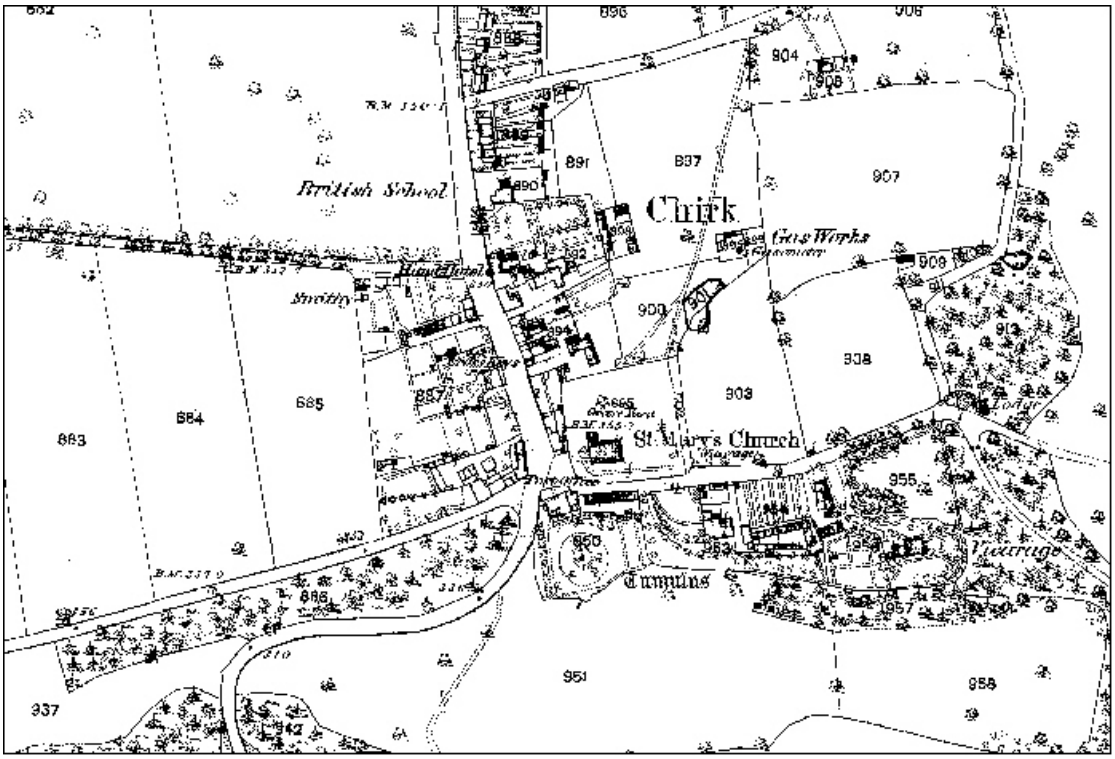
CPAT Report No 1186

Historic settlements in Wrexham County Borough



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

CPAT Report No 1186

Historic settlements in Wrexham County Borough

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Report for Cadw

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An introduction

Background

Eighteen years ago the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust compiled assessments of the historic settlements of Delyn Borough and Alyn and Deeside, two of the districts of the then county of Clwyd, on behalf of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. These were two of several such assessments for the local authority areas of eastern and north-eastern Wales and ultimately ten reports were completed between 1992 and 1995, embracing the entire region for which CPAT had and retains a remit.

The imperative that underpinned these surveys was committed to paper for the first time when Brecknock Borough was studied in 1993, it being expressed in the following terms:

> It has long been recognised that development within town and village alike [might] disturb or obliterate significant information about the past, but a suitable response to a specific building development or other permanent land use change has usually been instigated, if at all, on an ad hoc basis. A more structured approach to the understanding of historic settlements and the preservation and management of this fragile resource is required. This has been given a greater urgency by the publication in 1991 of the Welsh version of the Planning and Policy Guidance Note: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16 Wales). This emphasises the responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities in the conservation of the archaeological heritage and confirms that archaeological remains are a material consideration when determining planning applications (Martin and Walters 1993, 3).

Three principal objectives of the Brecknock Borough study were defined at that time, and were equally applicable to the later studies:

> i) to produce a general picture of historic settlement in the area,
> ii) to identify, in as far as the evidence allows, those areas within the historic settlements that could be termed archaeologically sensitive, in order to assist in the day-to-day and long-term planning processes initiated by the local authority, and
> iii) to define areas of potential archaeological significance where developers might be required to undertake an archaeological evaluation as part of the planning process.

The individual village histories were never intended for publication, but their contents were absorbed into the Sites and Monuments Record (now the Historic Environment Record) where they could be accessed and recycled, usually without any acknowledgement to their source, in others' reports.

There is no need to stress that in the two decades since those reports on Flintshire's towns and villages was circulated to a relatively small number of interested organisations, there have been changes, and we would hope improvements, to our collective perception of the emergence, development and in some instances collapse of historic settlements in the border counties and more specifically in Flintshire.

Firstly, a series of Cadw-funded site-condition studies have appeared which directly or indirectly have had a bearing on settlement studies. The historic churches survey (1995-99), the early medieval ecclesiastical sites survey (2001-04) and even the deserted medieval rural settlement survey (1996-2001) have all played a part in enhancing our understanding of settlement patterns and development in eastern Wales, as have some rather more specific and detailed ground surveys such as those of village earthworks in Brecknock (1993) and Radnorshire (1996), though none unfortunately for Flintshire.

Secondly, there are the results that have accrued from client-funded works on development sites – whether excavation, evaluation, watching brief or building recording – as a result of local authorities implementing PPG16 and, from 2002, the guidelines contained in Planning Policy Wales.

Thirdly, there are recently published studies which have transformed our thinking on certain topics. Most notable in this context are the place-name studies by Hywel Wyn Owen and Richard Morgan (2007), the first two volumes of the early medieval inscribed stones corpus prepared by Nancy Edwards, Mark Redknap and John Lewis (2007) and Richard Suggett's Houses and History in the March of Wales. Radnorshire 1400-1800 published by the Welsh Royal Commission in 2005. Neither of these last two is directly pertinent to Flintshire but both illustrate the quality of some of the work that has recently been completed or is in progress in the Principality.

Finally though in some ways the least tangible of the inputs is the ever-improving perception and appreciation of settlement development and the patterns that are fostered in east Wales, as a result of accumulated expertise, and the accessing of research from both other regions of Wales and from England. This doesn't normally manifest itself in publications, although the writer's paper, co-authored with Wyn Evans (2009) on clas churches and their landscapes is an exception.

In 2010 CPAT felt that the time had come to re-examine the pictures of its historic settlements, fifteen to twenty years on from when the initial studies were completed. In a general sense, various questions had been raised. Had developer-funding in advance of the potential destruction or damage to the cultural heritage had much of an effect and if so where? Had our knowledge and appreciation of the historic settlements in the region markedly improved in the last fifteen to twenty years? And in a departure from the practice in the early 1990s when the Internet was little more than an unfulfilled dream, could we successfully disseminate that information authoritatively so that it could be accessed digitally to satisfy the increasing number of people who search our website? There are several hundred historic settlements in eastern Wales and it was not possible to examine them all in a single exercise. The former local authority areas of Brecknock Borough and Radnorshire were selected to initiate the programme in 2010-11 and this was followed with studies of Montgomeryshire and Flintshire in 2011-12 and Wrexham County Borough in 2012-13. We hope to complete the remaining areas of Denbighshire, the Beacons national park (2013), and eastern Conwy during 2013-14.

Methodology and presentation

The 1994/5 reports. A pattern for each report was established in 1992 comprising a report which covered a minimum of one A4 page of text and in some instances, depending on the size and interest of the settlement involved, three or four pages. The report considered, under four sub-headings, the geographic location of the settlement, the known history of its origins and development, the buildings and archaeology that were integral elements of the settlement, and finally a set of recommendations for further work.

Accompanying each settlement study was an Ordnance Survey map-based depiction of the settlement showing scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, known archaeological features and earthworks, areas which it was felt at the time should be preserved in situ, other areas that should be evaluated in advance of development, and a boundary line drawn around the historic settlement as it was then recognised, in other words the perceived historic core of the town or village.

Those early reports also contained as annexes a copy of the descriptive brief for the preparation of the study and another of a draft paper on archaeology and the planning process in Powys

The 2012-14 reports. After various discussions the configuration of both the text layout and the accompanying map have been revised, to take account of changing circumstances and current requirements.

The baseline information – the settlement name, the national gird reference and the primary record number that links the settlement (as well as its individual elements) to the Historic Environment Record – have necessarily remained the same, although the height above sea level and the prefix PRN have been dropped.

The geographic location has been retained, as has the section on history, now renamed 'history of development'. More change can be seen in the section formerly headed 'buildings and archaeology' which has been altered to 'the heritage to 1750'. This alteration results from two considerations. Firstly, it is becoming increasingly commonplace to refer to the cultural heritage and cultural heritage assets, convenient collective terms that embrace not only below and above-ground archaeology, and buildings, but also historic landscape (and townscape) elements that did not necessarily get the recognition that they warrant in the former terminology. Cultural heritage is seen as a useful shorthand descriptive term for everything that we are concerned with here. Secondly, a decision was taken to end the study at 1750, bringing it into line with Cadw's terminal date for the concurrent scoping programme of medieval and early post-medieval monument scheduling enhancement. 1750 to 1760 is often seen as a starting date for the Industrial Revolution, even if its full 'flowering' did not occur in Wales for another fifty years. Equally importantly, however, it was during the later 18th century and a little beyond that, some settlements saw marked development with a concomitant increase in the number of buildings, and the diminishing significance in the forms of evidence that are significant to the archaeologist. This is not to downplay the significance of the buildings that date from the later 18th and 19th centuries, nor to infer that settlements that contain large numbers of such structures are not historic, rather it is a commentary on the shift in the nature of the evidence that is available to us.

This report has also tried to adopt a more rigorous approach to the presentation of the data, whether it be on archaeological sites, buildings or the townscape. It would be easy to write protracted descriptions of some buildings such as churches or earthwork complexes, or even in some instances the discoveries from development-led evaluations. The regurgitation of much detail, it was felt, would not necessarily be particularly useful to the general reader, and indeed might act as a deterrent. The inclusion of PRN numbers will allow the researcher or enthusiast to follow up individual leads in the regional Historic Environment Record should they wish, but what is offered here is a concise text covering as many issues as are currently known without over-elaboration on any one of them.

Finally, the section of recommendations has been removed. This, it should be admitted, is in part a pragmatic decision based on the realisation that some of the original recommendations covering standard issues such as the importance of consultation with the archaeological curator, the need for watching briefs and evaluations, and the like were compiled at a time when PPG16 was new, consultation practice was yet to be regularised, and the importance of the cultural heritage resource in our towns and villages had in some areas yet to be appreciated by at least some local authority planners. This situation has changed, and the importance of the cultural heritage is now largely accepted at local government level. It is pragmatic, however, for less satisfactory reasons. In an ideal world the recommendation for Halkyn that a survey be conducted to identify the relict earthworks of the former village would have been followed up and completed at some point over the last seventeen years. That these aims have not been achieved is less a comment on the validity of the recommendation, more on the limited resources that are available for surveying and research: it is unrealistic to assume that this is going to change in the foreseeable future.

There have also been some modifications to the plans that accompany the texts. The depiction of designated archaeological sites (scheduling) and buildings (listing) has been left out, for we are conscious of the fact that it is entirely the prerogative of Cadw and/or the local authority to define

these sites in cartographic form, and that the reader requiring information on the extent of a designation should approach the appropriate authority for that information. Furthermore, the number and extent of designated sites within any given settlement will change through time, and assuming that these maps have a currency measured in years, there is the potential for misleading a reader because the situation could have changed.

The definition of the historic core has also been modified, taking more account of existing boundaries in order to lessen any potential contention over whether a particular spot lies inside or outside the historic core as we perceive it. We would stress that the core boundary as defined is not an immutable perimeter, but is simply an estimate and a guide based on an assessment of the existing evidence by the writer as to where earlier settlement may once have existed.

Dropped too is the zonation of areas for evaluation in advance of development. In 1992, defining such areas was a useful guide to planners as to where archaeological intervention was most needed, but there is a potential conflict between the depiction of one or two such areas on a map on the one hand and the definition of the historic core on the other. If for whatever reason, an area within an historic core envelope is not highlighted for evaluation, this could be taken as an indication that the area would not require further assessment in the event of a proposed development. Rather we must work on the assumption that any development within an historic core could be a candidate for an evaluation, depending of course on the nature of the development itself, but that it should be the development control officer at CPAT who makes that decision, based on his own professional judgment.

More contentious perhaps is the decision to omit the identification of blocks of land defined as ‘areas for preservation in situ’, another facet of the 1992 survey. Where such areas are already statutorily designated within an historic settlement, their preservation is a given and no problem arises. However, in some cases in the past a decision that an area ought to be preserved has been taken on the basis of a rather superficial assessment of its worth, rather than on a detailed analysis of what is there. If, then, at a planning level a field containing earthworks is going to be preserved it needs to be based on rigorously defined evidence that will stand up to objective scrutiny, and this requires a detailed record that is rarely accessible through a report of this nature.

One final aspect to clarify is that the historic core envelope now defines only those areas within which there is the likelihood of settlement, by which we mean dwellings and their curtilages. The setting of any settlement will have been the surrounding landscape that was farmed and utilised from it, and potentially could spread over several square kilometres. Defining its fields, its pastures and its woodlands will be a considerable task, and its success cannot be guaranteed. Vital though it is to an understanding of that settlement, the inclusion of the setting within the historic core cannot be advocated. It requires a different level of zoning.

The original study of the two districts within Clwyd listed 35 settlements. The current survey covers 20. Omitted are settlements such as Bagillt, Greenfield, Llanfynydd and Oakenholt that reflect only post-1750 developments, and places such as Higher Shotton and Picton which though having a long history going back well into the Middle Ages, the latter even appearing in Domesday Book, were, as far as we can tell, manors centred on a single farm rather than nucleated settlements.

Wrexham County Borough – a settlement overview

Introduction

Wrexham is arguably the least coherent of the regions that are dealt with in these studies of historic settlements in north-east and central-east Wales. Montgomeryshire (2012), Radnorshire (2011), Flintshire (2012), and Denbighshire (to be done in 2013/14) have some coherency as counties with an historic past, even if their bounds have on occasion migrated to meet changing administrative requirements. Brecknock has been dealt with in two tranches to accommodate the Beacons national park (2013), and even eastern Conwy (to be done in 2013/14) has a geographical coherency, though in the past it would have been unrecognisable to a government official, whether central or regional. But Wrexham seems nothing other than an entirely artificial construct conjured up purely for administrative convenience. A block of lowland east of the Dee – Wrexham Maelor – which protrudes into England and might have been, had historical circumstances been different, a portion of Cheshire, is tied to the gradually rising ground to the west centred on Wrexham and cut by the River Clyweddog and further north the River Alyn. Nor is this the end of it, for since our regional report on Wrexham Maelor in 1992, the area has been reconfigured to take in a sliver of historic Denbighshire along the River Ceiriog.

With such an artificially contrived appearance, it is perhaps no surprise that the settlements are such a heterogeneous collection, ranging in size from Wrexham, one of the largest towns in north Wales to Whitewell and Redbrook which some would probably hesitate to term settlements until the twentieth century, and in age from Bangor Is-y-coed, surely one of the earliest places documented in Wales to Bronington, one of the most recent. Indeed, a reassessment of those settlements that were included in the 1992 report in the light of the revised ceiling of 1750 for considering historic settlements (for which see the introductory section to each individual settlement report) has led to the exclusion of a sizeable number of places during the current study. Lightwood Green, Horseman's Green, Tallarn Green and Crabtree Green are linked by their affixes which signal the presence of a piece of common land around which houses gradually emerged. But in the absence of any pre-1750 mapping, it would be a less cautious commentator or perhaps one who had considerably more time to spend in the archives who would argue that these nucleations went back into the medieval or Tudor era. Further to the north-west and south-west of Wrexham the rash of settlements such as Johnstown, Coedpoeth and Brymbo are a function of the inexorable industrialisation of the region, a trend of the late eighteenth century, though not exclusively so. Llay was included in 1992 because of the medieval moated enclosure at Llay Hall farm, but there is no substantive evidence that this ever developed into the focus of a nucleated settlement, and indeed it is considerably more likely that this remained as an isolated farm, albeit as a higher status establishment than its neighbours.

We are left with a rump of twenty settlements, a contrast to the forty-nine that were assessed in 1992, and even some of the twenty might be considered borderline in any consideration of nucleation, assessed here as much to display the difficulties in establishing origins and growth as well as the vagaries of toponymy.

There is one town and three larger villages that aspire to some of the attributes of a town. Wrexham is in a league of its own, a settlement that once it started to grow seems to have continued without pause, regardless of rebellion and conflagration. But Wrexham's commercial and industrial success has resulted in the sacrifice of its heritage. Its magnificent church apart it has little to show of its earlier history, and the scale of the archaeological examination of its historic core is not in keeping with its size and importance. Holt, Chirk and Overton are smaller, and the first two are historically more interesting. But all four share the rectangular layout of the medieval planned town. Holt and perhaps Overton are the most revealing because of their purity of form, Wrexham arguably the more interesting because it has yet to be fully

understood. Chirk is the slightest, yet is not in doubt. Wrexham appears to be Welsh foundation, Holt is an English establishment contemporary with the creation of its major castle, and Overton too is English, both well-studied in recent years through the University of Belfast's analysis of the Edwardian towns of Wales. The precise origins of Chirk's new layout are obscure. Put this the other way round and it is evident that all of the larger historic settlements in Wrexham display a high degree of planning and layout at their cores. And this is a characteristic which spreads throughout many of the towns of east Wales.

Wrexham boasts a number of places where it seems plausible to suggest that dwellings began to group around a focus, usually a church, in the medieval era, thereby creating a nucleated settlement or village. Plausibility, however, is not the same as confirmation, and in virtually no instance can a nucleated settlement be justified on present evidence. In the absence of standing buildings (other than a church) that date from prior to the reformation, archaeological research would appear to be the only solution but as yet developer-funded projects have yet to make an impact. Hanmer and perhaps Gresford seem likely, Bangor, Ruabon and Worthenbury are all possibles, while Marford remains an anomaly, if only because it is difficult to pinpoint when the pattern of housing that is visible today came into existence.

Church settlements of the sort that are peculiarly prevalent in the hills of Wales and which have featured strongly in most of the previous county reports are rare in Wrexham. Glyn Ceiriog, previously Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog, and Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog are the most likely and it is perhaps not surprising that both of them are to be found in the Ceiriog valley well out to the west in that part of Wrexham tacked on from Denbighshire at the time of its creation in 1996. Erbistock could fall under this heading, and perhaps too Marchwiel, though given its proximity to Wrexham it might be wondered whether there is more to the latter than is currently apparent.

Then there is a group of settlements that have emerged not because there is an apparent medieval focus, but more that there has been a gradual concentration of houses which creates to a greater or lesser degree a simulacrum of a nucleated settlement. Bettisfield, Bronington, Isycoed, Redbrook, Whitwell and possibly Penley all display the pattern of growth which develops from dispersed housing to become a more focussed community, in some cases in very times.

Finally, we can depart from tradition to celebrate the work of Derrick Pratt who has been turning out articles on Denbighshire and Flintshire with a strong Maelor flavour since the early 1960s. It is probably true to say that Derrick has almost single-handedly re-written major elements of the history of Maelor over the last forty years and more. In this respect there are probably few comparable areas of Wales that have benefited in such a sustained fashion. This report owes much to his researches. .

Bangor-is-y-coed

SJ 3889 4544
16314

Introduction
Bangor-is-y-coed is situated beside the A525 where it crosses the River Dee en route from Wrexham to Whitchurch (Shropshire). It is 7km south-east of the former.

The settlement has developed on the east bank of the River Dee. Whilst not on the lowest part of the flood plain, it is nevertheless so close to the river as to require the construction of a flood defence embankment around the northern side of the village. Eastwards, the ground rises gently away from the river.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Bangor up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly regarding the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers adopted in the HER to provide researchers with information that is specific to the individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development
In the early 7th century AD, Bangor was claimed to be the largest monastery in western Britain, ruled by Abbot Dinoot. Founded, it is said, by Deiniol who died in either 572 or 584, he was responsible too for founding the other Bangor on the northern coastline of Gwynedd. The Venerable Bede in his great *Ecclesiastical History* wrote that there were hundreds of monks here, other sources specifying 2400. Bede also recorded that 1200 were put to death by Aethelfrith of Northumbria's forces after the battle of Chester in *c*.616.

Bede further reported that the Bangor monastic community was divided into seven sections each with more than 300 monks ruled by its own abbot. The presence of so many monks at Bangor seems hardly credible, and it has been suggested that if this figure is to be seen as at all realistic, it must have included monks in outlying communities that were subject to Bangor.

The term *bangor* is normally translated as a 'wattle fence', a reference to the enclosure erected around an early monastic site. The 'coed' element presumably refers to the proximity of a wood, but the name Bangor Is-coed is first encountered in Edward Lhuyd's notes of 1699. The alternative form of Bangor Monarchorum - 'Bangor of the monks' – is only a little earlier, appearing in a document of 1607.

This is the earliest settlement to be known by name in Wrexham Maelor. Bede termed it both *Bancornaburg* and *Bancor* in 731. Later, in 1270, it was termed *Bankerbur*, and it first appeared in its present form in 1277/8. The *burh* element, now lost from the modern name but appearing regularly in the Middle Ages (as in *Bonkerbury* in *c*.1278) is usually interpreted as a 'defended enclosure' or 'stronghold', but alternative meanings are possible and it has been suggested recently that it could refer to an enclosure erected for the protection of the inhabitants of a small settlement that grew up around the monastery. It seems unlikely that the issue will ever be resolved with any certainty.

Equally unsubstantiated is the proposition that after a period of desertion following the massacre of the monks by the Northumbrian forces, a new church serving the area was erected on the site in or even before the 8th century, and that this became the centre of a large parish spanning the Dee valley. Indeed, the history and development of Bangor throughout the Middle Ages is obscure; virtually nothing seems to be known about it.

Bangor emerges only at the end of the 17th century when Edward Lhuyd noted 26 houses in the village, and by the mid-19th century it consisted of houses spread along what is now the High Street and beside the Whitchurch Road, with a few close to the church on the Overton Road.

The heritage to 1750

The church of St Dunawd (102683) incorporates 14th and 15th-century work in the fabric of the west wall of the nave, and the chancel, including windows and such internal features as the roofs. Further additions were made in the early 18th century when the tower was completely rebuilt, and the aisles in the 19th century, with the porch being added in 1877. Most of the interior fittings are post-medieval but there is a late medieval font, fragmentary stained glass a 14th-century sepulchral slab (the only in-situ survivor of several known to have been found in the churchyard), and some of the beams from the medieval rood screen. The churchyard is rectangular – a detailed measured survey of all the grave markers was completed some years ago.

Bangor bridge (100139) with its five arches was formerly dated to 1658, but that date is now thought to refer to its repair, the original structure being of late 15th or early 16th-century origin.

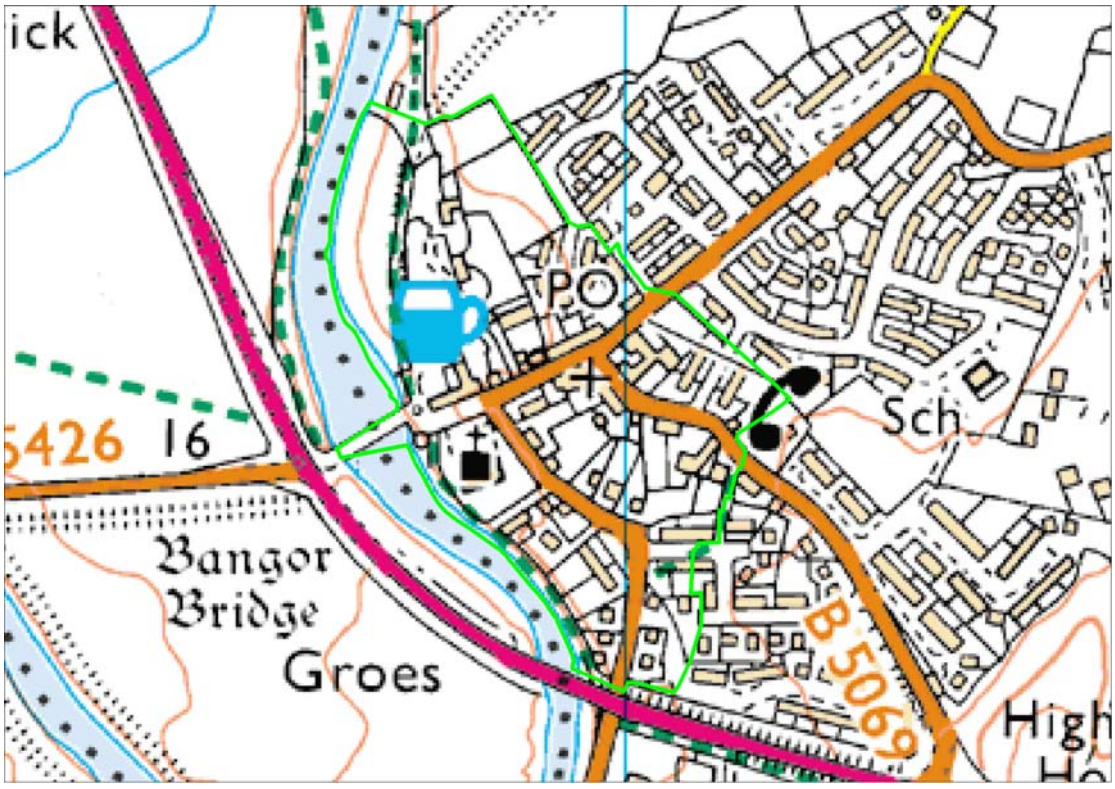
There do not appear to be any particularly old houses in the village, other than the timber-framed White House (105355) on High Street, which is considered to be of late 17th-century date.

The precise location of the early monastery (100149) is unknown, although there has been considerable speculation in the past and this will no doubt continue. It has been assumed, though without any substantive evidence, that the present parish church is on the site of its monastic predecessor. The ruins of the monastery were mentioned by William of Malmesbury, and John Leland in the first half of the 16th century claimed the survival of the names of two of its gates, Porthwgan to the north and Port Clays (Porth Klais) to the south. Rice Rees' comments in 1836 that traces of extensive ranges of monastic buildings were still observable at Bangor should, however, be taken with a pinch of salt. Derek Pratt has emphasised that the river terrace on which the monastery sat may have been eroded by subsequent river action, thus rendering the physical remains wholly irrecoverable. In succinct form he has summed up the monastery at Bangor as a 'considerable Christian seminary (size debatable), laid out (exact site unknown) on the flood plain of the Dee (extent disputable), occupying a (then) secluded valley floor hemmed in by high ground, typical of the siting of early Welsh monasteries'. No one is likely to do better!

There is no evidence of a circular churchyard at Bangor but Pratt argues that changes in the course of the river and the construction of the river bridge, together perhaps with the re-alignment of the roads leading to it, might perhaps have truncated the original outline. Excavations in 1986 behind the hall south of the churchyard recovered bones, and Pratt reported the discovery of a skull (105261) at Millstone Cottage on the Whitchurch Road at about the same time.

Suggestions that the street pattern may have been modified in the late medieval period or soon after were outlined in the previous paragraph. In addition an 18th-century estate map points to changes in the alignment of the Overton Road - unfortunately only a small fragment of the village is depicted and it is not possible to map the alterations with any accuracy, though the curving boundary running north beside Orchard Villa could be relevant in this context. It can also be noted here that the straight B5426 approaching Bangor across the flood plain from the west was constructed as late as 1819 to link the village with the coal-mining district around Ruabon.

The remnants of Bangor's medieval fields are depicted on the tithe map: sub-divided fields are shown running off the road to Worthenbury, south-west of Willow Court, and to the south of the village where the A525 now passes over the Overton Road. Arable open fields are documented in the 15th century, while Althrey Meadow to the south-west of the village was a common meadow. Ridge and furrow survives just to the south of the sewage farm off the road to Worthenbury (105262).



Bettisfield

16146
SJ 4595 3550

Introduction
The modern village of Bettisfield is situated on low-lying land, 1.5km south of the A495 Oswestry to Whitchurch road. The land rises gently to the north with the Victorian church and Bettisfield Hall Farm located on the brow of a hill, separated from the present village ribbon development along two minor roads by the Shropshire Union Canal and a disused railway line. Further north still by one kilometre is Bettisfield Park. The land between the village and church is a mixture of pasture and arable farmland punctuated by occasional areas of unreclaimed marshland and shallow ponds.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Bettisfield to around 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to historic settlement in the vicinity of modern Bettisfield. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which settlement may have developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers adopted in the HER to provide researchers with information that is specific to the individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development
Bettisfield is first recorded as *Beddesfeld* in the Domesday Book of 1086 and appears in its present form in 1388. This can be translated as 'Bēda's field', though the identity of Bēda remains a mystery. In addition there is a Welsh version of the name – *Llysvaesbedydd* – which is documented in 1356 and continued in variant form into the early 16th century. The significance of the *llys* element often meaning a court but sometimes a manor has yet to be explained.

The size and nature of the Domesday settlement is unknown but Bettisfield's appearance in the survey indicates that there was a manor here. Subsequently it gave its name to a township in the ecclesiastical parish of Hanmer.

Between the 11th and 17th centuries there is no solid evidence of a settlement here. Bettisfield Hall, the oldest surviving building, dates to the late 16th or early 17th century, the successor to a house first erected on the site around 1540. During the 17th century this structure together with a number of widely separated farmsteads may have been the only settlement within the Bettisfield area.

Bettisfield Park appears to have come into existence around 1640 when the Hanmer family moved there from Bettisfield Hall. Evans (1795) termed this Red Hall and the separate park to the west, Red Hall Park. Subsequently the road that separated them was re-positioned, hence the New Road of today that runs up to Hanmer village which was in place by 1819, by which time the Ordnance Survey were using the name Bettisfield Park.

An estate map of 1780 shows two settlement foci. The first, centred on what is now Bettisfield Hall Farm, comprised the winged hall with outbuildings to the south, and on the opposite side of the road, where the church and vicarage were later constructed, three other buildings, one a dwelling. This was Bettisfield as far as John Evans was concerned in 1795. Where the present village lies there were only a few widely spaced buildings, and Evans' map adds further detail for these dwellings were sited around open ground which he termed Bettisfield Green. The existence of this green may have been compromised by the construction of the Shropshire Union canal.

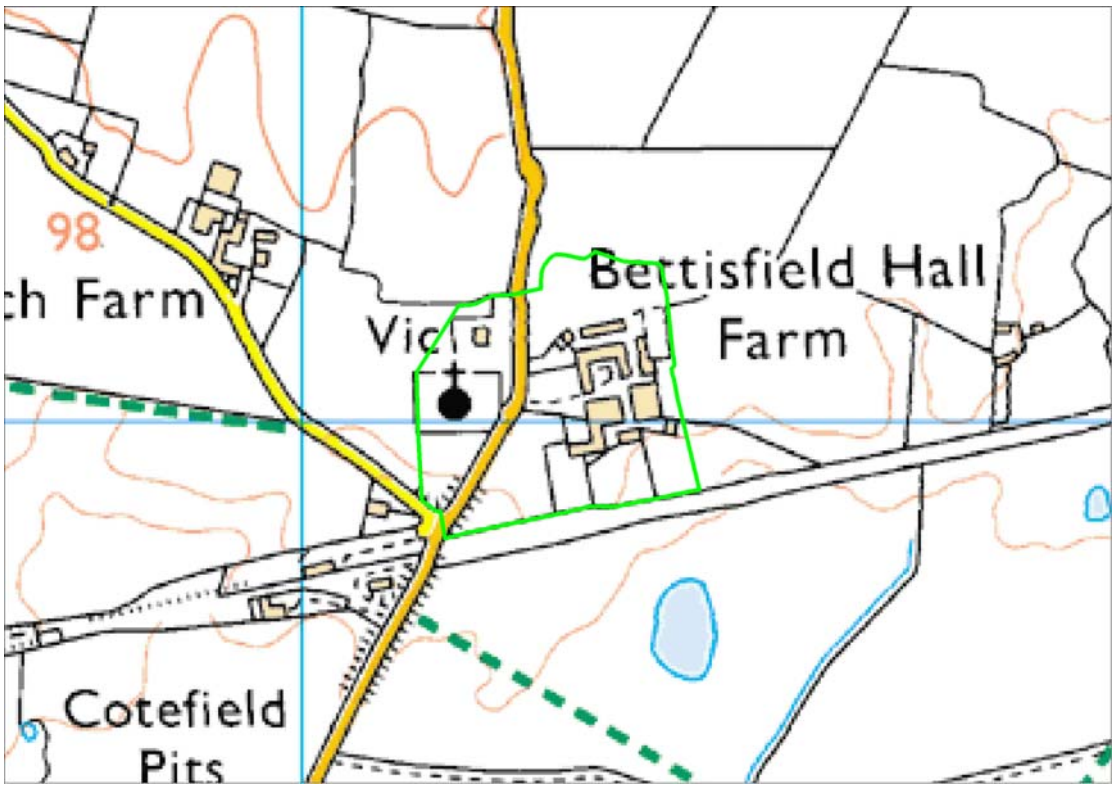
The construction of the Whitchurch branch of the canal in 1797 was probably a stimulus to the expansion of Bettisfield. The tithe map of 1839 shows a clustering of dwellings immediately adjacent to the canal side just south of Bettisfield Bridge. Sometime after 1845 the railway linking Oswestry and Chester was constructed and a station with sidings was provided at Bettisfield.

The heritage to 1750

The present church of St John the Baptist (105312) was constructed in 1872/4, replacing a wooden structure of 1851.

The only building of any architectural interest in Bettisfield is Bettisfield Hall (102682). The winged hall of late 16th to early 17th-century date was constructed in brick with ornate mullioned and transomed windows. One of the rooms within the hall is believed to have been a private chapel. The Hall is a Grade II listed building.

The cottages of the ribbon development to the south are no earlier than the 18th century. The only building of any potential interest is the brick house known as The Smithy (104481), documented as the village smithy but now showing no signs of its former usage.



Bronington

16384
SJ 4582 3942

Introduction
The core of the modern village of Bronington follows a minor road that lies immediately to the west of the A495 Ellesmere to Whitchurch road, with the latter approximately 6km to the south-west. The village lies on low and generally level land with the peat mosses of Fenn's and Whixall less than 2km to the south. The church and its accompanying vicarage lie detached from the village several hundred meters off to the south-east.

This brief report examines the background to Bronington up to the years around 1750. For a fuller explanation of the more recent history of the settlement, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the modern settlement. No historic core has been defined for Bronington as the evidence currently available to us is too sparse to justify it. However, this decision might need to be reviewed, were a more detailed analysis of the extent and appearance of Bronington Green to be completed. The map does not show any areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
The earliest record of the name comes in 1284 as *Bronynton*, later forms showing only minor variations. The first element is obscure but may be a personal name, while the second is Old English *ingtun*, suggesting a meaning along the lines of the 'settlement of [Bron's] people'. Its occurrence could be taken to mean that there was some form of Anglo-Saxon settlement in the area in the pre-Conquest era, but the evidence is not conclusive for new *ton* names were still being created well after the Normans invaded.

In recent times Bronington was a township in the large ecclesiastical parish of Hanmer, and it was not until 1836 that the parish with this name (but also known as New Fenns) was created to support the new church (see below). Probably, too, it was a medieval manor, although references that support this are much more difficult to come by.

Nothing can be satisfactorily revealed of the development of a settlement at Bronington between the 13th and the 18th centuries, and it is evident that there was no church here until the early 19th century. The evidence at present points to a largely dispersed pattern of farms and cottages.

The 1777 enclosure map shows only nine buildings clustered around the edges of what was a long central green or common lying to the south of the present School Lane (and termed Brannington [sic] Green by Edward Lhuyd in *c.*1698). The period when the green began to attract settlement cannot be gauged. This area has now been infilled with modern dwellings.

Bronington did not appear as a named settlement on John Evans' map of north Wales in 1795, but coincides to some extent with what he termed Fenns Heath, where housing was spread out along the edge of the mosses.

By the 19th century buildings were springing up along both sides of School Lane with two large outlying farms at New Hall Farm and Bay Tree Farm. Crofts are indicated on the southern side of Maesllwyn Lane and in the fields adjacent to the A495 opposite Moss Lane. The Ordnance Survey surveyors in 1829 termed the area Bronington, implying that the number of dwellings had become sufficient for the authorities to recognise the emergence of a distinct settlement focus, but it could be argued that it was only in the 20th century that Bronington took on the form of a nucleated village.

The heritage to 1750

A church (105314) dedicated to the Holy Trinity was provided in 1836 by converting a former barn lying beyond the east periphery of the village, by the addition of two transepts. A small tower was appended in 1864.

The oldest buildings in the present village are believed to be Glenmoor and Breen Cottages (105356 & 105357), both of 18th-century brick construction, a timber-framed barn of the same date at Pear Tree House and one possibly older timber-framed house at the eastern extreme of the village which is now a part of Post Office Farm (105358). Outlying from the main settlement core are Maesllwyn House where both the brick house and the barn are considered to be of 17th-century origin, New Hall Farm where a 17th-century building was partially rebuilt in the following century, and Malt Kiln farmhouse from the early 18th century. The remaining buildings are of 19th-and 20th-century construction.

Rapid field survey in 1992 identified several earthworks that might indicate the position of earlier buildings, possibly dwellings around the edge of the former green. The field (OS no.7970) to the rear of Church View displayed a number of undulations close to the southern boundary which do not appear to be either naturally derived or caused by recent dumping and may therefore represent the remains of earlier settlement. A large 'platform' earthwork could be seen against the western boundary of the field, and another large, possible building platform (105316) could be seen in the field (OS no.6048) north-east of Breen Cottage. South of The Cottage (OS no.3837) a shed was built on top of an earthwork platform (105317) that was clearly earlier and unrelated to the shed. And in addition the large field (OS no. 1934) opposite The Cottage on the west side of Grange Road displayed a short stretch of a possible holloway follows the present road. As far as can be established there has been no further examination of these features since 1992.

Though the evidence presented here is not sufficient to argue for a strong medieval presence at Bronington, metal detecting has produced a string of medieval and early post-medieval finds that indicate some activity in the centuries before the emergence of Bronington as a recognisable settlement.

Chirk

105950
SJ 2376 5095

Introduction
Chirk lies on what was formerly the main A5 trunk road (though the village has now been bypassed) from London to Holyhead, 8km north of Oswestry (Shropshire) and 14km south-south-west of Wrexham. It occupies level ground on the northern lip of the Ceiriog valley, the river being a major tributary of the River Dee. The small castle motte takes full advantage of the steep drop down to the river with the church and village lying a little further back from the edge.

Further away, Chirk Castle is about 2km to the west of the village, while the Jacobean house of Brynkinalt is little more than one kilometre to the east.

This brief report examines the background to Chirk up to the years around 1750. For the more recent history of the town, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
The appellation Chirk is thought to be an early anglicization of the river name, Ceiriog and is first recorded in the years 1164-5 as *Castelli de Chirc.* Minor variations in spelling the name continued through the Middle Ages and into Tudor times and beyond, so that in 1540 for instance it appeared as *Churk*. There was also a Welsh equivalent containing the Welsh term *waun* for 'moorland', so that in 1291 the church was referred to as *Ewevn* and in 1368 as *Y Waun*, the name still in use today.

St Mary's church (101108) was according to current wisdom established in the late 12th century, though the possibility of an earlier origin cannot be ruled out. There are hints of a link with the Welsh holy man St Tysilio from which an early medieval (i.e. pre-Conquest era) origin might be inferred, yet even if the association is authentic, it does not mean that an early church occupied the present site.

The main question perhaps is whether Chirk was established as an English settlement or a Welsh one. At first glance with its earthwork castle, church and designed town layout it could be of English origin, but Derrick Pratt has argued, convincingly, that there was a 12th-century nucleated *maerdref* or nucleated bond settlement run by a bailiff which would have provided for the local Welsh lord who would have had his base at the small motte overlooking the Ceiriog valley. The location of this nucleated settlement is not particularly certain. The house at Llwyn-y-cil half way between Chirk village and Chirk Castle (i.e. to the west of the modern settlement) was according to Pratt once known as *Maerdy*, the bailiff's house, lying within an area that was known as Y Faerdre and this may provide an indicator. But Pratt also implies that Lower Chirk which lay to the north of the modern settlement and in the vicinity of Chirk Green might have fallen within the *maerdref.* What is certain is that wherever the core of the *maerdref* was, nothing tangible from those days now survives or, at least, has yet been identified.

Only from 1282 did Chirk become the caput or central place of an English marcher lordship, following Edward I's invasion of Wales. Chirk was granted borough status in 1324 by the new Fitzalan lord of Chirkland, with 25 burgage plots laid out along the main street; this implies a new and rather modest development. By 1391 there were 32 burgesses, a weekly market, a hall that was about to be converted to shops and a court room and a chapel, this being the lord's chapel and not the parish church. The church at Chirk was early in its history a chapel dependent on the mother church at Llangollen; later, and certainly before 1275, it was appropriated to Valle Crucis Abbey which held it until the Dissolution.

The early 14th century saw the peak of Chirk's fortunes as a borough. After that it went into decline. It was reportedly 'devastated' during the Glyndŵr rebellion at the beginning of the 15th century, and by 1465 the hall was in ruin and the shops had gone. John Leland touring the country in the 1530s was unimpressed by Chirk - a few houses only - but he mentioned the 'mighty large and stronge castel' (*i.e.* Chirk Castle, not the motte) and two parks, one of which, 'Blake [Black] Park' survived. His view of Chirk appears to be confirmed by a survey of Chirkland in 1569 which recorded that there were 24 burgages in the town in decay. The market was no longer held by Leland's time, or at least that is what he would have to believe, but four annual fairs continued into the 19th century. Yet notwithstanding its dismissal by Leland, it remained one of the contributory boroughs that elected a Denbighshire member of parliament in the later 16th century.

The history of Chirk during the 16th to 18th centuries appears to have been little researched. What might be deduced is that its growth was extremely limited during the post-medieval era. Important in that it pre-dates Telford's A5, an admittedly small-scale manuscript map of the lordship of Chirk from the last quarter of the 18th century depicts the main build up of settlement on both sides of the wide Church Street, with some dwellings along Castle Road and Trevor Road. Confirmed by the earliest Ordnance Survey maps and the broadly contemporary tithe map (all from the first half of the 19th century) the lordship map reveals that Chirk had not expanded far beyond the notional limits of the planned borough; and as an incidental aside the map also confirms that the creation of Telford's road did not materially affect the layout of the village.

Extending from a track running along the east side of the churchyard was Chirk Green, a large area of open ground with cottages on its edges and some encroachments within it. This showed on the late 18th-century map of the manors of Chirk and Chirkland, and as an element of the landscape it almost certainly goes back well into the Middle Ages.

Samuel Lewis in his *Topographical Dictionary of Wales* refers to a fair amount of rebuilding in Chirk in the early 19th century after a new member of the Myddelton family took over the Chirk Castle estate, as well as improvements to the main road on both sides of the village.

Also during the 19th century, Brynkinalt Park was extended to take in all the ground immediately to the east of the village. Collectively these points reinforce Derrick Pratt's view that for several centuries Chirk was an estate village, organised and run by the local gentry, rather than a self-administered town.

The heritage to 1750

With its west tower and intricate fenestration, Chirk has the appearance of a Perpendicular church (101108), yet the southern wall of the nave and chancel could be earlier, and a small round-headed window may indicate a 12th-century date. Internally there are 17th-century wooden furnishings, a font which also dates from immediately after the Restoration (1662), part of a heart shrine, and some fine monuments memorialising the Myddeltons of Chirk Castle.

The churchyard (19770) is rectilinear with no convincing indications that it had a curvilinear predecessor.

Castell y Waun motte (101109) on the lip of the Ceiriog valley consists of a mound now used as an ornamental garden. Nothing survives of the surrounding ditch or of a contiguous bailey. The first documentary record to the castle is in 1165/6.

Another mound is reported to have existed on the opposite side of the road to Castell y Waun (Lewis, probably quoting Thomas Pennant). Nothing obviously artificial can now be detected there, and its origin and purpose, perhaps even its authenticity, are debateable.

The plan of the village is suggestive of a planted settlement but hardly conclusive, and unlike Denbigh, Holt and Ruthin, Chirk is not listed in the standard text on planned towns. The earthwork castle and adjacent church at the south end and the street adopting a straight alignment northwards with subsidiary lanes running off at right angles are positive indicators, but the layout of plots in the town – the first large-scale map is from 1873 by the Ordnance Survey – offers a fragmented and unsatisfactory picture. The late 18th-century manorial map displays houses on either side of Church Street as far north as Station Avenue and further housing along Castle Road, but virtually no settlement build up down Trevor Road. Church Street was wider than today, the houses that front it on its east side today, having been built over the former market place. While the map is small-scale and its precision may be open to query, it is the best guide that we have to layout of Chirk in earlier centuries.

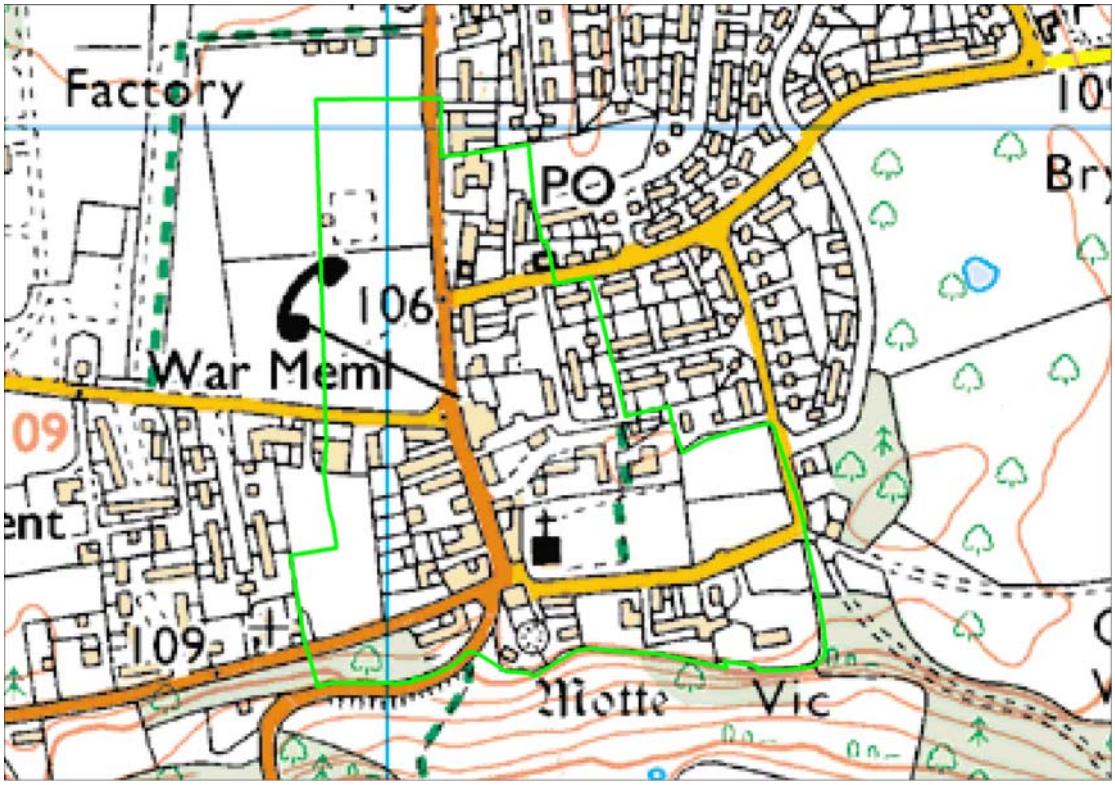
The vernacular buildings in the village go back to the 17th century, though not obviously earlier. Parts of Trevor House on Trevor Road are of the 17th century, the row of cottages facing the church probably go back to the 17th century though their construction is disguised by re-fronting in brick, The Hand Hotel was built as a hostelry in the mid-18th century, while the building immediately to the south of it and probably its precursor could be earlier, perhaps late 17th or early 18th-century; and The Mount, the house that fronts the motte at Chirk carries a date of 1753.

The recreation ground on the west side of Church Street and north of Station Avenue is covered by low ridge and furrow (19771).

Beyond the eastern edge of the settlement was possibly a monastic grange belonging to Valle Crucis Abbey. The field name, Maes y Mynach (102617), is assumed to refer to the association.

Chirk Castle lies around 2km to the west of the settlement. Whilst an association between castle and town is only to be expected, a consideration of the castle is not relevant to this

report. Similarly, Brynkinalt, which according to tradition was the home of the Trevor family from the 10th century, is not discussed here.



Erbistock

SJ 3558 4133
15656

Introduction
The modern settlement of Erbistock is located in a loop of the River Dee on its northern bank, less than 2km west of Overton. The village is reached by a minor lane road leading south of the A539 that links Whitchurch with Llangollen, and terminates at the river. The small settlement lies towards the foot of a steep slope which rises sharply from the river terrace, with the church and inn immediately above the river and the few houses straggling up the hill behind the church and on to the more level plateau beyond.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Erbistock up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to consult other sources of information and particularly with regard to the origins and nature of the later buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
Erbistock is derived from Old English terms meaning 'Erp's place', though the element *stoc* can also carry the more specific meaning of a dairy farm or even a secondary or outlying settlement, i.e. one that was an offshoot of an already established settlement. It was first recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 as *Erpestoch*, and by 1291 was referred to as *Erbystok*, very similar to the modern form. It has been suggested that if it was a secondary establishment the home could have been at Eyton.

Virtually nothing is known of the early history of Erbistock. The circumstances that led to the original settlement at this location are unclear: the proximity of a ford across the River Dee, and good agricultural land to the north and east are likely factors, but it is a moot question as to whether it was the ford or the church that came first. The setting of the church close to the river bank but in a relatively secluded position is typical of a sizeable number of early medieval church sites in Wales. There is, though, no direct evidence for a pre-Conquest church on this spot and the tradition that the church was formerly dedicated to an obscure and probably early saint, Erbin, would be unconvincing, but for the fact that 'ye offrying of Saynt Erbyns' were referred to amongst the income of the church at the time of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* in 1535. With this can be coupled the fact that the parish was carved out of a larger landholding belonging to the clas church at Bangor-on-Dee, and that Erbistock will originally have been a chapel dependant on the mother church, a situation more likely to have

occurred in the pre-Conquest era. Thus the establishment of a church, probably an early one, is another factor that might be considered as a potential stimulus for settlement.

It is the mid-19th-century tithe map that provides indirect evidence of a small, perhaps nucleated, community at Erbistock in the Middle Ages. Open fields lay immediately to the north of the church, to the north-east, and perhaps to the east where the grounds of the rectory seem to have supplanted an earlier field pattern. Open field strips imply the presence of several farmers whose lands were interspersed with those of their neighbours, and the proximity of the fields to the church suggests that their dwellings were close by. It is likely then that there were more houses along the lane leading down to the church than there are today and this represented the nucleated or semi-nucleated community of Erbistock.

By 1770 the dwellings had thinned out, for an estate map of that date shows a similar pattern of settlement to the present day with the small cluster of buildings around the church on the riverside and a few dispersed farm buildings and cottages to the north. During the 17th and 18th centuries the large residences at Manley Hall and Erbistock Hall were founded by wealthy families moving into the area.

The heritage to 1750

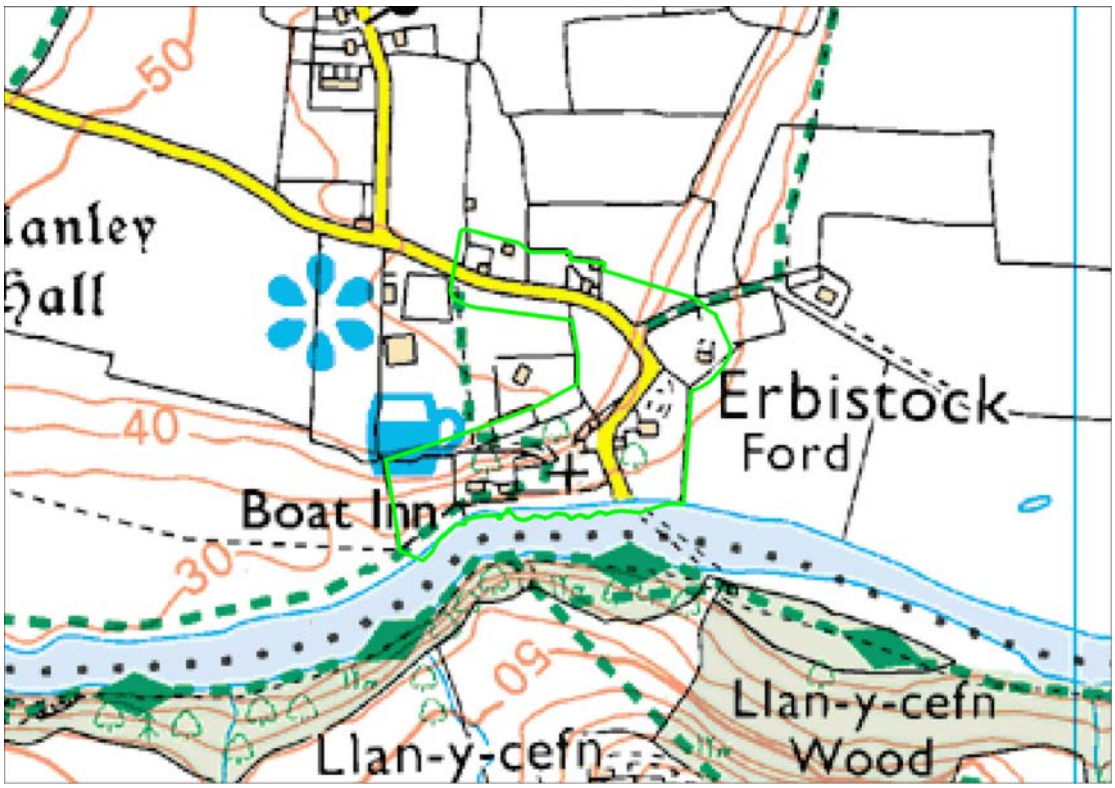
The church (102684), dedicated to St Hilary, was entirely rebuilt in the standard Gothic style in 1860, the only survivals from an earlier age being the Romanesque font, a chandelier that is likely to be 18th-century, and several wall memorials. The dates of its predecessors have not been established, but there was a church here in 1692 which was at least partially constructed in timber, and a stone church in 1748 which seems to have been a Georgian building that was claimed as a 'neat modern edifice in the Grecian style of architecture' by Samuel Lewis in 1833. A painting, presumably 18th century, depicts a double-aisled nave with a bellcote, a south porch and a window to illuminate a west gallery; the interior, not surprisingly had box pews according to contemporary pencil sketches.

The modern churchyard is rectilinear, almost rectangular, but there are hints in the alignment of its northern boundary of a smaller and perhaps more curvilinear enclosure in earlier times.

Excluding the church, two buildings are of historic interest. The Boat Inn (105318) situated just to the west of the church is claimed as 16th-century in date but the surviving structure is wholly of 17th-, 19th- and 20th-century construction. Originally two buildings now converted to one, it takes its name from a former ferry across the Dee. Portions of the Old Rectory (Grade II) can be dated to the late 17th or early 18th century, though most of the building is late 18th-century. Elsewhere in the parish, Grove Farm, Manley Hall, Erbistock Hall and, on the far side of the river, Llan-y-cefn are all 18th-century and earlier.

No features of archaeological interest were noted during the survey that was conducted as part of the original field assessment in 1992. It must be assumed that any archaeological deposits relating to the putative medieval settlement lie beneath, or in the immediate vicinity of, the present buildings.

The tithe map shows that the fields edging the settlement on the north consisted largely of a former open field system made up of the characteristic elongated strips, sometimes termed quillets. Palmer in 1910 noted that three closes were called 'the village fields'. Residual elements of these quillets still survive to the east of Glebe Cottage, but there are no indications of the ridge and furrow that are so much a feature of Wrexham Maelor.



Glyn Ceiriog

105959
SJ 2046 3843

Introduction
Known in past centuries as Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog but now abbreviated to Glyn Ceiriog, this village represents a classic example of settlement shift. The church accompanied by only a few houses is set on a steep south-facing hillside at a point where the Ceiriog valley describes a dramatic loop, and the location offers an excellent aspect both upstream and downstream. East from the church the ground also drops away steeply into the valley of Nant y Weniar. Above the church the ground rises for nearly 200m to a ridge running off the Berwyn Mountains. The main and modern part of the village lies in the valley below the church, on flatter ground beside the Ceiriog.

Glyn Ceiriog is served by the B4500 from Chirk and the B4579 from Oswestry. Llangollen is some 4km over the hills to the north, Oswestry 12km to the south-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Glyn Ceiriog up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
The earliest reference to the settlement is the Taxation of 1291 when the church was termed *Lansanfreit*. In 1538 we read of *Llansanffraid ynglyn* but it was not until 1566 that the Ceiriog was mentioned in association with the church, although as an independent feature the valley of Glyn Ceiriog was recorded in 1400. The meaning is straightforward – the ‘church of Saint Ffraid in the valley of the Ceiriog’.

The church was originally a chapel dependent on the mother church at Llangollen, and it seems likely though has not been proved that it came into existence in the early medieval era (i.e. before the Norman Conquest). The date at which it became a parish church is unknown, though this was certainly before the end of the 13th century. The origin and subsequent development of any settlement around the church remains obscure.

A large map of the manors of Chirk and Chirkland which dates to the last quarter of the 18th century depicts the churchyard and cottages on the lane leading to it from the west. Above

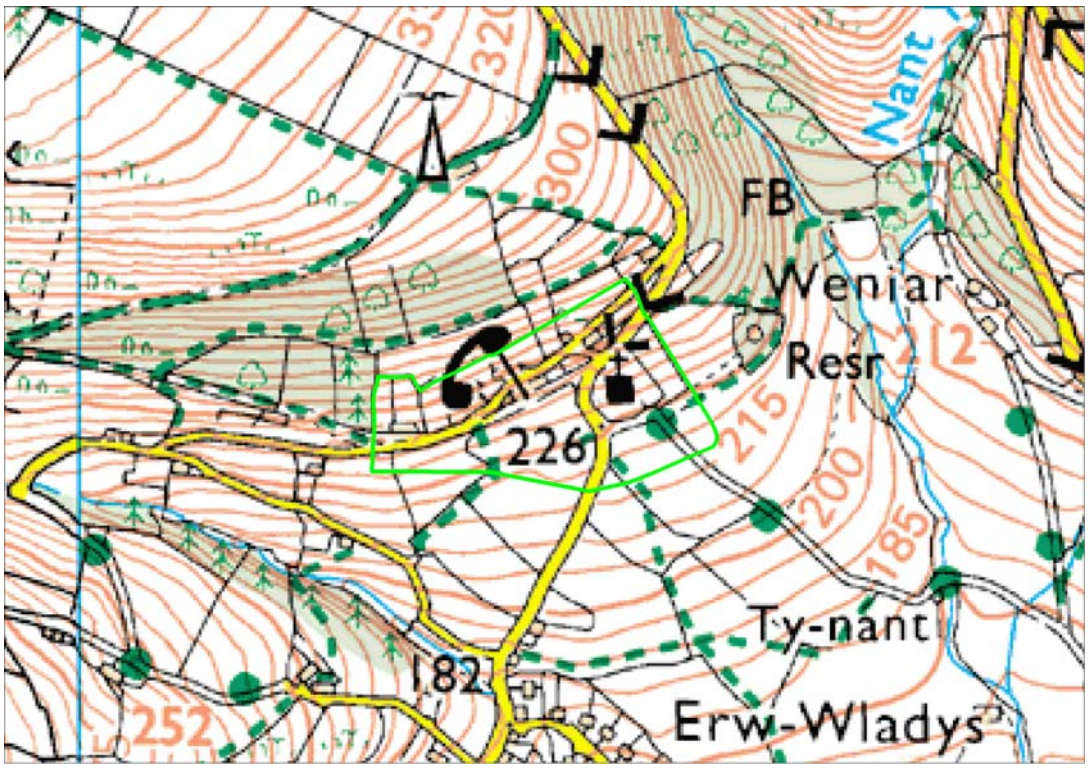
these were open moorland (*cf* Llanarmon Mynydd Mawr). This must have been the original focus of settlement, though whether dwellings began to emerge here in the late Middle Ages has yet to be established. In the valley below on the Chirk manorial map there was only a single farm, Ty Newydd (now gone but originally east of the Vicarage), and by the river the mill of Felin-bychan. John Evans' map from 1795 implies rather more settlement close to the river, but both of these maps are at too small a scale to allow any certainty on the true extent of the settlement. More precision comes from the tithe map of 1838 which reveals that dwellings had started to cluster around the crossroads three hundred metres below the church, creating the nucleus of modern Glyn Ceiriog, while along the numerous lanes lacing the northern side of the valley there was sporadic housing.

The heritage to 1750

St Ffraid's church (101088) was rebuilt about 1790, remodelled half a century later in 1838-9, and restored and to some degree refurbished in 1887. A claim that the tower is substantially 13th-century in origin, and thus the only early portion of the building, remains unproven. Sir Stephen Glynne, the inveterate commentator on churches, visited the church in 1853 and found 'scarcely any object of interest', and sadly that is the case today with only 18th-century altar rails and an illegible brass which from an earlier source is thought to commemorate a death in 1746. With the exception of the font which was classed by Archdeacon as 'old Perpendicular', its more obvious furnishings and fittings – the commandment boards and the royal arms – are all Victorian.

The churchyard (19745) is now of polygonal form; the Tithe map's depiction of a more curvilinear outline should perhaps be treated with caution. Today the northern slopes are overgrown, and the graveyard has been enlarged with successive extensions to the east.

As noted above the focus of settlement in the 18th century was the track leading westwards from the church. None of the houses on the track now appears to be any earlier than the 19th century, until Pen-draw'r-garth is reached, four hundred metres along the track, its date 1733.



Gresford

15666
SJ 3464 5498

Introduction
The modern village of Gresford village lies a short distance to the north-west of the former A483 trunk road, now the B5445, that linked Wrexham to Chester and has now been superseded by the Wrexham bypass. Llay lies two kilometres to the west, Wrexham 5km to the south, and the village itself has merged with Pant and Marford into a continuous built-up area on the east side of the River Alyn. The historic core of Gresford lies on the lip of ground that drops steeply down into the river valley to the north, while to the south it falls gently away from the crest occupied by the church.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Gresford up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the village, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
With the simple meaning of 'grass ford', Gresford appears as *Gretford* in 1086 and in its present form in 1273. The ford has been interpreted as a crossing of the Alyn (Alun), probably a predecessor of the bridge that lies below and immediately west of the church, and the assumption is that the road or track approaching the ford was a grassy one.

The manor of Gresford was recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086 with a church and a priest, and enough villeins and smallholders to at least hint at the possibility of a nucleated community. Palmer, the accomplished early 20th-century historian of Wrexham, saw Gresford as part of the larger medieval manor of Burton. Where the church was located and the villeins resided is not clear, but the former, it has been argued, was not the present building which was built on land given by a local landowner at the end of the 12th century, but the chapel of St Leonard at Pont y Capel on the River Alyn south of Llay (SJ 336 541). This seems to have continued in use into the 16th century and may still have been a ruin at the time that Lhuyd undertook his parochial survey in c.1699.

Gresford church, relatively newly built, has a rectorial list that goes back to 1284 and by 1291 it was worth £24, a value that would not have disgraced churches with a much longer history. It is a reasonable assumption that as the medieval era progressed, the church became a focus for settlement, though unfortunately this can be no more than speculation. However, by the

end of the 17th century, it had undoubtedly developed into a recognisable nucleation for Lhuyd referred to twenty houses around the church.

An estate map of 1787 provides the first visual impression of the settlement with dwellings concentrated around all sides of the rectangular churchyard and spreading south-eastwards along High Street, a pattern that had altered little by the middle of the 19th century. The streets around the church were noticeably wide and a small open area of ground or common land lay to the north-west of the churchyard. Palmer termed this the green and remarked that the village stocks were placed on it. The only other point of interest is the growth of the settlement, not along the road that ran to Wrexham which would have been the most obvious direction, but along High Street, a road that led to the subsidiary settlement of Holt.

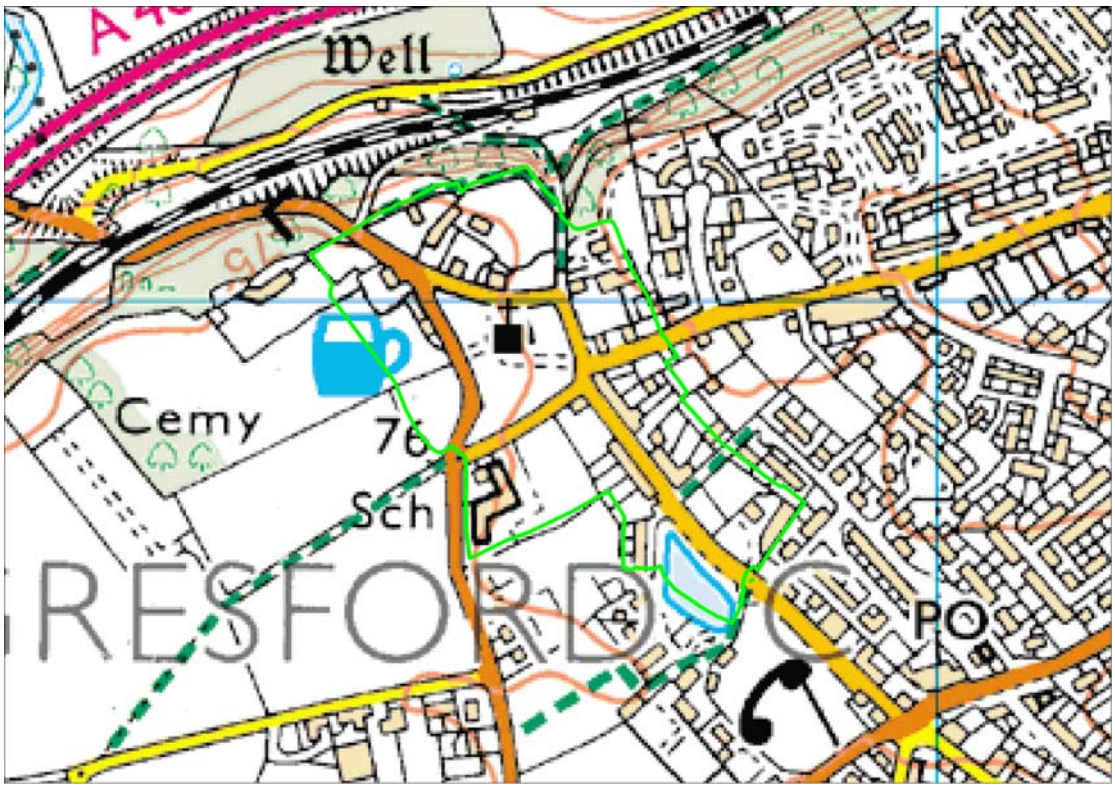
The distribution of settlement above is reinforced on the 1870-1 OS map though with slightly more expansion to the south and east. The churchyard had been extended to the south sometime between 1843 and 1870, an extension that resulted in the demolition of two dwellings depicted on both the 1843 Tithe and 1787 estate maps. The other curious protrusion in the churchyard layout – in the north-west corner – resulted from a similar intake of land from the common, apparently in 1831.

The heritage to 1750

All Saints' church (PRN 100383) has been described as 'the perfect Cheshire church in Wales' and is without doubt one of the ecclesiastical glories of Wales. It incorporates a nave with side aisles, a chancel and a west tower, and there are a wealth of internal fittings and features and external carvings. It is largely 15th-century Perpendicular in its style and fabric with traces of earlier and later features including a 16th-century south porch. The churchyard was formerly rectangular but incorporates 19th-century extensions on the north and south; there is nothing to suggest an original curvilinear graveyard that might an early medieval foundation.

Strode House (105330) on the northern side of the churchyard is a Grade II listed building, the former school accompanied by almshouses and both being built in 1725. Elsewhere the buildings of Gresford are of predominantly 19th-century date, and overall the village seems poorly represented by historic buildings.

At a greater distance from the historic core around the church are a former holy well known as All Saints Well (100357) which is in the lower slope of the Alyn valley immediately to the north of the churchyard, and a medieval cross base (100379) positioned at the junction of the B5373 and the B5445, its former cross perhaps marking the limit of some ecclesiastical jurisdiction or having some less well-defined secular purpose.



Hanmer

15674
SJ 4549 3968

Introduction
Hanmer lies just off the A539 that links Wrexham, some 16km to the north-west, with Whitchurch in Shropshire. The village has developed on a glacial moraine in a prominent position at the head of Hanmer Mere, and this location may well have been an attractive one for an emerging settlement.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Hanmer up to 1750. For the more recent history of the village, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.
The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
Hangmere is recorded in 1269 and *Hengem(er)e* at much the same time. *Hanmere* appears in 1391 and the modern form of the name for the first time in 1417. In Welsh sources the mere was named as *Llyn Hanmer* in 1497. Identified as an Old English personal name, an individual called *Hagena* gave his name to the mere, presumably in the pre-Conquest era, but if a manor was established here before the Normans arrived, no record of it has yet been encountered.

There is a tradition that St Chad, later to become bishop of Mercia, established a cell on the site in the middle of the 7th century. Barring some remarkable discovery this is likely to remain only a tradition. The church here is supposed to have existed in 1110 when a portion of its revenues were reputedly granted to the fledgling community established at Haughmond Abbey near Shrewsbury, and it lay within the medieval Cheshire deanery of Malpas. There is too, indirect evidence of a church here at the time of the Domesday survey (1087). Bettisfield was a township of Hanmer and was recorded in Domesday as having a priest. Yet there is no indication of an historic church at Bettisfield and it is plausible to assume that the priest was at Hanmer.

A manor must have developed here in the Middle Ages, and the Hanmer family, taking their name probably from the lake or the manor, rose to prominence after their arrival in the area during the reign of Edward I in the late 13th century. Haughmond Abbey's lands here were bought by Sir Thomas Hanmer after the Dissolution in the late 1530s, and it has been suggested that it was the development of his estate that may have fostered the growth of the village. Yet although Hanmer has the appearance of a nucleated settlement that might have

had early origins, in truth there is little to guide any determination as to when it emerged as a village.

A school was established here by 1625 and around 1699 Edward Lhuyd was able to record 25 houses around the church. An early map of 1779 indicates dwellings along and just off the main street and Thomas Pennant in his *Tour of Wales* published in 1784 referred to the 'little town of Hanmer'. The picture then is not so very different from today except for the very recent development to the east of the main street.

The heritage to 1750

Nothing of the earliest recorded church is apparent in the present building dedicated to St Chad (100183). It is predominantly late Perpendicular (*c.*1490), though the tower, so it is claimed, was only completed in 1570. The chancel was added in 1720. In 1889 the interior was completely gutted by fire but its extensive restoration was largely complete by 1892. Internal furnishings and fittings included several pieces of 17th and 18th-century furniture, three later 18th-century memorial brasses, and a chandelier originally in Bangor church which carries the date 1727.

The older part of the churchyard is to the north of the church; much of that to the south is a modern extension, the divide between the two still visible. There is a fine octagonal medieval churchyard cross shaft supporting a much worn, 14th-century carved cross-head (100184), standing by the south-east corner of the church.

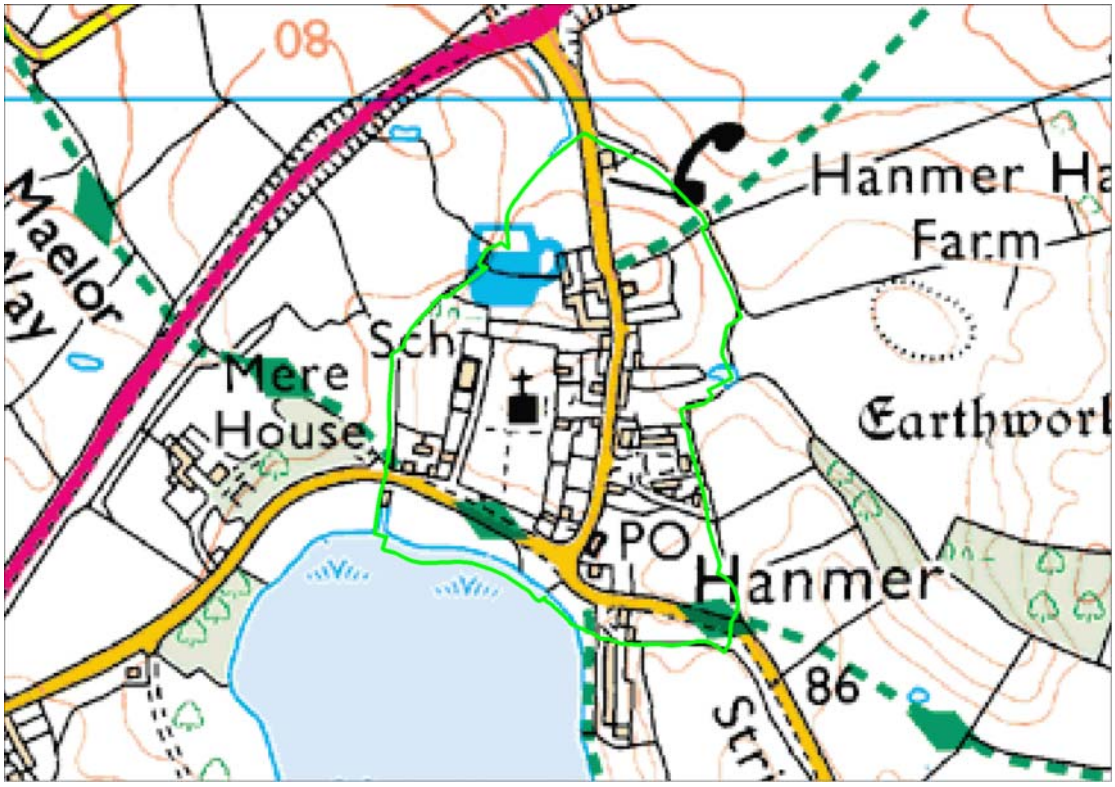
In a field 200m to the east of the village is a large low-lying oval mound (100181), approximately 110m long and around 75m wide. Though almost certainly glacial in origin, its form has been modified – the face of the mound has been scarped and it is ditched around the base, with an outer bank on its southern side. Any possibility that this was an unusual castle or ringwork seems to have been ruled out by the experts, and it is generally held that this is a moated site, albeit one of an atypical design, with its location in Vicarage Meadow perhaps suggesting that it was formerly the site of the parsonage.

The village appears to be basically a linear ribbon development along the main north-south street with the church and its yard lying back from this, and accessed via the Square (though this appears to have been a less prepossessing feature in the 19th century if the tithe map is a good guide. The linearity of the main street has led the Royal Commission (RCAHMW) to propose that Hanmer is a planned settlement originally set out (at an unknown date) along a single street, an attractive expalntion of the village morphology, alhtough there is nothing in the known records to support such an early development.

The possible presence of an earthwork enclosure around the village also needs consideration. Along the western side of the village a natural but now dry stream bed appears to have been enhanced to form a defensive ditch (105279). This feature forms the western boundaries to fields OS nos 3875, 4081 and 4682 with the land rising steeply on the other side. To the north of the last field the line is continued in the stream which curves around to join the road at a point opposite the garage. A similar natural boundary exists on the north-eastern side of the settlement though this is less forbidding (105298). Here defence, or at least demarcation, seems to have come from a strengthening of the boundary at the back of the old tenement plots. A bank in OS no.5690 is continued, most visibly, in the rear boundary of the Old Police House. The Tithe Map suggests that this eastern boundary once extended much further to the south, but later field enclosures (OS nos 6570, 6863 and 7057) and modern development have obscured the picture in this area. If this is an authentic enclosure, and at present the evidence is not compelling, it is difficult to envisage the circumstances in which it came into existence. Perhaps it is no more than a coincidence in the layout of boundaries.

The architecture of Hanmer is predominantly in late 18th to /early 19th-century brick with The Hanmer Arms (105299) being a fine example. The present school dates from 1676 but was substantially restored in 1850. Both Magpie Cottage (102849) beside the Mere and The Cottage on the Square are 17th-century, timber-framed buildings, while the Vicarage (105301) next to the church is also 17th-century but in red brick.

Little archaeological work has been undertaken in Hanmer. The exception was to the south-east of the church close to the T-junction of roads by the mere where medieval pottery but very little structural evidence was found in the plot in which Dove Cottage was subsequently built.



Holt

15676
SJ 4104 5389

Introduction
Now bypassed by the road from Wrexham to Nantwich (the A534), the same town of Holt is a nodal point for several roads that converge on one of the few bridging points of the River Dee. It is about 8km north-east of Wrexham and faces the Cheshire village of Farndon across the river. Holt is set out on a flat plateau above the meandering course of the river. A relatively gentle drop into the river valley on the north has been used by dwellings in the vicinity of the bridge, but on the east houses and the church are set on the lip of the valley, abandoning the slopes to meadows.

Modern infilling of the overall layout of the settlement is inevitably beginning to disrupt the historic pattern of Holt. New housing complexes on either side of Church Street, south of the church, and west of Cross Street have masked the medieval burgage plots in the historic core, a trend that will no doubt continue.

This brief report examines the background to Holt up to the years around 1750. For the more recent history of the town, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
This location beside the Dee has long been an attractive one. Though not directly relevant to the study, it is worth noting that there was a large Roman works depot producing tiles and pottery primarily for Chester just to the north-west of the later town and this functioned from the 1st to the 3rd century AD. And further back in time Bronze Age burials and, separately, the ditch surrounding a burial mound of similar age, have also been recorded close to the river.

Holt as a name is first documented in 1326 as *Holte*, twenty years later (1347) as *le Holt* and in the 1560s as *yr holt.* This is the old English place-name element *holt* meaning 'wood'. It has a second name, *Lyons*, which appears as *Castrum Leonis* (1316) and *the castle of Lyons lately called the castle of le Holt* (1347) and *Lyons alias Holt* was still in use in 1638. Modern

place-name authorities believe that the Lyons name was transferred from France, either as a place-name or a family name.

Holt is a planted town probably contemporaneous with the castle of John de Warenne, earl of Surrey which was built in the last decades of the 13th century, after he had been granted the lordship of Bromfield and Yale in 1282. Both the borough and the castle are referred to in records – in 1285 and 1311 respectively – before the place-name emerged. It is indisputable, however, that the site will have been selected primarily for strategic purposes, and that the foundation of the town will have been secondary to the castle.

Administratively Holt was a part of Gresford parish, its church initially only a chapel to the mother church at Gresford.

By the time of a survey in 1315 there were 152 burgesses and just over 200 burgages. This was a considerable community, one of the largest in Wales, though with a population that was predominantly English, primarily from Cheshire but also from the south and east of England. According to a document of 16th-century origin a borough charter was first issued in 1285 and was confirmed by a subsequent grant in 1411.

A weekly market was held on a Friday and a yearly fair. Trade and farming will have been of considerable importance to the inhabitants of medieval Holt. But mining too played a part in the economy for in 1412, the burgesses were granted the right to take coal from the wastes of Brymbo and Coedpoeth. The river was navigable up to the town allowing water borne trade.

Decline set in later in the medieval period. Though the market centre at the caput (or centre of the lordship), it was Wrexham, no more than eight kilometres away, that thrived, and during the mid-15th century the population of Holt was estimated at less than three hundred. Hostility between the English and Welsh inhabitants appears to have played a part in the decline. By Leland's time in the 1530s the weekly market seems to have been in abeyance. In 1620 there were only 65 freeholders and burgesses within the town, but during the century there may have been some improvement.

The heritage to 1750

St Chad's Church (101258), originally constructed late in the 13th century, was rebuilt and extended by Sir William Stanley between 1483 and 1495; the tower could also be of this time though it has been suggested, too, that it was built in 1679. Restoration work occurred in the 1730's and in 1871. Apart from the font, also of late 15th-century origin, there are few internal fittings of medieval or even Tudor date. The monument sequence starts in the early 18th century, the brasses a little earlier after the Restoration. A parson's bell has been attributed to the 15th century and there is an undated iron-bound chest. St Chad's churchyard is rectangular, fitting tidily into the design layout of the town, but also displaying an enlargement which occurred in 1881.

The castle (101260), unusual in its form of a regular pentagon with large corner towers, was first recorded in 1304. With its inner keep set on a boss of rock left by the removal of surrounding material, this was not a naturally strong fortification and is said to have been abandoned at an early date, though Leland in the earlier 16th century termed it a 'goodly castel', and it changed hands several times during the Civil War in the 17th century. Little now survives but the moat was apparently 10m deep and connected to the river. The castle's bailey or outer ward has never been precisely defined, but Lilley *et al* have made a convincing case for its perimeter being fossilised by the south-eastern side of the market place (see below) and then by the curving section of Chapel Street and its continuation, Smithfield Street. On this

reading, the straight line of Castle Street becomes a later feature of the townscape, introduced after the castle had fallen out of use, perhaps in the late medieval period.

Although a grant of murage (a necessary precursor to the construction of town defences) was given early in the town's development, there is no evidence that this was ever taken up, although there was clearly an intent to erect town walls as a document of 1391 states. But the castle apart, the only defence seems to have been the tower guarding the bridge which has now disappeared.

The design of the town is extremely regular, and an earlier authority pointed out that in its street plan it bears a resemblance to the true *bastide* (planted town) of south-western France, with the river bridge at one end of the developed area and the castle and market place at the other.

The triangular market place by The Cross is still clearly discernible as a focus for all the roads in the town, but it remains uncertain as to whether this was the successor to an earlier market place opposite the church (see below). The shaft of the medieval market cross survives, as does the octagonal base, having been moved to its present position in 1896.

Two main streets, Cross Street and Church Street, ran north to south, with a third lane, now lost, apparently lying parallel to and east of Church Street and passing just in front of the church. Church Green between Cross Street and Church Street was a green or patch of common within the town in the 19th century and probably long before. It still survives as an open space today, termed Church Green, and may conceivably even have been the original market place. Smithfield Street fed in to the town from the countryside to the south, Frog Lane from the west. There are surface indications confirmed by the tithe map that the former was originally rather wider than at present, but it appears from Norden's survey in the early 17th century that Frog Lane was the more important as a focus of housing.

Of the settlements in Wrexham Borough, Holt has witnessed more developer-funded archaeological work than any other over the last twenty years. Several developments have revealed archaeological remains, and possibly the most interesting in this context is work undertaken on land near Rose Cottage in Church Street which yielded evidence of road metalling, a possible boundary ditch, and structural remains in the form of a clay floor and hearth, together with medieval and post-medieval material.

The bridge (101261) linking Holt and Farndon, and by extension England and Wales was controlled from Holt and was first built in 1338, replacing a ferry. The present structure is considered to be 15th or early 16th century in date. It has eight segmental arches, cutwaters and the third arch (on the Welsh side) had a defensive tower with a drawbridge still in place in 1767 and even now distinguished by later masonry in the bridge structure. It was the subject of a thorough survey in 1992, but this remains unpublished.

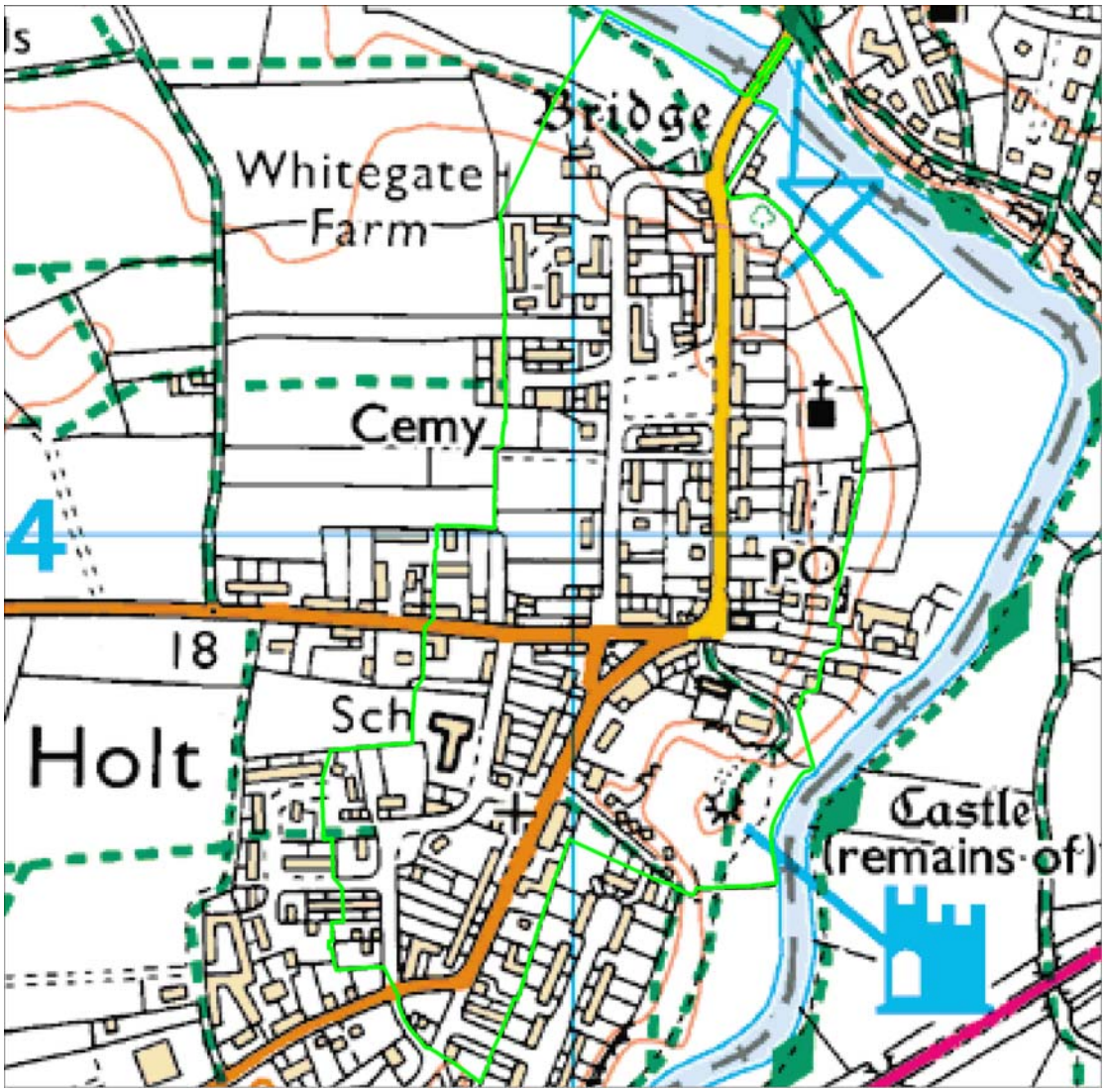
A quay (105284) existed on the riverside just to the west of the bridge, a facility for trade with Chester, but no traces of this now survive.

The town is short on older houses. Holt Hill (105282) off Green Street near the bridge is a listed building of the 17th century, remodelled in the 18th century, and Smithfield House (105283) at the southern end of an interesting row of cottages on Castle Street was originally a farmhouse of 17th-century origin. Holt Hall, also on Castle Street, was built in the early 18th century, Walnut Cottage on Frog Lane in the late 17th century, and Deeside Farm may also have originated in the 17th century though it has been re-fronted and extended. Lost buildings include a town hall (105281) known to have been in existence in 1545 and perhaps there from soon after the incorporation of the borough in 1411, stood on the south-east side of the market

place until its demolition in 1897, and there was also a 'Welsh' court-house in the castle precinct.

Extensive traces of open strips survived in fossilised form into the 19th century west and south-west of the town. Some remain today.

South of Frog Lane and six hundred metres west of the market square are the earthworks of Esp Hill fishponds (101267; SAM Denbigh 224), probably of medieval date. These presumably served the castle. And a further feature of the lordship castle will have been a park, probably now revealed only by field names on the south side of Holt.



Isycoed

15678
SJ 4041 5010

Introduction
The modern settlement of Isycoed lies less than two kilometres off the western bank of the River Dee on the low and vaguely undulating ground that edges that river. About three kilometres to the south is the small town of Holt with which it has been associated in the past. The hamlet is reached via a minor road leading off the B5130.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Isycoed up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the hamlet, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the modern settlement. No historic core has been suggested as the evidence currently available to us to define a nucleated settlement is too sparse to justify such a delineation. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
As a name Isycoed, meaning 'below the wood' or 'lower wood' is first encountered as *Iscoet* and *Is y coet* in the late 14th century, but the references are to an area or district rather than a specific place.

As a manor Isycoed may have been in existence at the time of the Norman Conquest, but it was not mentioned by name in Domesday Book. And the manor of Isycoed (or Iscoyd) did not cover the same area as the ecclesiastical parish as the Wrexham historian, Alfred Palmer pointed out more than a century ago. Knowledge of the historical development of the settlement at Isycoed is extremely poor. There is in fact no documentary or cartographic evidence for a settlement here before the 18th century, but a chapel is supposed to have existed by the 16th century. This became a parochial chapel with baptismal and burial rights sometime before 1577 although Palmer inclined to the view that up until the early 17th century the inhabitants of the various townships in Isycoed were obliged to worship at Holt church. Isycoed lay within Holt parish and in turn this appears to have originally been a part of Gresford. The position of the chapel is presumed to have been either on the same site as its successor or among the buildings at Chapel House Farm. Isycoed finally achieved parish status in 1826.

Maps from the turn of the 19th century indicate that Isycoed was effectively a set of individual buildings loosely grouped together along minor lanes. Significantly perhaps, John Evans termed it not Isycoed but New Chapel on his map of the northern counties of Wales in 1795. In essence, there is no evidence whatsoever that there was ever a nucleated settlement at Isycoed. Even today it barely merits the label. Recent development in Isycoed has taken

place largely to the north of the church along the northern side of the minor road between Elm Villa and the Plough Inn.

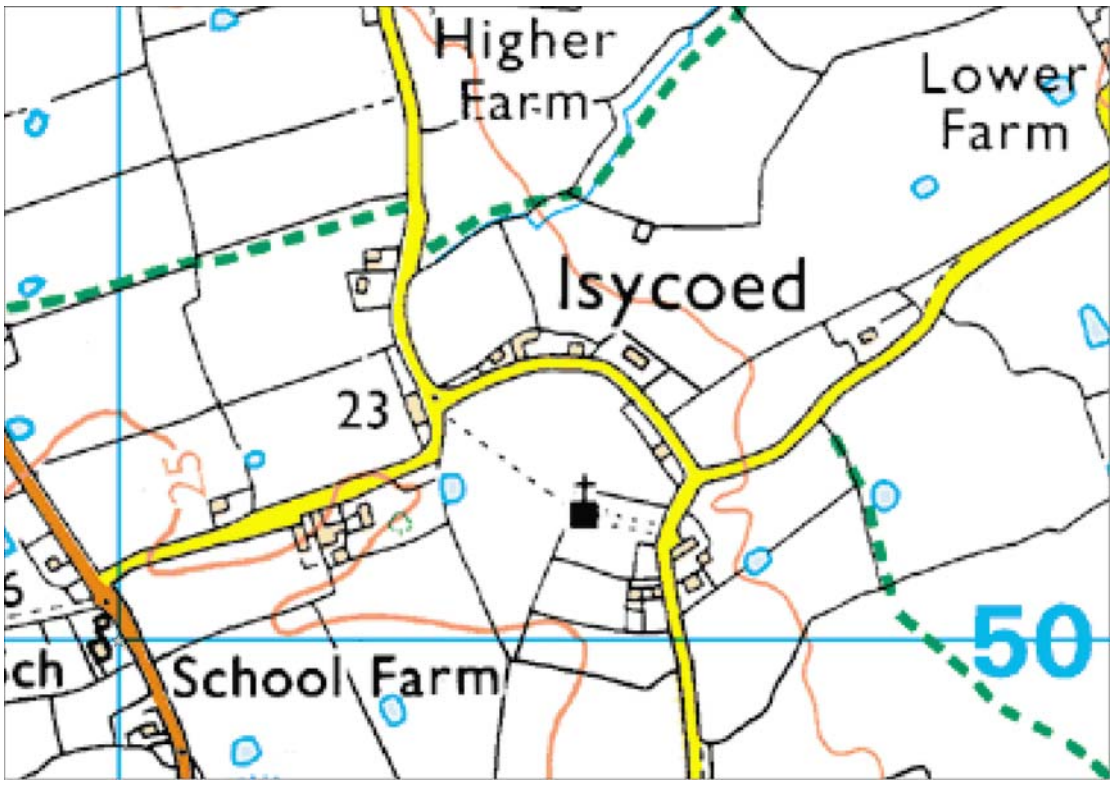
The heritage to 1750

The present church dedicated to St Paul (105319) was erected entirely of brick in 1829 on the site of a previous church reputedly rebuilt at least twice, the earlier prior to 1718 and again in 1742 (In passing the earliest gravestone in the churchyard is dated 1732). The interior was re-ordered, probably around 1871, and a restoration followed in 1890. It contains little of architectural merit and contains virtually nothing in the way of interesting furnishings and fittings, other than a font which carries a date of 1725 and a churchwardens' chest which is presumably 18th-century.

The churchyard is rectangular and was extended to the south at an unspecified date. The distinctive corrugations of ridge and furrow can be seen running through the graveyard extension to the south of the church.

Chapel House Farm has two buildings of interest, the smithy and the Grade II listed old farmhouse building (104296). The latter was perhaps built as a cruck-framed hall house in the 15th or 16th century, and integrated as a cross-wing into a later house, perhaps in the late 18th century. The Plough Inn (105321) is thought to have been erected in the 16th or even the 15th century as a cruck-framed building and then remodelled in the 17th century. Cobham Cottage a little way off to the east was probably built in the 17th century and then reconstructed in brick in the following century.

Other than extensive remains of former openfield ridge and furrow, indicative of medieval agriculture, particularly in the fields encircling the church, no other archaeological features were noted during the field survey.



Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog

1059621
SJ 2888 3769

Introduction
Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog has grown up on the southern lip of the flood plain of Afon Ceiriog as the fast-flowing river drops down off the Berwyn mountain range, at a place where a tributary, Nant y Glog, converges from the south. The church occupies a slightly higher spine of rock which protrudes from the lowest slopes of Pen y Glog towards the river. A number of lanes meet here and the B4500 terminates in the village, some 14km to the west of Oswestry.

Though modern housing is now spreading in ribbon fashion southwards up the valley of Nant y Glog, the village core remains compact.

This brief report examines the background to Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog up to the years around 1750. For a fuller explanation of the more recent history of the settlement, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.
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History of development
Lanarmon is first documented in 1270, Lannarmam in 1277-8, and in fuller form as Llanarmaior in Disfrynkeyrianc in 1291. Similar though not identical versions appeared later in the Middles Ages and into the Tudor era, but it was John Evans who put the modern form of the name onto his 1795 map of north Wales. The meaning of the name is straightforward - the ‘church of Garmon in the Ceiriog valley’.

Nothing is known of the early history of Llanarmon. Traditionally this is the site of a 5th-century church foundation, if a direct link with the shadowy figure of St Garmon is accepted. Indeed, more than one source cites this as his place of burial. But even if the association with St Garmon is considered to veer more towards legend than fact, the nature of the dedication, the churchyard morphology and the topographical setting in conjunction point to an early medieval establishment.

Whatever the story of the settlement in the medieval and Tudor periods, both documents and archaeology are mute.

The Chirk lordship map dating probably from the fourth quarter of the 18th century shows a small village at the crossroads, with no more than three dwellings in Nant y Glog valley, and the flatter land to the west of the village divided into arable strips, otherwise known as quillets. When the tithe survey was compiled fifty or so years later the quillets had largely disappeared while the form of the settlement had changed but little.

The heritage to 1750

The simple church of St Garmon (100998) dates entirely to 1846 when its medieval predecessor was demolished revealing a hoard of 15th-century coins now in the British Museum. Archdeacon Thomas recorded that 'the old church was a parallelogram in form with a square flat tower at the west end and a south porch; the floor was of clay covered with rushes and it was seated with benches and two large, high-backed pews'. The Victorian church consists of a nave and chancel in one, with a west tower and short spire over a porch. There is some undated furniture and altar rails from the late 17th or early 18th century, but little else was retained from the earlier church.

The churchyard at Llanarmon (19742) is broadly elliptical; though now rather more rectilinear than curvilinear it offers the impression of having had its face shaved back to a set of straight lines. It is generally raised but only on the north is its form dictated by the topography. No evidence remains of any earlier enclosure.

Tomen Garmon, a large but irregularly-shaped mound (100985) in the churchyard, is sometimes classed as a preaching mound, in keeping with other churches linked with St Garmon as at Llanfechain and Castel Caereinion, both in Montgomeryshire.

The earliest portions of the West Arms Hotel (19743) may date back to the 16th or 17th century, but much of it is of 18th-century date. And a little to the south a small flannel mill (42818) now converted to a shop may have originated in the 18th century. No other houses of any age have been identified in the village.

Open ground may once have existed immediately south of the West Arms with Nant y Glog edging it on the east. This has subsequently been infilled with houses, though its form is still detectable in the layout of lanes and an alley. From a later 18th-century map of the manors of Chirk and Chirkland it might be inferred that there was an open area of rectangular shape here, and this has the appearance of a small market place though there is no independent evidence that Llanarmon boasted such a facility in the medieval era. Perhaps more plausibly it could have been a green or small common, the setting for the thrice-yearly fairs.

Marchwiel

15682
SJ 3571 4771

Introduction
The modern village of Marchwiel has grown up on either side of the A525 road between Wrexham and Whitchurch, approximately 3km south-west of the former. The topography consists of gently undulating low hills, predominantly down to pasture which lie to the south of the River Clywedog.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Marchwiel up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the village, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.
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History of development
Extremely little is known of the origins of Marchwiel. From the field survey alone the settlement itself might appear to be relatively recent, perhaps no older than the early 18th century, though as an administrative area, it goes back much further, well into the 14th century as an extent of the lordship of Bromfield and Yale in 1315 testifies.

The physical evidence for a medieval precursor to the church and by extension any putative settlement around it is suggested only by the remains of a possible cross base in the churchyard which is presumed to be 14th or 15th-century in date. However, the earliest reference – to *Marchocil* – comes from the Norwich Taxation of 1254 and confirms the medieval presence of a chapel, though there is nothing in this that points to an earlier, pre-Conquest origin. The name is interpreted as meaning 'large saplings' and possibly suggests deliberate cultivation, but is otherwise uninformative.

Information boards within the church record that Marchwiel parish was carved out of Bangor-on-Dee sometime around 1535, and that prior to this there had been a chapel, dependent on Bangor, on the site of the present church. This, however, is probably misleading – the 1254 taxation refers to Marchwiel not as a chapel but as a church in its own right, a parson is recorded there in 1359 and the great St Asaph historian, Archdeacon Thomas, was inclined to see the separation of Marchwiel from its mother church as an occurrence much earlier than the 16th century.

The proposal that the place-name reflects the nature of the material from which the first chapel was constructed should be treated with considerable caution; it might be construed as an imaginative attempt to parallel the place-name origin of the mother church at Bangor.

It is assumed in the absence of any reliable evidence to the contrary that one stimulus for the siting and growth of the settlement is due to the nearby coal and iron production centres. Documentary evidence suggests that there was a church and community at Marchwiel early in the 17th century, and in 1626, a messuage in the settlement was gifted to the church, the rental to pay for repairs. More speculatively, it might be suggested that the establishment of the church and its ecclesiastical parish reflected the need of a developing settlement for its own spiritual centre. However, as late as *c.*1699 Edward Lhuyd was able to note in his *Parochial Queries* that there were only five houses and a smithy around the church, and as far as can be established there are no pre-19th-century maps that would provide an idea of the scale of settlement here.

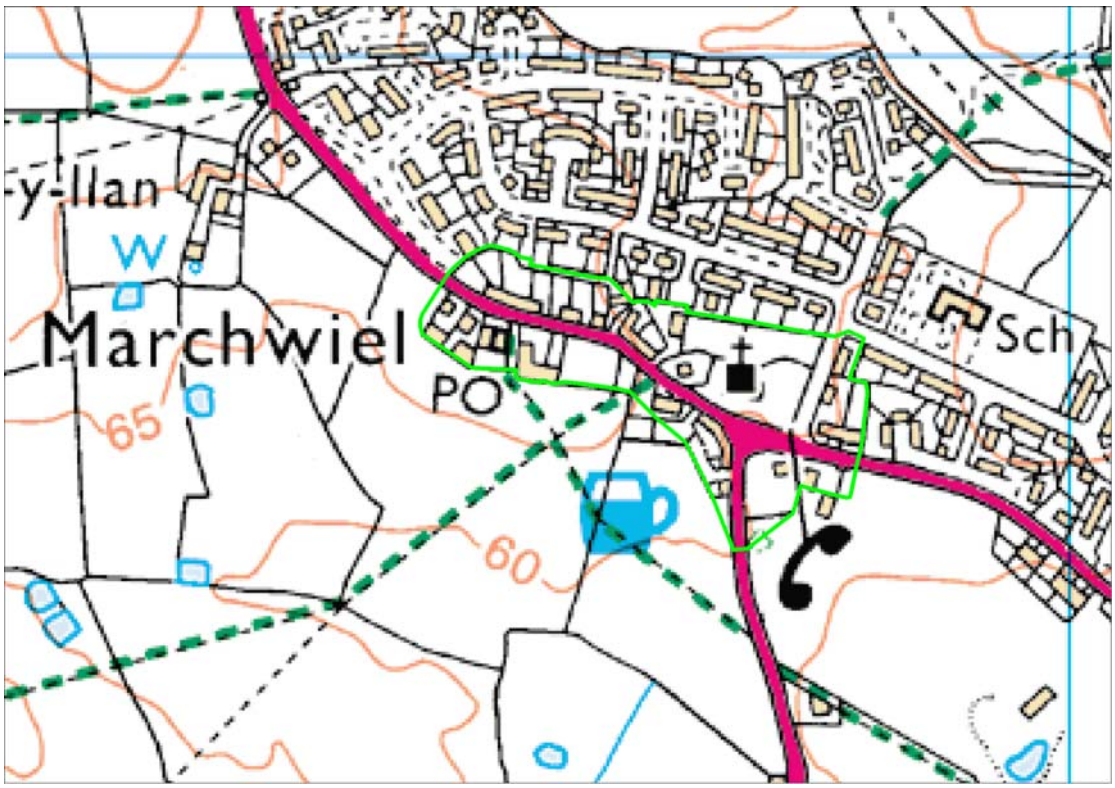
The proximity of the railway line giving access to the marketing centre at Wrexham with the siting of a station at Marchwiel undoubtedly initiated the 19th-century growth along the A525.

The heritage to 1750

The present church (100146), dedicated to St Deiniol and Marcella (but formerly, it is believed, to St Deiniol alone through its association with Bangor, and also in the past occasionally with St Marcellus), is a Georgian structure, mostly dating from the years 1778 to 1789. It has some 19th-century additions including a north transept and a polygonal apse attached to the chancel. Within the church there are brass and marble memorials and some fine stone glass, all of which are from the 18th century. The churchyard is rectangular.

Other than the church, no buildings of any significant architectural or historic interest were noted. The earliest buildings cluster along the street frontages around the church and to the west. On external evidence alone, these are no earlier than the 18th century. A former smithy (104290) is now part of a row of cottages west of the church and appears to date from the late 18th century, while a malthouse at Pen-y-llan at the western end of the village contains a beam that carries a date of 1703.

Traces of possible ridge and furrow recorded in two fields, one to the rear of the Red Lion Public House, south of the church, the other to the south of Hollyhedge on the eastern edge of the village, point to open-field agriculture but whether this was associated with a settlement at Marchwiel or elsewhere cannot be determined.



Marford

15683
SJ 3595 5628

Introduction
Marford is located on the B5445 which was formerly the A483 between Wrexham and Chester, 4.5km north-east of the former, before the Wrexham bypass usurped its number. Modern housing development has now merged it with the adjacent villages of Pant and Gresford. It is positioned at the northern end and foot of a steep promontory, close to a ford over the River Alyn. Quarrying has, however, severely altered the local topography.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Marford to around 1750. For the more recent history of the village, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the putative historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement may have developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
Marford, in its earliest form, appears as *Merford(e)* in 1315, and seemingly means 'boundary ford'. The Dictionary of Welsh place-names (2007) points out that there was a ford across the River Alun to the west of the settlement, with the river forming the boundary between the historic counties of Flintshire and Denbighshire. As the former was established by statute in 1284, the chronology fits. As late as the beginning of the 18th century, the place-name was still spelt with an ‘e’ rather than an ‘a’, and Samuel Lewis as late as 1833 also preferred the former.

Marford was never a parish in its own right. It had no church and was always part of the ecclesiastical parish of Gresford. For secular purposes Marford was apparently a commote, an administrative unit that might or might not have had a nucleated settlement at its centre. The name has also been attached to a township and a medieval provostry.

Though the Old English place-name elements imply a pre-Conquest landscape and one that was perhaps settled, the former motte and bailey constructed on top of the promontory is the first tangible indication of medieval activity. This may have been the castle of Bromfield which was burnt down in 1140, but probably rebuilt for it was mentioned in a document of *c.*1161. A mill was referred to here in 1315, and it has recently been suggested that it could have been in existence as early as 1050 though the integrity of the evidence for this claim is

not clear. More hypothetical still is the belief that there was an 8th-century Mercian defensive post and mustering place on the promontory.
After this, the historical record is sporadic: there are references to the township of Marford and Hoseley, and with the formation of the lordship of Bromfield and Yale in 1282, Marford and Hoseley materialised as one of the manors within it. Neither of these necessarily implies the presence of a settlement, and many of the records that do exist relate to the township.

However, it needs to be noted that Marford and Hoseley reputedly functioned as a *maerdref* in the Middle Ages, a reeve's settlement that supported a nearby royal court. This should signify a nucleated settlement in say the 12th century, perhaps even going back into the early medieval era. Though tenurial references to it were still evident in the administration of the township in the 1470s, nothing specific is known of the form or size of the *maerdref* (settlement), nor its precise location. It has been suggested however that the court was established on the now quarried away promontory, within the larger bailey attached to the motte, close to where Roft Hall was constructed in the 1570s.

An estate map of 1787 reveals the extent of the settlement at the end of the 18th century before it was redesigned as an estate village (see below). Some 18 dwellings were grouped around a road junction many of them seemingly in much the same positions as their 19th-century estate cottage successors. The road pattern shows some sign of change: Marford Hill Road, the present B5445, was preceded by a track 50m to the east, while another lane ran almost due south from where the Trevor Arms now stands, its former position marked by a continuous property boundary.

The heritage to 1750

The motte and bailey castle, known as The Roft (101298) and set within the ramparts of an Iron Age hillfort, formerly existed above the village, but was almost completely erased by quarrying in the middle of the twentieth century. Records, additional to those noted above, suggest that it was already ruinous by the 1280s when it was burnt by the Welshmen of Bromfield in the face of the advance by Edward I's army.

The core of the present village is of estate housing commissioned by George Boscawen of Trevalyn Hall. The cottages are all of a similar Gothic cottage style, distinctive and unusual. Building may have commenced in 1803, was certainly in progress in 1814 when a Wiltshire architect was employed and was completed by 1820. Most of the buildings are Grade II listed.

To the north-east of the village near the crossing of the Alyn lie Marford Mill (100363) and Trevalyn Hall (100376), the latter a mansion built in 1576, accompanied by 16th-century outbuildings. The former obviously has a long history for it was destroyed during the Glyndŵr rebellion and then rebuilt seventy years later, but its site is now occupied by a 19th-century mill building, itself now converted.

There is no suggestion that any of the buildings in the settlement are older than the early 19th century and no tangible evidence of earlier activity, though its existence is of course confirmed by the 1787 map. Of the medieval settlement – the *maerdref* – nothing is known of its location and if it was in the vicinity of the castle, it will have disappeared through quarrying. However, it is perhaps more likely that it lay below the promontory with its castle and thus could have been beneath the much later estate village.

For a fuller exposition on the *maerdref* the reader is referred to Derrick Pratt's 1992 article 'Fourteenth century Marford and Hosley: a maerdref in transition', in the *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society.*

Overton

15687
SJ 3730 4182

Introduction
Overton is a small town approximately 11km to the south of Wrexham and around 3km from the border with England. It straddles a road junction where the A539 intersects the B5069. It occupies level terrain but is perched close to the edge of a steep scarp that drops westwards into the floodplain of the River Dee.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Overton only up to 1750. For the more recent history of the town, it will be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of many of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
Contrary to the views of antiquaries, Overton does not figure in Domesday Book, and the earliest record of this place is as *Ouerton* in 1195 (though the actual source is a 14th-century one). In 1201 Overtone appears, but later forms are more distinctive, even idiosyncratic: *Awtun in the 14th century, Wrtun* in the following century and *Ortyn* in 1566. The name is taken to mean 'the settlement on the bank', the bank here perhaps being the valley edge, but alternatively and more specifically a reference to an ox-bow of the Dee which once lay almost immediately below the town. Speculatively, the settlement itself could have had its origins in a landholding that acquired this name from Mercian colonisation during or after the 8th century, in common with other *tun* place-names in Maelor Saesneg, and subsequently developed as a manor. There has been speculation, too, that an earlier *maerdref* might have existed at Overton before the borough was founded.

There was a castle near here soon after 1139, constructed by *Madog ap Maredudd,* one of the Welsh princes of Powys. Whether it acted as a focus for settlement in the earlier 12th century before the foundation of the town is not known, but it was still having work done to it at the beginning of the 14th century.

Overton emerged from obscurity in 1279 when Edward I granted *Robert de Crevequer* the right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair, and seven years later the king granted Overton to his wife, Eleanor. It was created a free borough by royal charter in 1292 when 56 taxpayers dwelled here, a reasonable proportion of them probably of Welsh extraction. Incentives to encourage further burgesses to settle in the town followed. Madog ap Llywelyn's

revolt in 1294 resulted in the destruction of at least part of the town, but while a grant of murage (the right to collect taxes to fund the building of defences around a town) was made in 1300, there is no evidence that the town ever progressed as far as erecting walls.

The town was sacked in 1403/4 by the forces Owain Glyndŵr and never properly recovered. In the 1530s John Leland noted there were "not twenty houses" in the town. However, despite the assumed reduction in population, Overton retained its market through until the 19th century, and from the Middle Ages it was effectively the secular centre of Maelor Saesneg.

For several centuries Overton church was a chapel, subsidiary to Bangor-on-Dee. Its parish, known to Edward Lhuyd as Overton Madoc, was in existence in the 17th century, but the church only became independent of Bangor as late as 1868.

The heritage to 1750

St. Mary's church (100153) is largely 14th and 15th-century Perpendicular in its tower and nave, to which the chancel was added in 1710 and aisles in the 19th century. Fragments of three 14th-century sepulchral slabs survive in the church, but there is a further fragment which may be earlier. A large dug-out chest is claimed to be 15th-century, the pulpit carries a date of 1637 and parts of the late medieval rood screen were incorporated into the more modern screens around the Lady Chapel. The font, a chandelier and a benefaction board all originated around the middle of the 18th century, and there is also a good set of 18th-century marble memorials, though the earliest may have been erected at the end of the previous century, and from the same period two memorial brasses.

The precise position of the castle is not known, although it is supposed to have been on a cliff edge overlooking the Dee. In the 1530s John Leland reported it ruinous and about to fall into the Dee. Several locations have been suggested for its site – the most convincing theory is that it was close to the river in the Asney area, 2km to the north-west of the town.

The churchyard is rectangular and, inside the wall, is fringed by fine yew trees, many of considerable age. There is no evidence that it has ever been enlarged.

Overton is laid out on a distinctively north to south axis, but contrary to what might have been anticipated the streets do not form a regular grid. Furthermore, the earlier Wrexham Road runs through the town, and is forced to make two right-angled turns to the north and to the south of the church. It has been suggested that these anomalies might signal the two different parts to the town, the market town and the borough, established at slightly different times, or as an alternative that the destruction wrought at the end of the 13th century and again at the beginning of the 15th century could have distorted the appearance of the original street layout. Either way the current pattern lacks the coherency of the most obvious planned towns.

Land grants awarded during the early 14th century in Overton refer to Walle Street/Welle Strete (1316) and Le Wallistrete (1326). A grant of land on Wall Street is also noted in 1553. It is possible that these names are early forms of Willow Street, though this would conflict with a view that Willow Street may have formerly been known as Plough Lane. Further plots were recorded in le Parsones rowe in 1361, now unlocated but presumably close to the church.

Burgage plots of medieval origin are recognisable lying between the Wrexham Road and Willow Street, and between High Street and School Lane. The plots on the west side of Salop Road probably also come under this heading, but are perhaps less convincing in the absence of an obvious back lane.

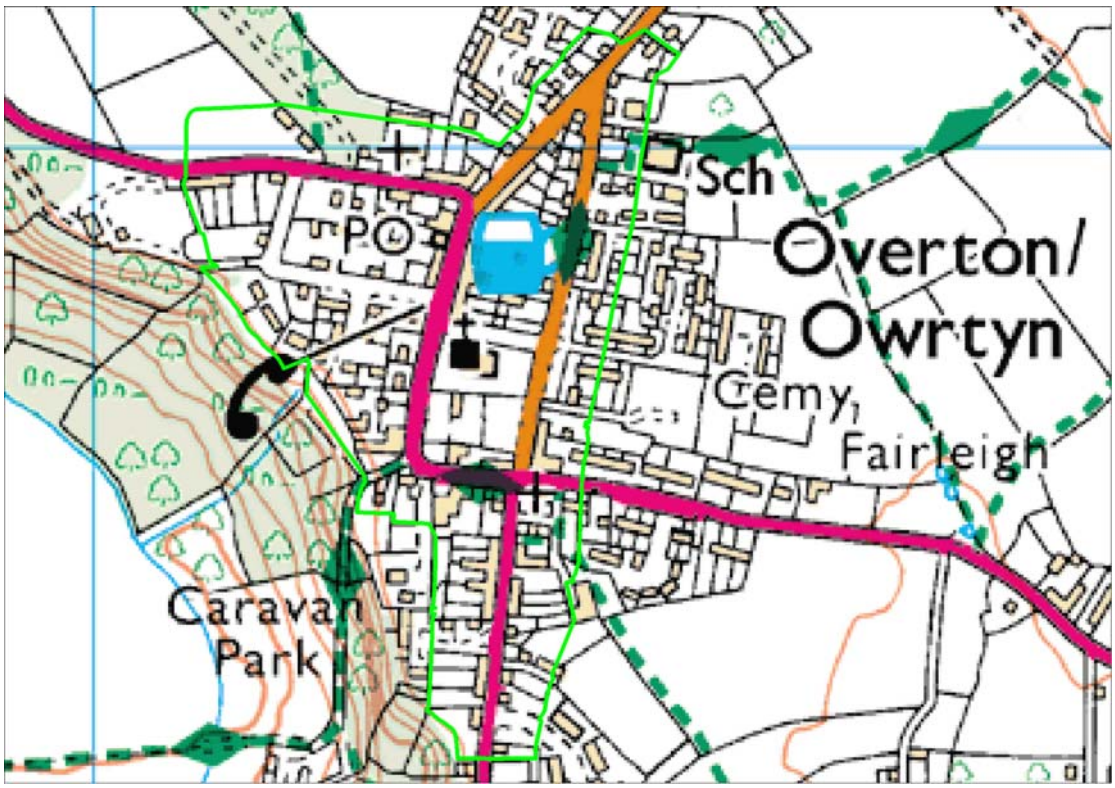
High Street is broader to the north of the church and this was almost certainly the location of the medieval market. The tithe map also displays a broadening of School Lane to the east of the churchyard. This is still apparent on the ground though its purpose is unclear.

Apart from the church Overton has a number of historic buildings. These range from the 17th-century timber-framed dwellings of Church Cottage (105264; though this could be early as the late 16th century), Black and White Cottage and Quinta Cottage (105263) to the early 18th-century Rectory (105265), now St Mary's House which seems to have been built as part of the same development as the adjacent Bryn-y-Pys estate office. One of three grouped cottages numbered 1 to 3 on the west side of the High Street displays a dated keystone of 1741, and White Cottage (20 High Street) has one of 1739. Gwydwr House, a substantial H-plan building, dates from the late 17th or early 18th century. However the overall tone is of elegant but workaday 18th and 19th-century brick. In general the finer and older survivals are along the High Street with very little of any age on the eastern side of town or on Salop Road to the south.

Two large halls were until recently situated within or close to Overton. Bryn-y-Pys Hall was demolished in 1956, having reputedly been first built in the 16th century and then rebuilt in the 18th century. It lay to the north of the town, but the lodge and the hall's ornamental gates are positioned within the town on Wrexham Road and were erected in the 1870s. Overton Hall, a 16th-century timber-framed building on the south side of Willow Street was demolished to make way for new housing in the 1970s; it has been suggested that this building represented a continuation of a long-standing manorial holding, directly opposite the church.

Outside the town, to the south and east, modern development and farming practice have destroyed much of the settlement's medieval field system, though the records indicate at least three open fields. A quillet survives as field OS no.6489 and traces of others were visible in the school playing field (OS no.5500).

There has been some archaeological work in advance of development in Overton in recent years. Off Willow Street in 2008, evaluation produced evidence of prehistoric activity as well as medieval occupation, though rather more surprising was the absence of any medieval activity in the plot where the new medical centre was built immediately to the south of the churchyard in 2003.



Penley

16314
SJ 4127 4001

Introduction
Penley is a dispersed settlement in flat open countryside. Situated close to the English border it is 4.5km east of Overton on the A539.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Penley up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of the buildings within it, and here can be recommended Shirley and Derrick Pratt's A Millennium History of Penley (2000).

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the modern settlement. No historic core has been defined for Penley as the evidence currently available to us is not sufficiently detailed to justify it. However, this decision might need to be reviewed, were a more detailed analysis of the extent and appearance of the greens at Penley to be completed. The map does not show any areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers adopted in the HER to provide researchers with information that is specific to the individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development
Penley is documented first as *Pendeley* in 1292, *Pendele* in 1300 and as *Pendley* in 1333, with the present form of the name being recorded in 1492. An alternative name, Llannerch Banna, is documented as *Lannerpanna* in 1270, and it has been suggested by place-name specialists that Panna may have been a conscious substitution for Penda and *llanerch* for *leah.* The meaning of Penley is usually taken to be 'Penda's clearing', but experts are increasingly seeing *leah* as meaning wood pasture, rather than the more traditional interpretation as a clearing in a wood or the wood itself. The traditional view that the Penda commemorated here was one and the same as the great, 7th-century Mercian king is of course attractive but not really likely.

As a settlement, Penley and its appearance during the medieval period is an unknown, but there are 14th-century records of open fields in the vicinity and two adjacent moated sites. Its ecclesiastical origins are unclear. It was originally a chapelry of Ellesmere, its mother church in Shropshire and remained that way into the 19th century, only becoming a parish in its own right around 1869.

At the time of enclosure at the end of the 18th century, the pattern of settlement was still relatively dispersed. There were at least two foci. Penley chapel (as it then was) lay close to or even on Chapel (or Church) Green, an irregular and elongated patch of open ground at the junction of Hollybush Lane and the A539 that acted as a focus for a group of three houses on the south side of the road and another four beside or close to Hollybush Lane. Three hundred metres or so eastwards was Far Green, now bisected by the main road, with a scatter of dwellings around its edge and Penley Hall and its moats to the north.

Almost one hundred years later (*c.*1880), the area showed very little further development and it is evident from the cartographic sources that Penley as a village is very much a creation of the 20th century with the hospital being a dominant feature.

The heritage to 1750

The church of St Mary Magdalene (105322) was rebuilt between 1899 and 1901. Nothing survives of its predecessors which lay a little to the south of the present building. A brick church had been built in 1794 but was declared unsafe in the 1880s. In the 18th century there was a church, at least some of which was of lath and plaster, but whether this was the 16th-century building known to have been in existence in the late 1530s has not been determined. At present the Pratts (see above) place the origin of the chapel no earlier than *c.*1475. Little that pre-dates 1750 remains in the church. Possibly the only survivor is a small memorial brass to a Penley incumbent who died in 1725.

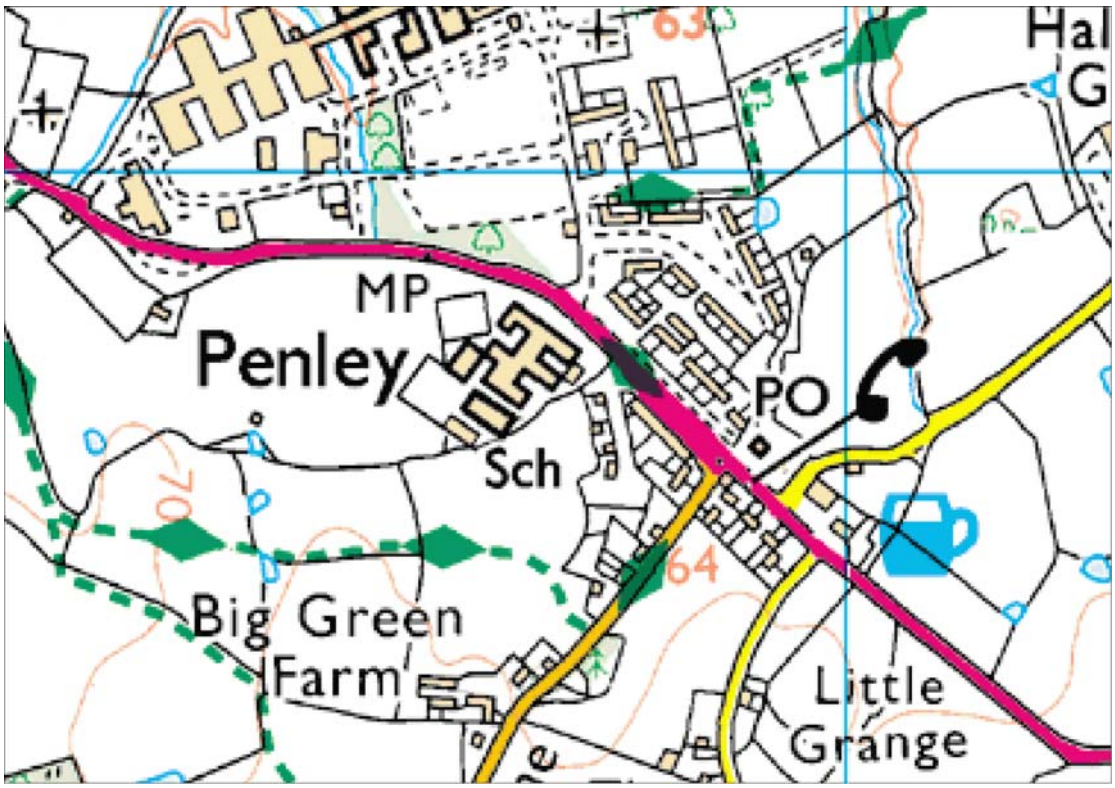
The churchyard, now elongated, was smaller and almost square in outline in the late 19th century, its southern edge flush to the road.

There are no buildings of particular historic interest in Penley itself, other than the 16th-century Dymock Arms (105327) on the eastern periphery of what was Far Green. On the outskirts of the village, Lane Farm at nearby Little Green (the northern portion of Chapel Green) is mid-18th-century and has a Grade II listing, while Old Hall Farm out to the west of Chapel Green is a hall-house listed as Grade II. Recent work at the latter has revealed a late medieval/early 16th-century timber-framed core with a complex series of subsequent alterations still evident in the fabric. Painted decoration of the beams and plaster survives from the earliest phase.

A well-preserved, water-filled moated site (100197) lies behind Penley Hall, almost certainly representing the location of the predecessor of that building. In addition the enclosure and tithe maps depict another moat of rather larger dimensions a short distance to the south of where Penley Hall lay. A L-shaped pond and two other boundaries form a quadrilateral (105347) which survived into the 19th century. It is claimed that soft ground around the former Polish chapel marks the position of this larger moat, known locally as the 'Outer Moat'. The presence of two moats little more than 300m apart has yet to be satisfactorily explained.

West of Ellesmere Lane and close to what was once the edge of Far Green, the irregularly shaped field to the north of Big Green Farm exhibits earthworks including holloways and platforms (105323). Other potentially interesting earthworks lie in OS field no.0085 (105324); in front of Old Hall (105325); and in the vicinity of Hollybush Lane Farm (105326).

Extensive traces of ridge and furrow were noted during the survey particularly to the east of Penley in the vicinity of Park Lane. Further ridging has been recorded north of the Penley Hall moat and it has been suggested that this moat overlies some cultivation ridges. However, Derrick Pratt quite rightly points out that the regular straight ridges are more in keeping with 18th- or 19th-century horse or steam ploughing than with medieval cultivation, and RCAHMW records also favour a later date for the ridges.



Redbrook

15691
SJ 5085 4115

Introduction
Redbrook is located where the A495 joins the A525 between Wrexham and Whitchurch in Shropshire. Wrexham is around 20km to the north-west while the English border is less than 400m to the east. The equally small and undistinguished settlement of Whitewell lies just to the west. The land drops gently from the flattish plateau that forms much of Maelor Saesneg to the valley of the Red Brook. The hamlet occupies a shelf on this slope.

This brief report examines the background to Redbrook up to the years around 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the modern settlement. No historic core boundary has been created as it is not possible to define a pre-1750 core for Redbrook. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers adopted in the HER to provide researchers with information that is specific to the individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development
Nothing is known of the history of Redbrook. As a place-name it has failed to trouble the specialists, and in the Welsh archives it features only because a 19th-century land surveyor, Joseph Lee, resided there. The earliest record that has been encountered is from 1769 and relates to the Whitchurch turnpike road at a time when it may have been the watercourse rather than any settlement there that was considered important.

The settlement's name is obviously a back formation from that of the stream which here forms the boundary between England and Wales, but how far back in time it goes and whether it refers to no more than the colour of the water in that stream has not been ascertained.

The earliest, admittedly small-scale, maps to name and show Redbrook are John Evans' map of north Wales in 1795 and the Ordnance Survey surveyors' map of 1829. Both suggest a thin scatter of houses around this junction of two turnpike roads and a little later at the time of the Tithe survey in 1840 the hamlet appeared almost precisely as it does today.

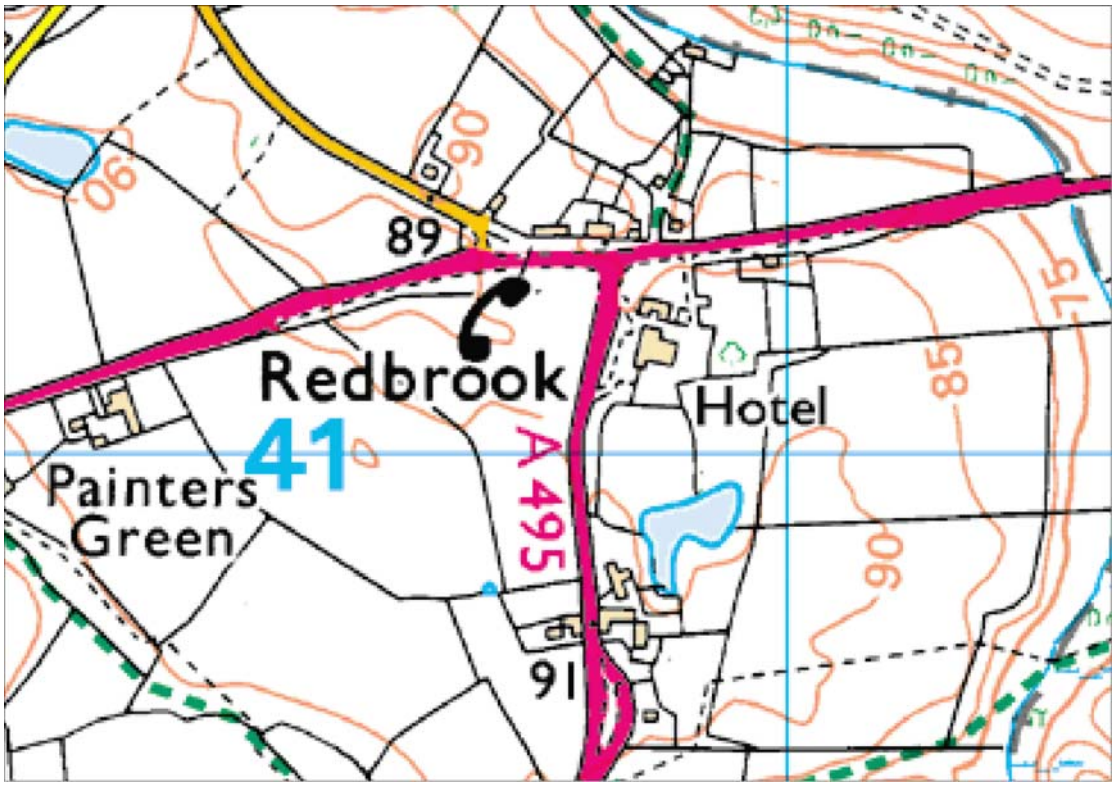
A few extra buildings around The Beeches, the enlargement of Redbrook Lodge Hotel and the construction of a couple of new cottages beside the A525 are the sole changes in the last one hundred and fifty years.

The heritage to 1750
The present Redbrook House, 250m south of the road junction, originated as a late 16th-century timber-framed building to which a new front was added in the late 18th century.

There is a suggestion too that the hotel by the junction may have a 17th-cenutry core but this has not been verified. Otherwise the only other structure of any age is Redbrook Bridge (105304) providing the crossing into England which may have been constructed by Thomas Telford in the early 19th century.

Nothing of archaeological interest has previously been recorded here. One field (OS no.8800) immediately to the south of Redbrook Lodge seems to show a terraced hollow as well as a fairly distinctive mound, though the significance of these earthworks has not been determined.

There is a 19th-century reference to a possible moated site (101329) near Upper House in Redbrook but the house name is not known locally, the site cannot now be identified and the credibility of the reference remains untested.



Ruabon

SJ 3027 4379
15695

Introduction
The village of Ruabon occupies the top of a hill and its slopes to the south-west. A number of main roads converge on the centre of the village near the church. The industrial settlements of Rhosllanerchrugog and Acrefair are located to the north-west and south-west. Wrexham lies about 7km to the north-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Ruabon up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly regarding the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
Ruabon was established between the two great Anglo-Saxon dykes: Offa's Dyke runs approximately 600m to the west, Wat's Dyke less than one kilometre to the east.

The earliest form of the place-name is Rywnabon which appeared in 1291, with Riwuabon in 1362. Referring to an otherwise unattested individual, the name commemorates ‘Mabon’s hill’. It has been suggested that Mabon was a saint, and that the first church here was dedicated to him. While it is likely that the church’s dedication to the Virgin (see below) is not the original one, probably occurring when the Cistercians of Valle Crucis acquired much of the parish in 1274, the attribution to Mabon is, on present evidence, more a tradition than a fact. Indeed, in the 1254 Taxatio the entry to Ecclesia Sancti Colyeni [St Collen] is normally linked to Ruabon.

In the medieval period it can be assumed that the earliest settlement might have clustered around the church at the top of Bridge Street. Possibly there was a small community here by the 13th century, when the church is mentioned in the Pope Nicholas’ Taxatio in 1291, though this has yet to be confirmed. But the site of the church is almost certainly much earlier. The near circular churchyard which formerly extended to the west down Ysgoldy Hill suggests that there was an early medieval llan church, perhaps preceded by an enclosed cemetery here, before the Norman Conquest.

The economy of the medieval settlement may have integrated ironworking and coal mining but agriculture and farming generally would have been the primary concern with the

utilisation of the lower land to the east. In contrast to more recent centuries, medieval Ruabon is very poorly documented, and it is not yet possible to define the extent or nature of the medieval village here. However, the presence of Maes-y-llan immediately to the east of the village coupled with surviving records including a fine estate map of 1715, points to medieval open-field agriculture which in this region would almost certainly be associated with a nucleated settlement.

Ruabon undoubtedly continued to expand in the Tudor period, and in the early 17th century a grammar school was established close to the church, later moving to the outskirts of the village, while 17th-century church terriers reveal buildings around the church. By the mid-19th century, a compact, almost rectangular shaped, settlement was in existence around the church. A western extension crossed Afon Eitha where a mill is recorded at Plas Newydd. The eastern end of the village was incorporated within the Wynnstay Estate and indeed Samuel Lewis in the 1830s claimed that the prosperity of Ruabon was due to the proximity of Wynnstay as well as the neighbourhood ironstone and coal mines. Park Street effectively became a small square with cottages of c.1840 on either side of the road. The listed Ruabon Gateway into Wynnstay Park was at the eastern extreme of the square while at the western end lay the Wynnstay Arms Hotel. A station was built in 1848.

A well-developed brick-making industry expanded along with the collieries in the 19th century, the former surviving well into the 20th century. Modern expansion has extended the 19th-century core to the north along High Street and west along the B5605 beyond Station Road. Finally, a recommendation, the best modern history of Ruabon is T. W. Pritchard's *Remembering Ruabon* which was published in Millennium year.

The heritage to 1750

The 14th-century church of St Mary (101340), heavily restored in *c.*1871, has a low west tower, nave and chancel and aisles. Internal features include a 15th-century wall painting depicting the Seven Works of Mercy, a sepulchral slab and several 14th-century effigies, 18th-century monuments to the Wynn family and the royal arms painted on a wooden board in 1780.

The churchyard has been largely cleared of monuments with grass and parking areas prevailing. Its outline has been modified over time, but not sufficiently to disguise its former sub-oval shape, and this appears to be a rare *llan* survival in Wrexham Maelor. Perhaps it originally encompassed all of the ground up to Ysgoldy Lane on the west and Bridge Street on the south. A new graveyard, opened at the west end of Church Street, is also presently disused.

There are a number of listed buildings in Ruabon. Most of the pre-19th century structures are Grade II, although Plas Newydd (101205) in Pont Adam Crescent on the opposite side of the river to the church is and a mid-16th-century H-plan mansion is Grade II*. The others are the Old Grammar School (105331) from 1618 which may incorporate parts of an even earlier building, but is now disguised behind a 19th-century shop front, the almhouses (105335) in Church Street that are said to have been built in 1711, the Bridge End hotel which is thought to have an 18th-century if not earlier origin, and a range of later post-medieval structures that include the Round House, the parish lock-up (105332), adjoining the church wall on the north side of Bridge Street, which is later 18th century, as is the Wynnstay Arms Hotel (105335) in Park Street.

Unlisted and unverified but potentially of architectural/historic importance are several other buildings: a number of houses along Church Street display timber-framing behind 18th or 19th-century facades and could possibly be of 17th-century or earlier origin; several houses on the

west side of Duke Street (105337) also display timber-framing which may indicate an older construction than their facades would suggest; and the building known as Brookside House (105338) situated on the south side of Afon Eitha below Bridge Street has walls that appear to be part timber-framed - its situation might suggest that this has formerly been a mill.

Whitewell

15701
SJ 4967 4108

Introduction
The settlement of Whitewell as shown on modern Ordnance Survey maps is positioned along a lane known as the Whitewell Road that converges on and is just to the north of the A525, Wrexham to Whitchurch road. Wrexham is 19km away to the north-west and Whitewell itself is close to the Shropshire border. In this gently undulating agrarian landscape, the church lies near the base of a long low slope with the Iscoyd Brook running along the bottom, and the previously mentioned lane on higher ground further to the south.

This brief report examines the background to Whitewell up to second half of the 18th century and is included here primarily to provide continuity with the original Wrexham Maelor survey rather than because of it inherent settlement characteristics. For the more recent history of the village, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the modern settlement. No historic core has been defined as the evidence currently available to us is too sparse to justify it. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
Whitewell refers to a well situated a few metres to the south of the present church, and it is from this that the modern settlement name has been adopted.

A chapel of ease, its mother church at Malpas in Cheshire, was provided for the surrounding community sometime before 1570 and is depicted on Christopher Saxton's county map published in 1577. This timber-framed building collapsed during restoration works in 1829 and was replaced in brick, though whether on precisely the same site as its predecessor is not known. It was given the status of a parish church in 1885.

There is no recognisable historic core to Whitewell and no convincing evidence of a former nucleated settlement. John Evans failed to show Whitewell on his map of 1795, in 1830 the Ordnance Survey surveyors seem to have been ignorant of the name, and as late as 1873 the settlement name had not been registered on the largest scale Ordnance Survey mapping. Whitewell as a settlement name is thus a modern creation.

The heritage to 1750
The present whitewashed brick church of St Mary (105343) is situated on level ground. The graveyard is broadly rectilinear in shape and its earliest recorded burials date to the beginning of the 19th century. No features associated with the earlier chapel have been discerned in

modern times, though there is some re-use of earlier panelling in the gallery. It is the only church in Wales in the diocese of Chester.

A carriage shelter close to the church is believed to have been erected in the 17th or 18th century, and is listed.

The White Well (100215), its stonework capped by a metal plate, is some 20m south of the church. In the early 20th century the Royal Commission claimed that this was a sacred well related to the old chapel at Whitewell but there is nothing specific to support the assertion. A second well, 40m to the south-west of the White Well, similarly has no known historical significance.

The majority of the dispersed buildings around Whitewell are of 19th-entury brick construction except for Chapel Farm (105344) which is timber-framed and possibly of 17th-century or even earlier date.

Whitewell Lodge (42808) is a large, 19th-century, brick hunting lodge with guests' lodgings, and was probably associated with Iscoyd Park.

Worthenbury

SJ 4191 4622
15702

Introduction
Worthenbury lies amongst the back lanes that cross the muted landscape of Wrexham Maelor between the A525 and the River Dee which converge three kilometres to the west at Bangor. It is some 10km south-east of Wrexham and no more than a kilometre from the English border.

The village covers level ground on the eastern edge of the Dee floodplain. The Emral Brook joining with the Wych Brook runs towards the river a short distance to the south and creates a low spur, a location that is utilised by the church and the village that now surrounds it. The village has grown up along a main street that runs north-west to south-east with a focus around the T-junction where the Bangor road (B5069) comes in from the south-west. Worthenbury is something of a rarity in Wrexham Maelor, a small nucleated village with a documented if sparse early history.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Worthenbury up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
Worthenbury is certainly of Anglo-Saxon origin. The place is recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 as *Hurdingberie* at which time there were "five hides which pay geld" and land for ten ploughs. Later in 1300 it was termed *Worthinbury* and other variations such as *Wrdynbur'* appeared at other times during the 14th century. The first record of the present form name came in 1527. The final element, *burh*, has a number of related meanings, the most common of which is a 'defended enclosure'. However, the most recent authoritative publication (2007) prefers as an alternative, a 'manor-house' or 'estate' protected by a fence which signalled the *worðign* or 'enclosure'.

Nearly twenty years ago the writer speculated that Worthenbury might be the missing Weardbyrig, an Anglo-Saxon burh or defended settlement thrown up by Aethelflaed, the female ruler of Mercia, in 915. Weardbyrig lay between two other burhs, at Runcorn on the Mersey and Chirbury near the Severn. This remains no more than a speculation: there are no unequivocally early remains to support the contention, but equally it has not been disproved.
The manor at the time of Domesday had a surprisingly long list of settlers attached to it: in addition to a knight there was a serf, three villeins, three Frenchmen, a radman (translated as a

rider) and a mill which presumably had a miller. In themselves these do not prove the existence of a nucleated settlement but they do strengthen the possibility.

There is generally little information on the development of the settlement during the Middle Ages. Perhaps it may have been one of the few nucleated settlements in the area, yet there is little reliable physical evidence, and of associated open fields which are an indicator of the scale of cultivation, only one is recorded. There is even a sparsity of information on the church or churches that preceded the present edifice, though a chapel is mentioned here in 1388. Administratively, it remained a chapelry of Bangor in the 17th century, but a parish for Worthenbury was carved out of Bangor in 1689.

By early in the 19th century when the first maps become available for the area, dwellings grouped around the T-junction and spread along the lane past the church running north-westwards and parallel to the Worthenbury Brook, while the Rectory and a farm lay to the south-east. This lane was evidently more important than that coming in from the north-east which may have become significant only when the turnpike commissioners became involved with it in the 1760s. The pattern of settlement, then, was much the same as it is today.

The heritage to 1750

The Domesday entry for Worthenbury records a mill, and this is reputed to have stood on the stream at the rear of the Old Rectory. There is no definite evidence of this though there is a suggestion of a platform (105352) in a bend of the stream in OS no.0095.

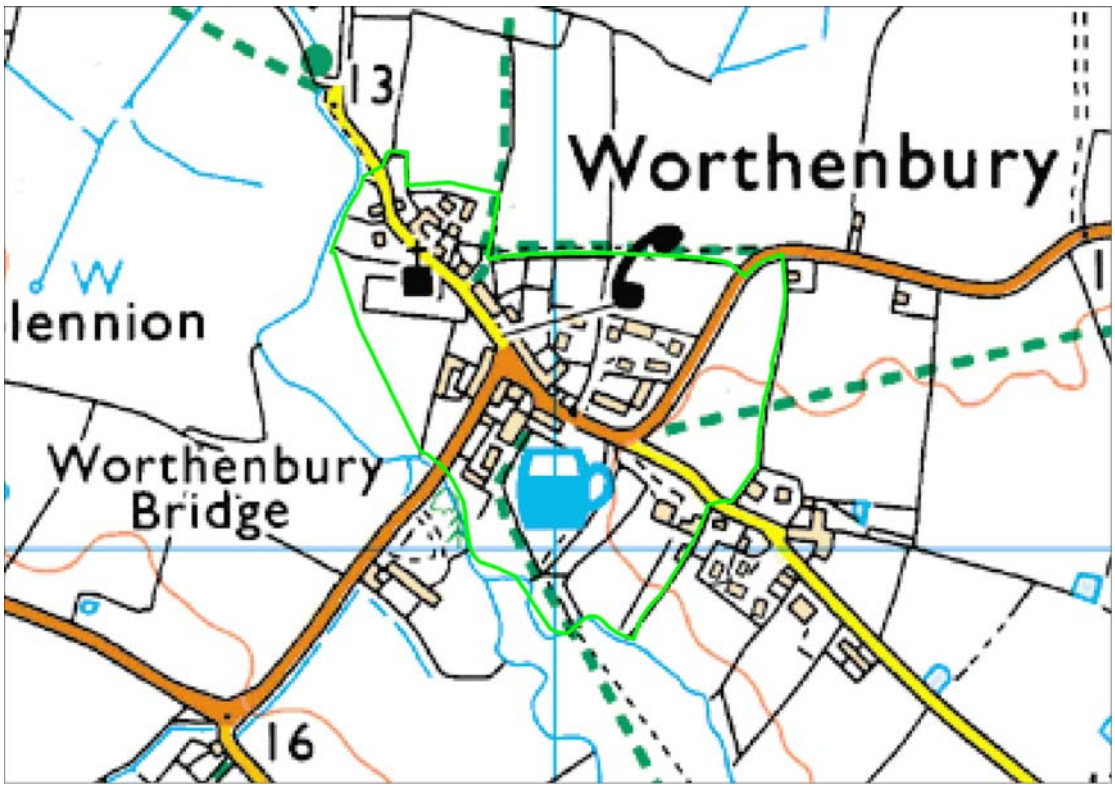
Potentially supporting evidence for the Anglo-Saxon *burh* is provided by a substantial boundary bank (105351) edging fields on the north side of the settlement (OS nos 9824 and 0022), with a scarp well over one metre high. To the east of the modern settlement there is a slight possibility that a further part of the circuit is represented by a ditch running inside the eastern boundary of field OS no.1414. As noted above this is largely speculative.

The church of St. Deniol (105348) is a fine Georgian edifice built in 1736-9, generally acclaimed one of the best of its date in Wales. No evidence survives of an earlier building(s). The churchyard, polygonal in design, has a modern extension to the west. For the age of the settlement and size of the parish the graveyard is surprisingly small, but a document drawn up at the time of the consecration of the new church in 1739 hints at the possibility that the churchyard was also newly laid out at that time.

Worthenbury seems to have enjoyed a phase of growth in the 18th century. In addition to the church it has other listed buildings from the end of the century. The only building which to date has been specifically attributed to an earlier era is the Old Rectory (41842) which is said to have been erected in 1657 and possibly to incorporate some early elements in its more modern framework. However, near Dawson Farm on Church Lane is a cottage that is claimed to be of 17th-century origin. Over Worthenbury Bridge from the village is The Manor, a house of no great age in itself but said to be on the site of an earlier manor. The writer has not been able to find any information that would verify this claim, but were it to be the case, the layout of the earlier settlement would need to be reassessed.

Outside the settlement, particularly in the fields to east, there are the remnants of extensive medieval fields with some well preserved ridge and furrow (105353).

Field OS no.1938 on the north side of the village has a strong local tradition of being a burial ground, though nothing has been observed there during past field surveys.



Wrexham

15703
SJ 3349 5018

Introduction
Wrexham has grown up on gently sloping land that forms the river terrace north of the Gwenfro, a river that has now been largely culverted. But to the south-west of the centre, the ground level also slopes away, marking a former river terrace. The town has long been important as a market and transport centre for the region and this can be seen in the numerous roads that converge on it, although it is now bypassed by the modern A483 north to south axial route that links Chester to Oswestry and beyond.

This brief report examines the background to Wrexham up to the years around 1750. For the more recent history of the town, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development
Wrexham was referred to as Wristlesha' in 1161 and appeared in its present form 25 years later, though subsequently a variety of other spellings were committed to record including Wrightlesham in 1316. The first element is a personal name Wryhtel and this is linked to Old English hamm. Modern authorities have chosen to interpret this suffix as 'water meadows', referencing the low-lying ground by the Gwenfro and Clywedog, but river meadows might be more accurate, and hamm can also refer more generally to a piece of enclosed land without any watery connotation.

Will the origin of Wrexham ever be established? There has been speculation, based primarily on the earliest place-name, that the settlement was a Saxon foundation, that a Welsh lord had his court (llys) here in the 12th century and that there would have been a bond settlement (maerdref) nearby, and that the church originated as a private chapel on the lord's estate. Each of these is plausible, none has yet been supported by incontrovertible evidence, although a good case has been made recently for the presence of an earlier (and perhaps pre-Conquest) chapel to the north of Brook Street around 250m to the north-west of the present parish church. It is believed that at some time prior to 1161 the castle 'de Wristlesham' was built. This Norman castle appearing in the records is usually equated with the earthwork motte at Erddig (101235) just over a kilometre to the south of Wrexham.

The medieval town was founded sometime before 1220, the date at which St Giles' church was known to have been constructed, and Derrick Pratt has termed it 'a rare bird – an organic "home grown" Welsh urban institution' (2007). By the early 14th century there was a thriving community at Wrexham, the records revealing 52 tenements held by 44 tenants. Several markets are documented which attest to its early importance as a trading centre, and it was during this century that it was referred to as a villa mercartoria which can be seen with hindsight as an indicator of its important economic role at the centre of the lordship of Bromfield and Yale. Fitzalan, its lord granted the town quasi-burghal privileges in 1380 (though the town was not granted the official status of a chartered borough until 1857). The population in the 14th century was predominantly Welsh in origin. In the 15th century, if not earlier, its economy was boosted by the development of iron and coal mining in the immediate vicinity of the town. A tanning industry is also thought to have existed at this time.

During the medieval period the settlement centre developed its core area close to the church in a northerly direction as far as Lambpit Street. The medieval market place was in High Street where the width of the street is still noticeably wider than elsewhere, and John Leland in the 1530s singled out Wrexham as the only market town in Welsh Maelor. In 1562 a town hall is mentioned at the corner of Hope Street and High Street, opposite which was set the market cross. East of the churchyard was an open area, known by the time the workhouse had been built on it in the mid-18th century as Wrexham Green. Dwellings lined the streets leading from the High Street, but little settlement seems to spread beyond the Gwenfro.

Wrexham's prosperity continued through the Tudor era and a free grammar school was established in 1603. But in 1643 a quarter of the town around the market area was destroyed by fire. It was quickly rebuilt and as far as can be determined is basically that which was depicted on John Wood's map of 1833. Edward Lhuyd's Parochialia compiled at the end of the 17th century is often a useful guide to the size of a settlement, but on Wrexham it is silent. By the early 19th century the brewing, tanning and ironworking industries were well established.

The emerging wealth of the town in the post-medieval period was reflected too in the construction of a number of large residences for the emerging industrial magnates on the outskirts of the town centre. Many of these large houses known as plasau were destroyed in the 19th century. One such was timber-framed Brynyffynnon on Hope Street, an early 17th-century house built for Sir Watkin Williams Wynn.

The heritage to 1750

Sadly, very few buildings of architectural and historic value have survived within the historic core of Wrexham. This was one of residual effects of the redevelopment of the town centre in the late 19th century when the railway was driven through the heart of the town. Town centre development in the 1960s, however, also contributed greatly to the demolition of late medieval and post-medieval buildings. The section below indicates the main surviving buildings of importance within the town centre.

St. Giles Church (130200) was founded in c.1220, but of the earliest church little remains, the growing wealth of the town being reflected in the glorious building of today whose fabric and architecture are primarily of the 15th and 16th centuries. The west tower is the most impressive feature of the church and was completed sometime after 1520. The iron gates and adjacent railings in the churchyard are scheduled.

With its rectilinear layout, Wrexham appears to have a deliberately designed street plan of medieval date which has largely survived to the present, though as with Chirk its presence was overlooked by Maurice Beresford in his classic study on New Towns in the Middle Ages

(1988). High Street as the market area is virtually on an east to west axis and terminates at one end with the south to north Yorke Street and Chester Street, while at the other continues for another 400m beyond Hope Street, the other main street coming in from the north. The rectangular block thus formed is closed off by Lampit Street on the north, its alignment a little different from that of High Street. Between the two are lanes – Kenrick Street and Henblas Street which may have been medieval sub-divisions. Other streets – Holt Street and Charles Street - run into Chester Street pretty well at right angles, and York Street runs up from the south. It is not such a classic planned layout as say Holt but town design is clear to see. Beyond this we can only speculate. The slight changes in alignment of both Chester Street and Queen Street might indicate phased growth with the streets being extended as the population grew, while Hope Street has the appearance of a pre-existing routeway integrated into the new town.

For a wealthy market town with a long history, Wrexham has disappointingly few older buildings and in many cases those that have survived have been heavily modified. 7-10 Church Street (130115) are timber-framed buildings dated to 1681, though all may once have formed parts of a single 15th-century hall-house; 5 and 7 Town Hill are two 16th-century houses (130135), the latter certainly a cruck-framed hall, with what is probably a later front wing; the Horse and Jockey on Hope Street is a much remodelled 16th-century hall-house; the Golden Lion Public House, No.13 High Street appears to be 16th century in origin, whilst exhibiting considerable later rebuilding (130119); the Old Swan Public House at 6 Abbot Street is a timber-framed structure that originated in the 16th or 17th century (130100); 1-2 High Street is timber framed from the 17th century; 4 Church Street though rebuilt has a 17th-century core (130114); the gatehouse at Brynyffynnon which survives, unlike the house itself, is 17th century; 23 Chester Street is a three-storied house of c.1750 with 19th-century remodelling (130106); and the Wynnstay Arms on Yorke Steet is also mid-18th century.

Limited archaeological work has taken place within Wrexham over the last twenty years, and a cursory assessment seems to suggest that many opportunities have been missed. Limited excavations on the Guildhall site in 1990 failed to locate Pwll Mawr, an open pool supposedly in front of the old Grammar School, which may have existed in the Middle Ages. More fruitful was a site between Vicarage Hill and Town Hill which between 1998 and 2000 revealed building foundations, cobbled surfaces, medieval finds and in places deep stratigraphy.