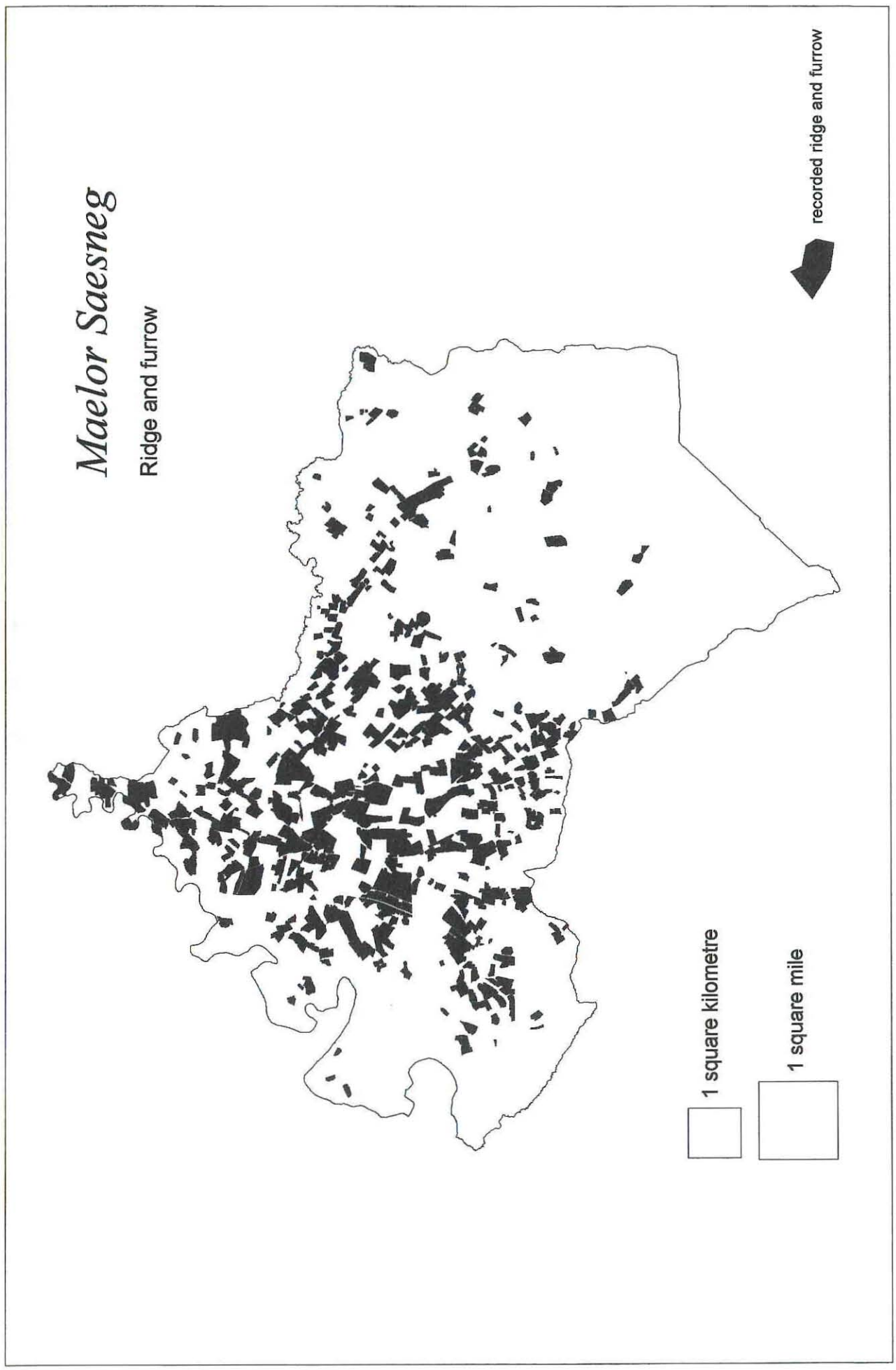
As noted above, the distribution of moated sites in *Maelor Saesneg* appears to confirm the suggestion that they represent a pioneering phase of expansion during the later 13th and 14th centuries — seemingly being intimately associated with ridge and furrow systems of probable medieval origin as well as avoiding pre-existing nucleated settlements suggested by place-name evidence — possibly created from former areas of pasture and forest. Part of the incentive for this expansion initially came from a desire to enhancing the revenues from the crown lands in Wales, assisted by the opening up of new markets such as that established at Overton.

Open arable fields and ridge and furrow

Though little early documentary evidence has survived relating to manorial systems of agriculture and land use in *Maelor Saesneg*, some evidence of medieval open fields associated with moated manorial centres is provided by the widespread survivial of ridge and furrow as well as by distinctive patterns of strip fields visible in the modern landscape and on earlier maps, much of which has yet to be studied in detail. Some ridge and furrow, including some of the narrower ridging, is undoubtedly late and perhaps unrelated to open field cultivation, though it seems a reasonable assumption from documentary sources, context and form that the broad pattern of ridge and furrow originated during the medieval period representing open field arable associated with medieval manors, perhaps in a different form to the classic form that developed in the English Midlands.

Though probably not all of medieval date distribution of ridge and furrow in *Maelor Saesneg* is an indicator of the extent of arable cultivation that had evolved by the later medieval period, generally avoiding less fertile ground, the steeper stream and river slopes and land liable to flooding. About 1,995 hectares (4,929 acres) of ridge and furrow have so far been identified in *Maelor Saesneg* by aerial photography and field survey, particularly in the western part of the area, representing just under 17 per cent of the total area (Map 10). A much higher proportion is evident in communities such as Willington Worthenbury and the western part of Maelor South where it where it reaches 40 per cent of the area, though in other communities such as the northern part of Bronington it occurs in smaller discrete systems.

This compares with certain classic areas of ridge and furrow in the Midlands where up to 90 per cent of some township areas was down to arable, though in parts of western Cheshire figures of 75 per cent are considered to be more typical. As in the extensive field systems of the Midlands, the ridges in *Maelor Saesneg* primarily represent a tenurial arrangement whereby intermixed holdings of small strips were dispersed in an open field. Here, as elsewhere, the ridges were generally aligned downhill, running across the contours, the furrows between the ridges acting as drains as well as providing boundaries between the strips, the ridges being created over the course of time by soil being consistently turned inwards by the plough. In the open field system characteristic of the Midlands the ridges, also known as 'lands', were grouped into furlongs which were themselves grouped into fields, of which there would typically be three which formed the basis of a rotational system designed to ensure continuing fertility, one of the fields in sequence being left fallow for a year.


Maelor Saesneg
Ridge and furrow
recorded ridge and furrow
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 10.

It has been suggested, for example, that there were three or possibly more medieval open fields in Bangor Is-y-coed, Overton and Hanmer, but perhaps no evidence for more than one in Worthenbury, and there is also documentary evidence for open common fields in the townships of Gredington, Bettisfield and probably in Tybroughton and Broughton. References also appear to open strips in the 13th and 14th in Althrey, Knolton, and Penley but it is possible that these, like some others elsewhere, may have formed small groups of ploughing strips rather than forming well organised arable fields.

A proportion of former ridge and furrow has undoubtedly been lost to later ploughing and levelling. There is evidently a reasonably close relationship between some field shapes and surviving ridge and furrow, particularly notable in the case of strip fields and former strip fields shown on earlier maps, as well as some other regular field types, which appears to help to locate a number of open field systems in areas where there is no recorded evidence of ridge and furrow. In some instances these correspond with field-name evidence suggesting the former existence of open fields, as in the case of the 'Maes mawr' and 'Maes y groes', first recorded in late16th- and early 17th-century sources, which correspond to remnant strip fields to the north-east and south of Bangor Is-y-coed respectively.

The local topography and natural drainage were clearly important in determined the furlong pattern: thus on gentle slopes there are often long furlongs, made up of many parallel lands, but on undulating ground complex patterns of small furlongs with lands in many directions. The system in operation in *Maelor Saesneg* perhaps owed more to that in Cheshire where the common arable fields appear to have been made up of a number of small units or furlongs, but where there is little evidence that the furlongs were grouped into large open fields of the Midland type, the furlongs in some instances perhaps to be regarded, as in other areas of north-west England as units of reclamation of woodland and heath perhaps continuing on a communal basis in some instances perhaps as late as the 15th and 16th centuries.

Elements of this pattern may reflect an intensive system of cultivation which is thought to have been in operation from an early date in parts of north-west England involving a short period of fallow between harvest and the sowing of cereals in the following spring. A further feature which may have distinguished the open fields of the *Maelor Saesneg* and adjacent areas of north-west England from the Midland system was possibly that of individual holdings forming a consolidated group of strips in parts of the common fields rather than a wide dispersal of parcels, possibly resulting from the exchange and consolidation of a once more dispersed pattern at a relatively early date in the medieval period, perhaps as a consequence of an area in which settlement within the core area of *Maelor Saesneg* appears to have been within dispersed in hamlets rather than focused within nucleated villages of a kind more characteristic of Midland England.

The most common crops grown during the medieval period would undoubtedly have been cereals, though peas and beans are known to have been cultivated in the open fields in adjacent areas of England. Hemp and flax was also introduced at an early date, though these may have been mostly grown on enclosed fields. There is also evidence that some parts of the common arable fields were regarded as more suitable for meadow, being cut for hay rather than being ploughed.

As elsewhere, the open fields of *Maelor Saesneg* formed a part of a more extensive land use system in support of a mixed farming economy, involving meadow land traditionally cut for hay for winter feed and grazed by stock in the autumn, common pasture for summer grazing, as well as the open fields themselves which were also probably important for summer and autumn grazing on a rotational basis while they were fallow. Documentary references appear, for example to Althrey meadow, evidently a dole field or common meadow, in the township of Bangor Is-y-coed in the early 16th century, in the area now occupied by Bangor Racecourse. As in the neighbouring townships in Cheshire, the extensive seasonally wet meadows along the lower Dee became important in the development of stock farming in the region during the Middle Ages. Owned in strips, traditionally marked with

stakes or stone markers, they were cut for hay before being used for common grazing, the strips generally no longer being visible on the ground since they were left unploughed. A difference with field systems of the Midlands may be the incidence of ridge and furrow on land liable to flood bordering the River Dee to the north of Worthenbury. This reflects a pattern also to be found in adjacent areas of the lower Dee valley in western Cheshire and in the Severn valley below Newtown in Montgomeryshire, which rather than representing irrigated meadows has been thought to represent a system of 'convertible husbandry', whereby land more suited to meadow in a wet season might form plough land in a long dry spell.

Ridge and furrow forms a distinct and important element in the historic landscape of Maelor Saesneg which urgently calls for further recording, analysis, interpretation and conservation. These traces of medieval arable agriculture are continuing to succumb to modern mechanised agriculture in some areas as a result of pasture improvement and reseeding and to be lost to housing developments on the margins of a number of settlements such as Worthenbury, Bronington, and Horseman's Green.

Growth of freehold farming in the medieval and early post-medieval periods

As in the neighbouring areas of the Midlands, the land around the margins of the open fields, representing the greater part of farmland in many townships, was probably cleared by individual effort and farmed by farmers not bound by manorial regulations. In adjacent areas of Shropshire, for example, forest clearance or assarting and heathland reclamation were evidently proceeding on a regular basis from the 12th century until perhaps the 16th century, no doubt partly at the expense of areas of former common grazing, leading to the creation of individually owned farms, probably with a greater dependence on pastoralism. As noted above, this process of piecemeal clearance and enclosure resulted in patterns of large and small irregular fields, frequently associated with dispersed farms, which today characterize just under 50 per cent of the *Maelor Saesneg* landscape.

Cultivation of the common open fields appears to have come under pressure both from the loss of labour due to the Black Death, which led to a recession of cultivated lands in some areas, and due to the growth of the wool trade, and from about the middle of the 14th century it appears that the open fields of Maelor *Saesneg*, together with those in adjacent areas of Cheshire and Shropshire were gradually reduced in size by a process of piecemeal enclosure by private agreement. As in Cheshire, the relative lack of Parliamentary enclosure in *Maelor Saesneg* was evidently a consequence of the process of enclosure proceeding steadily between the 14th and 18th centuries, resulting in the fossilisation of former open fields represented by ridge and furrow and strip-like field shapes in the rural landscape. By the 15th and 16th centuries a number of early estates were absorbing parts of the former open fields, such as the open strips acquired by Llannerch Panna, a former estate in the township of Penley township (Maelor South), mentioned in the 1470s. Ridge and furrow representing part of open fields became emparked at Emral (Willington Worthenbury) and Gredington (Hanmer) at about this date.

One of the essential benefits of the medieval open field system of cultivation had been that of maintaining soil fertility by means of crop rotation and leaving land in fallow. To what extent these traditional methods may have been disrupted by the enclosure movement is unknown, but concerns about declining fertility were evidently being documented by the 17th century in adjacent areas of north-west England. The practice of marling, involving the digging up subsoil and adding it to the topsoil to improve fertility is documented from the 12th and 13th century onwards in Shropshire and Cheshire, a number of early sources emphasising the value of marling the land especially before wheat was sown. It is perhaps to the early enclosure period, however, between the 16th and 18th centuries, that the majority of the marl pits in the north Shropshire, *Maelor Saesneg* and west Cheshire belong. Though a continuous process of infilling has evidently been in operation for a century or more, the old marl pits, often one or more to a field, still form a significant and distinctive landscape element in the region, often reaching densities up to 60 per square kilometre, and also represent a distinct horizon in the landscape history of the area (Map 11).

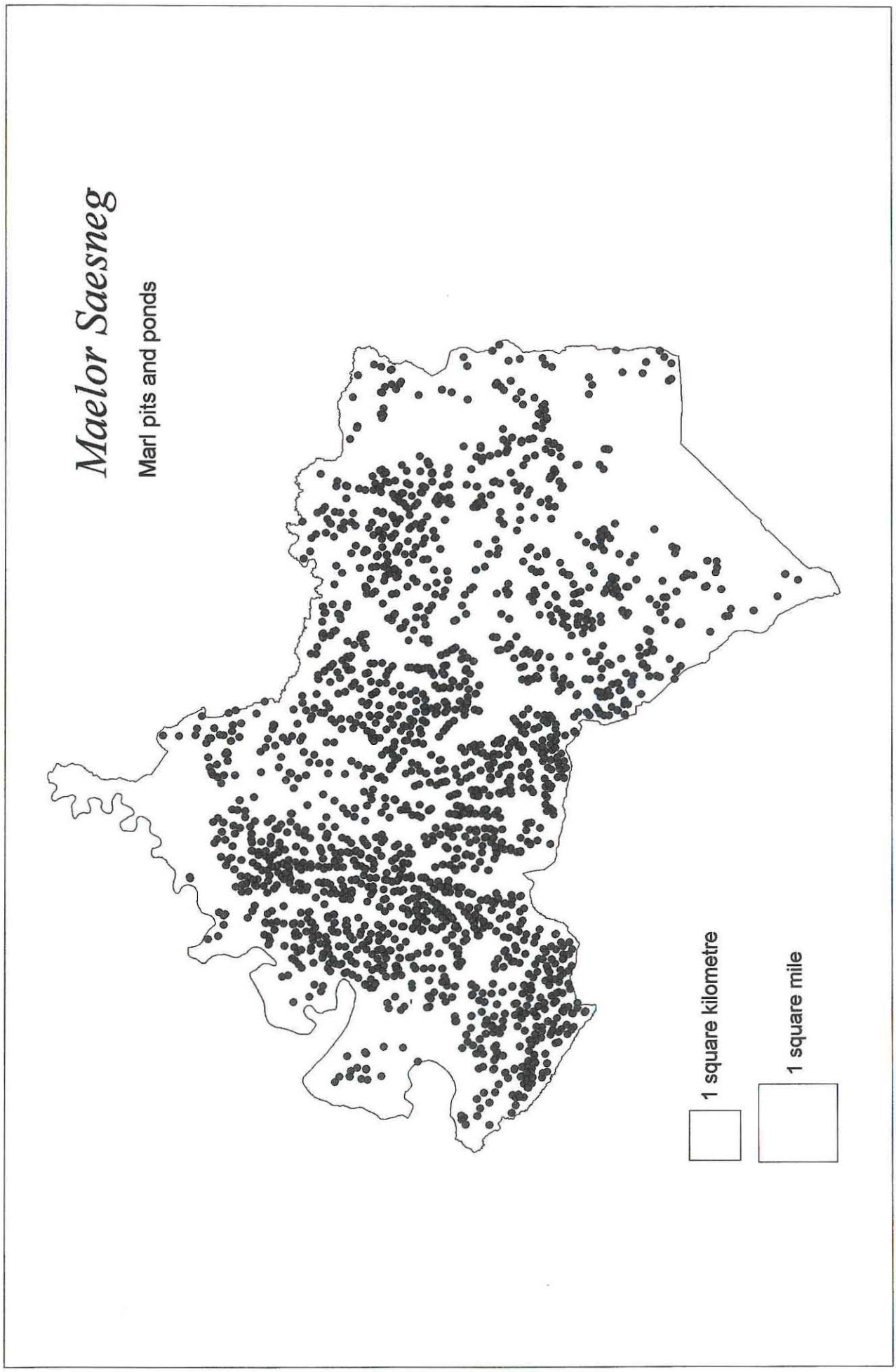
A wide range of glacial tills and Triassic sands, clays and marls were exploited for marl in the region from early times in order to improve the composition, texture and structure of the soil, one writer in the first decade of the 19th-century remarking, for example, that marl was considered 'unquestionably one of the most important of the Cheshire manures . . . found in many parts of England, but in particular abundance in Cheshire'. Both calcareous and non-calcareous marls were to be found in the area. When calcareous marl is added to clay soil, the lime content (with locally up to 15 per cent calcium carbonate) improved the soil structure, and enhancing its drainage and workability. When it was added to sandy soils the clay content improved water retention and counteracted the natural acidity of the soil, conserving the organic and mineral components of the soil which would otherwise tend to be washed out, and thus enhancing soil fertility. Non-calcareous marls acted in a similar way except that their effect was limited to textural changes.

The old marl pits are frequently water-filled and are typically steep-sided and generally between about 5–15 metres across and frequently fringed with trees or shrubs. They were normally dug with a ramp on one side to improve access for carts and often lie in middle of fields, evidently to save on cartage, though in many cases they fall on field boundaries (or former field boundaries that have now disappeared) or at the junction of three of four fields, perhaps in order to giving access to a number of different fields. The pits are often elongated or appear in groups of two or more in the same area, suggesting digging on a number of occasions, avoiding already flooded pits. A number of larger flooded pits lie next to farms or on the roadside in the southern part of *Maelor Saesneg*, suggests that marl may have been carted to fields further away, perhaps on a commercial basis. Flooded pits have often considered to be hazardous, and cases of drowning in marl pits have been recorded in the region from the medieval period onwards.

Many of the marl pits can be seen to cut through early ridge and furrow field systems and therefore in most cases appear to post-date the ending of the medieval open field system within the region. The overall distribution of marl pits, however, closely corresponds with that of ridge and furrow and strip fields in many area, both of which are generally indicative of former medieval open fields, which suggests that in many instances the marl pits represent improvement of former open fields in the early enclosure period, perhaps from the 16th century onwards. The distribution of marl pits extends beyond the known extent of ridge and furrow and strip fields, however, and since marling is generally to be associated with arable land, although it was sometimes evidently undertaken to improve pasture, the overall distribution of marl pits in *Maelor Saesneg* may gives an indication of the maximum extent of ploughland between about the 16th and 18th centuries in a landscape which today characterized by extensive areas of pasture.

The practice of marling appears to have been rapidly superseded by liming in the early years of the 19th century, especially once canal transport became available to transport it into the region from quarries in the hills to the west of the Dee. Kilns employed for converting limestone into lime were built alongside the Ellesmere Canal at Bettisfield at this period, no doubt supplying local farms with their produce. Agricultural lime was in turn to be replaced by chemical fertilizers when these became more readily available towards the end of the 19th-century.

Over 2,200 marl pits have been recorded in *Maelor Saesneg*, of which a proportion have now been filled in and are only visible on earlier Ordnance Survey maps. The pits represent a distinctive phase of past agricultural practice and land-use, perhaps beginning in the Middle Ages, but particularly characteristic of the post-enclosure period between the 16th and 18th centuries and regrettably many are continuing to be filled with rubbish though some are being converted into ornamental garden features. As well as providing an important visual historical element in the modern landscape, both flooded and infilled pits also represent an important ecological and palaeoenvironmental resource.


Maelor Saesneg
Marl pits and ponds
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 11.

Drainage and enclosure of the mosses

References to drainage and reclamation of wetlands by landowners becomes more common in adjacent areas of Shropshire during the period 1550–1650, and though there area fewer records surviving relating to the Welsh areas of the moss there are a number of references like one of 1582 relating to peat cutting and drainage ditch digging. The main period of land reclamation appears to have taken place from the early years of the 18th century, however, when powers to enclose parts of the mosses were first being granted. Once drained, the heathlands bordering the mosses often became quite productive, the process of drainage and enclosure resulting in a distinctive landscape of both large and small rectilinear pasture fields bordered by ditches, with mixed farms and smallholdings, with some arable on the better-drained sands and gravels. Some of these areas were subsequently to be subsequently converted to coniferous planations, such as Fenn's Wood, planted in the 1960s.

Agricultural improvements in the 18th and 19th centuries

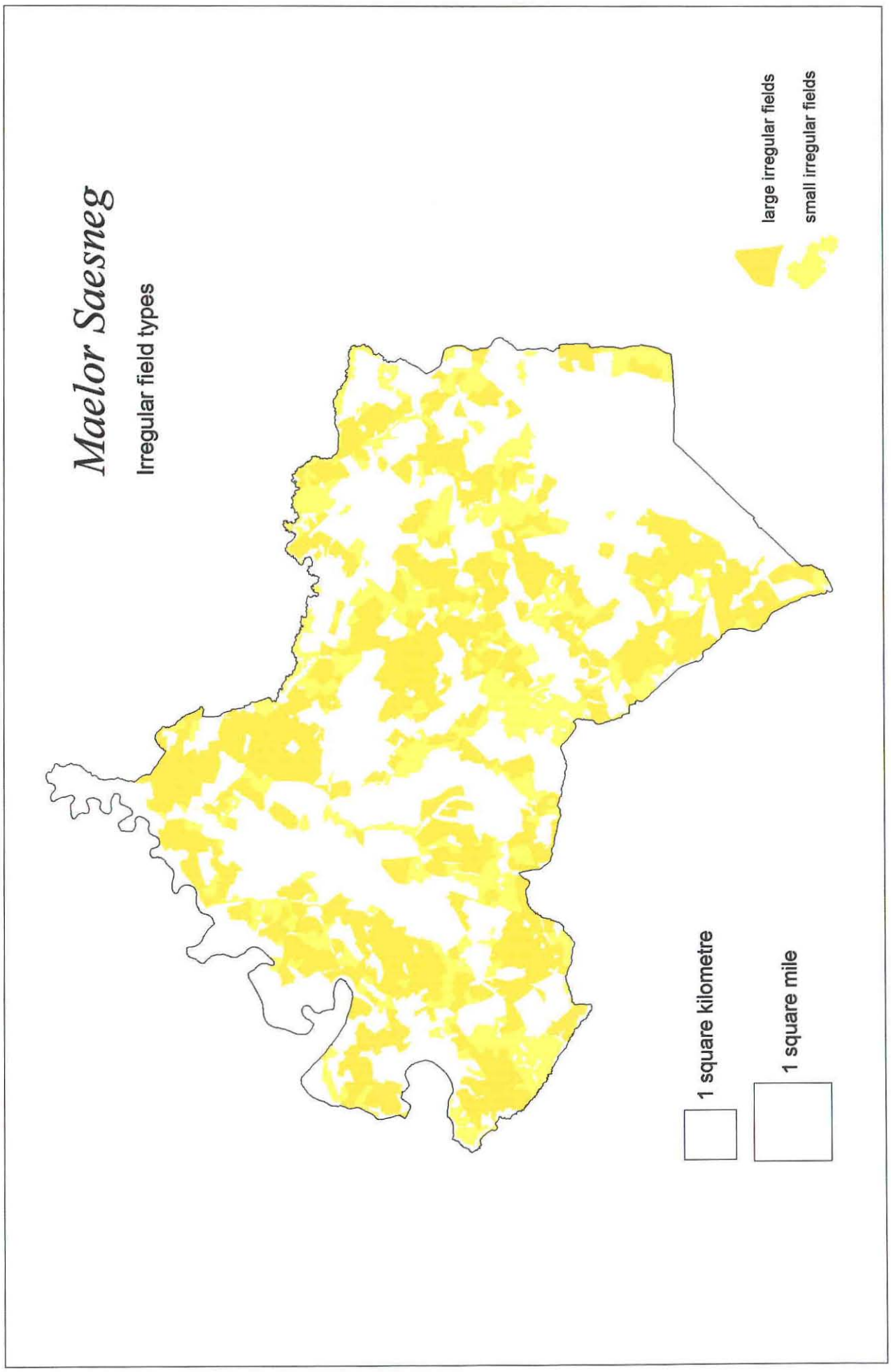
The 18th and 19th centuries saw the introduction of a number of agricultural improvements, particularly as the larger landowners sought to improve the revenue of their estates. The Bryn-y-Pys estate, for example, was considerably developed from the mid 19th century after its purchase by Edmund Peel. Despite these changes, much of the medieval and early post-medieval landscape of fields was to remain virtually intact though there is some evidence for the consolidation and enlargement of fields and reorganisation of field boundaries in some areas.

Widespread improvements were also made to agricultural buildings, particularly on the tenanted farms. Characteristic of the period is the complex of farm buildings at Buck Farm, Halghton (Willington Worthenbury), with a late 18th to early 19th-century timber-framed stable wing with blocked cart entrances, a 19th-century granary with belt-driven machinery, and red brick 19th-century milking parlour.

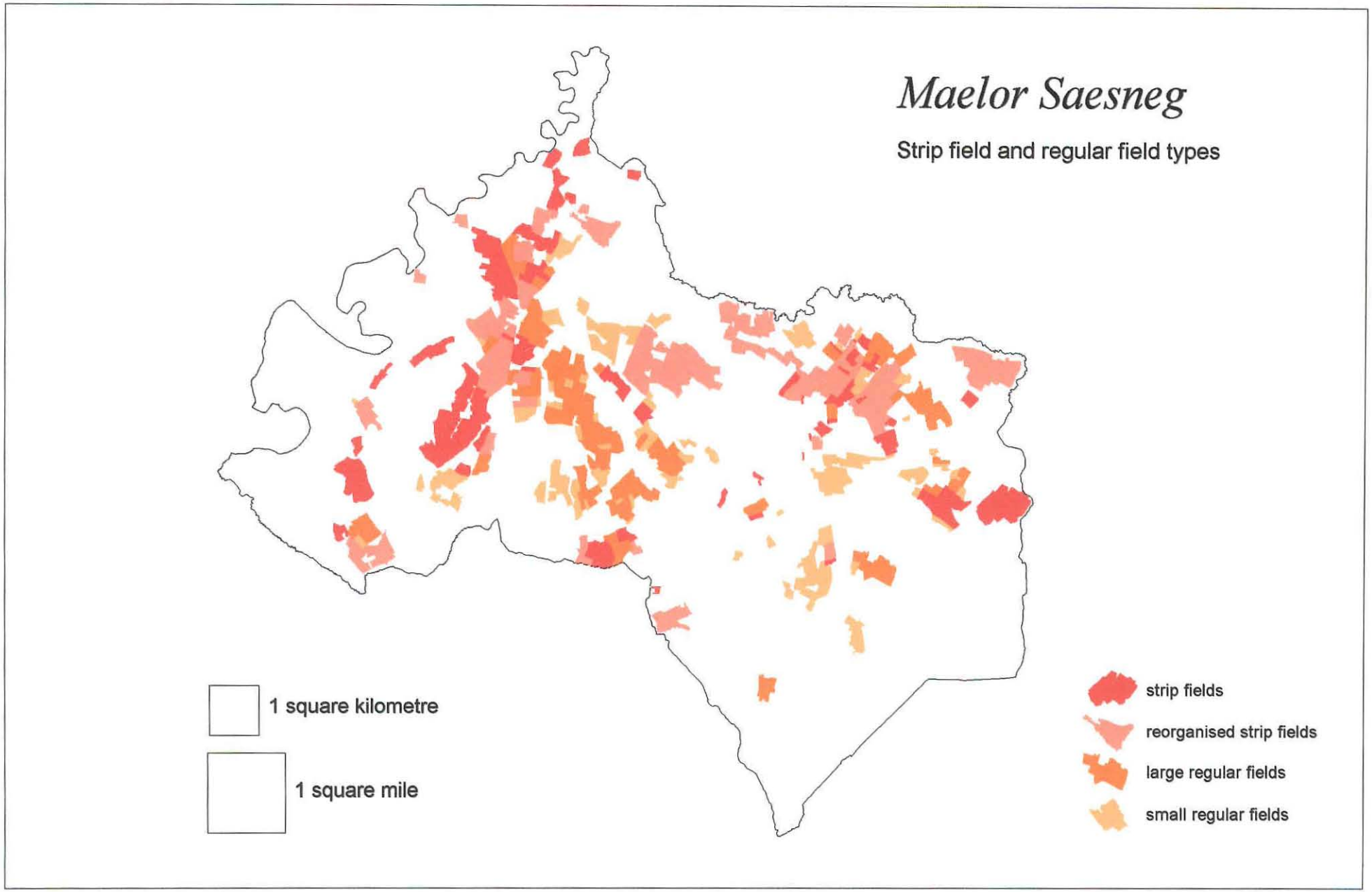
The 18th and 19th centuries also witnessed the expansion of a number of perhaps short-lived agricultural enterprises on more marginal land, such as the rabbit farming by place-name evidence including The Conery and Conery Lane near Fenn's Wood and The Warren near Iscoyd Park (both in Bronington).

Present-day fieldscapes

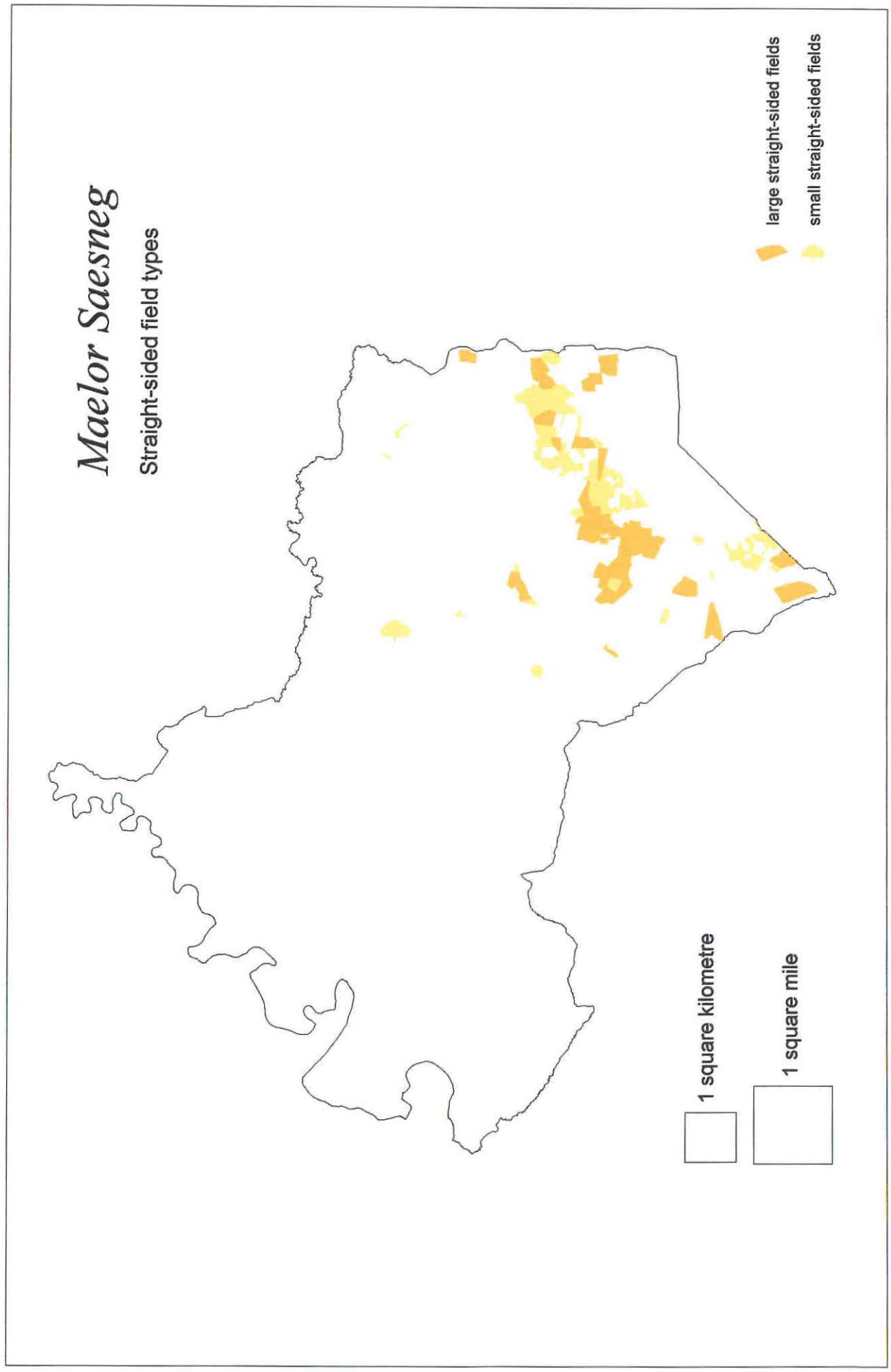
A variety of field patterns are evident in the present-day fieldscapes which, some of which are mentioned above, which it may be possible to place within a broad historical framework. Areas of both *large irregular fields* and *small irregular fields* (those classed for the purpose of this study as being above and below 3 hectares in size respectively) seem likely to have been created as a result of piecemeal woodland clearance and heaththland enclosure, perhaps largely from medieval time, and perhaps often involving the enclosure of former areas of common woodland and grazing and suggesting freehold tenure (Map 12). Many of the fields of this type are associated with evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation, however, suggesting that many of the fields of these shapes derive from the enclosure of former medieval open field. Fields classed as *floodplain fields*, generally bordering the Dee and often now or formerly subject to flooding and sometimes with ox-bow lakes or river cut-offs, in many instances probably represent the enclosure of former common meadow land already in use during the Middle Ages and probably enclosed during the later medieval and early post-medieval periods. As noted above, these are sometimes found in association with ridge and furrow cultivation, indicating periodic use as arable open field in the medieval period. Distinctive *strip fields*, generally classed as being groups of relatively long, thin fields (with a length:breadth ratio of >3:1) have a close relationship with areas of surviving ridge and furrow cultivation and appear to derive from the amalgamation and enclosure of medieval open field strips (Map 13). They occur as an element of what appear to have been both large and small medieval open fields, and are often found in combination with other field patterns which probably (as in the case of fields classed as *reorganised strip fields*) or possibly (as in the case of those classed as *regular fields*) have also derived from medieval strip fields. Field patterns classed as *large straight-sided fields* and *small straight-sided fields* (those again


Maelor Saesneg
Irregular field types
large irregular fields
small irregular fields
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 12.


Maelor Saesneg
Strip field and regular field types
1 square kilometre
1 square mile
strip fields
reorganised strip fields
large regular fields
small regular fields

Map 13.


Maelor Saesneg
Straight-sided field types
large straight-sided fields
small straight-sided fields
1 square kilometre
1 square mile

Map 14.

classed as being above and below 3 hectares in size respectively) often have the appearance of post-medieval or early modern enclosure, often either representing the relatively recent enclosure of areas of heathland or relatively recent landscape reorganisation, as in the case of the partitioning of former parkland, for example (Map 14). Finally, there are distinct small fields classed as *paddocks/closes* which are generally small and straight-sided and associated either with small-holdings or farmsteads.

Most of the modern field boundaries in the area are marked by simple hedges, many of which are now accompanied by post and wire fences to keep them stock-proof. Hedge-laying was clearly widely practiced in the past and is still being undertaken on a periodic basis in some areas. Many of the hedges are of mixed deciduous species and holly are frequently accompanied by mature oak trees. Hedges associated with the enclosure of former open fields are generally fairly straight, though irregular boundaries are to be seen in some areas which have probably resulted from piecemeal woodland clearance and enclosure. In some areas, such as the Eglwys Cross character area, field boundaries are accompanied by lynchets denoting former arable agriculture. Hedgerow removal and the amalgamation of fields in some areas has given rise to lines of mature oaks within areas of grassland. Single-species hedges and free-standing post and wire fences are more characteristic of some areas such as Stimmy Heath and Bettisfield character areas that have been reclaimed and enclosed more recently.

INDUSTRY

Extractive industries

Salt

Exploitation of naturally-occurring salt from underlying Triassic rocks exposed along the Wych Brook in the north-eastern part of the area forming part of similar deposits occurring though on a much larger scale in Cheshire at Nantwich, Northwich and Middlewich. Exploitation during the medieval period is indicated by the salt pit or (*salinae*) valued at 24s recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 in the manor of *Burwardestone*, possibly the same one as that noted as being in the possession of Haughmond Abbey in 1291 at *Wiche* in Iscoyd. Salt was an important commodity in the earlier Middle Ages, being regulated by a system of tolls, which accounts for its appearance in early documentary sources, the place-name element -wich being derived from the Old English *wic* ('trading settlement', itself derived from the Latin *vicus*) which was often applied to salt-producing settlements. By contrast, little appears to be recorded about salt working in the area at later periods though Thomas Pennant refers to a brine spring and salt works near Sarn Bridge over the Wych Brook in his *A Tour in Wales* published in 1794 and there is some evidence to suggest that the Upper and Lower Wych Salt Works were in operation in the 1830s. A brine pit about 7 metres in diameter is still to be seen at Lower Wych (Bronington).

Sand

Deposits of glacial sand deposits were exploited on a small scale in various parts of *Maelor Saesneg*, perhaps from early times up to the early 20th century, some of which are shown on early Ordnance Survey maps and some of which can still be seen in today's landscape. Several are recorded in the area of Bettisfield Park (Maelor South) and Hanmer, and one near Bryn-y-Pys (Overton).

Rights for the getting of sand to repair designated roads leading from the mosses were granted the enclosure award for Fenn's and Bettisfield mosses were enacted in the 1770s, and though extraction generally remained at a modest scale, relatively large quantities of sand were being extracted in the 1860s when the bed of the *Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway* was being laid across Fenn's Moss.

Peat

Peat cutting has formed an important industry on Fenn's Moss in the south-east corner of *Maelor Saesneg* for many centuries, exploiting deposits which exceeded a depth of 8 metres in certain areas. There are few surviving early records of peat cutting on the Welsh side of the border, though it is evident a well-developed system of turbary — the right to cut peat or turves — had emerged by the 1570s, having probably developed from much earlier times. These early common rights had finally become extinguished by the 1770s as a result of the enclosure acts covering Fenn's Moss and Bettisfield Moss. This gave rise to a commercial peat-cutting industry, beginning in the 1850s under leases issued by the Hanmer Estate, which continued with increasing intensity until production was finally brought to an end in the last decade of the 20th century following the purchase of the mosses by the Nature Conservancy Council.

There have been distinct changes in the purposes for which peat from Fenn's Moss has been used over the centuries. The earliest uses were most probably as a source of fuel though, although seemingly unrecorded on the Welsh side of the border, peat appears to have been quite widely used as a building material in conjunction with timber-framing for the construction of peat houses or *turfcotes* at least in the late medieval and early post medieval periods, examples of which survived on Whixall Moss up to the 1940s. From the middle of the 19th century onwards the peat was used for a much wider variety of purposes, being used in compressed form for a variety of metalworking and manufacturing processes, for the production of charcoal and for distillation, and being developed for use with munitions during both the First and Second World Wars. It was becoming used for horticultural purposes by commercially nurseries from as early as the late 1930s and on a much larger scale following the boom in popular gardening from the 1960s onwards.

The history of peat cutting of the moss can be clearly recognised on the ground — by the linear old hand cuts in certain areas, by the old commercially areas hand-cuts by the 'Whixall Bible' method (with reference to the shape of peat blocks), and by more recent mechanised cuttings methods. Commercial exploitation gave rise to the development of machine processing in later 19th century, with steam-powered grinding and bailing machinery installed by the 1880s and as noted in the following section several different stretches of tramroad were used in peat extraction on Fenn's Moss, to link with either the canal or railway systems, the tramroads on the mosses being subsequently replaced by narrow gauge railway and finally by tractor and trailer. The surviving peat works known as Fenn's Old Works, thought to be the last such works in mainland Britain, are protected as a scheduled ancient monument. The works are of steel girder construction of the late 1930s, formerly clad in corrugated iron, with a stationary engine (containing the only National Heavy Oil Engine still *in situ*), which provided power for machinery for milling and baling the peat.

Manufacturing and processing industries

Water corn mills

The milling of corn produced by the abundant arable land in *Maelor Saesneg* was once one of the major processing industries to be found in the area but has entirely disappeared today. Here as elsewhere the most readily available source of energy for grinding the corn was water power, harnessing rivers as well as smaller streams. The earliest mill known in the area was at Worthenbury, recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 and described as a new mill within the manor of the baron, Robert FitzHugh, and therefore possibly constructed soon after the Norman conquest. The site of the mill is unknown, though it may be represented by an earthwork platform on the Wych Brook, just to the south of the village of Worthenbury. There were undoubtedly other medieval mills in the area, though they too have been little studied. A mill at Overton was said to have been destroyed during the revolt against the English crown led by Madog ap Llywelyn in 1294. The site of the mill is unlocated, but it likely to have been on the Dee to the west of the town, perhaps in the vicinity of the present weir. The mill was evidently rebuilt within a few years, being referred to again in 1300 when it was valued at £12. Other early mills may be represented by place-name evidence. Mill Brook, which gives its name to Millbrook Farm, Millbrook Lane and

Millbrook Bridge to the south of Bangor Is-y-coed, is first recorded in 1290 as *Milnbrook*. The place-name 'Caer Felin' (Welsh *cae 'r felin* 'mill field), recorded in the vicinity of Emral Hall, may represent a further early mill site which is now missing.

Later water-driven corn mills are known at a number of sites throughout *Maelor Saesneg*, including five brick-built mills with slate roofs of late 18th- to early 19th-century date on the Wych Brook – Wych Mill, Llethr Mill and Wolvesacre Mill in Bronington (the latter only partly surviving) and Dymock's Mill and Sarn Mill, Tallarn Green (Willington Worthenbury). Dymock's Mill, a good example of a Georgian watermill, survived with most of its original machinery until the late 1980s, with a sluice from a former mill pond fed by the Wych Brook which drove an undershot water-wheel pit. Sarn Mill is again a brick-built watermill, rebuilt in 1827, which was later converted to run on electricity.

Three mills, again of late 18th to early 19th-century date, were established on tributaries of the Emral Brook – Halghton Mill, Halton New Mill and at Hanmer Mill at Hanmer Mill Farm (Hanmer), both on tributaries of the Emral Brook. Water still flows from the mill race and leat of Halghton New Mill, and the wheel pit and millpond survive at Hanmer Mill, though all three mills are now disused. Two further mills were established on tributaries of the Emral Brook to the west and north-west of Penley – Penley Mill and Cross Mill (Maelor South), Penley Mill again being a brick structure of 19th-century date, the original French burrstone millstones surviving in the nearby stream. Knolton Mill (Overton) was a further watermill, established on the Shell Brook, a tributary of the Dee which forms the boundary between England and Wales along the south-western boundary of *Maelor Saesneg*.

Most of the waterpowered mills within the area had ceased production by the later 19th and early 20th centuries due to often unpredictable waterflow and competition with more commercial mills elsewhere, though some, like Sarn Mill, had been converted to run on electrical power. Cadney Corn Mill, a two storey red brick corn mill to the east of Bettisfield (Maelor South), likewise was formerly driven with steam-powered diesel engines installed in 1925.

Windmills

The surviving base of a round, 18th-century brick-built windmill just to the east of Cadney Corn Mill (Maelor South), may perhaps have been built to help to drain the moss. Windmills are known to have been used to drain marshy arable land in neighbouring areas of Shropshire, including those built at Prees in the early 16th century and Ellesmere in the early 17th century.

Fulling mills

Water power was also used for driving a number of fulling mills, used in the finishing of woollen cloth produced in the district in the medieval and post-medieval periods. Two fulling mills are recorded at Halghton (Hanmer) and Tybroughton (Bronington) in the early 15th century though no archaeological remains of these mills have yet been identified. The Halghton fulling mill was probably on the tributary of the Emral Brook at Pandy (Welsh *pandy* 'fulling mill') which has given its name to Pandy Farm and Pandy Bridge. The location of the Tybroughton fulling mill is unknown, though it seems likely to have been on the Wych Brook or one of its tributaries, in the vicinity of Tybroughton Hall.

Smithies

Most communities had ready access to a local smithy, often sited on one of the main roads or near a road junction, including those recorded at Redbrook, Higher Wych, Henrwst, Bronington, Eglwys Cross and Stimmy Heath (Bronington), Bettisfield, Penley and Street Lydan (Maelor South), Three Fingers, Worthenbury, and Sarn (Willington Worthenbury), Halghton, Hanmer (Hanmer). Many of the smithies appear to have come into existence in the late 19th and earler 20th centuries, and represented by small brick-built structures. Few if any of these local workshops, once vital to the local agricultural community, have survived intact to the present day, most

having either been demolished, retained as sheds, or converted into domestic accommodation. One of the few which has survived is the remains of the 19th-century forge in the rear wing of Gwaylod House, Overton Bridge (Overton) which includes a double forging hearth apparently formerly open to the rear and later enclosed by a lean-to.

Crabmills

Little has been written about the history of brewing in *Maelor Saesneg*, though this was evidently of at least local importance until perhaps towards the advent of the larger commercial breweries towards the end of the 19th century. The production of cider is indicated by a number of farm and house names based on 'crab mill' indicating a cider press for crushing apples, normally powered by horse or pony. Three former cider presses are indicated by place-name evidence — Crab Mill, on Green Lane (Bangor Is-y-coed), Crab Mill near Little Green (Bronington), and Crabmill Farm (Overton), south of Overton, though little or no tangible archaeological evidence of the industry appears to have survived.

Breweries

We are likewise largely dependent upon place-name evidence for the small breweries scattered across the area which produced local ales and beers, including the late 18th to early 19th-century Malt House in Worthenbury, Pen-y-llan, an early 19th-century brick-built house in Overton, listed as a malt kiln and shop in the 1838 tithe survey, and Maltkiln House in Bronington. A former malthouse in Tallarn Green (Worthenbury Willington) is shown on maps editions of the Ordnance Survey maps published in the 1870s and 1880s, in opposition to which the purpose-built Methodist Temperance Room of 1890 in Tallarn Green may have been established. The small brewery known as the Dee Brewery survived intact until the 1980s, following closure some years before.

Brick and tile works

Local small-scale brick production probably started in the area in about the mid 17th century, mainly for the a small number of gentry houses such as Halghton Hall (Hanmer), built in 1662. At the end of the 18th century, Thomas Pennant, amongst others, drew attention to the potentially important sources of clay to be found in *Maelor Saesneg*, but it was generally not until the later 19th century that relatively small commercial works became established at various centres to feed the increasing demand for building materials and pipes for land drainage. The works that were established during this period included those at Lightwood Green (Overton), Fenn's Hall, Fenn's Bank, Tilstock Lane near Brickwalls (Bronington), and at Pandy (Hanmer). Products included pipes, bricks, copings and window sills at the Overton Brick and Tile Works at Lightwood Green, pipes at the Pandy Brick and Tile Works. The Fenn's Bank and Lightwood Green works were strategically sited on the railway, the former on the Ellesmere-Whitchurch line and the latter on the Wrexham-Ellesmere line. Each of the works were based on local supplies of clay dug from clay pits near the works which were up to forty feet deep in the case of the Fenn's Bank works, and which here as elsewhere are now represented by flooded hollows, clay being transported to the works by tramroad at Fenn's Bank and Pandy. The works at Fenn's Bank had a circular 14-chamber Hoffman kiln built 1860 and a tall chimney, 175 feet high, both demolished when the works were abandoned in the early 1960s. Few other traces of the works still survive, these local production centres failing to compete with the more successful brick and tile works which became established in the Wrexham area during the later 19th and earlier 20th centuries, notably at Ruabon. The works at Lightwood Green were set up by the Bryn-y-Pys Estate probably in the 1880, with engine house and machine shed, which closed during the Second World War. The Pandy works, with two beehive kilns, machine and drying sheds was established in the 1870s.

Limekilns

Following the construction of the Whitchurch branch of the Shropshire Union Canal in 1797 lime kilns were established alongside the canal at Bettisfield, fed by limestone and coal from the coalfields of north-east Wales, unloaded by means of the ramp that still remains visible just to the west of Bettisfield Bridge. The chief product of the kilns was probably agricultural lime, marketed to local farms within the district, replacing the practice of

marling which probably died out early in the 19th century. Dependence upon liming for maintaining soil fertility itself declined in the later 19th century as chemical fertilizers became more readily available.

Tanneries

Place-name evidence, notably Tan House just to the east of Overton, suggests that tanning was once carried out on perhaps a small scale in *Maelor Saesneg*, though there is again little surviving physical evidence.

Modern industries

Maelor Saesneg remains a predominantly agricultural and non-industrial area, though the site of the former Fenn's Bank brick and tile works is now occupied by a modern aluminium works, itself replacing a metal reclamation works established during the Second World War.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Water transport

Though no longer used for transport today, the River Dee was still considered to be navigable as far inland as Bangor Is-y-coed until at least the 1830s. River transport along the River Dee had undoubtedly been important by Roman times, if not earlier, being used to transport the products of the tile works at Holt, about 10 kilometres downstream, to the legionary fortress at Chester. Little physical evidence of the history of river transport has survivied, though a dugout canoe is said to have been found in the 1860s or 1870s near Llyn Bedydd (Hanmer), perhaps dating to the later prehistoric to medieval periods. Ferries across the Dee were no doubt important from early times, the river crossing linking Erbistock with the eastern bank of the river, close to a ford near the church, passable at certain seasons, remained in use until the early 20th century.

Early roads

There are no certain Roman roads crossing *Maelor Saesneg*, though unconfirmed claims for the existence of a Roman road near Dymock's Mill (Willington Worthenbury) were made in the late 19th century. Greater credence might perhaps be given to the suggestion of an ancient routeway between Whitchurch (the Roman town of *Mediolanum*) and Bangor Is-y-coed, corresponding to the later turnpike and present A525, on the basis of late 3rd- and early 4th-century Roman coins found in the area of Eglwys Cross. The crossings of the Dee at Overton and Bangor Is-y-coed has clearly been of some strategic significance since early times, at points where higher ground approaches the river and the floodplain is consequently relatively narrow. It was probably in connection with improvements to this same route as part of Edward I's efforts to secure his conquest of Wales that the captain of his garrison at Whitchurch was granted permission in 1282 to clear trees from the pass at Redbrook (*La Rede Broc*), on the eastern margins of *Maelor Saesneg*, on the present national boundary between England and Wales, such clearances typically being a bowshot in breadth, a distance of up to about 250 metres.

Though poorly documented and later subject to improvement, the general course of the routes linking other larger nucleated settlements in the area are likely to be of either early medieval or medieval origin, such as those between Overton and Bangor Is-y-coed, Overton and Ellesmere, Overton and Hanmer, Bangor Is-y-coed and Worthenbury. Likewise, many of the minor lanes and trackways weaving their way through early field systems, linking the larger settlements with the minor townships, probably also had their origins at this period.

Early river crossings

Many of the early bridges and fording points were replaced during the course of the later 18th and 19th centuries, though some early structural evidence has survived in places. The older bridge near the church at Bangor-s-y-coed evidently has medieval origins but was largely rebuilt in the 17th-century and at one time the bridge bore a

date-stone of 1658. The bridge was clearly of some significance at this period: Daniel Defoe in his *Tour* published in the 1720s being evidently pleasantly surprised to encounter this 'stone-bridge over the Dee, and indeed, a very fine one'. Other notable early bridges include Sarn Bridge at Tallarn Green (Willington Worthenbury), across an early fording point across the Wych Brook, on the border between England and Wales, where the existing early 19th-century stone bridge replaced an earlier construction of 1627.

Turnpike roads, milestones and new bridges

As in other parts of Britain, many improvements were made to the main roads and bridges of *Maelor Saesneg* during the course of the 18th century. Turnpike acts for the repair of the road from Shrewsbury through Ellesmere and Overton to Wrexham (the present A528/A539) was passed in the 1750s and a similar act for the Marchwiel through Bangor Is-y-coed to Whitchurch road (the present A525) was passed in the 1760s. Turnpike roads were established on the other principal routeways across *Maelor Saesneg* — the Bangor to Malpas road (B5069, the Overton, Hanmer to Whitchurch road (A539), and the Redbrook to Ellesmere road via Welshampton (A495). There are disappointingly few surviving records relating to the turnpike roads in the area, though it is evident that tolls continued to be collected at 'Overton Gate' and 'Maesgwaelod Bar' on the Ellesmere to Wrexham road into the 1870s, the former near the town and the latter presumably near Overton Bridge. House names indicating former toll gates include Toll-bar Cottage on the A539 west of Penley, and Tollgate near Pandy on the A525.

Other local roads were to remain in a poor condition until the 19th century, George Kay making the following general observations about roads in Flintshire:

> The turnpike roads are kept in good repair in general but cross or parochial roads are in a wretched state. They are so very bad that in many places it is difficult and dangerous to travel on horseback in winter and to get a carriage to pass along them appears to me impracticable. They are uncommonly narrow and low, often answering the double purpose of a road and a drain.

Milestones were set up along the turnpikes, generally in the form of sandstone blocks with an arched upper surface and cast-iron plates indicating distances along the road, of which there are surviving examples of late 18th- or early 19th-century date on the Bangor Is-y-coed to Whitchurch road (A525) near Broad Oak and the London Apprentice, on the Overton–Hanmer road (A539) at Street Lydan and Penley, and on the Overton–Ellesmere road (A528) near Queensbridge and the Trotting Mare public house. Other stones appear to have disappeared since they were first mapped by the Ordnance Survey, though some had evidently already suffered damage by the early years of the 19th century when warning notices were being posted threatening legal action against those guilty of break or damaging the milestones 'on the Turnpike Roads leading from Marchwiel to Whitchurch, and from Redbrook to Welshhampton, and from Bangor to Malpas'.

Major road bridges built in the 19th century include Overton Bridge, crossing the Dee into Denbighshire, built in 1813, a two-arched bridge of red sandstone. A number of other smaller, single-arched stone road bridges were built by the turnpike trusts during the course of the earlier 19th century, including three on the border between England and Wales: Barton's Bridge, Knolton (Overton) built in 1819 and said to be the work of Thomas Telford; Sarn Bridge (Worthenbury Willington) also of 1819, but replacing an earlier bridge of 1627, and subsequently widened in 1925; Redbrook Bridge, Bronington, of early 19th-century date and again said to be the work of Thomas Telford. Later bridges include the stone-built Poulton Bridge (Overton) of 1851, and Worthenbury Bridge of 1872–73, replacing an earlier bridge destroyed by floods, with a yellow brick arch.

Notable private estate bridges included the semi-circular arched stone bridge with parapets of brick and stone west of the stable courtyard at Emral (Worthenbury Willington), probably dating to the early 1730s, whose original design included 'pepper-pot' guardrooms, regrettably now demolished.

Canal transport

Works had begun by the Ellesmere Canal Company on the construction of the canal between Ellesmere to Whitchurch in 1797, the section across Fenn's and Whixall Moss having completed by 1804 across Maelor Saesneg, close to the border with Shropshire, crossed by road bridges at Cornhill Bridge, Bettisfield Bridge and Clapping Gate Bridge, all near Bettisfield. Construction of the canal across Fenn's and Whixall mosses involved extensive drainage works and must have posed a number of engineering difficulties, perhaps involving the use of brushwood rafts to prevent sinkage as in the subsequent construction of the railway. The canal has had a distinct impact upon the landscape of the linear zone of *Maelor Saesneg* that it traverses including the characteristic humped brick-built road bridges at Clapping Gate Bridge, Bettisfield Bridge and Cornhill Bridge, as well as the small industrial settlement which grew up near the canal wharf and access ramp next to Bettisfield Bridge.

The primary purpose of the canal had been to promote long-distance trade, though it became used to import and export materials locally within *Maelor Saesneg*, as noted above, including supplying materials for the limekilns at Bettisfield and exporting peat from the works established at Fenn's Moss in the early 1850s. During the First World War the canal was also used to transport the large number of troops training on one group of rifle ranges on the western edge of the moss, known as The Batters, only being accessible to those arriving by barge.

Today, the canal is a popular recreational facility and tourist attraction.

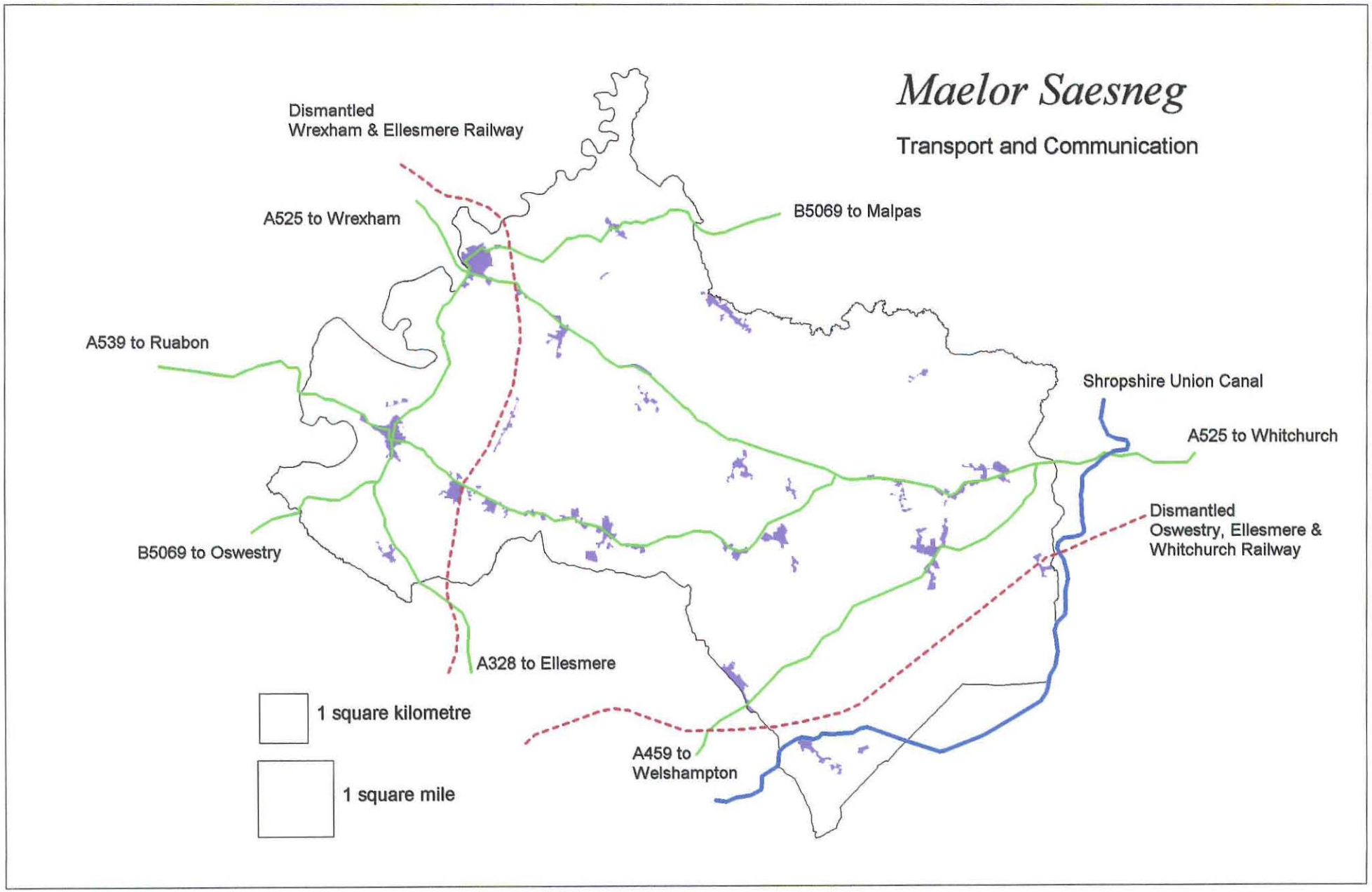
Tramroads and narrow gauge railways

Horse-drawn tramroads were used during the 19th century by a number of local industries for hauling materials relatively short distances, one being set up at the Pandy pipe and tile works (Hanmer) to link the clay pits with the main works nearer the roadside, and several different stretches of tramroad were used in peat extraction on Fenn's Moss, to link with either the canal or railway systems. The tramroads on the mosses were subsequently replaced by narrow gauge railway and finally by tractor and trailer.

Main line railways

The south-east corner of the *Maelor Saesneg* landscape is crossed by the now disused railway line whose construction commenced in 1861 and began goods services in 1863, with former intermediate stations at Fenn's Bank and at Bettisfield. The line, which began as the *Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway*, still forms a prominent landscape feature and an important access route to parts of Fenn's Moss, whose margins are colonized by silver birch and willow. In its early years the line joined the Oswestry and Newtown Railway at Oswestry and the London and North-Western Railway between Shrewsbury and Crewe at Whitchurch, one of its primary purposes being to regenerate the town of Ellesmere which had suffered from competition with other neighbouring towns already provided with railway facilities. Where the track crossed the moss it was accompanied by a pair of drainage ditches, 40 yards (36 metres) apart, to either side of the track, which was bedded on heather, peat, bundles of faggots, a thick bed of sand dug from local sand pits. In 1864 a single track extension to Oswestry was opened and the railway company combined with several others to form the Cambrian Railway Company. In 1922 the Cambrian amalgamated with the Great Western Railway, and was finally closed in 1962. Peat processing works accessible by sidings became established alongside the railway at The Old Graveyard and Fenn's Old Works (Bronington). The Fenn's Bank Brick and Tile Works (Bronington), in existence by the 1890s, was likewise conveniently being sited next to the railway line. At one stage a tramroad near the Fenn's Old Works was linked to a covered exchange siding with the railway. Troops practicing on the Fenn's Moss rifle ranges during the First World War arrived by railway by means of an extra long siding provided off the passing loop at nearby Fenn's Bank Station. Apart from the surviving course of the railway line, parts of which are now accommodated by tracks, other visible traces of the railway include the former station, engine shed and road bridge at Bettisfield (Maelor South) and bridges and bridge abutments such as those at Trench and Cloy.

Traces of the former *Wrexham and Ellesmere Railway* are visible in the landscape of the western side of *Maelor*


Maelor Saesneg
Transport and Communication
Dismantled
Wrexham & Ellesmere Railway
A525 to Wrexham
B5069 to Malpas
A539 to Ruabon
Shropshire Union Canal
A525 to Whitchurch
Dismantled
Oswestry, Ellesmere &
Whitchurch Railway
B5069 to Oswestry
A328 to Ellesmere
1 square kilometre
1 square mile
A459 to
Welshampton

Map 15.

Saesneg. The railway, running via Marchwiel, Bangor Is-y-coed, and Overton, was started in 1892 and completed in 1895. Crossing the Dee was a major feat of engineering requiring a single 58-metre span, latticed steel girder bridge just to the north Bangor Is-y-coed, one of the longest single spans in the country, resting on massive sandstone abutments, and manufactured by Pearson and Knowles of Warrington. The railway had intermediate stations serving Bangor Is-y-coed and Overton (occupying part of the former open common at Lightwood Green). Additional stops known as Trench Halt (east of Knolton) and Cae Dyah Halt or Cloy Halt were built to serve the scattered rural populations of these areas in 1914 and 1932 respectively. Passenger traffic was interrupted during the Second World War when the line was used for munitions traffic from the Royal Ordnance Factory at Marchwiel, and both passenger and freight services finally ceased in 1962, as in the case of the Oswestry to Whitchurch line, following which the viaduct over the Dee north of Bangor Is-y-coed was blown up. Much of the former track is visible as embankments or cuttings, some of which forms modern field boundaries or has been reused as a track or has become flooded. Other distinctive visible features include the humped road bridges at Lightwood Green (Overton), the stone bridge abutments at Cloy Bank (Bangor Is-y-coed) and the surviving bridge at Trench (Maelor South).

A number of local industries were to benefit from proximity to both the canal and railway networks crossing *Maelor Saesneg*. The Overton Brick and Tile Works, established at Lightwood Green in perhaps 1880s, was set up by perhaps 1886, by 1899 the Bryn-y-Pys estate had established a brickyard consisting of engine house, machine shed, closed during the Second World War, Overton Brick and Tile Works, Lightwood Green, sited on the line of the railway, started in late 19th century and modernized in the 1920s produced bricks, pipes, coping blocks and window sills, finally closing during Second World War.

Aqueducts

Underground aqueducts carrying water from Lake Vyrnwy to Liverpool was constructed across *Maelor Saesneg* in the period between the early 1880s and early 1890s and though largely hidden from view today, air valves and a meter chamber associated with the aqueduct are shown on earlier editions of Ordnance Survey maps dating to the opening years of the 20th century just to the east of Bowen's Hall (Hanmer), to the north of Horseman's Green.

SPORT AND RECREATION

Fishing is perhaps one of the oldest sporting activities still carried out in the area, especially on the River Dee, and in earlier times no doubt an important economic activity. A valuable fishery, presumably for salmon, is recorded at Overton mill in the late 13th century, the fishing rights at one time being owned by the Cistercian monastery at Valle Crucis, and Thomas Pennant records that coracles in the late 18th century were 'much in use in these parts for the purposes of salmon fishing'. Pennant also noted that water-races were often performed in these slight vessels, mentioning a 'regatta of great magnificence is to be exhibited by them above Bangor Bridge' to be held on a forthcoming Michaelmas day (29 September). Hanmer Mere and Llyn Bedydd were probably also exploited from an early date, with a boathouse for fishing or other recreational purposes being represented on the banks of Hanmer Mere on early Ordnance Survey maps published in the 1880s and 1890s. Several other pursuits are also no longer undertaken, including the now illegal sport of cock fighting is said to be represented by a cock-pit to the rear of former Buck Inn at Worthenbury and possibly also carried out elsewhere in the area.

School and village sports

Modern village sports are represented by football pitches at a number of centres, including Bangor Is-y-coed, Overton and Penley, with an additional village cricket pitch at Overton and a country house cricket pitch next to the house at Iscoyd Park. A variety of other village sporting activities take place at Overton including tennis

courts and bowling greens (including a former bowling green behind Gwydyr House). A more recent introduction is the boules pitch, where competitions are held with visitors from the twinned village of La Murette in France.

Horse racing

The most widely-known modern sporting activity associated with *Maelor Saesneg* is the horse racing at the Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse, on the banks of the Dee just to the south of Bangor Is-y-coed, where National Hunt meetings are regularly held during the racing season.

Walking

The relatively recent interest in recreational walking has given rise to the 38-kilometre waymarked recreational trail crossing *Maelor Saseneg* known as the Maelor Way, linking the similar footpaths in Shropshire and Cheshire on the east with the Offa's Dyke national trail on the west. The cross-country footpath, using public footpaths, lanes and a canal towpath, passes through Whitewell, Bronington, Hanmer, Penley and was first opened in 1991 and has attracted many walkers to the area.

MILITARY ACTIVITY

The most intensive use of *Maelor Saesneg* for military activity was during the 20th century. Large areas of Fenn's and Whixall Mosses were commandeered by the military authorities during the two World Wars. At least eight army rifle ranges between 300 and 1100 yards long and with shooting butts formed of timber and peat, with associated huts in some cases were set up on the mosses. One of the ranges appears to have been in existence before 1909 and probably had its roots in either the South African war years or the expansion of local territorial or militia units. Access to the ranges by large numbers of troops was made easier by the canal and railway which cross the mosses. One group of ranges on the western edge of the moss, known as The Batters, was accessible to troops arriving by canal barge. The main use of the ranges was during the First World War, when troops normally arrived by railway, disembarking by means of an extra long siding provided off the passing loop at nearby Fenn's Bank Station. A new army tented camp was established at Fenn's Bank in 1916 for troops training on the North-East Fenns rifle ranges, which could house up to a thousand men.

During the Second World War the mosses lay within a few minutes flying time of a number of military airfields, and consequently a gunnery and bombing range and a decoy site were located here between 1940–45. Visible remains are slight, but include a brick picket hut, concrete plinths that once carried a control building, quadrant towers and a Strategic Starfish decoy site up to several hundred metres across designed to protect Liverpool, together with iron rods protruding from the peat which once supported machine-gun targets for air-to-ground gunnery practice and as a bombing range. The mosses were also the site of a number of air crashes during practice, including those on Cadney Moss and at Little Green, Bronington. As noted above, peat from the mosses was also commandeered during both the First and Second World Wars for the production of munitions.

Maelor Saesneg also became an important focus for military hospitals during the Second World War due to its proximity to military airfields, its relatively good communications by road and rail to the Atlantic seaport at Liverpool, its peaceful rural environment, and the ready availability of parkland associated with a number of country houses. Consequently the parkland associated with country houses at Bryn-y-Pys, Bettisfield, Iscoyd, Penley Hall and Llannerch Panna were all requisitioned for military purposes. In addition Gredington Park became an out-station of the Gobowen Orthopaedic Hospital and military depots were established at Lightwood Green, Gwernheylod and The Brow (Overton). Large US Army hospitals were constructed at Penley Hall, Llannerch Panna and Iscoyd which between them catered for almost 10,000 battle casualties during the course of the war and considered at the time as 'a little bit of US territory in Wales'. After the end of the war the hospitals continued

in use for the post-war settlement of Polish communiites into the 1950s and early 1960s. The former military hospital still dominates the landscape of Penley, part of which remain in use as a hospital and part as an industrial park.

Memorials commemorating the dead of the two World Wars were first erected at various centres of population during the period after the First World War in a number of the larger centres of population, including Overton, Bangor Is-y-coed, Hanmer, Bronington, Iscoyd and Tallarn Green.

PARKS AND GARDENS

Parkland areas associated with a number of country houses and former country houses forms a significant element of several areas of the *Maelor Saesneg* landscape. There is no certain evidence for the creation of medieval parks within the area, and the surviving evidence suggests relatively late emparkment during the later 17th to earlier 19th centuries, and in some instances appears to correspond with a period during which a number of the major landowning families were rebuilding their family seats, abandoning earlier moated sites and replacing timber halls as their principal residences. In some instances, as at Emral in perhaps the 18th century and Gredington in the 19th century the parkland overlies areas of former ridge and furrow of perhaps several different periods, probably enclosed from former open fields in earlier centuries. In both of these instances the surviving parkland remains as a poignant reminder of the country houses which have now disappeared from the landscape, Emral having been demolished in 1936 and Gredington finally in the 1980s. A similar fate befell the parkland associated with Gwernheylod, a former country house with 17th century origins demolished in the 1860s and Bryn-y-Pys, a stylish house of the 1730s demolished in the 1950s, and Bettisfield Park, dating from the earlier 17th century and partly demolished in the late 1940s. Areas of former parkland associated with the house at Penley Hall and the Victorian country house at Llannerch Panna have been built over during the 20th century, for a hospital in the case of Penley and by a modern housing development in the case of Llannech Panna. The only surviving example where both the parkland and its house remain substantially intact is at Iscoyd Park where the 18th-century house, built for the Hanmer family and enlarged in the 19th century, stands within its complete 18th- and 19th-century landscape park.

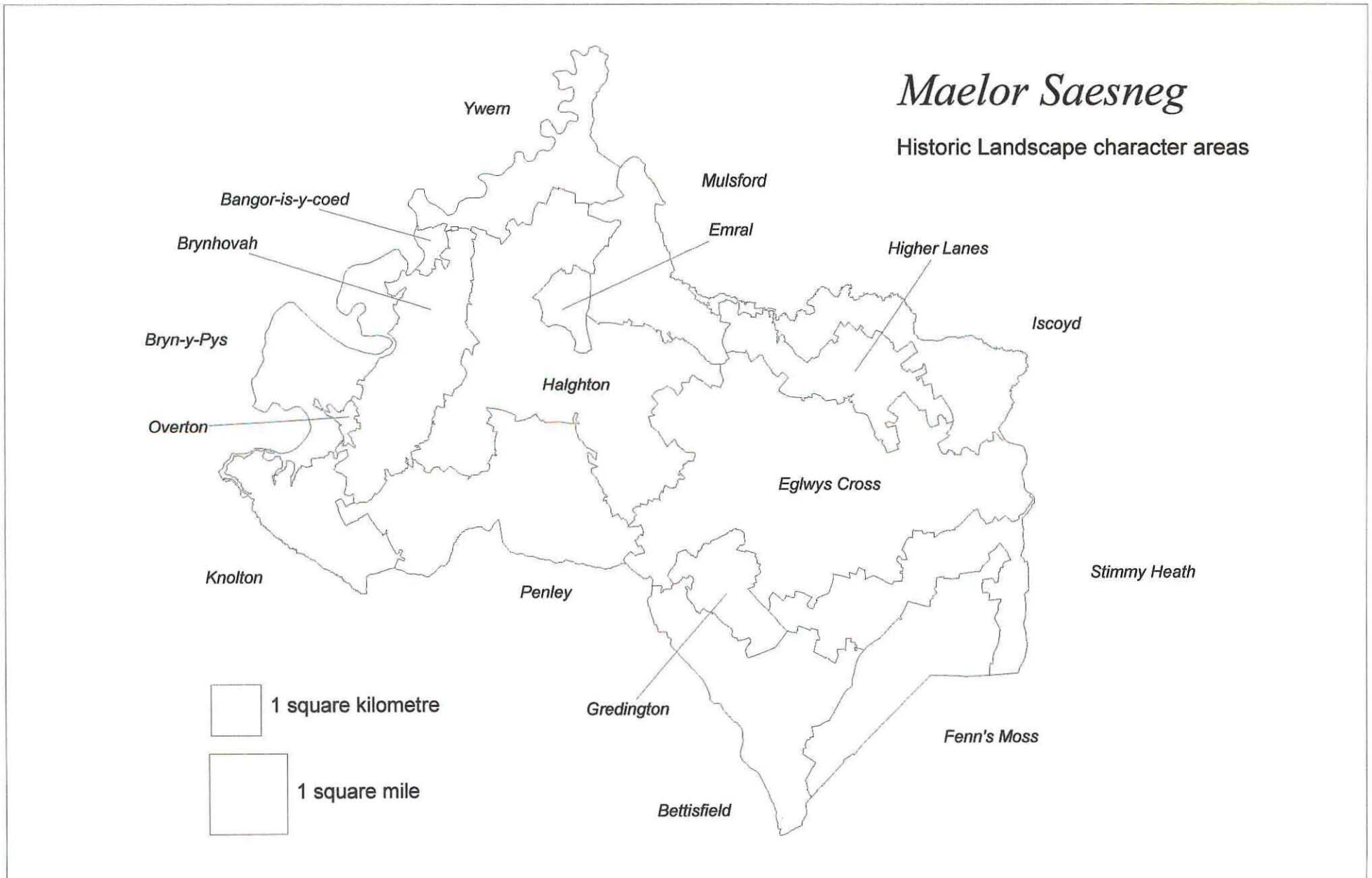
Historic landscape character areas in Maelor Saesneg

Summary of Character Areas

The following character areas have been defined within the *Maelor Saesneg* historic landscape area (Map 16), described in more detail on the pages which follow:

1114	*YWERN*	*Floodplain with scattered and isolated farms, land traditionally used as meadow, with drainage dykes and ditches in some areas, and with some ridge and furrow possibly indicating areas of open field cultivation during the medieval and early post-medieval periods.*
1115	*BANGOR IS-Y-COED*	*Modern expansion of historically important early medieval ecclesiastical centre and by a subsequent medieval nucleated church settlement, close to strategically important river crossing which has substantially expanded as a settlement in the 20th century.*
1116	*BRYNHOVAH*	*Valley-bottom farmland with scattered farms and winding lanes, relict medieval open field cultivation represented by strip fields and ridge and furrow, the fieldscape evidently reorganised into a pattern of large irregular fields after the Middle Ages.*
1117	*BRYN-Y-PYS*	*Varied, picturesque area of meadowland, farmland, wooded slopes, former parkland belonging to a number of country houses, and race-course bordering the eastern banks of the River Dee, including a number of strategic river crossings.*
1118	*OVERTON*	*Planted medieval borough, possibly superseding early medieval farming settlement, which became a fashionable small market town in the 18th and 19th centuries and continued as the administrative centre for the locality until local government reorganisation until 1974.*
1119	*KNOLTON*	*Scattered farms and irregular fields of medieval and late medieval origin and irregular fields with discrete area of former medieval open field.*
1120	*HALGHTON*	*Extensive area of medieval strip fields and ridge and furrow with associated moated sites, scattered farms and later small roadside settlements.*
1121	*EMRAL*	*Former 17th-century landscape park with buildings and structures associated with now-demolished country house belonging to important Anglo-Welsh borderland family.*
1122	*MULSFORD*	*Predominantly agricultural landscape of scattered farms of late medieval origin associated with ridge and furrow cultivation and irregular field patterns with 'green' settlement at Tallarn Green.*
1123	*PENLEY*	*Varied field pattern resulting from enclosure of common open fields associated with ridge and furrow and former medieval manorial centres and late enclosure of areas of common grazing, 'green' encroachment settlements and remains of two large US Army hospitals and subsequent Polish hospitals.*

1124	*GREDINGTON*	*Late glacial mere, woodland, parkland and former parkland, some overlying areas of medieval open field, associated with the Gredington and Bettisfield Park country houses.*
1125	*EGLWYS CROSS*	*Landscape dominated by irregular field patterns and scattered farms, with early nucleated church settlement at Hanmer and a handful of later 'green' and roadside settlements.*
1126	*HIGHER LANES*	*Dispersed farms on lanes running between strip fields and ridge and furrow of medieval open field origin.*
1127	*ISCOYD*	*Rural landscape with traces of ancient woodland and medieval open fields, with dispersed farms and Iscoyd Park country house and landscape park of earlier 18th-century origin.*
1128	*STIMMY HEATH*	*Flat area of late enclosure and conifer plantations around margins of Fenn's Moss.*
1129	*FENN'S MOSS*	*Raised mire with evidence of exploitation from prehistoric and medieval times onwards, and with pollen evidence for the history of vegetation and land-use in the region since the last glaciation.*
1130	*BETTISFIELD*	*Rural landscape of scattered farms and irregular fields emerging from woodland clearance in the late medieval and early post-medieval period, with late linear settlement owing its origins to the coming of the canal and railway in the 19th century.*


Maelor Saesneg
Historic Landscape character areas
Ywern
Mulsford
Bangor-is-y-coed
Brynhovah
Emral
Higher Lanes
Iscoyd
Bryn-y-Pys
Halghton
Overton
Eglwys Cross
Knolton
Penley
Stimmy Heath
1 square kilometre
Gredington
Fenn's Moss
1 square mile
Bettisfield

Map 16.

1114 *Ywern* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bangor Is-y-coed and Willington Worthenbury Communities

Floodplain with scattered and isolated farms, land traditionally used as meadow, with drainage dykes and ditches in some areas, and with some ridge and furrow possibly indicating areas of open field cultivation during the medieval and early post-medieval periods.

Historic background

The area formed part of the medieval ecclesiastical parishes of Bangor Is-y-coed and Worthenbury, but being predominantly agricultural there is little historical information relating to it.

Key historic landscape characteristics

Distinctive landscape represented by the floodplain of the River Dee at its confluence with the Wych Brook and the Worthenbury Brook, generally fairly flat and below 15 metres above Ordnance Datum, parts of which are subject to seasonal flooding. Archaeological and sedimentary evidence suggests that the course of the river has been relatively stable since later prehistoric or Roman times, with many of the meander cut-offs being infilled during the medieval period. The area to the north of Bangor Is-y-coed is crossed by a flood alleviation bank.

The only settlement in the area comprises a small number of isolated farms which probably originated in the post-medieval period. Present-day land use is predominantly pasture, though there are some areas of relict field systems represented by ridge and furrow which appear to represent areas of open field cultivation during the medieval and early post-medieval periods, possibly on a periodic rather than continuous basis. Modern boundaries are generally either formed of thin hedges or post-and-wire fences. Land improvement and water management schemes of post-medieval date are represented by drainage ditches and dykes, area of which have the appearance of water meadows. The modern field pattern is predominantly of large irregular fields with some discrete areas of strip fields which are possibly of medieval origin, associated with ridge and furrow.

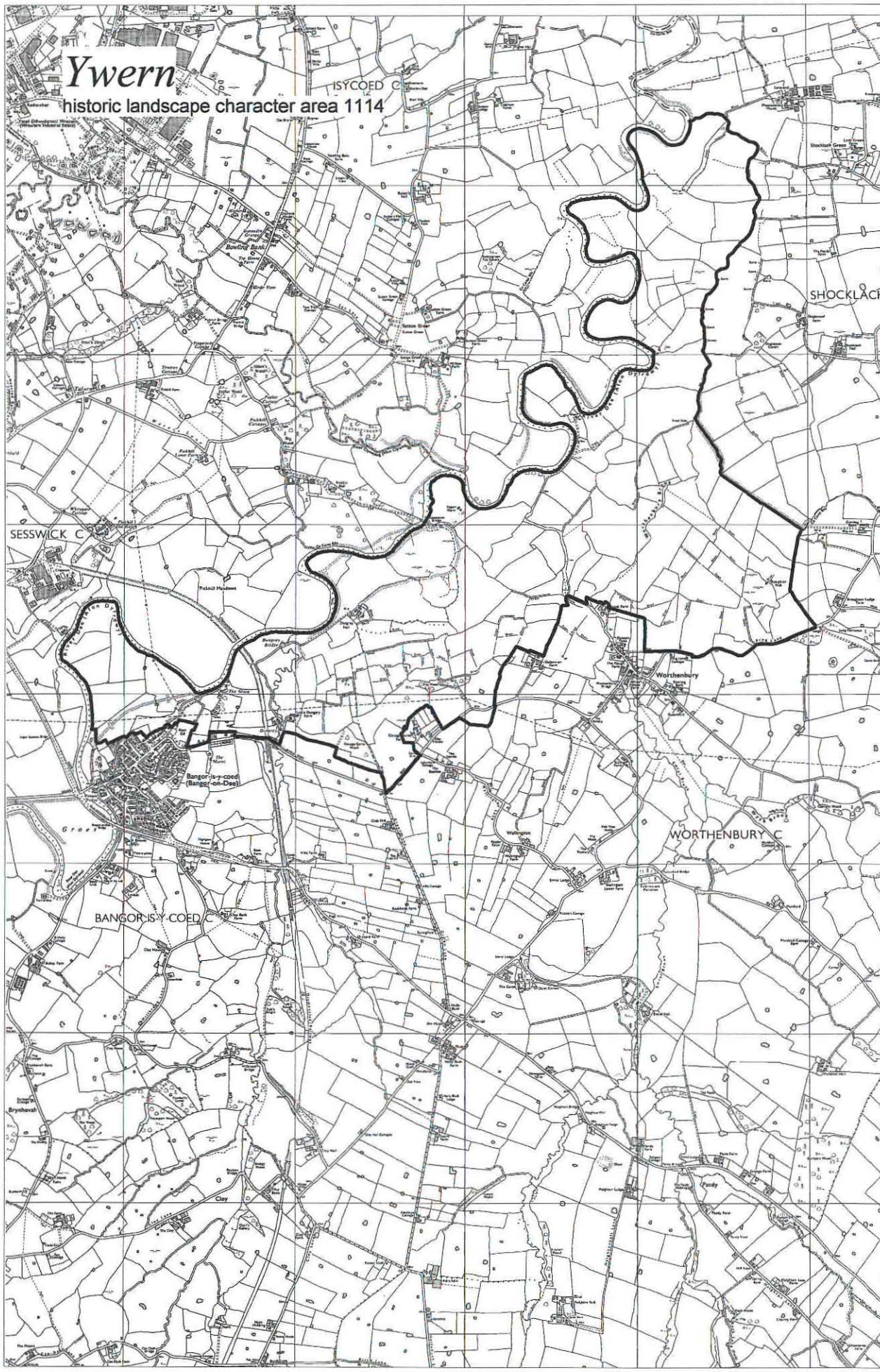
Communications are generally limited to the lanes and footpaths giving access to isolated farmsteads and parts of the river bank. The western part of the area was once crossed by the course of the *Wrexham and Ellesmere Railway*, constructed in the 1890s and closed in the 1960s, following which the viaduct across the river to the north of Bangor Is-y-coed was demolished.

Sources

Baughan 1991; Gurnell et al.; Pratt 1998; Pratt 1999; Sylvester 1969; Williams 1997; Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

Key historic landscape management issues

- management of areas of relict field systems including ridge and furrow and strip fields
- management of ancient sediments in alluvial deposits and river cut-offs which are of palaeoenvironmental significance



1115 ***Bangor Is-y-coed*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bangor Is-y-coed community

Modern expansion of historically important early medieval ecclesiastical centre and by a subsequent medieval nucleated church settlement, close to strategically important river crossing which has substantially expanded as a settlement in the 20th century.

Historic background

Bangor Is-y-coed is first documented in connection with the battle of Chester in about 616, when Aethelfrith, king of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria defeated British forces led by Brocmail (Brochfael), of the royal house of Powys, following which a considerable number of British monks were slaughtered. It continued in existence into the Middle Ages as an important religious centre as a *clas* church with a large ecclesiastical territory, probably associated with a relatively small secular settlement.

Key historic landscape characteristics

The settlement lies low-lying ground on the eastern bank of the River Dee, generally at a height of below 15 metres above Ordnance Datum.

Nothing visible remains of the early monastery, named 'Bancornaburg' by Bede, whose site may have been washed away as the River Dee shifted its course. Little is know of the development of the settlement during the medieval period, which consisted of under thirty houses at the end of the 17th century. By the end of the 19th century it formed a small nucleated settlement comprising the church, a group of houses along the High Street and beside the Whitchurch Road with a few close to the church on the Overton Road together with a coaching inn, rectory, nonconformist chapel, shop, free school, and brewery, with a station on the Wrexham-Ellesmere line just to the east. During the course of the 20th century the eastern side of the settlement saw a substantial and rapid expansion in new housing.

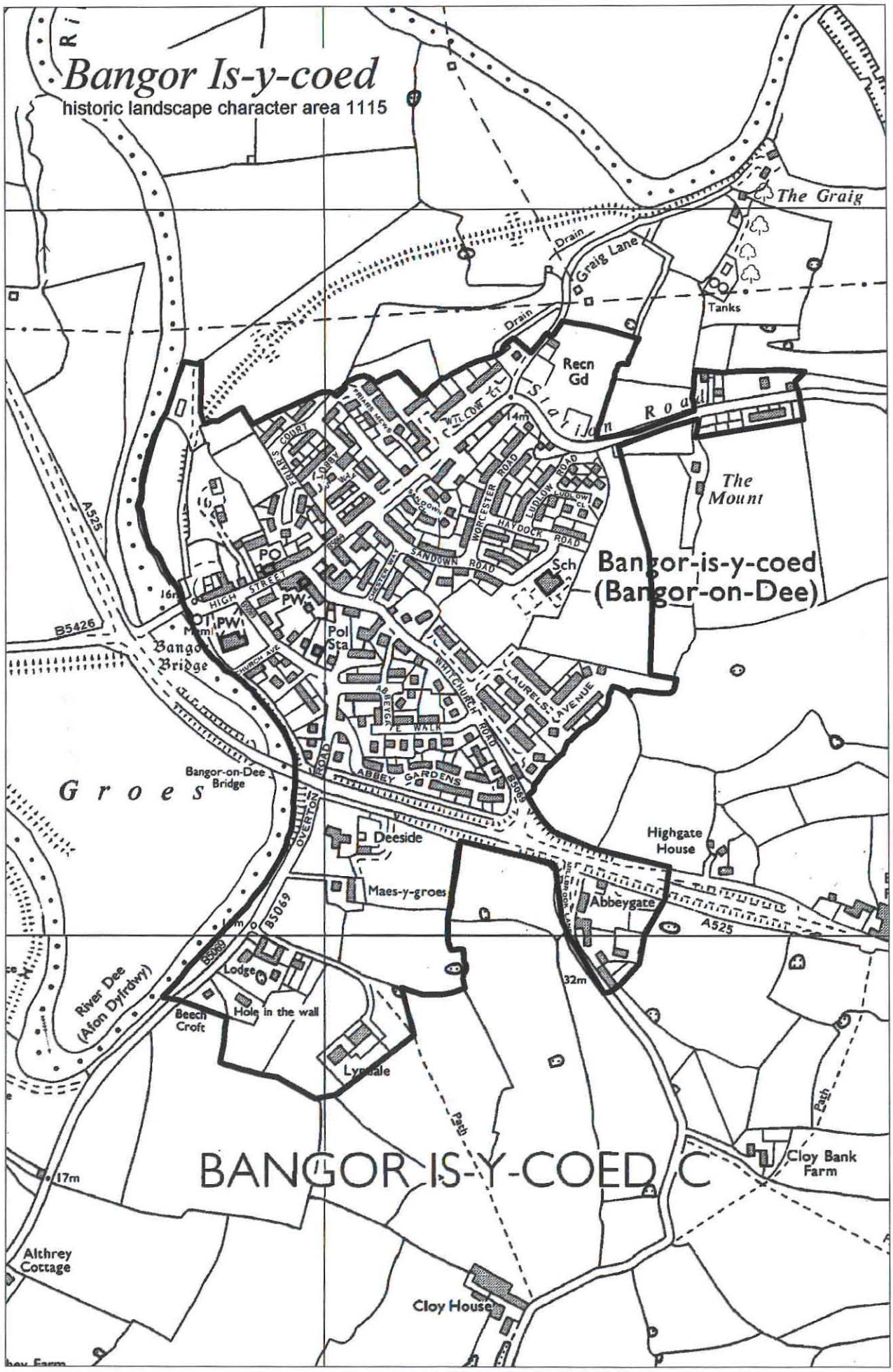
Parts of St Dunawd's Church appear to date from the 14th century, the church being extensively altered in the early 18th century when the three-storeyed brick tower with round-headed bell openings and urns as finials was added. The earliest surviving domestic structures include fragments of possibly early 17th-century timber buildings encased in later brick buildings, as in the case of The Stableyard in the High Street. Later buildings, of 18th- and 19th-century date are mostly brick-built. The earlier stone bridge, near church, is of medieval origins but the fabric is largely of 17th-century date. Due to the existence of the bridge the settlement became a significant nodal point in the medieval period and following the development of the turnpike roads in the 18th century.

Sources

Colgrave & Musgrove 1969; Defoe 1724-6; Edwards 1991; Gresham 1968; Hubbard 1986; Jervoise 1976; Lewis 1833; Morris-Jones & Parry-Williams 1933; Palmer 1889; Plummer 1896; Pratt & Veysey 1977; Pratt 1992a; Pratt 1992b; Pryce 1992; Silvester et al. 1992; Soulsby 1983; Thomas 1962; Tucker 1958; Williams 1997; Listed Buildings lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

Key historic landscape management issues

- fabric, character and setting of historic buildings including houses, church and bridge
- buried archaeological deposits associated with the early medieval and medieval ecclesiastical centre and settlement



1116 ***Brynhovah*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bangor Is-y-coed and Overton communities

Valley-bottom farmland with scattered farms and winding lanes, relict medieval open field cultivation represented by strip fields and ridge and furrow, the fieldscape evidently reorganised into a pattern of large irregular fields after the Middle Ages.

Historic background

Early settlement and land use is possibly indicated by a 2nd-century Roman coin found near Cloy House. The historic character area formed part of the medieval ecclesiastical parish of Bangor Is-y-coed and probably includes areas of land farmed by the self-sufficient early medieval community at Bangor in the late 5th and early 6th century. Documentary evidence of the 16th and 17th centuries suggests the existence of open fields which probably had their origin in manors established at both Bangor and Overton and farmed from those settlements in the early Middle Ages. An expansion in woodland clearance and the extension of arable farmland probably took place in the southern part of the area as a consequence of the Crown's policy of free timber and land being offered rent-free for 10 years to English settlers taking up residence in the new borough of Overton in the 1290s, and probably involving some lands confiscated from native Welsh landowners who had sided with Llywelyn in the previous decade. An early mill site is probably indicated by the place-name Millbrook, to the south of Bangor Is-y-coed, first recorded in 1290 as *Milnbrook*.

Key historic landscape characteristics

The historic landscape character area occupies an undulating swathe of farmland between Bangor Is-y-coed and Overton, to the west of Mill Brook, a tributary of the Dee, generally lying between 30–60 metres above Ordnance Datum. Present-day land-use is predominantly pastoral, though there are some small parcels of broadleaved and deciduous woodland plantation.

The fieldscape is predominantly one of large irregular fields though there are clear patterns of strip fields representing former open fields particularly on the southern and eastern sides of both Bangor and Overton. Documentary evidence of the 16th century suggests at least two open fields at Bangor called 'Maes mawr' and 'Maes y groes' divided into strip fields often with Welsh names. The widespread survival of ridge and furrow within the historic landscape area is probably also to be associated with medieval open field cultivation. Many of the areas of ridge and furrow are found outside the areas where strip fields have survived, however, suggesting that widespread reorganisation of the landscape took place following enclosure of the open fields during the late medieval and early post-medieval periods. Marl pits, probably mostly of late medieval and early post-medieval date, are widely distributed throughout the area.

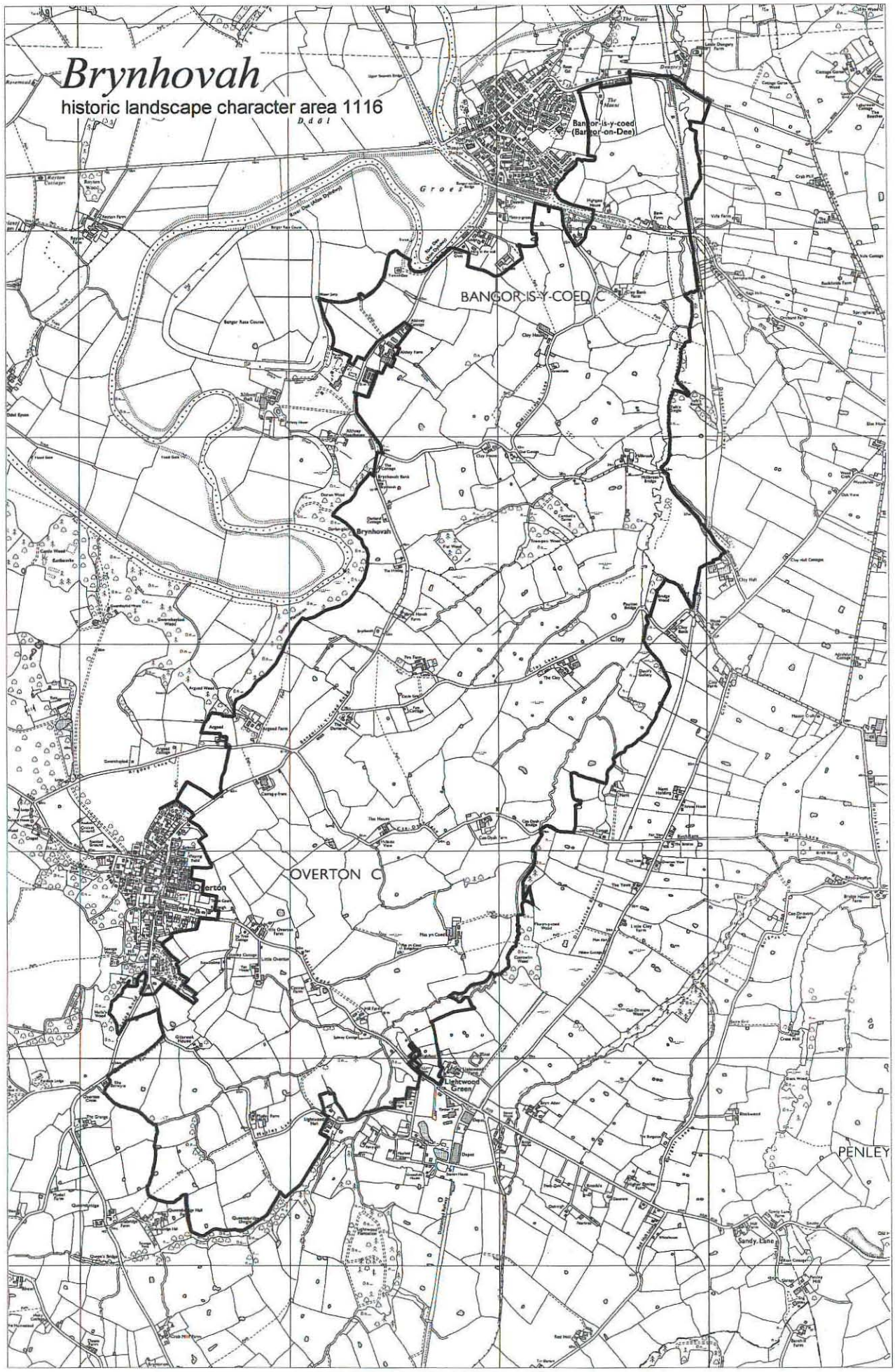
Settlement is generally confined to quite widely scattered farms and smallholdings, mostly with English names, some of which appear to have emerged from the break-up of the medieval open fields during the later medieval and early post-medieval periods. Characteristic buildings reflecting the history of land use and land tenure in the area include Plas yn Coed, originally a large, late 17th-century brick-built set on a stone plinth, the mid 18th-century brick-built farmhouse at Argoed, a model example of an estate farmhouse reflecting the prosperity of the area at that time, finally Brynhovah Cottage, an 18th-century smallholder's house and attached byre, together with frequent small and medium-sized brick-built farmhouses and outbuildings of 19th-century date. The settlements are typically linked by such as Musley Lane, Cloy Lane, Cae-Dyah Lane and Millbrook Lane, which wind their way though the fields and which are probably mostly of medieval or earlier origin.

Sources

Sylvester 1969; Silvester et al. 1992; Wiliam 1986; Listed Buildings lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record;

Key historic landscape management issues

- fieldscape character which includes surviving traces of medieval open field cultivation represented by strip fields, areas of ridge and furrow, and winding lanes
- marl pits represented by hollows and ponds as part of the fabric of the historic landscape and for potential waterlogged deposits
- fabric, character and setting of historic farmhouses and farm buildings



1117 ***Bryn-y-Pys*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bangor Is-y-coed and Overton communities

Varied, picturesque area of meadowland, farmland, wooded slopes, former parkland belonging to a number of country houses, and race-course bordering the eastern banks of the River Dee, including a number of strategic river crossings.

Historic background

Early settlement is possibly represented by the possible prehistoric Iron Age hillfort on the banks of the Dee, known as Gwernheylod Banks promontory fort, formerly interpreted as a damaged medieval motte and bailey castle. The strategic importance of the area is probably also indicated by the fact that an important manorial centre had been established in this area by Madog ap Meredudd, ruler of Powys, in about 1138, thought to have been associated with a castle now washed away by the River Dee in the Asney Park area. A mill had been established, probably on the bank of the Dee near the present weir south of Min-yr-afon by the end of the 13th century. A fishery, presumably for salmon, had also been established here by the late 13th century, the fishing rights here at one time being owned by the Cistercian monastery at Valle Crucis.

Key historic landscape characteristics

Meadowland and farmland on the eastern bank of the River Dee, generally between 15–60 metres above Ordnance Datum, with sinuous strips of ancient broadleaved woodland with some more recent conifer and poplar plantations on the steeper slopes and river banks. Modern land use is predominantly pasture.

Present-day settlement is largely confined to a number of scattered farms together with a small number of roadside houses and cottages, including several lodges and other buildings formerly associated with country houses. Late medieval and possibly earlier settlement is represented by the half-timbered house at Althrey Hall, about 1.5 kilometres to the south-west of Bangor Is-y-coed, possibly built on the site of an earlier moated hall, and thought to have been built for Richard ap Howel in the late 15th century. The high status of the house has been recognised for many centuries, having been described by John Leland as 'a fair house' in the 1530s and drawn by the topographical artist John Ingleby in 1780. Two further important gentry houses in the character area have been demolished — Gwernheylod House, a house dating from the 17th century, demolished in about 1860, and Bryn-y-Pys, a Georgian house, probably built in the 1730s and demolished in the 1950s — which formed the centres of landed estates, both associated with buildings which reflect an earlier 19th-century interest in building model examples of estate buildings. Gwernheylod lay on the edge of the wooded area associated parkland near the bank of the Dee, and amongst other things is survived by and earlier 19th-century brick-built stable-block with a central light well with dove boxes, and by the earthworks of a former 18th-century folly in Castle Wood from which small cannon were once fired on occasion. The country house at Bryn-y-Pys which once lay about 1.5 kilometres to the north-east of Overton, is similarly survived by its former parkland, by its former brick-built 18th-century stable range with coachhouse and dovecote with about 80 doveboxes, together with characteristic entrance lodges, gate piers and gates. The house, then the seat of Richard Parry Price, was visited by Thomas Pennant in the 1780s when it possessed a fine collection of birds including a pair of Angolan vultures.

The picturesque setting near the banks of the River Dee played an important role in the development of this group of country houses in the 18th and earlier 19th centuries. In the case of Gwernheylod (Gwernhailed) Pennant commented as follows: 'the seat of Mr. Fletcher, in this parish, must not pass unnoticed. Few places command so rich a view; and few have been more judicously improved. It stands on the lofty brow that skirts the country.

Beneath runs the Dee'. The Dee at Overton Bridge is described by Pennant as flowing 'picturesquely between lofty banks, admirably described by the inimitable pencil of Mr. Sandy', reproduced in his *Twelve Views of North Wales* published in 1776. Surviving early 19th-century buildings in which exploited the picturesques setting of Overton Bridge include the large stone-built house at Min-yr-afon, possibly remodelled from an earlier building. Characteristic of the larger yet more modest farmhouses in the character area is Asney Park, a late 18th-century two-storey brick-built farmhouse, brick with slate roof, in a loop of the Dee about 2 kilometres to the north-west of Overton.

Some discrete areas of ridge and furrow have been recorded near Althrey Hall, Asney Park Farm and Maes-Gwaelod which probably represent small medieval open field, also suggested by the place-name element *maes*. The medieval origin of the ridge and furrow is also suggested by documentary references to strip fields in the area of Althrey in the 13th and 14th century. References are also made to the dole field or common meadow at Althrey in the mid 16th century, which presumably occupied the riverside meadows in the area now occupied by Bangor Racecourse. The riverside meadows to the west of Overton and elsewhere along the river bank were likewise probably occupied by common meadows intermixed with strips of woodland and relatively small and scattered ploughlands. The present-day field pattern is dominated by a pattern of relatively large irregular fields which emerged from this diverse pattern of land use as a result of enclosure probably from the mid 16th century onwards. Significant farm-buildings include the 17th-century timber-framed barn at Althrey Woodhouse. Marl pits, probably mostly of late medieval and early post-medieval date, are thinly scattered across the area, in the fields above the floodplain.

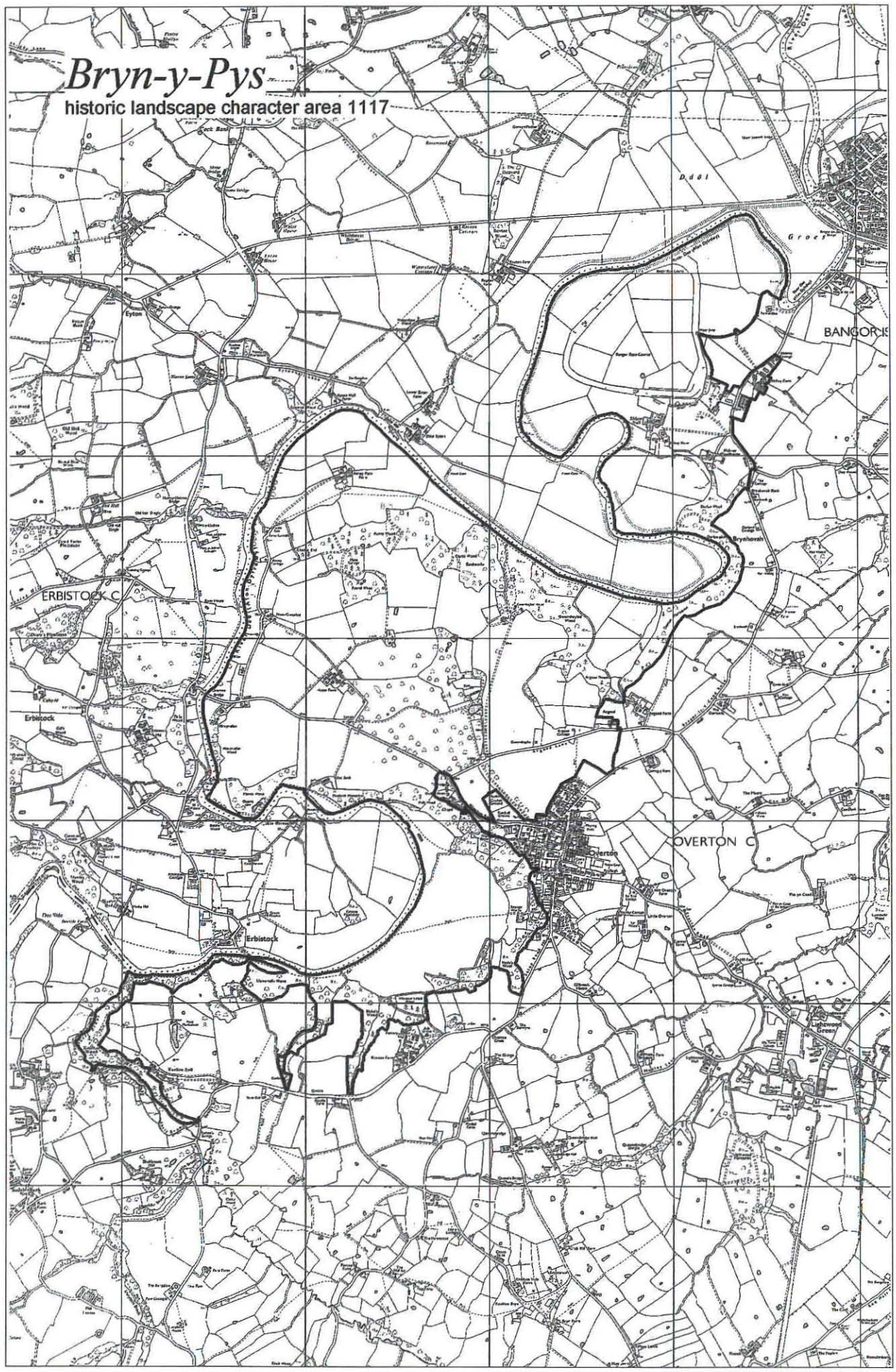
The area is crossed by the main road from Overton to Ruabon and Wrexham, a former turnpike road which crosses the River Dee at Overton Bridge, an early 19th-century stone bridge which replaced an earlier ferry. A further ford and ferry crossed the river at the southern end of the area, between Erbistock and Llan-y-cefn.

Sources

Lewis 1833; Howson 1883; Hubbard 1986; King 1983; Pennant 1784; Pratt 1965; Pratt & Veysey 1977; Smith 1988; Smith 2001; Silvester et al. 1992; Sylvester 1969; Williams 1990; Listed Building lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

Key historic landscape management issues

- defences and interior of Gwernheylod Banks Iron Age promontory fort
- fieldscape character, including surviving traces medieval open field cultivation represented by areas of ridge and furrow
- marl pits represented by hollows and ponds as part of the fabric of the historic landscape and for potential waterlogged deposits
- fabric, character and setting of historic farmhouses and farm buildings
- parkland, lodges, stables, folly and other structures associated with now-demolished country houses
- historic bridges, milestones and other structures associated with the turnpike roads



1118 *Overton* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Overton community

Planted medieval borough, possibly superseding early medieval farming settlement, which became a fashionable small market town in the 18th and 19th centuries and continued as the administrative centre for the locality until local government reorganisation until 1974.

Historic background

Place-name evidence suggests that Overton may have originated as a Saxon agricultural settlement in perhaps the 8th or 9th century, the name being derived from the Old English place-name elements *ofer tun* meaning 'tun on the bank'. The name is first recorded with reference to an important Welsh manorial centre held by Madog ap Meredudd, ruler of Powys, in about 1138, subsequently forming part of the estate of Gruffudd Maelor, the Welsh ruler of northern Powys by the early 13th century, possibly focused on a former castle on the bank of the River Dee in the Asney area, 2km away from the town. The status of an earlier settlement at Overton is uncertain, but a market was established here in 1279 and in 1292 it acquired borough status by means of a royal charter, by which time the town's population included fifty-six taxpayers, many of whom are likely to have been English settlers. The town continued to prosper during the 13th and 14th centuries and by the early 14th century its population included a number of relatively affluent Welsh families. The town was evidently badly damaged during the Glyndŵr revolt in 1403, and though it may have taken many years to recover it became the administrative centre for the hundred of *Maelor Saesneg* in the county of Flintshire at the Act of Union in 1536. By the 18th century the town had re-emerged as a relatively prosperous settlement, though by the early 19th century the market had been discontinued and with little trade and manufacturing being undertaken within it.

Key historic landscape characteristics

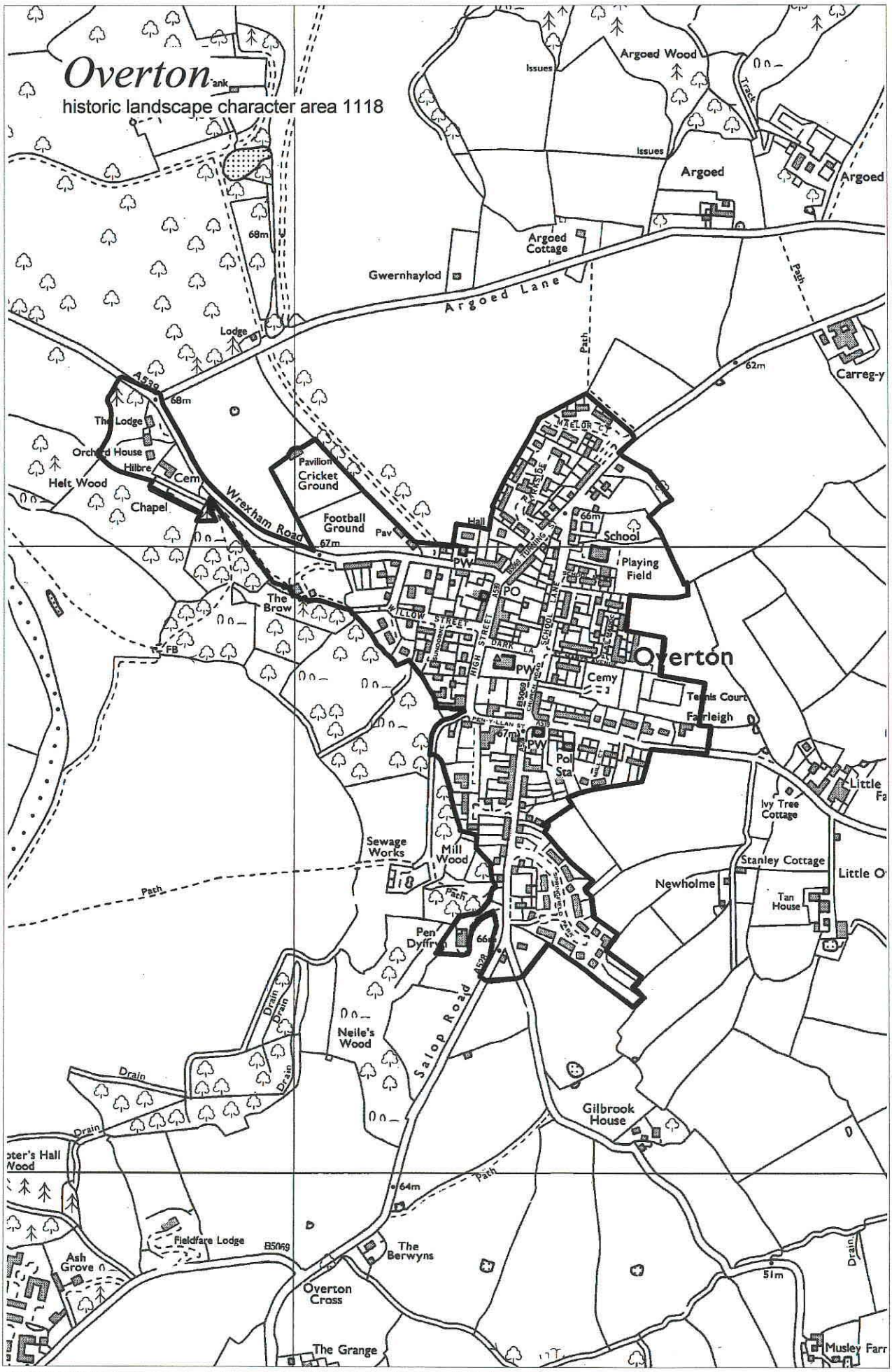
The town lies on flat ground close to an old river scarp above the Dee, and generally lies between 50–60 metres above Ordnance Datum. The older core of the settlement has grid-like pattern of streets of medieval original which developed around the medieval marketplace occupying the broader part of High Street, to the north of the church. Little structural evidence of medieval date has survived above ground apart from St Mary's Church, extensively rebuilt in the 18th and 19th centuries. An earlier building horizon of the 16th and 17th centuries is represented by a small half-timbered cottage near the churchyard, by the front elevation of Quinta Cottage, and by traces of timber-framing visible in the rear elevations of a terrace of houses rebuilt in brick in the 18th century in the High Street. Many of the older buildings in the settlement are of 18th- and early 19th-century date, many of which are painted, including larger detached houses such as Gwydyr House (variously a public house, private residence and shop), Pen-y-llan House (a former malthouse and shop), and terraced houses and cottages, including a number of buildings of a picturesque character, such as The Quinta, with its oriel window, ornate bargeboards and arched windows. In addition to the more substantial middle-class houses, by the end of the 19th century the settlement also included estate workers' cottages, church school, shops, almshouses, cocoa rooms, estate office for the Bryn-y-Pys estate, Methodist chapel, malthouse, rectory, and cemetery chapel. Its importance as a local centre into the early 20th century is further reflected by the former council offices of and the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Welsh Martyrs both built in the 1950s

Sources

Done & Williams 1992; Fryde 1970–71; Lewis 1833; Gresham 1968; Howson 1883; Hubbard 1986; Pennant 1784; Silvester et al. 1992; Soulsby 1983; Sylvester 1969; Tucker 1958; Listed Building lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

Key historic landscape management issues

- buried archaeological deposits associated with medieval and possibly early medieval settlement
- medieval road pattern and post-medieval townscape
- fabric, character and setting of historic buildings which illustrate the history of the town



1119 *Knolton* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA
Overton community

Scattered farms and irregular fields of medieval and late medieval origin and irregular fields with discrete area of former medieval open field.

Historic background

Much of the character area formerly fell within the township of Knolton in the 19th-century ecclesiastical parish of Overton. Early settlement of perhaps the 8th or 9th centuries is suggested by the Old English place-name elements *cnoll* and *tun* ('knoll settlement'), though the name itself if first recorded in the early 14th century.

Key historic landscape characteristics

The character area occupies a ridge of higher ground along the south-western boundary of *Maelor Saesneg*, generally between 50–90 metres above Ordnance Datum, which slopes gently to the north-east and more steeply to the wooded slopes along the Dee valley on the north-west and the Shell Brook on the south-west, the latter of which forms the boundary with England.

The predominant fieldscape within the character area is one of large and small irregular fields which may derive largely from piecemeal woodland clearance and enclosure from the Middle Ages onwards, though a discrete pattern of strip fields in the area of Knolton suggests a discrete area of medieval open field cultivation, which perhaps correspond with documentary references to open strip fields in the 13th and 14th centuries. Relatively little ridge and furrow cultivation is recorded within the area though it includes a dense scatter of marl pits. Modern land use is mostly permanent grassland, fields generally being bounded by low cut multi-species hedges.

Settlement is characterized by a of widely dispersed farmsteads suggesting medieval and later freehold farming, a scatter of cottages and smallholdings in the area to the south of Rhewl, and the loosely nucleated farms and houses in the hamlet of Knolton Bryn. A number of the houses have early origins, including the Llan-y-cefn farmhouse, originally a probably 15th/16th-century cruck-built building now faced in brick. Knolton Hall, Top Farm farmhouse, Gwalia farmhouse and Model Farm, though substantially remodelled or extended in the 18th and 19th centuries, all preserve evidence of earlier timber-framed phases probably of the 16th century, Knolton Hall having been remodelled to form a substantial country house. Llan-y-cefn, Gwalia and Top Farm all have characteristic complexes of outbuildings indicating relative prosperity during the 18th and 19th centuries, including byre, stable and cartshed at Gwalia, a stable range, summerhouse, icehouse, coachhouse and cowhouse at Llan-y-cefn. Characteristic of smaller farms and smallholdings in the character area is The Homestead, a small 19th-century house and barn, all under the same roof, of a type which was probably once much more common in the area. The cluster of buildings at Knolton Bryn appears to overlie an area of former medieval open field, suggesting that the settlement here may owe its origin to a period of enclosure in the post-medieval period. Lying a little distance from the parish church at Overton, Knolton was provided with a corrugated-iron mission church in the 1890s, typical of the kind of subsidiary often provided for scattered rural communities of this kind, lying at a little distance from the parish centre.

Substantial improvements to the public roads in the character area in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the visible legacy of these improvements being the several milestones with cast-iron plates on the former turnpike road between Ellesmere and Wrexham (A528) and Barton's Bridge, a small, stone-arched road bridge across the Shell Brook, on the border between England and Wales, said to have been built by Thomas Telford in 1819. During the 20th century, between 1914–62 the area was served by the small station at Trench Halt, on the

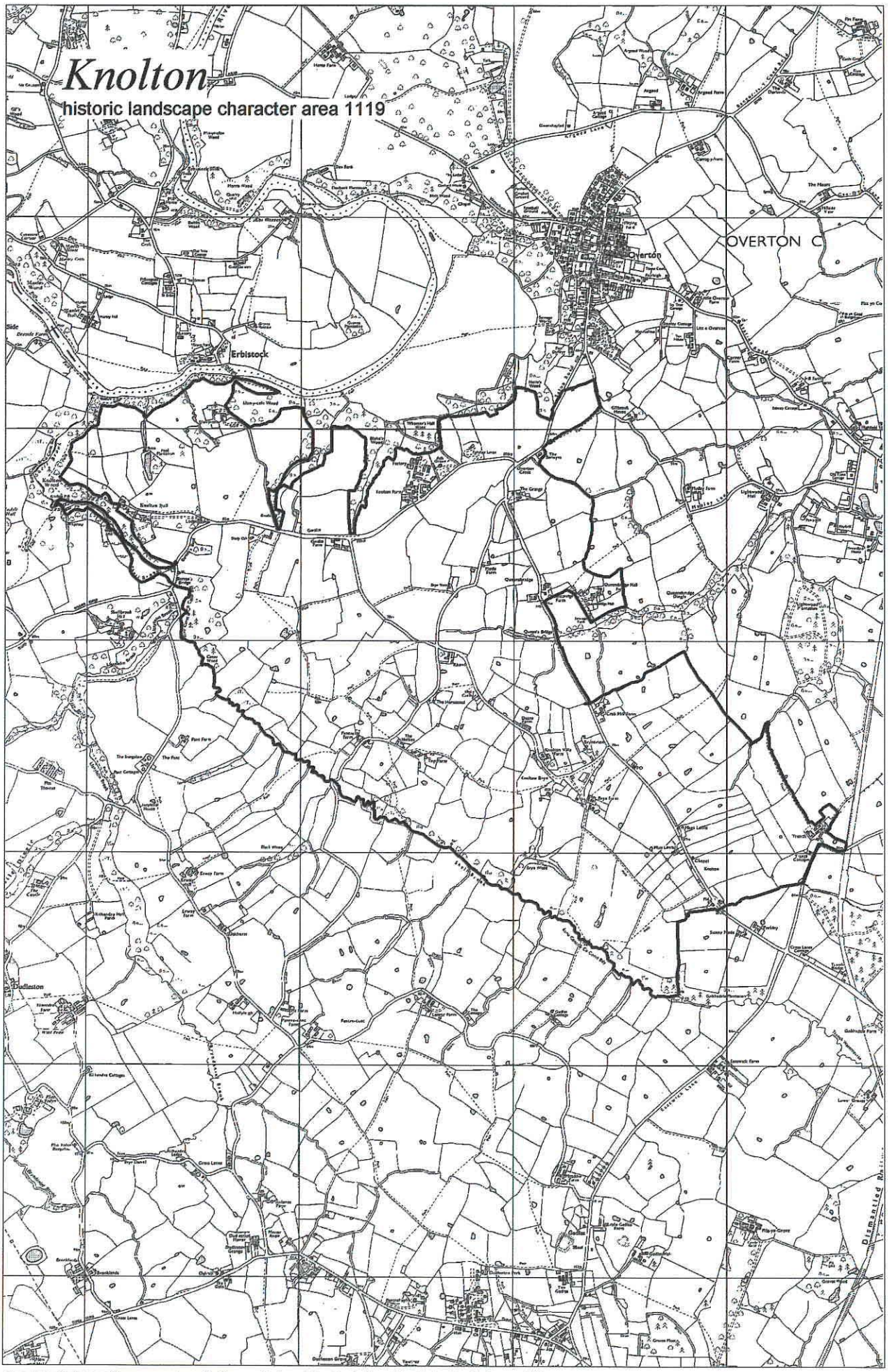
Wrexham and Ellesmere railway line, of which little trace now survives.

Sources

Baughan 1991; Charles 1938; Sylvester 1969; Listed Building lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

Key historic landscape management issues

- fieldscape character, including surviving traces medieval open field cultivation represented by areas of ridge and furrow
- marl pits represented by hollows and ponds as part of the fabric of the historic landscape and for potential waterlogged deposits
- fabric, character and setting of historic farmhouses and farm buildings illustrating the history of agriculture
- historic bridges, milestones and other structures associated with road improvements in the 18th and 19th centuries



1120 ***Halghton*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bangor Is-y-coed, Hanmer, Maelor South, Overton and Willington Worthenbury communities

Extensive area of medieval strip fields and ridge and furrow with associated moated sites, scattered farms and later small roadside settlements.

Historic background

Early agricultural settlements of perhaps the 8th and 9th centuries is suggested by place-names Halghton, Wallington and Willington with the Old English element *–tun*, though there is no further historical evidence relating to these settlements before the Middle Ages. The small village at Worthenbury, whose name includes the Old English place-name element *burh* ('stronghold'), signifying a defensive structure of some kind. Worthenbury (*Hurdingberie*) is one of the few settlements in *Maelor Saesneg* which are specifically mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086, and which before the Norman conquest formed a manor held by Edwin, the Saxon earl of Mercia. Tenants at Worthenbury at the time of the conquest included an unnamed knight and three unnamed Frenchmen, all of whom may have been granted lands in return for military service. Apart from Worthenbury, the area remained at some remove from early ecclesiastical centres. Even the church at Worthenbury, however, first mentioned in the later 14th century, remained a dependent chapelry within the parish of Bangor Is-y-coed until the late 17th century.

Key historic landscape characteristics

Relatively flat and low-lying area, generally between 30–60 metres above Ordnance Datum and sloping to the north, dissected by a number of small wooded streams such as Emral Brook and Mill Brook which are tributaries of the Worthenbury Brook which join the River Dee at Shocklach Green.

Little is known of the early settlement within the character area despite the place-name evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlements of perhaps the 8th to 10th centuries, probably focused on a number of dispersed agricultural manors, Halghton itself, for example, having neither a village nor church. A subsequent phase of settlement is represented by a distinctive group of 5–6 moated sites including those at Halghton Hall, Halghton Lodge, Holly Bush Farm, Lightwood Farm, Bryn, Peartree Lane and possibly at Mulsford Hall, which were no doubt originally associated with timber halls which have long since vanished above ground. They appear to have been the focus of a number of smaller manors, perhaps established in the wake of the Edwardian conquest of Wales in the later 13th century, and possibly represent a colonising phase of agriculture, during which extensive areas of arable land were first exploited on an intensive scale.

The fieldscapes within the character area are dominated by strip fields and reorganised strip fields of medieval origin, many of which are associated with ridge and furrow, together with other field patterns including both large and small regular fields which may have originated from the enclosure of former open fields. Little documentary evidence of the organisation of the open fields has survived , though reference was made to open field strips in Willington in the 15th century. Modern land use is predominantly grassland, fields being characteristically defined by multi-species hedges with scattered mature hedgerow oaks.

Later settlement, probably largely dating from the early post-medieval period onwards, is represented by a number of linear settlements that grew up along roadsides and near important road junctions, such as those at Holly Bush, Little Cloy and Halghton Lane.

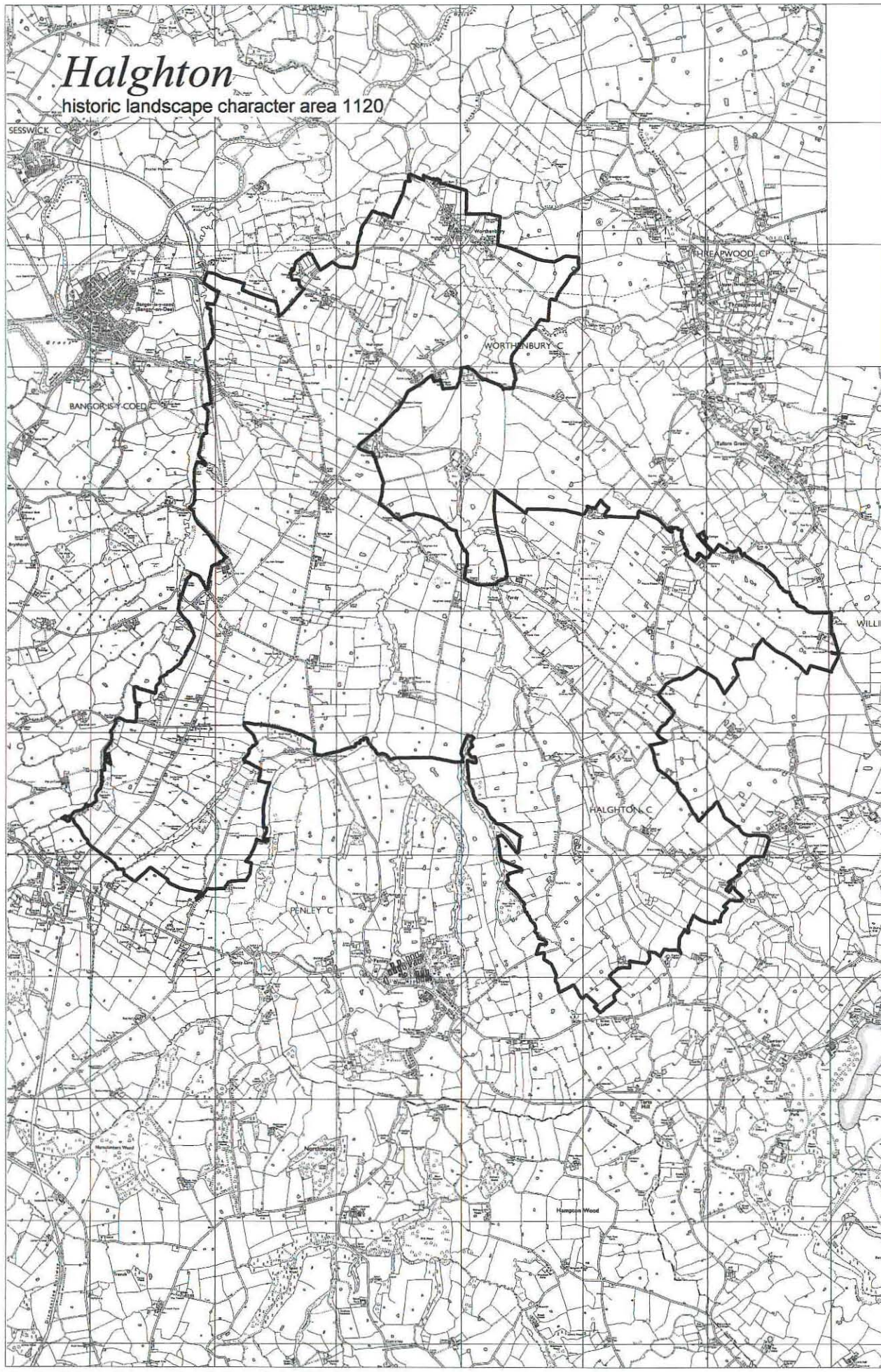
Early halls assumed to have been associated with the moated sites were replaced chronologically and occasionally on adjacent sites by a series of 16th- to 17th-century timber-framed farmhouses such as Buck Farm, Willington Cross, The Dukes, The Fields, The Bryn, and Peartree Farm, which were generally extended in brick in the later 17th to early 19th centuries. Other farmhouses such as those Mulsford Hall and Holly Bush Farm are characteristic substantial brick-built farmhouses of the mid and later 18th century.

Sources

Aberg 1978; Baughan 1991; Charles 1938; Hill 1981; Hubbard 1986; Musson 1994; Pratt 1964; 1998; 1999; Silvester et al. 1992; Spurgeon 1991; Sylvester 1969; Listed Building lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

Key historic landscape management issues

- fieldscape character, including surviving traces medieval open field cultivation represented by areas of ridge and furrow
- marl pits represented by hollows and ponds as part of the fabric of the historic landscape and for potential waterlogged deposits
- fabric, character and setting of historic farmhouses and farm buildings illustrating the history of agriculture
- earthworks, buried archaeological deposits and setting of moated sites
- fabric, character and setting of historic buildings which illustrate the history of Worthenbury
- buried archaeological deposits associated with medieval and possibly early medieval settlement at Worthenbury
- historic bridges, milestones and other structures associated with road improvements in the 18th and 19th centuries



1121 *Emral* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Hanmer and Willington Worthenbury communities

Former17th-century landscape park with buildings and structures associated with now-demolished country house belonging to important Anglo-Welsh borderland family.

Historic background

The historic landscape area is focused on the now-demolished Emral Hall, the seat of the Puleston family, an important Anglo-Welsh family in the borderlands, who resided there in uninterrupted succession between the reign of Edward I and the 1930s when the estate was sold off and the house demolished. The family derived their name from the manor of Pilston or Puleston new Newport, Shropshire, Sir Roger de Puleston, a trusted officer of the king and associated with 'Embers-hall' in 1283, probably being the first of his line to establish a seat here in the wake of the conquest of Wales. He was appointed first sheriff of Anglesey and as such was responsible for levying the unpopular tax on moveables which precipitated the revolt led by Madog ap Llywelyn in the autumn of 1294, during the course of which he lost his life in a Welsh raid on the borough of Caernarfon. The early hall was most probably associated with a moated site of which the Emral Brook is thought to have formed the eastern side. Like a number of other prominent local families of English origin the Pulestons were later to become fully absorbed within Anglo-Welsh cultural and political life, becoming patrons of many Welsh poets, including Guto'r Glyn, Gutun Owain and Lewys Glyn Cothi, for successive generations between the mid 14th century and the end of the 16th. Robert Puleston was one of a number of prominent landowners in *Maelor Saesneg* who had sided with Owain Glyn D@r at an early stage of the Welsh rebellion in the early years of the 15th century. A chapel dedicated to St Thomas the Martyr existed here in the 1440s which was demolished in the 1770s.

During the Civil War the king's forces were billeted at Emral in 1642, possibly within a later medieval hall which had replaced an earlier hall at the site. Sir John Puleston (*c.* 1583–1659) judge, lived at Emral Hall in 1650s, installed Philip Henry as minister of Worthenbury of which he had bought the advowson, and tutor to his children. Henry lived at Emral until Puleston built him a house at Worthenbury, said of his patron that in renewing leases on the estate he substituted for the customary obligation of keeping a hound or a hawk for the landlord to that of keeping a Bible in the house.

A new larger house was built in about the 1660s, which together with additions in the 1720s and 1890s probably extended over parts of the earlier moat. The house was demolished in 1936 and considered to be a serious architectural loss. Much material was used to fill in the remains of the moat though parts of the house were re-erected at Portmeirion by the architect Clough Williams-Ellis.

Key historic landscape characteristics

The historic landscape character area occupies gently sloping ground along the banks of the Emral Brook, generally between about 15–30 metres above Ordnance Datum and despite the demolition of Emral Hall itself still contains many characteristic traces of a country house cultural landscape. Surviving from the early 18th-century are two brick-built stable blocks and courtyard, partly forming part of the present Emral Stud and partly converted to residential use, designed by the same architect as the well-known Georgian church dedicated to St Deiniol at Worthenbury. Contemporary with the stable blocks are the single-span stone bridge with brick parapets, formerly with 'pepper-pot' guardrooms to either side, which originally lay on the main drive to the house, together with the partly subterranean circular brick ice-house with domed roof. Two of the original three lodges survive, the fabric being predominantly of 19th-century date.

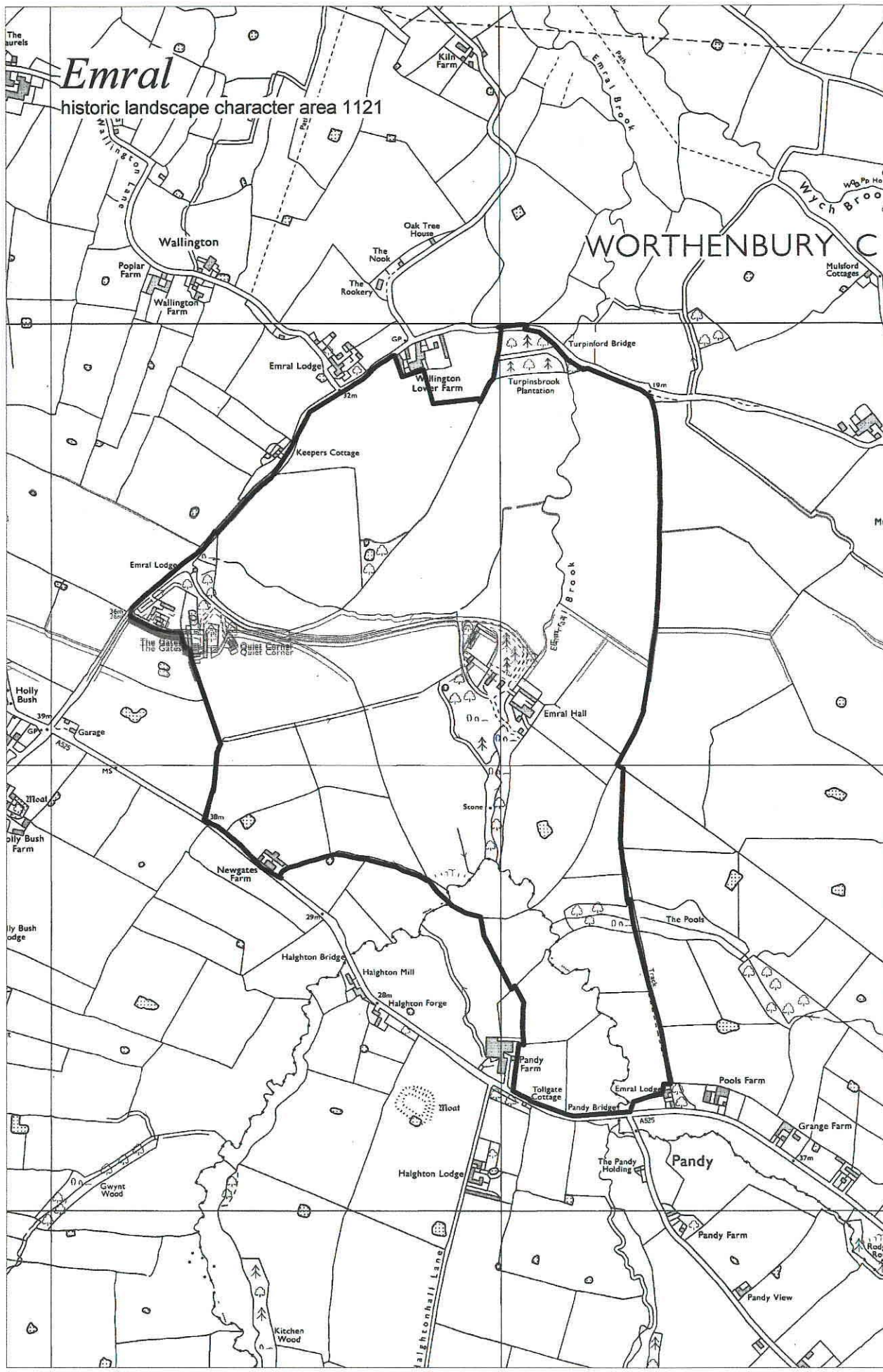
A large oval enclosure marks the boundary of the small landscape park, probably of 18th-century origin, which once surrounded the former hall. There are widespread traces of ridge and furrow cultivation within the parkland boundary which probably represent medieval open field contemporary with the medieval hall and moated site, first emparked in perhaps the 17th or 18th century. Present-day land use is predominantly grassland, subdived by post and wire fences.

Sources

Harrison 1974; Hubbard 1986; Jones 1933; Lee 1888; Lewis 1833; Lloyd & Jenkins 1959; Lloyd 1986; Manley et al. 1991; Pennant 1784; Stephens 1986; Sylvester 1969; Listed Building lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- fieldscape character, including surviving traces medieval open field cultivation represented by areas of ridge and furrow
- buried archaeological deposits associated with now infilled medieval moated site and subsequent demolished 17th-century hall
- buildings and structures associated with now-demolished country house



1122 ***Mulsford*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Willington Worthenbury community

Predominantly agricultural landscape of scattered farms of late medieval origin associated with ridge and furrow cultivation and irregular field patterns with 'green' settlement at Tallarn Green.

Historic background

Early settlement within the historic landscape character area of perhaps the 8th to 10th century is suggested by the place-name Broughton which contains the Anglo-Saxon place-name element *–tun* indicating a farm or small settlement, though the name itself is only first recorded in the 1530s. By the early 19th-century Broughton Hall had become the focus of a small agricultural estate which occupied much of the parish of Worthenbury which probably emerged from the enclosure of former common open fields. The 'green' settlement at Tallarn Green, which appears to represent encroachment within a former area of common grazing, was first documented by Edward Lhwyd in the 1690s.

Key historic landscape characteristics

Relatively low-lying rural agricultural area, between about 15–50 metres above Ordnance Datum, gently sloping to the north and west, and down to the Wych Brook on the eastern side of the area which forms the boundary between Wrexham and Cheshire. The character area contains a reasonably high proportion of ridge and furrow which probably has its origins in medieval open field cultivation. Fieldscapes are dominated by large and small irregular field boundaries, the association between ridge and furrow and irregular field patterns perhaps indicating widespread reorganisation of field boundaries in the post-medieval period. Numerous marl pits are scattered throughout the area, many of which are now ponds. Modern land use is mostly pasture, with field boundaries formed by multi-species hedgerows

The earliest visible settlement evidence in the area is represented by the moated site to the south of Tallarn Green which probably represents a small medieval manorial centre of the later 13th or 14th century. A latter settlement pattern is represented by the distribution of farms in the area, some of which probably emerged from the break up and enclosure of the former commons in the later medieval period. Characteristic of this period are the farmhouse at Glandeg and Oak Farm, both of which contain traces of former timber-framed buildings of perhaps the early 17th century, both subsequently extended in brick in the 19th century, smaller rural dwellings of this period being represented by Bridge Cottages, Tallarn Green. Broughton Hall, which probably originated in at least the earlier 16th century, and described in Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of Wales* as 'a spacious mansion', shared the same fate as many other former country houses in *Maelor Saesneg*, being demolished in 1961, survived by two of three former gate lodges.

The long linear settlement at Tallarn Green occupies a spur of land between the Wych Brook and one of its tributaries, merging on the north-west with the settlement that has grown up around Sarn Bridge. At the time of the enclosure award of 1770s it consisted of a narrow tract of unenclosed land occupied by about a dozen dwellings. The enclosure award divided the common into fields and formalised a road along the length of the spur, thus opening the way for the construction of new cottages besides the road on what had previously been common land. The complement of buildings in Tallarn Green are characteristic of a relatively modern settlement of this form, including a new stone church the early 1870 dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, a parsonage of the 1880s with some half-timbering, together with the Kenyon Cottages of the early 1890s, two single-storeyed dwellings for widows with a labourer's house between, in a timber-framed, revivalist vernacular style considered appropriate for philanthropic buildings of this kind, and the Tallarn Green Temperance Room, a purpose-built Methodist

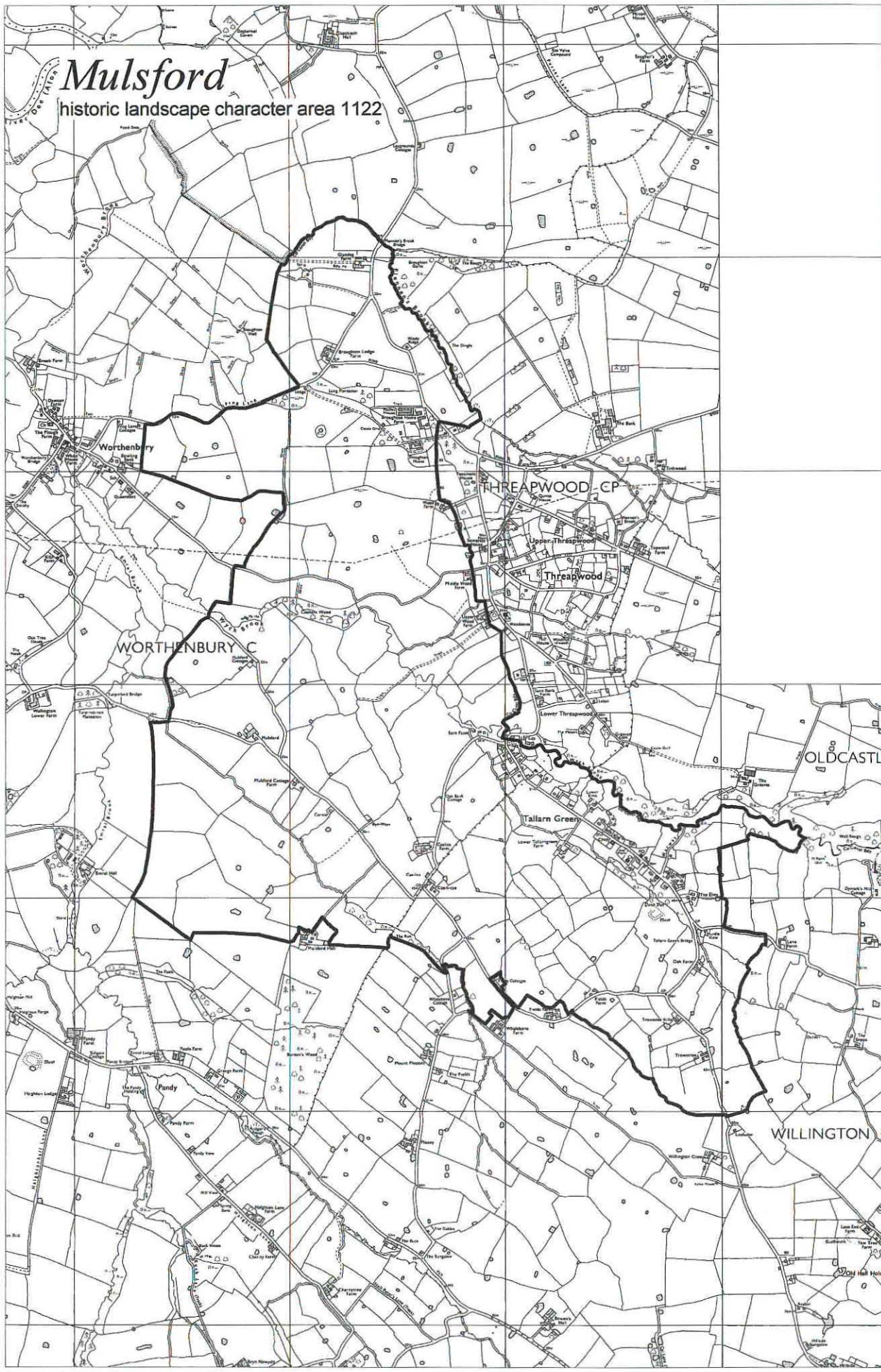
Temperance Room, dated 1890, probably also built by Lord Kenyon of Gredington, an active promoter of the Temperance Movement.

Sources

Charles 1938; Harrison 1974; Hubbard 1986; Lewis 1833; Pratt 1964; Silvester et al. 1992; Smith 1988; Spurgeon 1991; Sylvester 1969; Listed Building lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- fieldscape character, including surviving traces medieval open field cultivation represented by areas of ridge and furrow
- marl pits represented by hollows and ponds as part of the fabric of the historic landscape and for potential waterlogged deposits
- earthworks, buried archaeological deposits and setting of medieval moated site
- buried archaeological deposits associated with early settlement history of 'green' settlement at Tallarn Green



1123 ***Penley*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA
Hanmer, Maelor South and Overton communities

Varied field pattern resulting from enclosure of common open fields associated with ridge and furrow and former medieval manorial centres and late enclosure of areas of common grazing, 'green' encroachment settlements and remains of two large US Army hospitals and subsequent Polish hospitals.

Historic background

Early settlement of the area is suggested by Anglo-Saxon and Welsh place-name evidence indicative of early medieval and medieval woodland clearance. Penley, first recorded as *Pendele* in 1300, derives from the personal name Penda and the Old English element *-leah* meaning 'wood, clearing in a wood' which is also rendered in the Welsh place-name Llannerch Panna which has the same meaning. Lightwood Green, first recorded at 'Lightwoode' in 1484, includes the Old English *leoht* 'bright, light'. Medieval settlement is represented by the Penley moated site which probably represents a manorial centre of the later 13th or 14th century. Open field strips in the township of Llannerch Panna are documented in the later Middle Ages though it is probable that as elsewhere in *Maelor Saesneg* these medieval common fields were being enclosed and absorbed into the expanding landed estates that are in evidence by the early 16th century. In the post-medieval period the moated site at Penley was replaced by Penley Hall, the focus of an estate owned by the Dymock family, Llannerch Panna becoming the site of a country house for a branch of the Kenyon family in the late 19th century. During the course of the Second World War to US Army hospitals the parkland associated Penley Hall and Llannerch Panna, which in the post-war years were reused as hospitals for Polish refugees.

Key historic landscape characteristics

The area occupies an area of undulating farmland between about 30–70 metres above Ordnance Datum, gently sloping to the north, dissected by wooded stream valleys which feed the Emral Brook. Field patterns are dominated by large and small irregular field boundaries, with an area of strip fields in the Park Lane and Street Lydan area, though the widespread occurrence of ridge and furrow cultivation within the character area probably indicates the former presence of medieval open field cultivation which is not clearly represented in the field pattern. Numerous marl pits are scattered throughout the area, many represented by ponds. Modern land use is predominantly pasture, fields being bounded with multi-species hedges with scattered mature oak trees in the hedge lines.

A more ancient settlement pattern is represented by quite scattered farms, the present settlements at both Lightwood Green and Penley, despite the early documentation of their place-names, being predominantly the creation of the 18th to 20th centuries. The tithe map of the 1830s shows Lightwood Green as an already well developed 'green' settlement probably encroaching upon a former area of common grazing, with a cluster of dwellings in individual small enclosures around an central green with several other encroachments at its centre. The central common identifiable on the tithe has largely disappeared with the development of the brickworks, and the modern timber yard. The commons here were not enclosed until 1877, being one of the latest enclosures of common land in the country. Between the late 19th century and the 1960s the settlement benefited from the Wrexham and Ellesmere Railway, provided with a station at Lightwood Green. The Overton Brick and Tile Works at Lightwood Green began in the late 19th century and closed during Second World War, produced bricks, pipes, coping blocks and window sills.

At the time of enclosure at the end of the 18th century the pattern of settlement was evidently quite dispersed, though the association with the place-names 'Big Green', 'Little Green' and 'Far Green' and 'Chapel Green' again

suggests that the settlement had its origins in the gradual enclosure of former areas of common grazing which were once more extensive. Penley remained a dependent chapelry of the parish of Ellesmere until 1869, when it became a parish in its own right. The enclosure award shows Penley chapel (now the parish church) lying close to Chapel Green, an irregular area of common at the junction of Holly Bush Lane and the A539 around which were grouped three houses on the south side of the road and another four beside or close to Holly Bush Lane which led to Little Green. A little further eastwards was the much larger Far Green, now bisected by the main road, with a scatter of dwellings around its edge and Penley Hall to the north. The settlement remained relatively small until the creation of the military hospital during the Second World War.

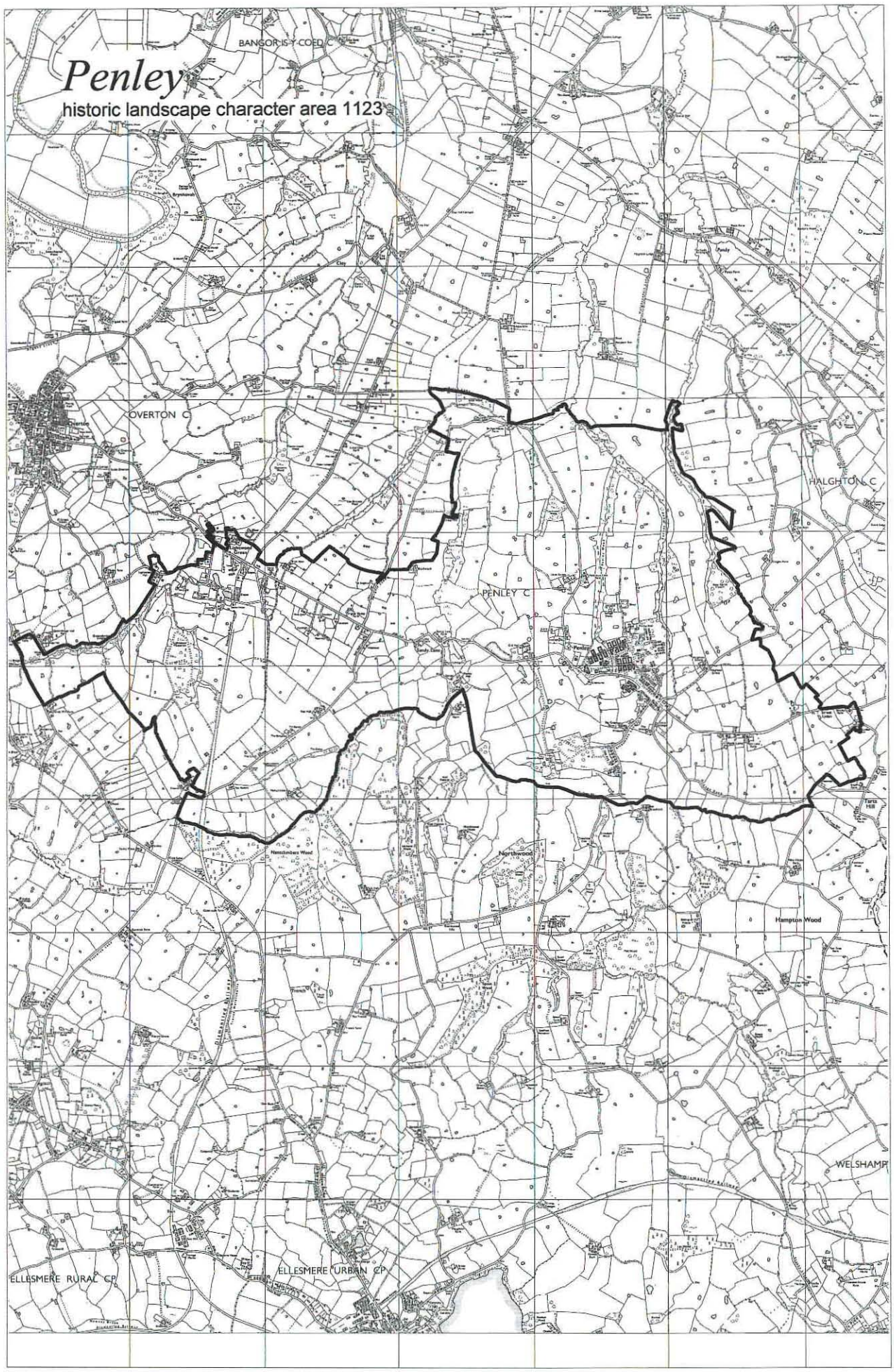
Few early buildings or structures remain visible within the landscape within the area, the earliest building horizon being characteristically represented by the brick-built late 17th-century farmhouse at Penley Old Hall concealing the remains of a 16th-century timber hall, probably of two bays and open to the roof, whose high status is emphasised by the decorative motifs painted over the timber and plaster interior, including what appears to be a *trompe l'oeil* wall torch set in a bracket. The mid 18th-century farmhouse at Lightwood Hall may likewise have been built around the core of an earlier building. Perhaps characteristic of agricultural buildings rarely surviving in the area today is the originally cruck-framed barn, dating from 1550, which once stood at Street Lydan, now re-erected at the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagans. Buildings of the late 17th-century onwards were almost invariably brick-built, as at Penley Old Hall and Lightwood Hall as well as a number of more modest farmhouses and dwellings. The area was associated with three local estates which grew to prominence particularly from the early 17th century onwards, including the Dymocks of Penley and the Pulestons of Emral. The 1870s country house at Llannerch Panna (renamed Tudor Court), in vernacular style with external walls of half-timber and Ruabon brick chimneys was built for a branch of the Kenyon family. Other distinctive modern buildings in the area include the Madras School in Penley, built in 1811 (named after a school in where one of the founders had worked), of stuccoed brick, thatched in *cottage orné* style. Buildings and structures associated with the US Army and subsequent Polish hospital at Penley Hall survives, though parts are now occupied by the Penley Industrial Estate or Enterprise Park, other parts, like the similar establishment at Llannerch, having been sold for private and local authority housing.

Sources

Baughan 1991; Cole & Parkinson 1992; Edwards 1987; Pratt 1998, 1999; Pratt & Pratt 2000; Silvester et al. 1992; Sylvester 1969; Wiliam 1988; Listed Building lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- fieldscape character, including surviving traces medieval open field cultivation represented by areas of ridge and furrow
- marl pits represented by hollows and ponds as part of the fabric of the historic landscape and for potential waterlogged deposits
- earthworks, buried archaeological deposits and setting of medieval moated site
- buried archaeological deposits associated with early settlement history of 'green' settlement at Lightwood Green and Penley
- buildings and structures associated with the US military hospitals and subsequent Polish hospitals and resettlement centres at Penley



1124 ***Gredington*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Hanmer community

Late glacial mere, woodland, parkland and former parkland, some overlying areas of medieval open field, associated with the Gredington and Bettisfield Park country houses.

Historic background

The historic landscape character area includes the parkland and former parkland and woodland associated with the country houses of Gredington on the edge of Hanmer mere and Bettisfield Park further to the south. Hanmer Mere, the natural lake from which the village is named is first recorded in 1269 as 'Hangmere', which is thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon personal name *Hagena* and the word 'mere'. The place-name Gredington is first recorded at the very end of the 17th-century, but is again thought to derive from the name of an Anglo-Saxon settlement or farmstead, denoted by the element *–tun*, though it is no longer considered to be identified with *Radintone* in the Domesday survey as previously claimed. Gredington is referred to in the 13th century as a township with houses, roads, intermixed holdings, mossland and waste. In the 15th century the township had three open fields, divided into arable strips, but by the middle of the 16th century it appears that the identity of the earlier settlement had been merged with that of the parish of Hanmer.

The properties at Gredington and at Bettisfield Park may have been amongst the lands granted to Haughmond Abbey, Shropshire, during the Middle Ages and acquired by the Hanmers at the dissolution of the monasteries. An earlier hall at Gredington was in the hands of the Hanmers probably by at least the mid 17th-century, Roger Hanmer (d. 1675), a parliamentary supporter in the Civil War, being described as being 'of Gredington'. The property was sold to the Kenyons, another prominent local family in the late 1670s. The present house is a modern, two-storey brick house, built in plain Georgian style in the early 1980s to replace a large brick house of classical style built in the period 1808–11 but possibly incorporating parts of its 17th- and 18th-century forerunner, which was demolished in stages between 1958 and 1980.

The country house at Bettisfield Park was likewise also owned by a branch of the Hanmer family, from at least the early 17th century, illustrated by Moses Griffiths. The rendered house, with Georgian additions of the late 18th or early 19th century and Italianate belvedere tower of the 1840s was partly demolished in the years after the Second World War.

Key historic landscape characteristics

Gently undulating area generally between 70–100 metres above Ordnance Datum sloping towards lower ground to the north, part of the western edge of the area being defined by Cumber's Brook a tributary of Emral Brook and ultimately of the River Dee. Hanmer and the smaller Park Pool to the south are natural meres of late glacial origin, caused by the deposition of glacial moraines such as that which underlies the village of Hanmer. The area includes a high proportion of broadleaved woodland and conifer plantation, reflecting Samuel Lewis's description of the area in the 1830s: 'the enclosures are small, and the fences full of fine oak timber, of nearly one hundred years' growth, which gives to the scenery, especially near Gredington, a stately magnificence of character'.

The history and development of the landscape of the area is inextricably linked with that of the country houses belonging to two prominent local families. The former parkland at Bettisfield perhaps has their origin in the later 16th or earlier 17th centuries. The high pale around a deer park at Bettisfield is said to have been removed in 1914, much of the land of the former park now being given over to agriculture leaving the late 18th-century stables with pediment and cupola, and mid 19th-century water tower, kitchen gardens and farm buildings. The landscape park

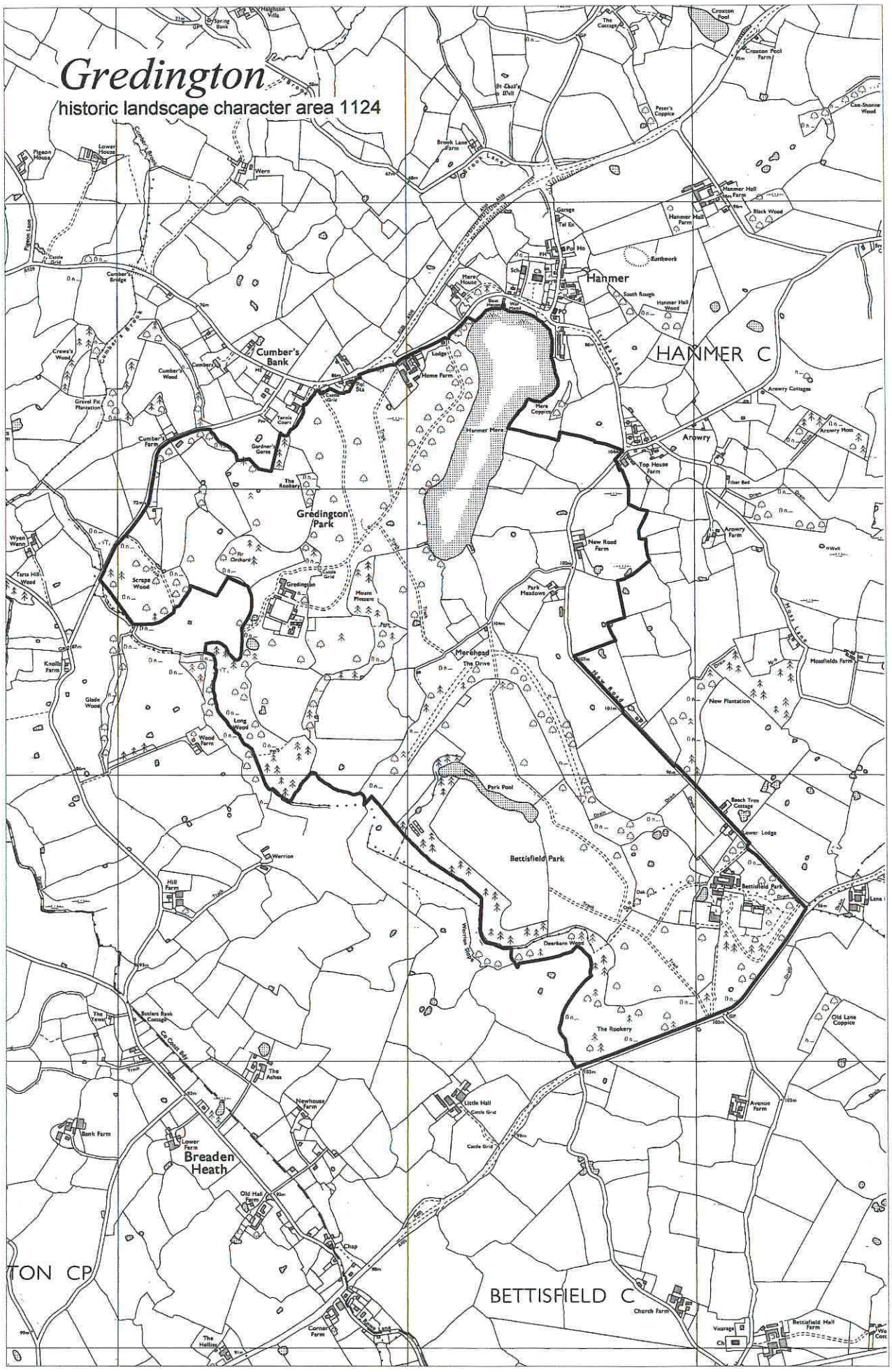
at Gredington appears to have been first laid out in the early 19th century though traces of ridge and furrow show that ultimately it owes its origin to the enclosure of former medieval open field. It is thought that landscaping may initially have involved little more than the construction of driveways and the removal of field boundaries existing at that time, leaving some of the larger hedgerow trees in place, with the addition of entrances and lodges in the later 19th century.

Sources

Cadw 1995; Charles 1938; Hubbard 1986; Kenyon 1873; Lewis 1833; Lhuyd 1909; Lloyd & Jenkins 1959; Musson 1994; Pennant 1784; Pratt 1965; Sylvester 1969; Listed Buildings lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- potential palaeoenvironmental deposits and sediments preserved below or near late glacial meres
- fieldscape character including medieval open field cultivation represented by areas of ridge and furrow
- character and setting of parkland associated with Gredington Park
- buried archaeological deposits associated with unlocated early settlement history of Gredington



1125 *Eglwys Cross* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bronington, Hanmer, Maelor South and Willington Worthenbury communities

Landscape dominated by irregular field patterns and scattered farms, with early nucleated church settlement at Hanmer and a handful of later 'green' and roadside settlements.

Historic background

Earlier prehistoric settlement and land-use of at least part of the area is indicated by two Bronze Age burial mounds north of Whitewell, one partially excavated in the late 19th century, and possible similar sites at Waenreef Farm and Bryn Rossett. Early medieval settlement of perhaps the 8th to 10th century is suggested by a number of place-names ending with the Old English element *–tun* indicating a Saxon settlement or farm, as in the case of Willington and Bronington, though in none of these instances are early forms of the names recorded: Willington, for example is first recorded as 'Gwillington' in 1284 but Bronington is first recorded in the late 17th century. The place-name Croxton may indicate Viking settlement. Hanmer is unnamed in the Domesday survey of 1086 though the existence of the church here, which may be of Anglo-Saxon origin, may be indicated by the presence of a priest said to hold land at Bettisfield (*Bedesfield*) at that date, though the church itself, dedicated to St Chad, it first documented in 1110 when it was gifted with other lands to the Augustinian abbey at Haughmond, Shropshire. The area is crossed by a number of important routeways linking Overton and Bangor with the neighbouring town of Whitchurch in Shropshire. The strategic importance of these routes during the Edwardian conquest is indicated by a writ of 1282 authorizing William le Botiler of Wemme, captain of Edwards garrison at Whitchurch, to clear trees from the pass at Redbrook (*La Rede Broc*), presumably on the line of the present A525.

Key historic landscape characteristics

The historic landscape character area forms an undulating and hummocky area of morainic drift, generally between 30–90 metres above Ordnance Datum, dissected by shallow valleys of streams which are tributaries of the Wych Brook to the north-east and the Emral Brook on to the north-west. Meres and mosses such as Llyn Bedydd, Croxton Pool and Cranberry Moss and with poor natural drainage have formed in hollows left by the deposition of glacial till, Llyn Bedydd being fringed with mixed deciduous woodland including birch and sycamore.

Fieldscapes are dominated by large and small fields with irregular boundaries which have probably resulted from piecemeal encroachment and enclosure, though there are some smaller areas of strip fields such as those to the north of Fenn's Old Hall, to the north-east of Hanmer, west of Peartree Farm and to the north of Eglwys Cross which appear to owe their origin to former areas of medieval open field, some of which are associated with remnant areas of ridge and furrow cultivation. Former arable is also represented by field lynchets in some areas. Wetter, low-lying areas to the east of Eglwys Cross were drained and improved, probably in the post-medieval period, and there is a widespread distribution of marl pits, most of which survive as water-filled ponds and hollows. Modern land use is predominantly pasture though there is some arable, mostly for the cultivation of fodder crops. Field boundaries are mostly marked by mixed-species hedges, with scattered mature oak trees.

Physical evidence of early settlement is provided by the motte known as Mount Cop at Eglwys Cross and by the unusual possible circular moated site just to the east of Hanmer, both of which are lacking certain historical associations. The small nucleated settlement at Hanmer is possibly of Anglo-Saxon or Norman origins, though there is there are evidently few other medieval manorial centres or nucleated settlements in the character area, suggesting that settlement during this period was predominantly based upon scattered farmsteads. A high proportion of modern farms have English names, such as Yew Tree Farm, The Fingers, Broad Oak, and Cranberry

Farm, though historical evidence for farm and field names suggests that there had been a significant Welsh cultural element in the later Middle Ages. Several 'green' settlements, such as those at Horseman's Green, Little Green, and Painters Green, probably represent post-medieval enclosure of former areas of common grazing, the linear settlements at Broughton, The Chequer, Whitewell and Little Arowry probably having largely emerged as a consequence of the improvements to the turnpike roads in the later 18th and earlier 19th centuries. Elsewhere there are ancient winding lanes, sometimes set within hollow-ways.

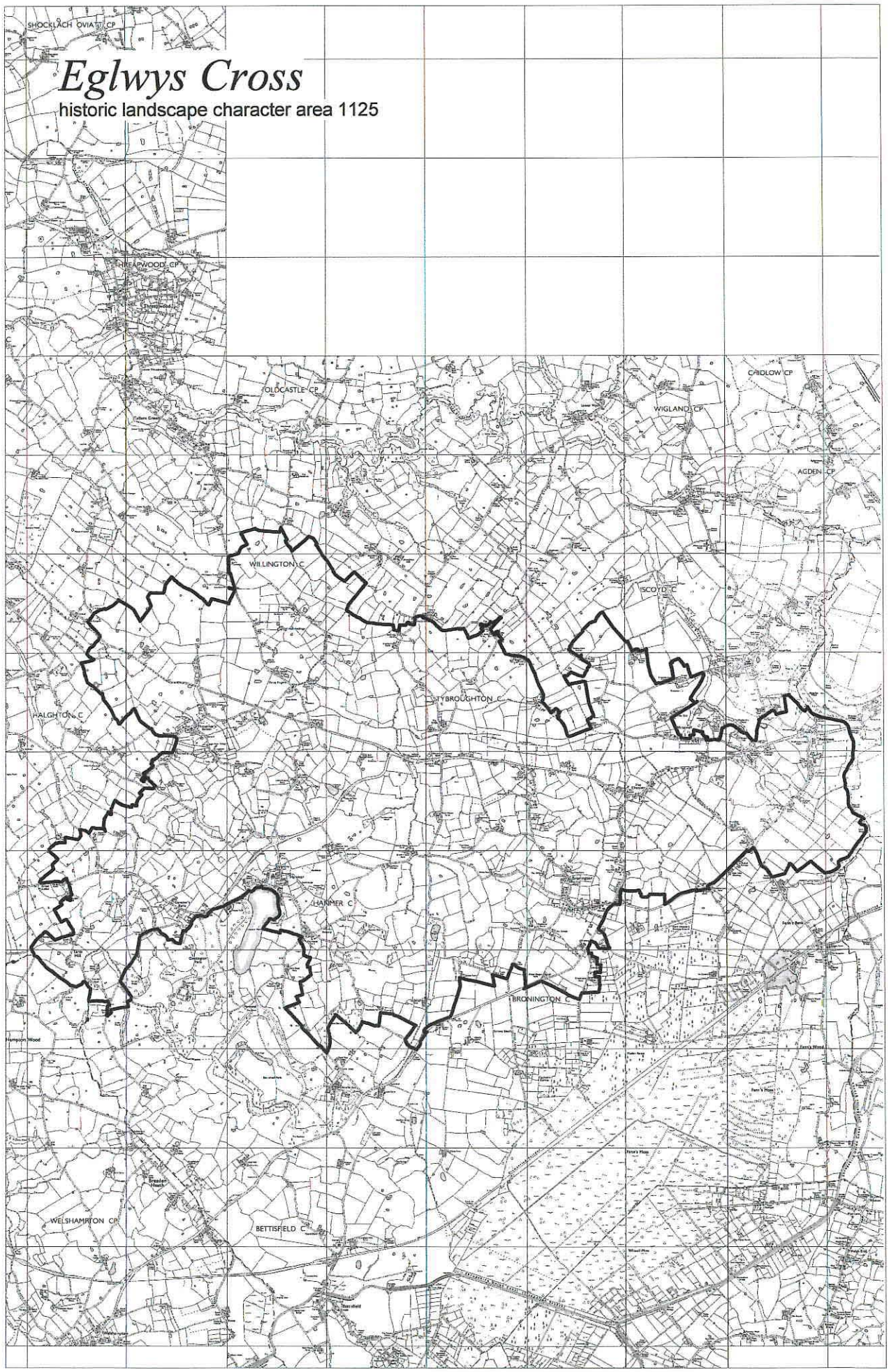
An earlier horizon of houses in the character area is represented by relatively rare appearance of late medieval and early post-medieval half-timbering at the thatched Magpie Cottage, Hanmer, Peartree Farm, and at The Cumbers, the latter a late 19th-century brick-built house with half-timbered gables. A high status late medieval manorial centre is indicated by the late 15th-century timber-framed aisled hall at Horseman's Green, also later encased in brick. Many of the surviving higher status houses are 18th-century brick-built structures in a Georgian vernacular style, such as the early 18th-century vicarage at Hanmer, Croxton (1793), Hanmer Hall (1756)

Sources

Berry & Gale 1966a; Charles 1938; Davies 1949; Edwards 1991; Hubbard 1986; Lee 1876; Musson 1994; Sawyer & Hacker 1987; Silvester et al. 1992; Smith 1988; Smith 2001; Sylvester 1969; Listed Buildings lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Records

Key historic landscape management issues

- meres and mosses of potential palaeoenvironmental significance
- prehistoric burial monuments affected by ploughing
- fieldscape character including medieval open field cultivation represented by areas of ridge and furrow
- earthworks of medieval motte at Eglwys Cross and moated site at Hanmer
- character and setting and buried archaeological deposits associated with medieval nucleated settlement at Hanmer
- buried archaeological deposits associated with early settlement history of 'green' settlements
- marl pits represented by hollows and ponds as part of the fabric of the historic landscape and for potential waterlogged deposits



1126 ***Higher Lanes*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bronington and Willington Worthenbury communities

Dispersed farms on lanes running between strip fields and ridge and furrow of medieval open field origin.

Historic background

Early medieval settlement of perhaps the 8th to 10th century is suggested by the place-name Tybroughton ending with the Old English element *–tun*.

Key historic landscape characteristics

Gently undulating landscape, generally between 30–90 metres above Ordnance Datum, with watercourses and streams such as the Shoothill Brook running to the north to join the Wych Brook.

Fieldscapes are dominated by strip fields and reorganised strip fields, associated with a relatively high proportion of ridge and furrow, derived from medieval open field cultivation, with narrow lanes running between the fields. The numerous marl pits scattered across the area, now generally visible as ponds, probably represent post-enclosure land improvement. Modern land-use is predominantly pasture, field being bounded by mature mixed-species hedges and post and wire fences. Mature oak trees are scattered along existing hedgerows as well as denoting the course of former field boundaries across enlarged fields.

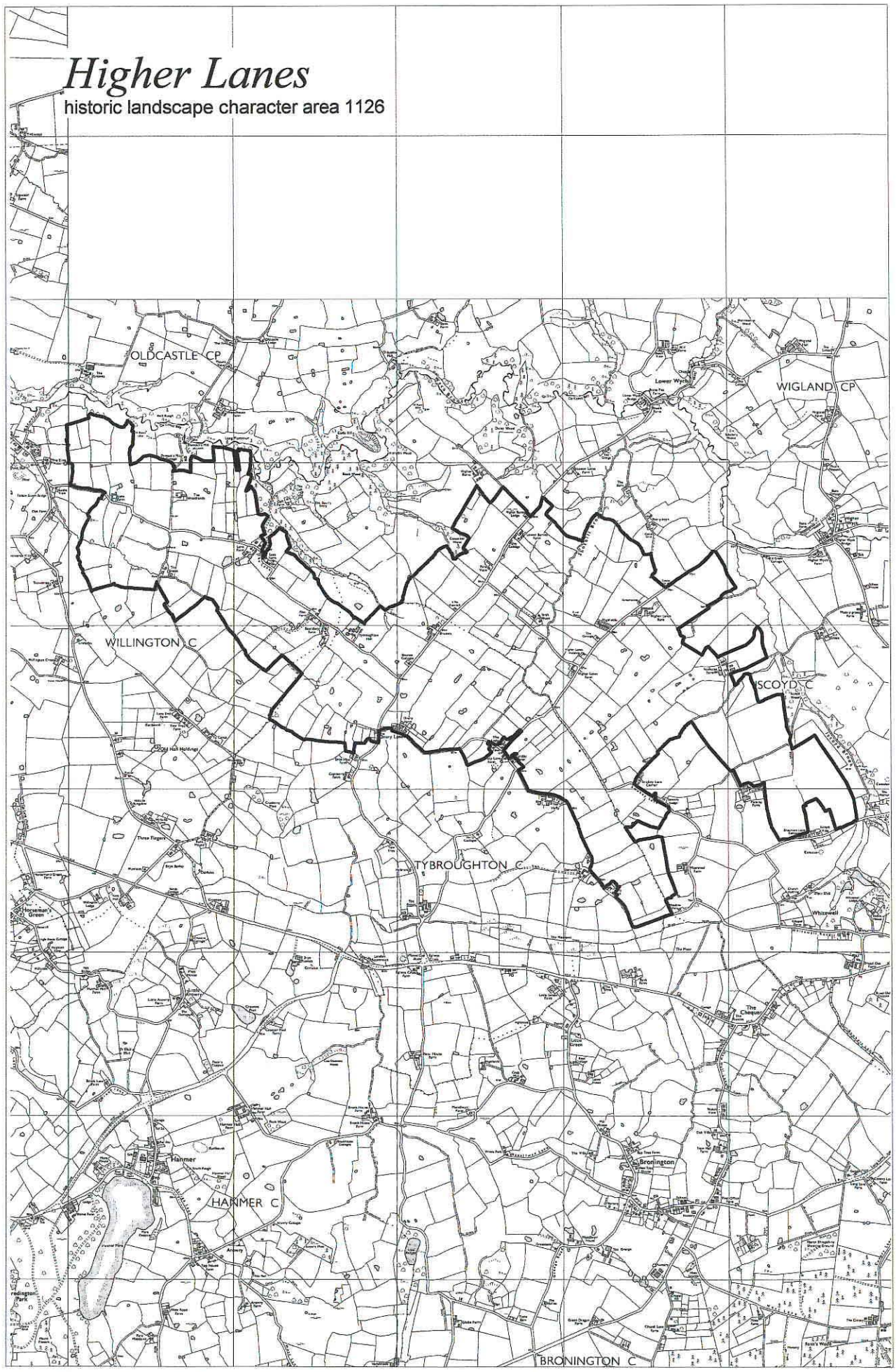
Few if any early manorial centres have been identified within the character area, settlement being predominantly based upon scattered lane-side farms and smallholdings, including ones such as The Woodlands, Lane Farm, and Boundary Farm which appear to post-date the enclosure of former open fields. An earlier building horizon is represented by the Brunett farmhouse, which in origin appears to have been a 17th-century timber-framed structure. Characteristic of the later buildings is Lane Farm, possibly originally an estate farm, with an early 19th-century brick-built farmhouse with gothic-style iron casement windows in the manner of those manufactured Wilkinson's Bersham foundry.

Sources

Smith 1988; Sylvester 1969; Listed Buildings lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- fieldscape character including medieval open field cultivation represented by strip fields and areas of ridge and furrow
- marl pits represented by hollows and ponds as part of the fabric of the historic landscape and for potential waterlogged deposits



1127 ***Iscoyd*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bronington and Willington Worthenbury communities

Rural landscape with traces of ancient woodland and medieval open fields, with dispersed farms and Iscoyd Park country house and landscape park of earlier 18th-century origin.

Historic background

Early prehistoric settlement and land-use in the area is indicated by the probable Bronze Age burial mound known as Warren Tump to the west of Iscoyd Park and by the Bronze Age bronze axe found in the grounds of Iscoyd Park in the mid 19th century. There is no certain place-name evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement within the area though it has been considered likely that the 'missing' manor of *Burwardestone*, which is named in the Domesday survey of 1086 probably fell within the area of Iscoyd. The manor had been formerly held by Edwin, the Saxon earl of Mercia, and although it is described as being 'waste' at the time of the Norman conquest in 1066, it seems likely that a well developed agricultural community had already been established in the area by that date. Tenants of the manor in 1086 included two knights (*miles*) who probably held land in return for military service, emphasising the strategic significance of *Maelor Saesneg* at that period. Apart from the mention of sufficient arable land for 14 ploughs, the Domesday survey also notes the existence of a salthouse (*salina*), exploiting the Triassic salt beds exposed by the Wych Brook. The name of the brook and the local place-names in including Upper and Lower Wych include the Old English element *wic* which commonly refers to salt workings. The workings, though on a much smaller scale than those at early salt-production centres in Cheshire, appear to have continued in existence until the late 18th or early 19th century. Though little documentary evidence appears to have survived it seems likely that a medieval manorial centre became established at the moated site at Wolvesacre Hall perhaps as early as the late 13th century, preceding the existing post-medieval house. A second moated site may have existed just opposite Maes-y-groes Farm. A substantial medieval house is also said to have existed on the site of Iscoyd Park, possibly on the site of an earlier park. The present house, landscape park and pleasure garden have their origin in the earlier 18th-century when it formed an estate belonging to a branch of the Hanmer family, which passed through various other hands during the course of the 19th century, the parkland being requisitioned for a military hospital during the Second World War. Whitewell Lodge, a large 19th-century brick-built hunting lodge in the southern corner of the character area, appears to have been associated with Iscoyd Park.

Key historic landscape characteristics

The area forms part of the northern edge of *Maelor Saesneg* running along and sloping down to the Wych Brook or Red Brook which forms the boundary with Cheshire. It generally falls between 30–90 metres above Ordnance Datum and is broken by valleys of several streams such as Iscoyd Brook and Shoothill Brook, tributaries of the Wych Brook, which are often edged by ancient or replanted broadleaved woodland or by small conifer plantations. Modern land use is a mixture of improved pasture and with some arable, mostly for fodder crops. Field boundaries are mostly mixed-species hedges, some including an abundance of holly, with scattered mature oak trees in hedges and former hedge lines.

Fieldscapes include a mixture of large and small irregular fields, often on the more broken ground along watercourses, together with an area of strip fields and apparently reorganised strip fields together with a little surviving ridge and furrow to the north and west of Wolvesacre Hall, which appear to derive from the enclosure medieval open fields. A number of place-names in the area, such as Maes-y-groes and Crossfield, may also have their origin in medieval open fields. The former existence of areas of medieval common grazing is suggested by the survival 'green' place-names, including Kil or Kiln Green, Hall Green and Mannings Green, though evidently

none of these were the focus of significant encroachment settlements characteristic of some other areas of *Maelor Saesneg*.

Present-day settlement is represented by scattered farms, the country house complexes at Iscoyd Park and Whitewell, Many of the farmhouses, such as Maes-y-groes and Pen-y-bryn are brick buildings of late 17th-century to 18th-century in date, though an earlier building horizon is represented at The Gelli which originated as a reasonably substantial two-storey timber-framed house of the 17th century. A pair of semi-detached mid 19th-century cottages at Mannings Green, with elaborately decorated ornamental brick chimneys, are characteristic of the estate cottages of the period, presumably built for the Iscoyd Park estate.

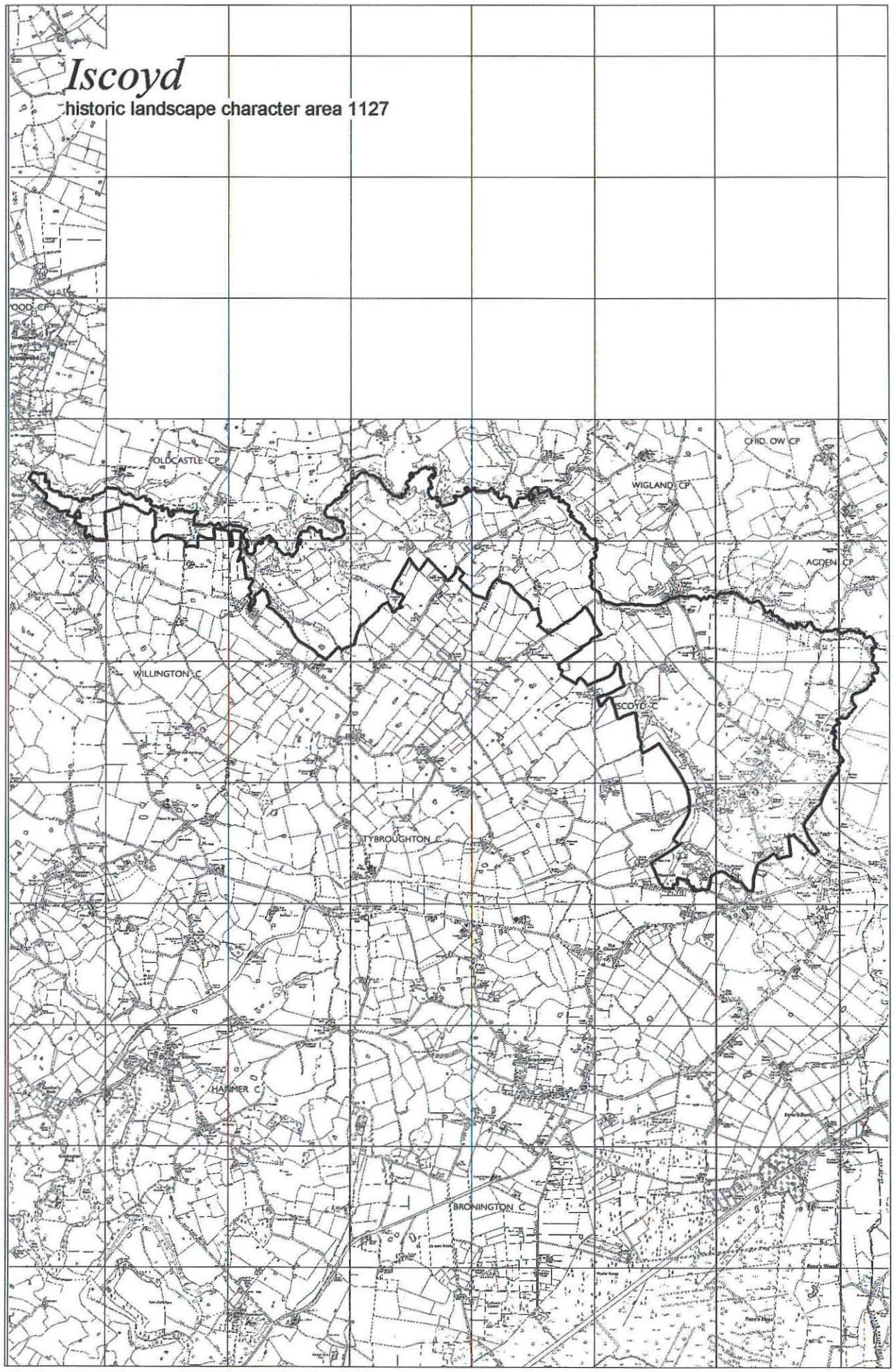
A series of corn watermills became established along the Wych Brook including Dymock's Mill, Wych Mill, Llethr Mill and Wolvesacre Mill from the later 18th century onwards, some of which may have earlier origins, whose remains include leats and millponds in addition to the surviving structural evidence.

Sources

Cadw 1995; Davies 1949; Hubbard 1986; Pennant 1784; Pratt 1964; Pratt & Pratt 2000; Sawyer & Hacker 1981; Silvester et al. 1992; Spurgeon 1991; Listed Buildings lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- fieldscapes, including remnant of strip fields and ridge and furrow deriving from medieval open fields.
- setting, parkland, gardens, buildings and other structures associated with Iscoyd Park country house and Whitewell lodge
- structures and deposits associated with medieval and later saltworkings
- structures and deposits associated with moated sites and other settlement evidence surviving from the medieval period
- buildings, leats, millponds and other structures associated with watermills



1128 *Stimmy Heath* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bronington and Hanmer communities

Flat area of late enclosure and conifer plantations around margins of Fenn's Moss.

Historic background

There is little visible evidence of early settlement and land use in the area. The farmland and plantation known as Fenn's Wood on the eastern side of the area is first recorded in the later 13th century as *Boscu del Fennes*, probably at a time where more extensive areas of native broadleaved woodland still survived in the areas around the mire. Little documentary evidence has survived regarding this woodland during the Middle Ages though around the margins of Whixall Moss, just across the border into England, it is evident that woodland clearance was actively taking place during the 13th and 14th century, the woods there affording common rights of *housebote* (the right to take timber for the repair or construction of house and hedges and fences, *haybote* and *pannage* (the right for swine to take oak mast in the appropriate season). Common rights over the mosses and the areas surrounding them were extinguished by a series of enclosure awards during the 18th century when rights were awarded to the Hanmer family and a number of single individuals. Rabbit farming, probably in the post-medieval period, is implied by the place-names The Conery and Conery Farm Lane.

Key historic landscape characteristics

Relatively flat land around the margins of Fenn's Moss, generally between 80–90 metres above Ordnance Datum, with fieldscapes dominated by large and small straight-sided fields with areas of conifer plantation such as Fenn's Wood and Bronington Wood mostly of post-war date. The distinctive field pattern in this character area has resulted from the pattern of allotment following enclosure during the 18th century, drainage and land improvement since that time having resulted in the reclamation of some areas from the moss. A number of nurseries and market gardens have become established on the light sandy soils in the area. Field boundaries are mostly marked by post and wire fences and single-species hedges.

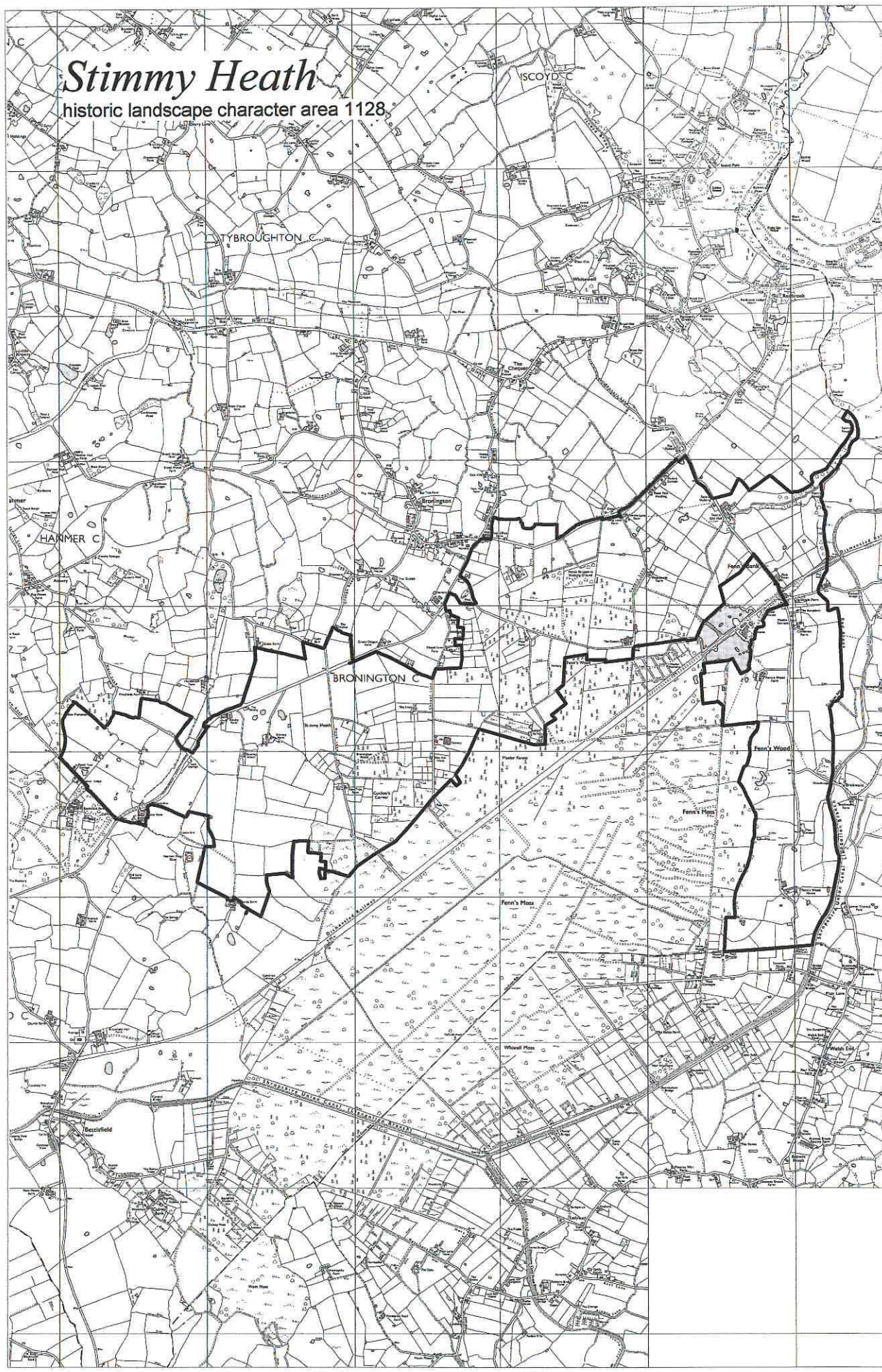
Settlement is characterised by dispersed post-medieval and more recent houses. Glacial deposits of sand and clay have been exploited on a relatively small scale in the modern period, represented by a number of disused sand pits in the eastern part of the area and by the clay pits of the former Tilstock Lane clay pit and brickyard, near Brickwalls.

Sources

Berry & Gale 1996c; Lee 1879; Hubbard 1986; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- evidence of early settlement and land use around the fen margins



1129 ***Fenn's Moss*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA
Bronington and Maelor South communities

Raised mire with evidence of exploitation from prehistoric and medieval times onwards, and with pollen evidence for the history of vegetation and land-use in the region since the last glaciation.

Historic background

The area includes Fenn's Moss and Cadney Moss, an extensive peaty area, generally between 80–90 metres above Ordnance Datum, continuous with Whixall and Wem mosses on the English side of the border, divided by the Border Drain, which together form one of the largest and most southerly lowland raised mires in Britain. The mosses have developed since the last glaciation on sites with impeded drainage caused by the deposition of glacial till as the ice retreated about 12,000 years ago. It is probable that the mosses were exploited from prehistoric times onwards, but although there is little certain evidence from the Welsh side of the border a Middle Bronze Age axe of a type known as a palstave was found embedded in a pine stump in Whixall Moss. There are few surviving historical records relating to the Welsh areas of the mosses before the early 18th century, though there is evidence from the Whixall manorial records which show that a well-developed system of *turbary* (common rights to cut peat or turves) was already in existence by the 1570s and which may have evolved from earlier times, and towards the end of the 16th century it is evident that peat cutting and the digging of drainage ditches were taking place hand in hand in certain areas. Powers to enclose parts of the moss were being granted from the early 18th century, common rights being finally extinguished in the 1770s as part of the enclosure of the parish of Hanmer, about when about half the ownership rights were awarded to the Hanmer estate and most of the rest to numerous single individuals, which led to the creation of over a hundred narrow turbary allotments, the rights also being granted for getting sand to repair the designated roads leading from the moss, the enclosures serving to order and define the landscape, enclosure also being associated with extensive drainage schemes, and formalised the network of footpaths, tracks and roads. Enclosure eventually gave rise to the to a commercial peat-cutting industry, beginning in the 1850s under leases issued by the Hanmer Estate, which continued with increasing intensity until production was finally brought to an end in the last decade of the 20th century following the purchase of the mosses by the Nature Conservancy Council. The mosses were crossed by the Ellesmere Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal, completed in 1804, and by the Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway, which began operations in 1863. Large areas of Fenn's Moss were commandeered by the army in the First World Wars for use as rifle ranges and during the Second World War as a gunnery and bombing range and as a decoy site designed to protect industrial centres and civilian settlements in the Wrexham, Deeside and Liverpool area.

Key historic landscape characteristics

In terms of modern land use the mosses combine some areas of uncut peats, former peat cuttings, alder carr and regenerated native scrub, together with some areas of pasture created by the drainage of certain areas. Areas of conifer plantation, such as Fenn's Wood were planted in the 1960s. Peats in the Welsh area of mosses are over 8 metres in depth in the uncut area of Oafs Orchard, though in cut areas there is an average of only 3 metres and in a few areas the peat has been entirely removed, down to the surface of the underlying subsoil. A substantial area of the moss forms the Fenn's Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve, managed by the Countryside Council for Wales and English Nature.

Although the primary significance of the mosses today is as a nature conservation area, they also preserve significant evidence of the history of exploitation during the course of the last four or five hundred years. Older peat cutting by linear hand cuts are visible in certain areas, which are clearly distinguishable from firstly the areas commercially hand-cut by the 'Whixall Bible' method (with reference to the shape of peat blocks), and by more

recent mechanised cuttings methods. Also surviving here and there are traces of the former tramroads and narrow gauge railways that were used for transporting peat, together with the former peat works known as the as Fenn's Old Works, thought to be the last such works in mainland Britain. Traces are also visible of the First World War shooting butts and targets of the Second World War bombing range. The railway across the mosses ceased operation in the 1960s, but its course is still clearly marked by a pair of drainage ditches and by the course of the track which was bedded on heather, peat, bundles of faggots, and a thick bed of sand dug from local sand pits.

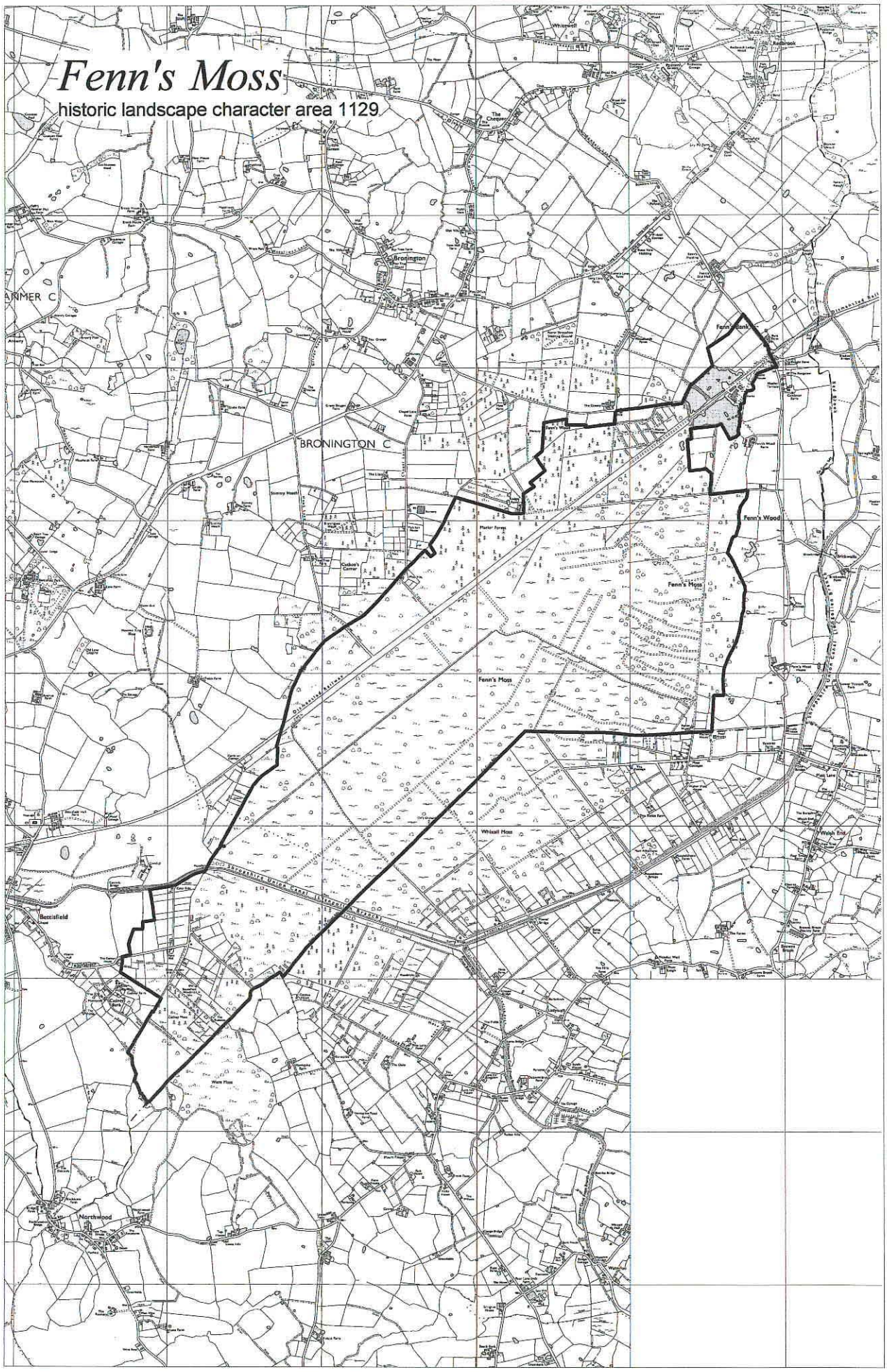
Pollens preserved in the peat deposits in the mosses have been studies since the 1930s but still represent an important source of environmental evidence for the history of climate change, vegetation, land use and human activity in the region since the end of the last glaciation.

Sources

Baughan 1991; Berry et al. 1996; Berry & Gale 1996a, 1996b; Brassil et al. 1991; Caseldine 1990; Chambers et al. 1996; Daniels 1996; Hardy 1938; Jenkins 1991; Musson 1994; Pratt & Grant 1996; Turner 1964; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- peat deposits of importance to the environmental and land-use history of the region
- surface evidence for enclosure, drainage, peat cutting and peat processing from at least the early post-medieval period
- structures associated with the Ellesemere Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal and the now disused Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway
- structures associated with uses of the mosses by the military during the First and Second World Wars



1130 ***Bettisfield*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bronington and Maelor South communities

Rural landscape of scattered farms and irregular fields emerging from woodland clearance in the late medieval and early post-medieval period, with late linear settlement owing its origins to the coming of the canal and railway in the 19th century.

Historic background

Saxon settlement is indicated by the record of the manor of *Bedesfeld* in the Domesday survey, which was said to have been held by the church in the time of King Cnut (1016–35), the place-name probably derived from Betti's *feld* (Old English 'field'). The form or siting of this settlement is early unknown and it is possible that it may refer to a number of holdings dispersed around a manorial centre rather than a nucleated settlement. The inhabitants at that time included three knights (*milites*), who would have held land in return for military service, a priest, who it has been suggested may have been associated with an early church at Hanmer, about 4 kilometres to the north of the present settlement of Bettisfield, and what are described as 'three other men' (distinguished from serfs, villeins and bordars) who may represent a Welsh element in the population. Significantly, Domesday also records the presence of extensive areas of woodland, described as being three leagues by two leagues across, an area commensurate in size with the historic landscape character area. Extensive areas of woodland are recorded as being felled in the vicinity of Northwood in the adjacent areas of Shropshire between the late 15th century and the early decades of the 17th century, and it seems probable that large tracts of farmland in this area were similarly being created within this historic landscape area during that period. The earliest surviving maps dating to the late 18th century show a dispersed rural community within the area, the modern nucleated settlement at Bettisfield evidently largely owing its existence to the construction of the Ellesmere branch of the Shropshire Union Canal, completed in 1804, and by the Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway, which began operations in 1863.

Key historic landscape characteristics

Gently undulating pasture and arable farmland, generally between 80–100 metres above Ordnance Datum, with small marshy areas in poorly drained hollows towards the south and some heathland areas towards the west. The area is drained by to the north by steams which join the Emral Brook and ultimately the River Dee and to the south by streams which are tributaries of the River Roden in Shropshire.

Fieldscapes are dominated by large irregular field patterns though with a distinct area of strip fields and reorganised strip fields associated with some relict areas of ridge and furrow in the area between Hill Farm and Knolls Farm, to the west of Bettisfield Park, that probably owes its origin to the enclosure of former medieval open fields. There is a diverse range of field boundary types, including mature mixed-species hedges with scatted mature oaks as well modern post and wire fences.

Present-day settlement is based on dispersed farms, between 0.5 and 1 kilometre apart, with the relatively recent linear settlement at Bettisfield, which as noted above appears to largely owe its existence to the coming of the canal and railway during the 19th century and which gave rise to a number of small-scale rural industries, including the former limekilns at Bettisfield, fed by lime and coal transported by canal barge.

The earliest surviving buildings in the area are high-status dwellings, which include The Ashes farmhouse, a late 16th-century, two storey timber framed house with an added timber-framed wing, and Bettisfield Old Hall, a 17th-century brick-built house, associated with a Tudor or Jacobean terraced garden. This replaced a probably timber hall in existence by the earlier 16th century, which at one time was in the ownership of a branch of the Hanmer

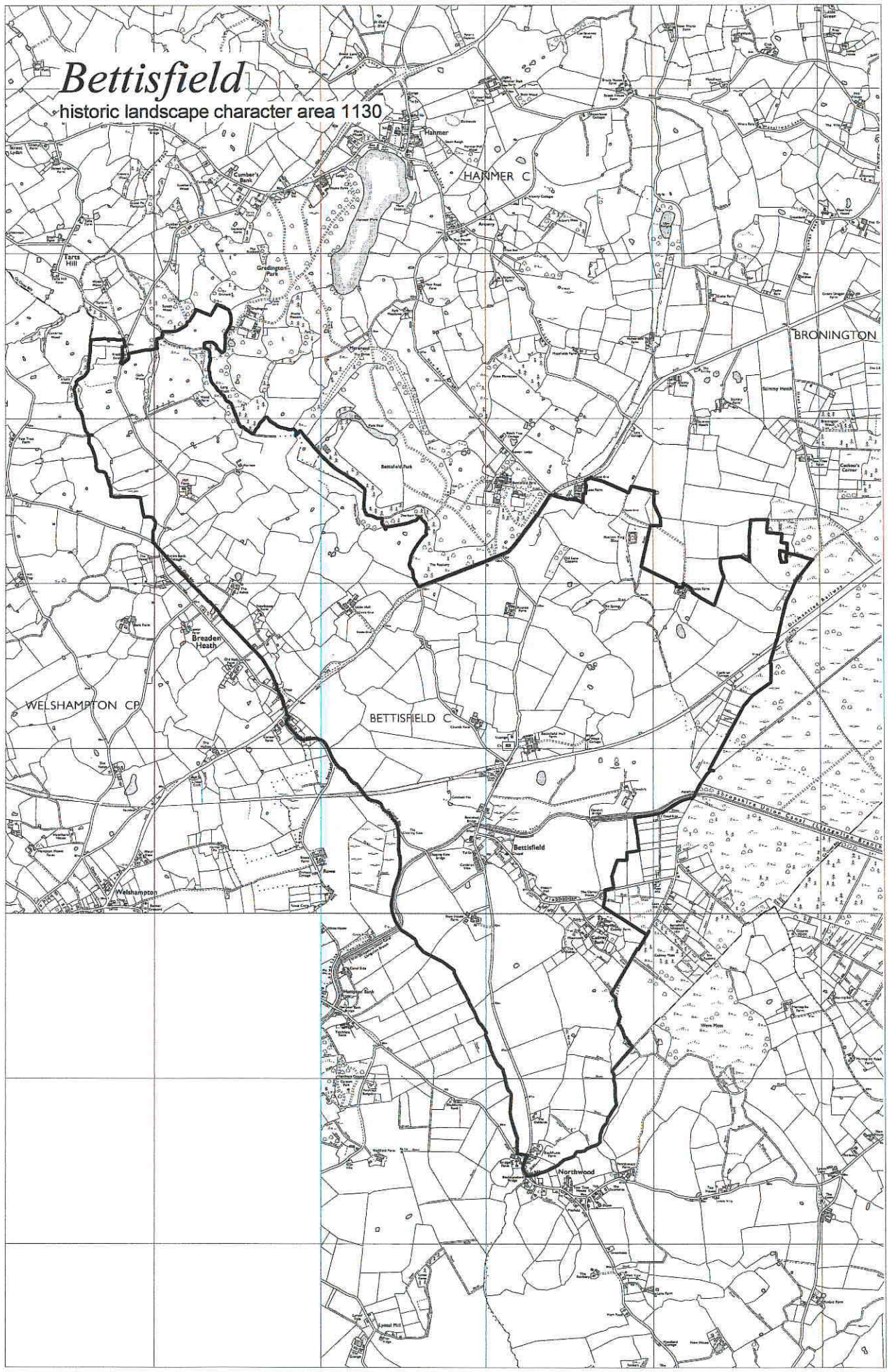
family. An earlier pattern of settlement is represented by the moated site at Haulton Ring, to the east of Bettisfield Park, which may represent a colonising period of woodland clearance and settlement during the late 13th and early 14th century. A series of cropmark enclosures to the north of Blackhurst Farm are undated, but may belong to the later prehistoric, Romano-British, or medieval periods.

Sources

Baughan 1991;Cadw 1995; Charles 1938; Frost 1995; Hubbard 1986; Manley 1990; Morgan 1978; Sawyer & Thacker 1987; Silvester et al. 1992; Smith 1988; Spurgeon 1991; Sylvester 1969; Listed Buildings lists; Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Key historic landscape management issues

- moated site at Haulton Ring and undated earthwork enclosures to the north of Blackhurst Farm
- fieldscapes including strip fields and traces of ridge and furrow deriving from the enclosure of medieval open fields
- structures and deposits relating to the early history of settlement at Bettisfield
- structures and buildings relating to the history of the canal and railway and evidence of associated rural industries



Photographs of character areas

1114 *Ywern* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The River Dee viewed from the bridge at Bangor Is-y-coed, looking north. *Photo: CPAT 1323.13.*

Worthenbury Brook viewed from Worthenbury bridge looking westwards towards Dolennion Farm. *Photo: CPAT 1323.05.*

River Dee meanders near Wern. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-221*

1115 ***Bangor Is-y-coed*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bangor Is-y-coed bridge, village and church, viewed from the west. *Photo: CPAT 1323.16.*

Centre of Bangor Is-y-coed village. *Photo: CPAT 1323.10*

1116 ***Brynhovah*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Ridge and furrow to the east of Bangor Is-y-coed, representing medieval open field cultivation. *Photo: CPAT 1323.18.*

Landscape view from the south-east, looking towards Overton in the background. *Photo: CPAT 89-C-41*

Bridge abutments of the former *Wrexham and Ellesmere Railway* at Cloy Bank. The railway remained in operation between 1895. and 1962. *Photo: CPAT 1323.21*

1117 ***Bryn-y-Pys*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Tree-lined avenue and lodge of the former Bryn-y-Pys Hall, just to the north of Overton. *Photo: CPAT 1324.0*

Ridge and furrow field system next to the River Dee at Gwernheylod Banks. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0215*

Bangor Racecourse on the banks of the River Dee. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0219*

1118 *Overton* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Centre of Overton showing 17th-century timber framed cottage and 18th- and 19th-century brick-built houses and shops. *Photo: CPAT 1324.03*

Overton viewed from the south. The basic road pattern was established when the 'new town' was established in the late 13th century. *Photo: CPAT 84-C-0064*

Distant view of Overton from the south showing its setting on a steep bank above the floodplain of the River Dee. *Photo: CPAT 1324.04*

1119 *Knolton* HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Knolton Mission Room, forming part of the scattered settlement at Knolton Bryn which appears to owe its origins to the encroachments overlying a former medieval open field. *Photo: CPAT 1324.07*

Fieldscape near Knolton Villa Farm showing former marl pit to the left and strip field on the right resulting from the enclosure of medieval open field strips. *Photo: CPAT 1324.10*

1120 ***Halghton*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Ridge and furrow in fields to the east of Worthenbury, representing former medieval open field cultivation. *Photo: CPAT 1322.23*

Peatree Lane moated site, ridge and furrow field system and marl pits. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0208*

Halghton Lodge moated site and ridge and furrow field system. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0210*

1121 ***Emral*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Modern post and wire fences dividing up the former parkland enclosing Emral Hall, the woodland beyond bordering the Emral Brook. The hall, demolished in the 1930s, lay on the site of the medieval 'Embers-hall'. The parkland was at least partly created from the enclosure of former medieval open fields. *Photo: CPAT 1323.19*

1122 ***Mulsford*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Fieldscape near Mulsford showing irregular field boundaries resulting from piecemeal clearance and enclosure. *Photo: CPAT 1322.12.*

Ridge and furrow field system near Mulsford Hall. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0205*

Remnant ridge and furrow near Sarn Bridge Farm. *Photo: CPAT 1322.10.*

1123 ***Penley*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

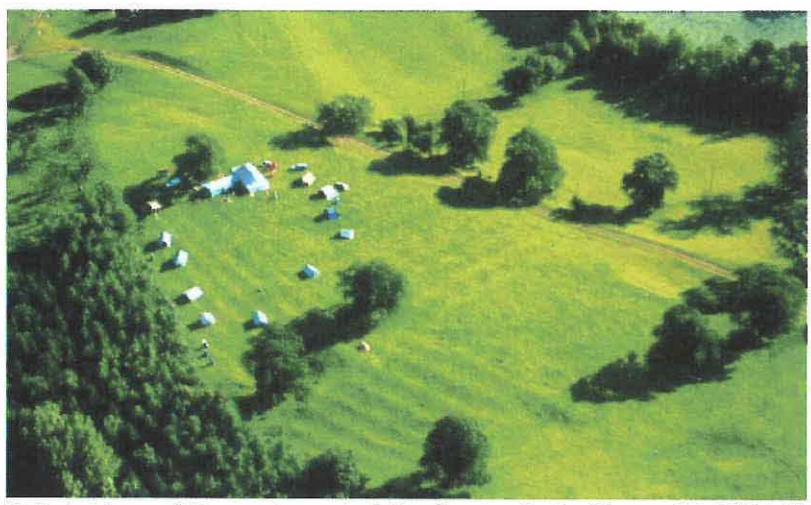
Narrow ridge and furrow in the Sandy Lane area. *Photo: CPAT 1324.13*

Part of the former US Army Hospital and subsequent Polish Hospital in Penley, now used as an industrial park. The hospital was first established during the Second World War in parkland attached to Penley Hall. *Photo: CPAT 1324.18*

Sandy Lane, viewed from the north. *Photo: CPAT 89-C-43*

1124 ***Gredington*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

View of the northern end of Hanmer Mere, near Hanmer village. The lake is of late glacial origin, having been formed as a result of impeded drainage caused by the glacial moraine underlying the village of Hanmer. *Photo: CPAT 1328.14*



Relict ridge and furrow in part of Gredington Park. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0196*

Bettisfield Park country house viewed from the south. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0190*

1125 ***Eglwys Cross*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Winding lanes forming part of the anciently enclosed landscape near Hanmer Hall Farm. *Photo: CPAT 1328.07*

Field lynchet and hedges near Hanmer Mill Farm. *Photo: CPAT 1328.12*

Mount Cop earthwork castle, Eglwys Cross. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0197*

1126 ***Higher Lanes*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Former marl pit near Shift Farm. *Photo: CPAT 1321.24*

Half-timbered house along The Lane, near Tybroughton. *Photo: CPAT 1322.05*

1127 ***Iscoyd*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Fieldscape in the Maes-y-groes Farm area. *Photo: CPAT 1321.18*

Iscoyd Park. *Photo: CPAT 1321.16*

Landscape along the Wych Brook to the east of Tallarn Green. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-200*

1128 ***Stimmy Heath*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Recent fields and plantation near The Conery. *Photo: CPAT 1328.01*

Recent fields and plantation near The Conery. *Photo: CPAT 1328.02*

Holy Trinity Church, Bronington. *Photo: CPAT 1328.05*

1129 ***Fenn's Moss*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Drainage ditch cutting through peat deposits on Fenn's Moss. *Photo: CPAT 1329.12*

Birch woodland and peat bog near Oaf's Orchard. *Photo: CPAT 1329.17*

Former peat cutting next to the Shropshire Union Canal. *Photo: CPAT 84-C-0061*

1130 ***Bettisfield*** HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Haulton Ring moated site. *Photo: CPAT 85-C-0187*

Dilapidated 18th-century brick-built Bettisfield Windmill and 19th-century Cadney Corn Mill, near Bettisfield. Photo: CPAT 1329.08

Shropshire Union Canal at Bettisfield. *Photo: CPAT 1329.02*

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Topographical index

Appendix 1: Historic landscape types

The following list shows the historic landscape types used in this study, drawn from the map sources stated elsewhere in this report. The minimum size of units was intended to be 1 hectare.

with suggested equivalent LANDMAP history and archaeology Level 3 terms (draft version 2).
As shown on ordnance survey maps

Maelor Saesneg historic landscape types	**Notes**
COMMUNICATIONS	
former railway station	including goods yard
ENCLOSED LAND	
assart	obvious areas of cleared ancient woodland, largely surrounded by extant wood
drained wetland	floodplain fields of various types enclosed by drainage ditches and dykes
floodplain fields	riverside fields and meadows of various shapes and sizes, liable to flood
large irregular fields	> 3ha
large regular fields	> 3ha; imprecisely rectilinear fields without precisely straight boundaries; set out in relationship to other fields in an organised system; having the appearance of an organised or reorganised landscape
small irregular fields	< 3ha
small regular fields	< 3ha, imprecisely rectilinear; set out in relationship to other fields in a system
farmyards/paddocks (paddocks/closes)	including farms, farmyards, gardens, singly or contiguous, or linked by shortish stretch of road > 1ha
strip fields	length:breadth ratio generally >2:1, generally in series
reorganised strip fields	indication of former strip fields which have now been amalgamated, shown on eg tithe map or early edition of Ordnance Survey
large straight-sided fields	> 3ha, strictly straight-sided fields, as set out by surveyor, on at least 2-3 sides with irregular sides up against eg road or stream on other side
small straight-sided fields	< 3ha, strictly straight-sided fields, as set out by surveyor, on at least 2-3 sides with irregular sides up against eg road or stream on other side
HOSPITAL	
hospital	isolated hospital complex
INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, RETAIL, UTILITIES	
manufacturing/processing complex	works; industrial park
former manufacturing/processing complex	
water treatment works	including sewage works
SETTLEMENT	
historic settlement core	medieval to 1880 nucleated settlement
large nucleated settlement	post 1880s settlement expansion to historic settlement

small linear settlement	>5 houses
small nucleated settlement	>5 houses
large country house	including house, stables, adjacent gardens and driveway
SPORT, RECREATION, CONSERVATION	
parkland	
sports field	including school playing field, tennis courts
racecourse	
former parkland	partitioned, retaining some parkland character
WATER	
natural lake	
major river	'atlas' river
WETLAND AND BOG	
moss/raised bog	
WOODLAND, SCRUB, ORCHARD	
broadleaved woodland	
mixed woodland	
mixed plantation	
conifer plantation	
sinuous broadleaved woodland	
sinuous mixed woodland	
sinuous conifer woodland	
scrub	

Appendix 2: LANDMAP Level 2 and 3 equivalents

The following list suggests LANDMAP Level 2 and 3 equivalents (draft LANDMAP version 2, forthcoming) to the historic landscape types used in this study.

LANDMAP Level 2 land use	**LANDMAP Level 3 pattern**	**Maelor Saseneg historic landscape types**
Rural Environment	Irregular fieldscape	large irregular fields
		small irregular fields
		farmyards/paddocks
	Regular fieldscape	assart
		drained wetland
		floodplain fields
		large regular fields
		small regular fields
		strip fields
		reorganised strip fields
		large straight-sided fields
		small straight-sided fields
	Woodland	broadleaved woodland
		mixed woodland
		mixed plantation
		conifer plantation
		sinuous broadleaved woodland
		sinuous mixed woodland
		sinuous conifer woodland
	Marginal land	scrub
	Reclaimed land	drained wetland
	Water & wetland	natural lake
		major river
		moss/raised bog
Built Environment	Nucleated settlement	historic settlement core
		post-1880s settlement
		small nucleated settlement
		small linear settlement
	Processing / manufacturing	manufacturing/processing complex
		former manufacturing/processing complex
		water treatment works
	Communications	former railway station
	Designed	parkland
		former parkland
		large country house
		hospital
	Recreational	sports field
		racecourse