

A MAP of CHESHIRE North Well from LONDON
Humble Town to the N. Near the Earl of Cheshmndely Lord Saut of the County

THE

CHESHIRE HISTORIAN

PUBLISHED BY THE CHESHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
22 NEWGATE STREET, CHESTER

No. 3

PRICE 2/-

1953

*From London to Cheshire, Principal towns from Chester Altrincham 50. And ditto
with 20. Congleton 10. Northwich 15. Frodsham 25. Northwich 14. Thelthorpe 20. Sandbach 25
Manchester 20. And ditto 25. Macclesfield 10. From Thelthorpe ditto. Thelthorpe. Northwich. Macclesfield.
20. From Northwich. Warrington. Lymm. 20. And ditto 25. And ditto 25.*

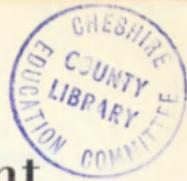
Book No.
Cheshire Education Committee.
COUNTY LIBRARY.

CHEESHIRE
COUNTY
LIBRARY

13 FEB 1953

210 CRCC PAGE

THE PRESERVATION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS by WILLIAM A. SINGLETON, M.A., Ph.D., B.Arch.	1
CHESHIRE MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES: No. 3. Vernon Park Museum, Stockport, by J. R. RIMMER, B.E.M., A.M.A., Curator	8
BOOK REVIEW: "TIMBER BUILDING IN ENGLAND"	12
THE ARCHAEOLOGIST IN THE FIELD (Part III): A. Roman Roads by GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E., A.M.A.	13
B. The Hill Forts of Cheshire by J. D. JONES, B.A., F.S.A. (Scot.)	19
EXCAVATIONS, 1952— CHESTER: BUNBURY CHURCH	24
CHESHIRE COUNTY RECORDS by MAJOR F. G. C. ROWE, County Archivist	27
CHESTER MIRACLE PLAYS by MARGARET M. PRITCHARD, B.A. (Admin.)	34
THE CHESTER CIVIC SWORD by C. BLAIR, B.A.	39
"CHESHIRE VILLAGE MEMORIES." Review	43
THE SOUL CAKERS: An Old Village Memory by C. B. HUTTON	44
BUNBURY CHURCH REPAIRS by THE REV. M. H. RIDGWAY, B.A., F.S.A.	46
COINS OF THE CHESTER MINT by G. W.	49
CHESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS	50
WHY NOT FORM A LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY by ARTHUR OAKES, B.A.	51
LIST OF NAMES & ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF SOCIETIES	INSIDE BACK COVER



The Preservation of Ancient Buildings

By WILLIAM A. SINGLETON, M.A., Ph.D., B.Arch.

IT is stimulating to find amongst all sections of society a renewed realisation that this country contains a priceless heritage of historic architecture, which is not surpassed anywhere in the world. For example, nowhere else is there such a fine array of exquisite mediaeval parish churches, or such a rich collection of lesser domestic architecture. Nor is this heritage confined to the buildings themselves. Everywhere beautiful fittings and furnishings of historic significance, the craftsmanship of which can never be equalled, abound. It is a constant source of delight and pride to Cheshire folk that their county has a goodly share of these treasures.

The impact of the last world conflict, with its trail of destruction, has brought home very forcibly the value of this heritage. With this has come the realisation that many of these ancient and historic buildings are in an extremely bad state of repair, and in several cases, require urgent and drastic attention. In addition there is grave apprehension about the future amongst all those interested in the protection and repair of ancient buildings.

The realisation and subsequent fear has been responsible for the setting up of two important Commissions, whose reports have been published within the last few years. The first of these, generally referred to as the Gowers Report, published in 1950, deals exclusively with the very vast and complex problem of the Great Houses of this country. Although pressure is continually being applied in Parliament, no implementation of this Report has yet emerged. This is no doubt due to the present financial stringency, but further delay may result in the rapidly worsening situation getting completely out of hand.

The other Report, "The Preservation of our Churches" (June, 1952), is the outcome of the very earnest deliberations of a Church Assembly Commission concerned with the future of the country's 14,000 parish churches, of which about 9,000 are mediaeval.

From these Reports two main issues emerge, both of which are so fundamental that the whole future of our great historic buildings is dependent upon them. Finance is the primary consideration which exercises everyone's mind. How is the money required for even immediately necessary repairs to be found? This often repeated question is the real crux of the problem, but its solution is one of difficulty and complexity. It has to be treated urgently, vigorously, and on a nation-wide scale. The

Reports make very definite recommendations in this regard and already the Historic Churches Preservation Trust has been formed with Her Majesty the Queen as Patron and the Duke of Edinburgh as President. Thus the work of raising the £4 million required for the next ten years has started.

Much of these Reports and, indeed, much of what has been written generally, has emphasised the need for vast sums of money to meet the problem but the other equally important consideration has not been sufficiently stressed. This second problem is to find architects, surveyors, builders, and craftsmen with suitable experience and specialised knowledge in the field of protection and repair to carry out the work in the best possible manner. It is not generally recognised that the repair of old buildings must be entrusted to architects and craftsmen skilled in the techniques necessary for such work. To quote from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings' Annual Report (1951):

"The lack of such knowledge leads to irreparable harm being done and time and again the Society finds evidence of expensive, over-drastring and frequent reparations carried out by the ignorant and the inexperienced. The difficulties at present affecting the building trades intensified by the lack of skilled craftsmen contributes further to the problem and calls for constant and knowledgeable supervision by the architect."

Comparatively few such men exist, largely because during the past few decades very little conservation work has been undertaken, and therefore the opportunity to gain practical experience has been severely restricted. Making up this deficiency must be undertaken as a long-term project and all the various societies and public bodies concerned with this type of work are setting about tackling the problem with vigour and a real sense of urgency. The Ministry of Works (Ancient Monuments Branch), the National Trust, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Ancient Monuments Society and the Central Council for the Care of Churches are all working from their own particular angles towards the solution of this great problem.

Probably the most important step in the right direction has been taken by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, who have re-instituted their Lethaby Scholarship. This was originally instituted in 1930 by the Society, in memory of the late Professor W. R. Lethaby, to enable architectural students to study for six months the repair of ancient buildings under the guidance of architect members of the Committee. This endeavour has proved most satisfactory and is an ideal solution of the problem.

Another most valuable contribution is now being made by the Academic Development Committee of the York Civic Trust, who have set up a series of short residential courses called the York Courses on Protection and Repair of Ancient Buildings. These are

a development of the already well-established annual Summer Schools of Architectural Study, which they now supplement. The first course was held in York last September and was an unqualified success, drawing architects, surveyors and builders from all over Britain. A great expansion of these courses is planned for this year, with specialised courses on such subjects as the Care of Churches.

These courses have been organised in such a manner that architects and others, who wish to know more of repair methods, but who find it difficult to leave their appointments or practices for any length of time, can attend. Their duration is for a week or a fortnight, and the whole series can be taken over a period of one or more years to suit personal requirement.

The Bartlett School of Architecture at London University, on the other hand, has set up a post-graduate diploma course on the repair of ancient buildings on a part-time evening basis. Although this is admirable and extends for one session it is obviously suitable only for those working and living in or near London.

It is of the utmost importance that the right mental attitude to ancient and historic buildings should be developed. Every individual building in all its aspects must be studied and appreciated. Every building of any antiquity bears evidence of its structural evolution and development. The ways of life, beliefs and mental outlook of all its various builders and craftsmen are revealed to all those who take the time to look and study. Overlaid on this will be found the influence, probably the greatest single influence, of passing styles and fashions. Strange as it may seem, this factor is as much in evidence in old work as it is today.

Every building possesses certain fundamental physical characteristics such as length, width and height, but it also possesses a personality very much its own. Some architects refer to this quality as a fourth dimension, but, however it is viewed, it is a quality which that building alone possesses. Once it is destroyed or damaged it can never be re-created. It is impossible to restore this personality, and therefore any attempt to do so must be condemned, as the result at the best can be only "period-fakes." This personality which an old building has is bound up especially with the influence of the passage of time and can be likened to the appeal to one's senses in the face of an old friend, whose very features bring back memories and affectionate thoughts of the past.

It is this quality which blends together in old buildings the often otherwise incongruous work of different historical periods. For example, many of our early parish churches comprise perhaps a Saxon tower, a Norman nave, thirteenth century chancel and fourteenth century aisles with many later additions and alterations.

Thus the vigour of the Saxon, the detail of the Norman and the structural ingenuity of later periods are fused together in a harmonious composition. It is however difficult to define the sources of this "personality" and its attendant atmosphere, because its components included proportion, texture, colour and decoration, each of which is a study in itself, with the passage of the centuries to fuse them altogether.

From these few remarks, it is evident that the problems of protection and of repairing ancient and historic buildings are many and complex. There is however, only space here to consider a few of the main principles to be adopted.

The first essential is to have a real personal and first-hand contact with the structure and materials of the building and get within its "personality." This is vitally necessary in order to avoid its destruction and at the same time to repair it sympathetically. The second guiding principle is that of conservation and preservation. As it is impossible to re-create the atmosphere of individual buildings, it is therefore essential to preserve and protect as much of the original work as possible. Where repairs or replacements are necessary, these should be so contrived that they in no way result in conjectural imitations of the old work. New work should always be in harmony with the old, but subordinate to it. No one is able to place for example, a limb of a human being by an exact replica. An artificial one is used which has the same general size and shape as the real one, but obviously the two could not be confused. So it should be with old buildings. If it is necessary to replace a portion of a richly moulded oak roof-beam, the new portion to be spliced in would have the same general size and shape. In addition the main lines of the mouldings would be lined through but not imitated. Thus the harmony is preserved but without harsh copying or restoration.

Thirdly, the very common archaeological habit of exposing historical features, for no other reason than that they are historical, should be avoided. For example, many mediaeval timber-framed houses, particularly in the towns, have had their eighteenth century plaster facades removed. Thus depriving them of much of their "personality." Apart from the fact that many of these facades were very beautiful in themselves, often with fine decorative pargetting. In destroying them the whole chronological sequence and therefore their authenticity has been lost. In fact in several cases false Tudor windows have had to be inserted in an effort to restore some sort of appearance.

It was principles such as these that led, over seventy years ago, to the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings by William Morris, Ruskin, Burne-Jones, and similar kindred spirits. They aimed at restraining the Victorian method

of wholesale conjectural restoration, which was so rampant at the time. In 1877 Morris issued his famous manifesto which forms the historical basis upon which the Society works, and which is also printed in their Annual Reports. The second and third paragraphs of this manifesto read as follows:

“For Architecture, long decaying, died out, as a popular art at least, just as the knowledge of mediaeval art was born. So that the civilised world of the nineteenth century has no style of its own amidst its wide knowledge of the styles of other centuries. From this lack and this gain arose in men’s minds the strange idea of the Restoration of ancient buildings; and a strange and most fatal idea, which by its very name implies that it is possible to strip from a building this, that, and the other part of its history — of its life that is — and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point, and leave it still historical, living, and even as it once was.

In early times this kind of forgery was impossible, because knowledge failed the builders, or perhaps because instinct held them back. If repairs were needed, if ambition or piety pricked onto change, that change was of necessity wrought in the unmistakable fashion of the time; a church of the eleventh century might be added to or altered in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth or even seventeenth or eighteenth centuries; but every change, whatever history is destroyed, left history in the gap, and was alive with the spirit of the deeds done midst its fashioning. The result of all this was often the building in which the many changes, though harsh and visible enough, were, by their very contrast, interesting and instructive and could by no possibility mislead. But those who make the changes wrought in our day under the name of Restoration, while professing to bring back a building to the best time of its history, have no guide but each his own individual whim to point out to them what is admirable and what is contemptible; while the very nature of their task compels them to destroy something and to supply the gap by imagining what the earlier builders should or might have done. Moreover, in the course of this double process of destruction and addition the whole surface of the building is necessarily tampered with; so that the appearance of antiquity is taken away from such old parts of the fabric as are left and there is laying to rest in the spectator the suspicion of what may have been lost; and in short, a feeble and lifeless forgery is that final result of all the wasted labour.”

This statement, although written almost eighty years ago, sums up rather well the problems to be faced and the pitfalls to be avoided if our rich heritage of historic buildings is to be preserved.

There is another aspect of the problem the implications of which are not always fully realised. Certain buildings, which were built for a definite, perhaps rather special, purpose, occasionally become redundant. For example, the population serving a parish church might for one reason or another over the years leave the area and the church, which may be structurally sound. Or for reasons of finance, the great houses and halls, which form such an integral part of the countryside, often create difficulties for their owners. Not only were the houses built in the days of spacious living and are therefore unsuitable for modern needs, but death-duties and other taxes have taken almost all of the money needed to maintain the houses and estates. The problem therefore resolves itself into finding suitable new and alternative uses for many of these buildings. In the case of a church or similar structure, this is difficult. In one or two cases churches have been turned into museums of mediaeval or ecclesiastical art and sculpture; but obviously the times such a use could be tried are strictly limited, with the result that no suitable alternative use can be found. A church, by its very plan and structure, has limited possibilities.

The Great Houses on the other hand are more adaptable, and already many of these have found new uses as offices, residential colleges of all kinds, research centres and convalescent homes. Often they are well suited for such uses. For example, Burton Manor in Wirral, although not very ancient, has been turned into an admirable residential college for Adult Education. In the past five years of the college's existence, over ten thousand students have studied and have enjoyed its facilities and amenities. The fabric is thus suitably protected and the gardens well tended.

On the other hand, some great houses which are occupied or partly occupied, present a difficult problem. This has often been solved by the owners opening the house and gardens to the public at suitable times and at a small charge. In this way not only are funds made available for the upkeep of the estate, but also the public have pleasure in viewing these magnificent houses, their furnishings and their gardens. The nation owes a considerable debt to these owners, who generally at considerable discomfort to themselves, open their doors to interested sightseers. A Cheshire example is Adlington Hall, near Macclesfield, the home of Mrs. Legh.

Alas, many more are completely uninhabited and derelict. As such they are always ideal subjects for the attentions of fungal or insect attack. The words "dry rot" and "death-watch beetle" are all too common these days, and these empty ancient buildings succumb sooner or later to their ravages.

In this short article an attempt has been made to help readers to understand the value of ancient and historic buildings and to learn something of the principles of preservation. The accent has been rather on the negative, but if old buildings are saved from the wrong kind of restoration, much of the excellent craftsmanship still remaining will be preserved. It is always better to preserve than to restore!

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING.

"The Protection of Ancient Buildings." A. R. Powys. (Dent & Sons, 1929).

"Old Churches and New Craftsmanship." A. D. R. Caroe. (O.U.P., 1950).

Annual Reports of the Central Council for the Care of Churches. (Dunster, Somerset).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Local History Committee thanks all those who have so kindly contributed articles or otherwise helped, also The Manchester University Press, The Manchester Public Library and The Chetham Society for the use of the cover block.

The Editor will be pleased to receive articles, short notes and queries to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

ERRATA

CHESHIRE HISTORIAN No. 1.

Page 23 line 12, for two read one.

CHESHIRE HISTORIAN No. 2.

A number of copies require the following—

Page 5 line 15, and page 13 lines 14 and 15, for Clegg read Glegg.

„ 8 line 34, for beachmast read beechmast.

„ 12 „ 9, for attacked read attached.

„ 12 „ 42, for 1550 read 1559.

„ 22 „ 21, for Neiderbieber read Niederbieber.

„ 35 „ 44, for unfortunately read fortunately.

„ 47 „ 22, for count read court.

Cheshire Museums and Art Galleries

No. 3.

Vernon Park Museum, Stockport

By J. R. RIMMER, B.E.M., A.M.A., CURATOR.

THE Municipal Museum, Stockport, is situated in Vernon Park close to the north-eastern boundary of the town. The view from its upper windows is still one of beauty, presenting a delightful expanse of country extending for miles over a luxuriant valley, and marred only to a minor degree by the encroachment of modern building estates. Towers and spires of distant churches, and several mansions embosomed amidst magnificent trees, add charms to the landscape, and the panorama has a fitting boundary in the surrounding hills of Cheshire, and the mountains of Yorkshire and Derbyshire, the windings of the river Goyt adding not a little to its attractions.

It is a substantial building of brick with stone facings, and the first part of it was presented to the Corporation in 1860 by the then Members of Parliament for the Borough, Messrs. John Benjamin Smith and James Kershaw. Soon after its opening, it is recorded that "so large were the number of works of art and science, along with objects of virtue and taste immediately presented, and so rapidly was the building filled, that in 1865 the Corporation considered it necessary to build a new wing as large as the original structure." From later records we are informed that the extension was filled by 1868. Phenomenal growth you might say! But was it in the right direction?

Like so many other museums throughout the country, the museum at Stockport was born of the interest in scientific discovery which was current in the mid-nineteenth century and which reflected itself in the many natural history and antiquarian societies, philosophical institutions and mechanics' institutes of the day. Except for the desire, nay even obsession, to collect almost anything which could be termed unusual, many of these early museums appear to have had very little idea of their function or purpose within their own area. Exhibition of all possessions was their aim, a policy which unfortunately resulted, all too often, in a distressingly monotonous similarity between so many of them.

Much of the heterogeneous material garnered by many of the enthusiastic, though often unqualified, early curators has suffered considerable physical damage from the primitive methods of preservation which were then considered adequate, or because of insufficient recordings of data concerning the date, place and conditions of taking, and is now of very little scientific value.

Stockport has however, also like many other museums throughout the country, realised of recent years, that the day of the museum as a general storehouse is over, and that to justify its existence, it must fulfil a clearly defined educational and cultural function within its own locality.

It has been said with much truth that museums, like human beings, are better for restricting their diet to what they can digest, for both readily show the signs of gluttony. In view of this, our museum has selected a target which it considers worthy, and at the same time capable of attainment. That of collecting, comprehending, conserving and presenting to the public only material which will illustrate, firstly, the geography and geology of the neighbourhood, secondly, the plant and animal life to be found in the local countryside and finally, the history of man in the area and his success in winning a livelihood from his surroundings. Although we are attempting to cover in detail an area with a radius of approximately fifteen miles from the centre of the town, no hard and fast rule is being made and specimens from other parts of the country which would be useful in illustrating any particular theme within our scope, are equally acceptable.

In order to form some sort of a background to our scheme, the whole area has been divided into sections and as complete as possible a pictorial survey of each section has been built up. Every available illustration, whether it be an old print, engraving, oil-painting or photograph connected with the area was sought, photographically copied and then enlarged to a standard size. This collection has proved invaluable in our work and is continually being extended by the addition of present day photographs.

Against this background, and similarly zoned or sectionalised, is being built our collection of local historical and natural history material.

Naturally much of the material already on exhibition fell completely outside the scope of our newly determined policy, and has therefore either been placed in storage or exchanged for material from other museums to the mutual advantage of both.

The work of transforming an old style general type of museum to one which is purely "regional" or "local" in character is necessarily slow, but much progress is being made and already important sections have been completed dealing with, the bird life, the origins of local government, the early industries and transport in the area, as well as the early history and development of the town of Stockport. Particular attention and care are being paid to the most adequate and up-to-date methods of preservation and restoration of all materials in our possession, and to the complete recording of all data concerning their origins, as well as full details of any treatment considered necessary.

The old idea that display should demonstrate possession and little more, has been changed for the more modern view that it should substantiate ideas. A happy medium between the old style overcrowded cases and the ultra-modern shop window methods, where a minimum of objects is shown, has been sought, and specimens have been carefully selected for the part they can play in the illustration of a particular theme or idea. Wherever possible, models, photographs and diagrams have been interspersed with actual specimens in the displays for the purpose of making the story more complete and intelligible.

Although there is much yet to be done, the museum is already proving more attractive and popular to a much wider public, and perhaps more particularly to students and the many schools within the town.

It is felt that all museums have their regular visitors and in order to meet the needs of this class as well as the casual visitor, the museum is endeavouring to stage frequent temporary exhibitions of a topical nature i.e. the "Then and Now" exhibition staged during the Festival Year; "Oil, its origin and uses" at the time of the Persian oil dispute; "Speed of Animals" at the time of the late John Cobb's attempt on the water speed record, and at present, preliminary work is being done for an exhibition entitled "Coronation Regalia and Personalities" to take place during the Coronation period. This introduction of topical exhibitions is not only attracting considerable attention to the museum, but also helps to avoid what possibly might be one of the dangers of a "regional" museum, that of being too specialised and having a rather one-track outlook.

Another problem arising from our change of policy was concerned with how best to impress on the public the new purposes of the museum and how to change the rather strange ideas linking museums with dust, must, static display and places to go into only when it rains—a legacy of our earlier museums—which undoubtedly it had. This problem has been tackled with considerable success in two ways. Firstly it was considered important, and incidentally far simpler, to produce a museum-conscious public by starting with the school children, whose views on museums were perhaps not yet deeply rooted. Every facility was made available to encourage their use of the museum service. This included, organised visits to the museums with a brief talk by the curator; visits were made to the schools to explain our new ideas; lectures were given to teachers' associations; articles were published in the local Youth Handbook; close co-operation was made with and advice given to local visual aid committees, and a carefully prepared School Loan Scheme or Service has been built up, based mainly on the requirements of the teachers, and linked closely with many of the extremely fine series of school broadcasts.

Because of the rather isolated position of the museum on the north-eastern outskirts of the town, the second group of people — the adult citizens — proved more difficult to approach, but considerable success has been attained through a comprehensive series of talks — over 200 up to the present date — given to the majority of the social and educational organisations throughout the town. In addition to this an attempt has been made to “take the museum to the people.” Some of the temporary exhibitions mentioned earlier have been staged in the centre of the town, and a number of small displays have been specially prepared for use in shop windows. This latter method has been particularly successful and has proved mutually beneficial both to the shopkeepers and the museum. A further method which has considerably helped us in this campaign and for which I have at all times been grateful, has been the regular publicity given by both local newspapers to our endeavours.

The results of our efforts in this direction are slow but sure. They are clearly reflected not only in our increased attendances but also in what is perhaps equally important, a considerably increased quality and more selective type of material being offered for our collections. The general public is certainly realising that the museum is no longer a repository for their unwanted possessions, and that it is indeed a privilege to have an item accepted either for our display or study collections.

Sections in the museum which are at present being reorganised to conform to the new policy and methods of display include:— the local mammals with an introductory case dealing with their evolution and anatomy; local industries with the stress on hatting, cotton and engineering; the evolution of modern firearms; amphibians and reptiles of the area; forms of punishment used in Stockport during the Middle Ages and local butterflies and their caterpillars.

If one had to choose one item only for which the museum is known both locally and throughout the country, it would undoubtedly be the famous window to be found in the north wall of the ground floor room. It is about six feet high by three feet wide and is composed of some 250 pieces of translucent fluor spar of the variety found in the Blue John Mines at Castleton, and was made and presented by the museum's first curator, the late Mr. John Tym.

Of recent acquisitions, the Echalaz Bird Collection, which consists of over 80 beautifully prepared habitat groups with painted backgrounds, is certainly the most popular with children and adults alike.

Our study collections, like the exhibition material, have needed much treatment, but with the addition of many recent acquisitions are now becoming a centre of keen interest. They include an herbarium, a fine collection of archives, bird study-skin, geological and zoological collections and a very recently acquired collection of lepidoptera.

Finally, the museum possesses a fine collection of paintings representing many of the early continental schools, which were originally on loan from the museum's earliest benefactor, Mr. John Benjamin Smith, but which were later presented by his executors.

The hours of opening are as follows:—

Open Weekdays.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (April to September).
" "	10 a.m. to dusk. (October to March).
Open Sundays.	2 p.m. to 5 p.m. (April to September).
" "	2 p.m. to dusk. (October to March).

Book Review

“Timber Building in England”

By FRED H. CROSSLEY, F.S.A.

Although not dealing solely with a Cheshire subject, the attention of readers of “THE CHESHIRE HISTORIAN” is drawn to the above book, published by Batsford, 1951 (Price 30s.) There are two main reasons for this: firstly, no student or admirer of Cheshire buildings can afford to do without it, and secondly, because its author is our greatest living authority on Cheshire buildings, and in particular the old Churches of the County. It is not surprising, therefore, that for the Cheshireman a good deal of added charm is found in its many references to Cheshire buildings, and in the magnificent series of illustrations which adorn the book. Apart from the one possible exception of boat building, the whole field of timber construction is dealt with from the earliest evidences of the art to the styles appearing at the end of the 17th century.

It is well that a book of this type should appear and be read at a time when through the action of misguided councils, hard-up landlords and indifferent tenants so many of our timber houses are disappearing from the Cheshire scene. May it, before it is too late, help to educate Cheshire people to appreciate and to preserve what they have so richly inherited.

M.H.R.

The Archæologist in the Field

(Part III)

A. Roman Roads

By GRAHAM WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., A.M.I.C.E.,
A.M.A.

B. The Hill Forts of Cheshire

By J. D. JONES, B.A., F.S.A. (Scot.)

A.

ROMAN roads are justly famous in this country. They have become a byword on account of their straightness, in striking contrast to the tortuous lanes of the countryside which caused Chesterton to begin his famous poem — “The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English road.” The Roman road system remains the only major contribution Britain has received directly from that great civilisation, all other living trace of which was blotted out by the Anglo-Saxon conquest and settlement. It would be correct to say that the main road system of today, with London as the nodal point, is for the most part, on the lines laid down by the Roman engineers. There are of course new roads of the Turnpike era and many other diversions, while some considerable lengths of the Roman highways have almost completely vanished.

Although this subject is one of great interest, appealing strongly to popular imagination, it is curious how little field work has been carried out. Only one attempt has been made to bring the whole subject under single review, the book by a civil engineer, T. CODRINGTON, “*Roman Roads in Britain*” published in 1903 and running to three editions, the last of which appeared in 1918. It is very doubtful if anyone will ever repeat this task in detail as our knowledge has grown enormously since Codrington’s day. Modern methods of more critical examination and detailed study would make it necessary to devote a complete volume to a stretch of road only 50 to 100 miles long or to a small network such as that of the Cheshire Plain. Even a popular writer, Winbolt, found that he had sufficient material for a book on Stane Street (*With a Spade on Stane Street*), and more recently I. Margery has written the best modern study (*Roman Ways in the Weald*, 1948), covering part of Sussex.

Scattered through the transactions of the county and local societies are hundreds of notes on short sections of roads and the task of collecting these, alone, would be a most unenviable one. Much of this material has already appeared in the Victoria County History series but it is already considerably out of date.

The more one studies Roman roads, the more one realises that, as in similar cases, the subject is an extremely complicated one. Codrington, while recognising considerable variations of construction, appeared to work on the assumption that the whole system was laid out at one time for one single purpose — the rapid deployment of troops. In actual fact, the Roman road system is comparable to that of today where there are:—

- (1) Major roads classified under the code letter A.
- (2) Secondary roads under the letter B.
- (3) Unclassified roads, mostly local lanes and byways.
- (4) Private roads and tracks leading to houses, farms or fields etc.

This pattern was complicated in Roman times by the fact that the roads could serve either military or civil needs or be dual in character. In some cases, south of the Fosse Way, they started as military highways and later came under purely civil control. Furthermore, the wandering prehistoric trackways probably continued to be used during the occupation. We thus have Roman roads not only differing in width and method of construction but also in function. Their uses can probably be classed under the following headings:—

- (1) Military and Imperial.
- (2) Civil, used by Romanised Britons, linking towns and settlements.
- (3) Industrial, associated with mining etc.
- (4) Agricultural, associated with the so-called villas.
- (5) Trackways etc., associated with the native population in the villages, which remained hardly touched by the Roman civilisation.

In any district of Britain, the roads would tend to conform to this complex pattern, increasing in number and diversity with the population and degree of exploitation of the land or its mineral wealth. It is to be expected that the system would have also suited changing needs. As standards declined in the third and fourth centuries, so the maintenance would become less thorough, but as agriculture appeared to prosper at this time, there is little doubt that new roads serving purely local needs would have come into being.

In studying Roman roads, the questions one must ask are, for example, which points does this road join, for what purpose, and at which particular period? The answers might help to elucidate the problems of its structure. The intricate problems ensuing from this should not blind one to the comparatively simpler

questions relating to the main routes. These military or Imperial roads were probably kept at a high level of efficiency. Along them bodies of troops could move at a pace of about twenty miles a day, and the Imperial couriers, using post horses, could travel much faster. In the military zones there was usually a fort situated at every stage along the route i.e. at about every twenty miles. In the civil areas were the *mansiones* or posting stations at about the same distance apart and where the courier and traveller could obtain a change of horses. Around the *mansio*, which probably began life as a fort protecting a river crossing or similar point of strategic importance, would have grown up a small settlement. There are many of these little centres of 15 to 20 acres in Britain and their close study is one of the many tasks facing the serious student of the period.

These main routes were laid out originally as military roads and they have in common the straightness associated with them in the popular mind. This however has been much exaggerated. The roads are usually straight only from point to point. They were aligned from one high point to another and this factor is of considerable use to the student, as once the series of "high points" is found, it is usually possible to make an attempted alignment between them if the Roman road has, for the most part, ceased to be visible on the ground. The Roman engineers were by no means hidebound in this matter of straightness. Where there were natural obstacles to be avoided, the road duly took them into consideration. They were not daunted by marshes or rivers, but boldly crossed them by means of causeways and bridges. Up steep slopes the road was cut into zigzags to avoid an incline which would have been impossible for horse drawn carts.

The materials used in road construction were those available in the district, gravel, broken stone or even slag, spread on the site of the road and rammed down often in several layers, the profile when completed having a pronounced camber to throw off the rainwater. One of the universal characteristics of the first-class Roman road is the *agger* or embankment which was thrown up, in the level stretches, to carry the road. This was formed by digging ditches on each side of the alignment and heaping up the soil in the centre. This provided drainage ditches and raised the road surface above the normal level. In hilly country, which has not been intensively cultivated, one finds traces of Roman road engineering in the form of embankments and cuttings. In agricultural districts however, they have long since been ploughed away. Where the same length of road has been in continuous use, not only has the raised embankment gone, but its site is marked by a hollow way worn out by centuries of traffic. Where no surface indications are visible, in the form of varying levels, one can sometimes trace a road by the scatter of metalting after ploughing.

Field workers on this problem can receive much help from a study of parish boundaries and field names. Most of the former date from Saxon times when Roman roads were much in evidence and quite often the boundary continues to follow the line of the road, although all trace of it has long since disappeared. Field and place names can also be helpful. References to streets, causeways and pavements are not uncommon. The only certain Roman road in the Wirral goes through Street Hey Farm, while Stretton, near Malpas, marks the position of one of the main southern routes. There is a Wetfield pavement between Bunbury and Nantwich but this may refer to a mediaeval track. These names require caution in use. Much has been written about Windy and Cold Harbours, also about Pepper Streets but they are by no means infallible guides. It is indeed sad to recall that there has been much imaginative writing on this subject. The only answer to this is sound field work based primarily on accurate observation and painstaking enquiry supported by excavations at selected points. Students must not expect results from casual half-day excursions as only prolonged and persistent work will bring light to bear on this fascinating problem, but good and fruitful labour brings its own reward. Nor can we expect any startling answers from aerial reconnaissance in this area. The glacial subsoil of the Cheshire Plain is not suitable for the production of cropmarks.

THE ROMAN ROADS OF CHESHIRE.

VERY little study has been given this subject in Cheshire. The only comprehensive survey is that of W. Thompson Watkin in his book *Roman Cheshire* published in 1886. Those sections, which are based on Watkin's own field work are most useful if read carefully, but his book contains much second-hand information, most of which should be subject to critical examination. The significance of this book lies in the fact that many of the surface indications noted by Watkin have, in the eighty or more years since his day, been ploughed out of existence. The road, for example, crossing the fields north of the Abbey Arms between Kelsall and Northwich is described by him as "in embankment form with the *fossae* visible, though the road has been much reduced in height and the *fossae* much filled up, owing to marling and continual ploughing." Whereas today, nothing remains but a mere thin scatter of metalling which one can observe after ploughing.

The Cheshire Plain was never developed by the Romans to any extent. Its proximity to the military zone and its wet climate did not make it very attractive. To what extent the Romans exploited the salt deposits is not clear, but traces of civil settlements are evident at both Northwich (*Condote*) and Middlewich (*Salinis*?). The well drained, sandy subsoils of the Delamere and other areas, may have continued to support a native population

which has left nothing but a thin scatter of Romano-British material. The main centre of Roman influence was undoubtedly the great legionary depot at Chester (*Deva*) and this point was the focus of the main road system controlling the entry into Wales. The siting of the main roads crossing the county was governed by the river Mersey. The bridgehead was at Wilderspool, near Warrington, and there are probably at least three roads meeting at this point; one for Chester, another for Whitchurch (*Mediolano*) and a third from Northwich (*Condote*) along Kind (or King) street. Of these, the road from Whitchurch remains at present hypothetical. The other nodal point on the Mersey at Manchester (*Mamucium*), an auxiliary fort, must have connected with Northwich (via Stretford) and possibly with the south towards Chesterton.

There must also have been a main cross-route from the east, from Buxton (*Aquae*) towards Northwich but no trace of it has been properly established. Another road entered Cheshire from the south-east via the settlement at Chesterton, coming originally from Littlechester, near Derby, a point of great strategic importance, but this also is difficult to trace. A glance at the small scale map of the county (Fig. 1) shows how pitifully ignorant we are of the main routes, only Watling Street from Chester to Manchester is reasonably well established. The rest still await the patient study of the field worker. Traces, meagre no doubt, must exist here and there waiting the discerning eye.

BOOK LIST.

- T. CODRINGTON. *Roman Roads in Britain*, 3rd ed. 1918.
I. D. MARGERY. *Roman Ways in the Weald*, published by Phoenix House, 1948.
W. THOMPSON WATKIN. *Roman Cheshire*, 1886.
S. E. WINBOLT. *With a Spade on Stane Street*, Methuen, 1936.

Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain 1928 (a new edition is forthcoming).

NOTES ON THE MAP (FIG. 1).

The information plotted on this map has been taken from the Cheshire set of 6 in. O.S. sheets on which all archaeological discoveries are plotted at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. It is not meant to be definitive but more indicative of the present state of knowledge. It shows at a glance how little is known about Roman Cheshire and in particular the eastern part of the county. There should be a route from Buxton into Cheshire, possibly using the Valley of the Dane, and one would expect also a north-south route between Manchester and Chesterton, but no positive trace of either of the routes has so far been recorded. Similarly the important link between Whitchurch and Wilderspool, which possibly follows modern roads for the greater part of its length, remains hypothetical.

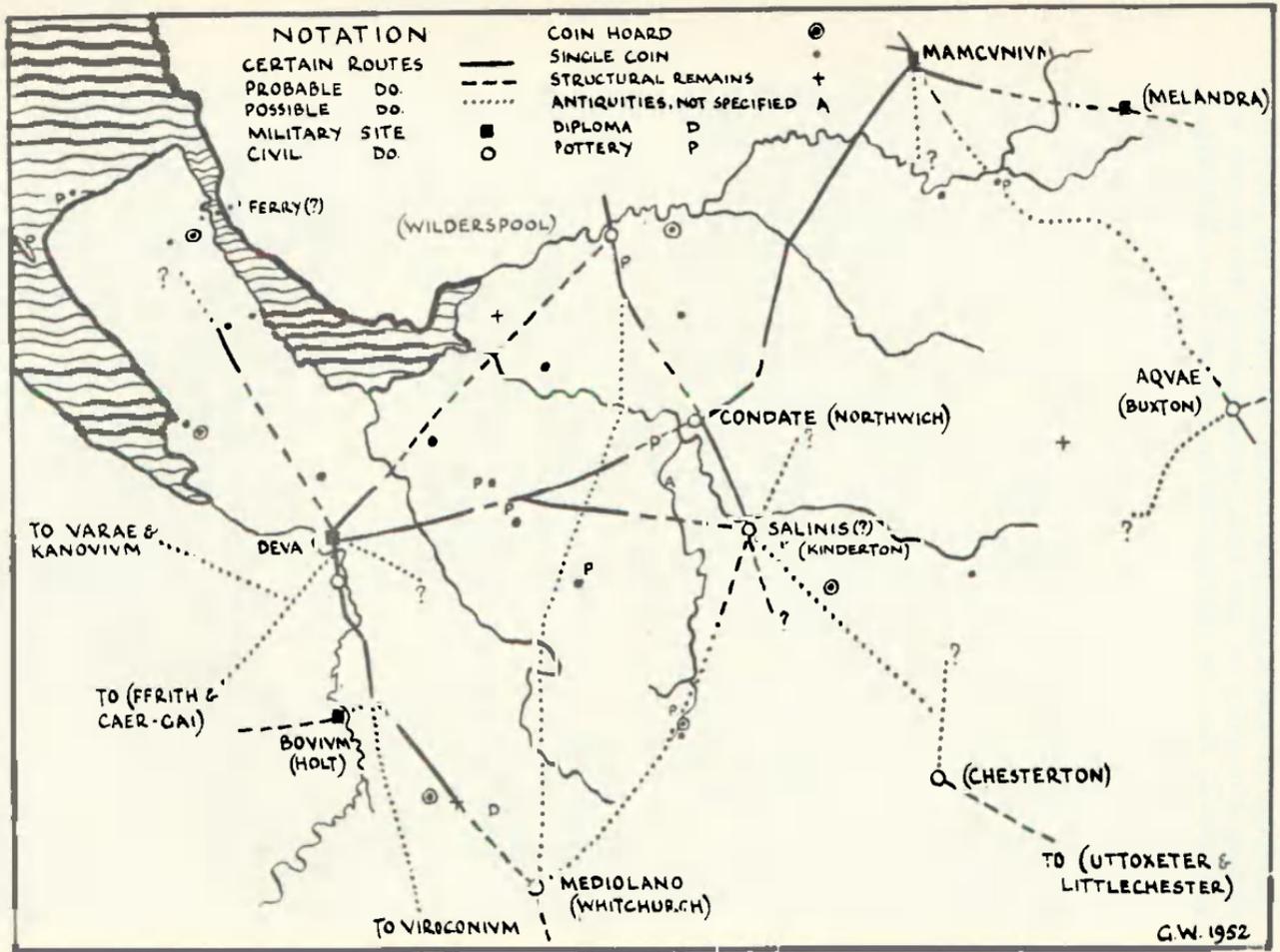


Fig. 1.

There has been a number of finds of coins in the county, but they do not necessarily signify nearby occupation. Pottery has not been so readily recognised and fragments have probably escaped notice.

The only structural remains, apart from those associated with recognised settlements or military establishments (i.e. at Chester, Wilderspool, Northwich, Kinderton and Heronbridge) are at:—

- (1) Halton — ditches and 3rd century pottery (*Annals*, xxiv, 165).
- (2) Malpas — “Roman implements, with coins and tessellated pavements.” (Watkin, p. 286, quoting Foote Gower, *Add. MSS., B.M., 11,338, Fo. 68*).
- (3) Winkle, near Macclesfield, a sepulchral mound (Watkin, p. 303).

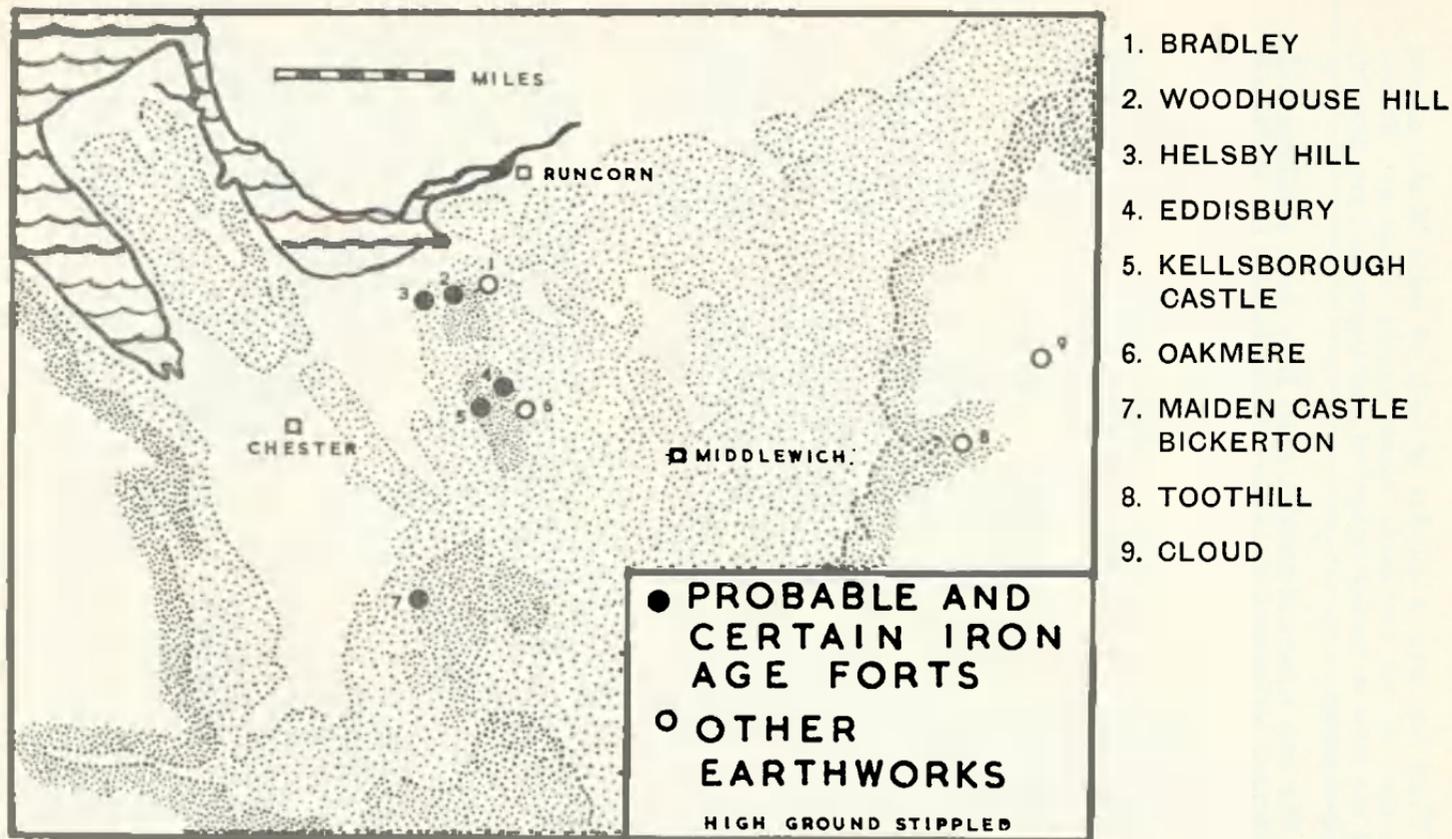
Although Wilderspool is marked as a civil settlement it probably began as an auxiliary fort in the first century and may even have been a military works depot like Holt in Denbighshire.

The place names follow the article by Prof. I. A. Richmond on “The British Section of the Ravenna Cosmography” (*Arch.*, 93) except that the writer feels that Kinderton has at present a greater claim to the name SALINIS than Nantwich. Although the latter has been regarded by many antiquaries as a Roman settlement, the only evidence, at present, consists of two finds of coins, one of which was a small hoard.

B.

AN important feature of the archaeological map of Cheshire is the group of defensive earthworks which we call hill forts. A glance at the distribution map (Fig. 2) will show that these forts are built chiefly on the Central Ridge, which commands a good view of the plain on either side. This siting of forts along a ridge of high ground is part of a pattern which is repeated elsewhere — for example, along the Clwyd Valley in North Wales — and the forts themselves form part of a much larger network, which has been the subject of much recent investigation. A large part of this has been done by Professor Varley, who has carried out excavations on two of our Cheshire hill forts — Maiden Castle, Bickerton (7), and Castle Ditch, Eddisbury (4). The report on the latter, which has just appeared in the *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol. 102, 1950, has materially advanced our knowledge of this type of site.

The story begins in the south of England, in the region we know as Wessex, where some of the earliest forts were built about 250 B.C. These had a single earth rampart with a ditch outside,



(Fig. 2.) HILL FORTS IN CHESHIRE.

(Based on fig. 29 in Varley and Jackson's *Prehistoric Cheshire*).

and the entrances consisted simply of a gap in the rampart. From the pottery and other material found in them we know something of their occupants, who belonged to the culture group known as "Iron Age A." This type of structure gradually spread north up the Welsh Marches, branching off into North Wales and Cheshire, and it was about this period that the first real hill fort was built at Eddisbury (4) (although, as with some other forts, this was preceded by a still earlier set of palisade defences). This hill fort consisted of a simple rampart, following the contours of the hill but enclosing only part of the area of the top. The rampart was made up of earth, but was faced with stone on the outside.

As yet, Eddisbury was affected only by the first wave of fort building, emanating from the south of England. But soon another influence was felt, although only remotely, in Cheshire. At some time in the early part of the 1st century B.C., a wave of new immigrants reached the south-west of England from the area of Brittany, bringing with them a characteristic culture which we know as "Iron Age B." The most famous type sites of this culture are the lake villages of Meare and Glastonbury. This new immigration also had a pronounced effect on hill fort building, in the form of the multivallate fort. In this, the usual single rampart was superseded by a more complicated structure with two or more ramparts, of which the later phase of Maiden Castle, Dorset, is a well-known example. This increase in the depth of the defences was probably a reaction to the increasing use of the sling in siege warfare. The actual culture of the new invaders did not spread very far inland from the Severn Estuary, apart from isolated examples in the Welsh Marches. Some of its pottery was found in the hill fort at Oswestry, Shropshire, but in Cheshire the results were apparent in the structure of forts rather than the material culture. The fort at Eddisbury was reconstructed during the first century B.C., an outer rampart being added, and the timber guard cell at the south-eastern entrance being rebuilt in stone. It was probably in this period that the fort at Maiden Castle, Bickerton (7) was first built. Unlike Eddisbury, which comes into the class of contour forts, Maiden Castle was a promontory fort, one side of which was protected by a cliff face on the north-west, while a double rampart protected the other sides.

Both Maiden Castle and the reconstructed Eddisbury had a feature common to many hill forts of this period — the ramparts at the entrance were turned inwards to deepen the defences at this vulnerable point. We have already seen how structural changes outpaced the spread of material culture, and the military device of the inturned entrance is another example of this. Its obvious utility caused it to cut across existing cultural divisions and gave it a wide distribution, both in the south of England and the Welsh Marches, and also in another area in the north-east of England.

There are other features of these two forts, however, which raise some difficulties about their date. For the reconstructed entrance at Eddisbury, and the entire rampart at Maiden Castle, which were standing at the time of the Roman conquest and cannot have preceded it by a very long time, were built in a style which is characteristic of a supposedly early group of forts in Scotland. In these, the earth and stone ramparts were strengthened with vertical and horizontal timber beams. This type of fortification is sometimes called *Murus Gallicus* because in some ways it resembles a group of Gaulish forts so described by Julius Caesar. It seems evident that the ramparts of the Cheshire forts must be related in some way to those in Scotland, though it is uncertain at the moment which is earlier. The Abernethy group of forts, the Scottish prototype of this form of rampart building, was usually dated to about 250 B.C., in which case Professor Varley suggests that this form of construction in Cheshire must be a later derivation. Recently however, the early date of the Abernethy complex has been challenged, and the question remains an open one.

Another feature which provides a possible link with the north is the construction of a guard cell of timber or stone on each side of the inner end of the entrance. The original fort at Eddisbury, as well as the similar early fort at Almondbury in Yorkshire, had guard cells of timber, and in the later reconstruction at Eddisbury the cells were built of stone. Similar stone guard cells, built into the inturn of the rampart, are found in some of the neighbouring North Wales forts — Dinorben, Pen-y-Corrdyn, and Caer Drewyn — and were once thought to be derived from Roman military architecture. At Eddisbury, however, we have them in a purely prehistoric context. At the fort of Leckhampton in Gloucestershire they appear in an Iron Age B reconstruction of an earlier Iron Age A fort. Generally they seem to be an early feature, and may have some relation to the Scottish brochs, another product of the northward spread of Iron Age B culture from south-west England, which also often had guard cells on each side of the entrance passage.

While the Cheshire forts form part of the same complex as many of the North Wales forts in prehistoric times, excavations have shown that they came to a parting of the ways when the Romans established themselves in the north-west in the third quarter of the 1st century A.D. The Welsh forts, though they may have stood empty for a time, seem to have been extensively re-occupied in the 2nd century and later. In Cheshire, the forts seem to have been deserted after the Roman conquest. Eddisbury, within the area of influence of the legionary base at Chester, and actually overlooking a main Roman road, was put out of action as a fort. The ramparts were reduced and the ditches

filled up. Soon after this, the Yorkshire fort of Almondbury suffered similar treatment. Although no slighting seems to have taken place at Maiden Castle, that too shows no occupation at this period. There was a later Saxon occupation of Eddisbury but the history of the hill forts in this area was now virtually finished.

So much for Eddisbury and Maiden Castle. With the exception of one section dug on Woodhouse Hill (2) the other forts in the county have not been excavated; until more is known about them we can only presume, from their similarity to the excavated examples, that they too date to the pre-Roman Iron Age.

It is not known which tribes built these Cheshire forts. We do know that Almondbury was the stronghold, in Roman times, of the tribe known as the Brigantes, while the multivallate forts of the south-west were occupied by Celtic invaders from the Continent. But in Cheshire, Dr. Varley suggests that the occupants of the forts were the descendants of the native Bronze Age population, who adopted the structures of the new cultures without absorbing much of the pottery. After the Roman invasion the need for tribal forts largely ceased, and the inhabitants were assimilated into the wider culture of the Roman Empire.

SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- DR. WILLOUGHBY GARDNER: "The native hill-forts in North Wales and their defences." (*Arch. Camb.* Vol. 81, 1926).
- PROFESSOR VARLEY: "The hill-forts of the Welsh Marches." (*Arch. Journal*, Vol. CV, 1948).
- PROFESSOR WHEELER: "Earthwork since Hadrian Allcroft." (*Arch. Journal*, Vol. CVI, Supplement).
- PROFESSOR C. F. C. HAWKES: "Hill Forts." (*Antiquity*, 1931).
- PROFESSOR WHEELER: "Roman and native in Wales." (*Trans. of the Cymmrodorion Soc.*, 1920-21).
- VARLEY & JACKSON: "Prehistoric Cheshire." (Cheshire Rural Community Council, 1940).
- PROFESSOR VARLEY: "Recent investigations into the origin of the Cheshire hill-forts." (*Trans. of the Lancs. and Cheshire Ant. Soc.*, Vol. LI).
- PROFESSOR VARLEY: "Excavations of the Castle Ditch, Eddisbury." (*Trans. of the Historic Soc. of Lancs. and Cheshire*, Vol. 102, 1950).
- PROFESSOR VARLEY: "Excavations at Maiden Castle, Bickerton." (*Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, Vols. XXII and XXIII).

Excavations, 1952

DEANERY FIELD, CHESTER.

THE main effort of the year was directed at a trench through the northern defences in the Deanery Field in order to establish the presence or otherwise of the Flavian turf rampart (c. A.D. 70-75), previously discovered on the west side and at the south-east corner. In this, the excavation was successful; part of the turf rampart was found standing to a height of 7 ft., but its front portion had been cut away during the reconstruction of the north wall in 1887. The back too had been reduced by about 3 feet for the insertion of a building. This unexpected feature could not be fully explored within the limits of the trench but it is clear that its construction had removed the greater part of the primary levels in the tail of the rampart. The building, which was 28 feet wide, appears to be similar to others found on this side of the fortress and presumably was used for the storage of fuel and other combustible material. No evidence was recovered by which it could be dated, but it was clearly a secondary feature. The main result of the excavation was the discovery of the turf rampart, which now makes it possible to say that from c. A.D. 70 to 300, the enceinte of the legionary fortress appears to have remained in the same position.

BRIDGE GATE.

A small scale excavation was carried out near the Bridge Gate in the yard of the Home Guard Club. The purpose of this was to make contact with the early mediaeval defences and if possible, to recover some examples of the pottery of that period. A heavy stone foundation was encountered and within the restrictions of the single trench, it was impossible to determine its limits or arrive at any conclusion as to its purpose. A quantity of interesting pottery was recovered of an entirely new local type. There is at present, some disagreement among authorities on this pottery but it seems probable that it belongs to the 13th century. The foundation may be an addition to the defences at this point, possibly under Edward I.

INFIRMARY FIELD.

Efforts were continued during the year to locate a Roman burial but without success. The cemetery area must be considerably more confined than was previously imagined. Further work was done on the Roman building found last year.

AMPHITHEATRE.

A short trench was excavated at the request of the City Engineer, to locate the outer wall of the amphitheatre, to enable the improvement line to be set out at this corner. No new information came to light.

C.W.

BUNBURY PARISH CHURCH SANCTUARY, INTERIM REPORT

FOR some time, the Sanctuary flooring of Bunbury Parish Church laid in tile by Minton of Stoke-on-Trent in 1849 had shown signs of giving way and in view of the laying of a new floor it was decided that the cause of the subsidence should be found before new work was commenced. The grave slab of the Rev. Thomas Porter, one time Preacher of Bunbury (and of his wife) was found beneath the top step of the altar and recovered in good condition although smeared with cement. Marble edged steps had been laid upon the encaustic tiles and the grave slab covered a hole which had been dug through them to examine the floor beneath, presumably because of earlier subsidence. This had been due to a large lead coffin bearing, beneath a skull and cross bones the inscription, G.D. Esqr., Aged 45, 1727. (George Davenport of Calveley). Alongside to the north was another lead coffin without inscription and to the west a very large one (7 ft. 8 ins. in length) having a lead coffin plate to Richard Davenport, 1771. There were also three more leaden coffins within the sanctuary, only one of which was inscribed (beneath skull and crossbones) F.P. 1726, in the south-east corner of the sanctuary near the double piscina. Scattered through the soil over the whole sanctuary and disturbed at various times, presumably when the soil was dug into for burials in the 18th century, were numerous fragments of 14th century glass, mediaeval tiles and pieces of alabaster little larger than chippings. The glass, about 160 fragments, appears to belong to the lost Jesse window which formerly occupied the east window. The alabaster fragments probably came from the missing Calveley tombs. A large portion of one of these, a broken slab, quite plain, measuring 4 ft. 11 ins. by 3 ft. $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. and $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in thickness, was found near the vestry door.

The most important result of the excavation was the discovery of a wall running parallel with the communion rail 12 ft. 6 ins. from the east wall. The wall was 4 ft. high and its top course was 1 ft. 9 ins. below the 19th century floor level. For 1 ft. 6 ins. the top two courses were of ashlar blocks mortared together and appeared to have been coated with a thin plaster as though older building material had been used. Beneath these were footings (on the south side) made up of nine moulded stones from a 12th century arch having a span of 6 ft. 8 ins., and one decorated voussoir of zigzag ornament with pellets, deeply cut. The footing of the south wall of the sanctuary (which had a well-built offset 12 ins. below the tile level) was also made up of earlier material, namely six large blocks of ashlar with a $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. chamfer cut on the square, and which also had received a liberal amount of thin plaster or whitewash. They were built well into this wall and the east wall of the chancel on the south end.

Moulded or carved stones were not found in the north wall, only in the newly discovered wall running parallel to the communion rail. Unfortunately the northern end of this latter wall had been greatly disturbed by grave digging and it was not possible to determine the relationship between it and the wall on the south side which continues westwards into the chancel parallel to the Ridley Chapel screen and into ground which could not be disturbed. There were no apparent signs of bonding however where the walls might have joined. In the angle so formed were the remains of footings and one large well-cut stone which might have formed part of a buttress set at right angles to the north-to-south wall.

It remains to indicate the importance of these structural remains, but it is impossible to draw definite conclusions for the evidence is tantalisingly insufficient. This however coincides with the evidence already to hand in connection with the history of 14th century building at Bunbury. How much did Sir Hugh Calveley build, and how much did he inherit, are questions to which there is no satisfactory answer. The facts to be considered are as follows.

Until the early 18th century the east window contained 14th century glass commemorating David de Bunbury together with the date 1343. The east window follows the style of this period and also shows signs of having been reconstructed. Hugh Calveley is credited with this work however, but if he built *de novo* the existing east wall and window (indeed the whole chancel) in 1387 (the date of the licence to build) one must account for the earlier glass having survived in a later frame and also believe that Sir Hugh was using designs about 40 years out of date. This is not beyond the bounds of possibility for there are one or two examples of architecture in Cheshire which seem to indicate that the county was a little behind the times. Bunbury east window has been quoted as one of these examples and it might be possible to explode the other evidence on further research. One more piece of evidence ought to be taken into consideration, that culled from documentary sources. The will of William Walsham (proved 1389) directs 'to the fabric of the Church of Bunnebury and the repair of the Chancel 20 marks.' An earlier will dated 1361 of William Ketell leaves 'for the fabric of the Church of Bunbury 4s.'

We can only leave the matter with the question, did Hugh Calveley then inherit a large Church of the time of David de Bunbury and enlarge the chancel, rebuilding the east wall (and window complete with glass) 12 ft. 6 ins. to the east in order to accommodate the canons of his new foundation, and also to provide a more dignified setting for his own alabaster tomb?

M.H.R.



MALTBY CHURCH, LINCS., 1940.
Before Repair in 1940.



MALTBY CHURCH, LINCS., 1940.
After Repair in 1940.

BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS.

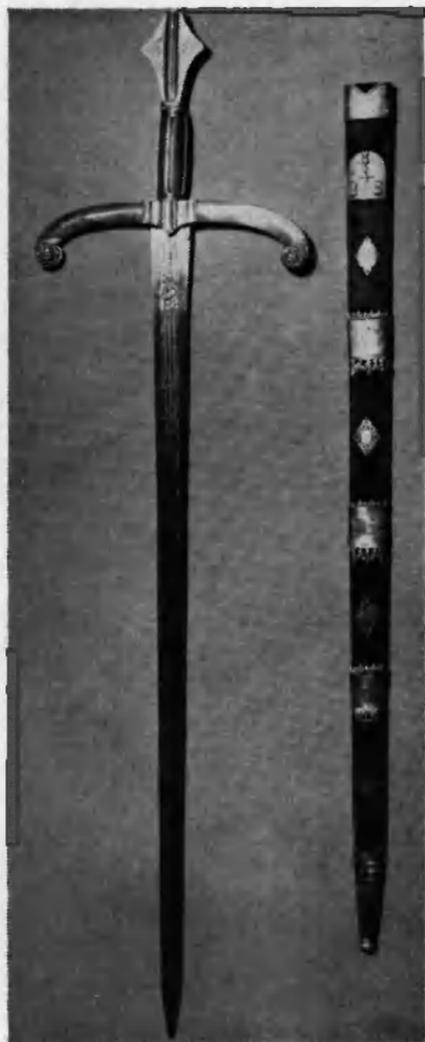


Fig. 1.

BLOCK BY COURTESY OF CHESTER CORPORATION.

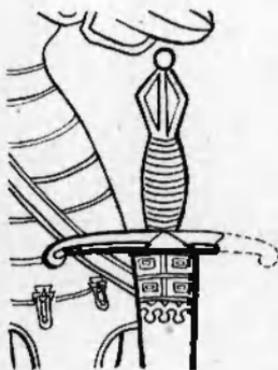


fig. 4



fig. 2



fig. 3

Cheshire County Records

By MAJOR F. G. C. ROWE, COUNTY ARCHIVIST.

RECORDS, or archives, to many people mean nothing, and even if shown and explained to them are mentally consigned to the dust-bin or bonfire. Too often does one hear of some contemporary notes of happenings in bygone years, found in an attic, a cellar or in a bricked-up hole in a ruinous wall, being summarily consigned to the flames or sent to salvage. By this action, perhaps, the only true account of some event is lost for ever. This unwitting destruction has occurred not only in mansions but also in cottages and barns. Many a priceless document of the past has come to light in a sack in an outhouse.

In spite of ignorant or wanton destruction of records, it is to surviving records that one must have recourse when desirous of finding out "what really happened," as opposed to fanciful or pleasant legends. Records are not necessarily as dry as dust, for in many cases they are enlivened by quaint and humorous expressions; sometimes one comes across the impish opinion of an old-time clerk written in the margin of the document. Instances are to be found where the clerk has drawn unflattering sketches of men's faces against the entries.

Throughout the centuries prior to the establishment of County Councils, the Justices of the Peace, when assembled for Quarter Sessions, administered the counties in addition to their judicial functions, and during this time the records of their administration were incorporated with those of the bench. Since February 1889, the records of the administration of the County Palatine of Chester by its County Council have been kept apart from the records of the Quarter Sessions, still presided over by the Justices.

The records of the County administration, as well as those of the Sessions, are kept in the muniment room of the Cheshire Record Office, The Castle, Chester, under the immediate charge of the County Archivist. The latter works under the orders of the Records Advisory Sub-Committee of the Standing Joint Committee, as conveyed by the Clerk of the Peace. Lord Leverhulme, the Lord Lieutenant, is the Custos Rotulorum and is also Chairman of the Committee and Sub-Committee. In addition to these records there are the plans, deposited with the Clerk of the Peace under Acts of Parliament, of public utility undertakings, e.g. gas, electricity, turnpike roads, canals, etc. The Enclosure Awards of many manors and townships are kept with the official records. The judicial records of the Quarter Sessions which may be consulted by research workers, date from 1558 to a year one hundred years prior to the current year, the administrative records up to 1889, and other non-confidential documents as desired.

Besides the official records in the keeping of the County Council there are what are generally called unofficial records, i.e. those which have not arisen from the functions of the Justices or of the County Council but which have been deposited for preservation and for the enlightenment of posterity. Into this category fall such items as Minutes of defunct Local Authorities, the books and accounts of the River Weaver Navigation, and the collections of estate and private documents belonging to private persons no longer requiring them.

The Cheshire Record Office has been approved by the Master of the Rolls as an approved repository for manorial records, and the County Council has been similarly authorised by him to accept such records. As the Office is the only one in the County so approved, it is hoped that persons no longer requiring their collections of old documents and plans will deposit them at the Record Office, rather than destroy them or send them away from the County. The County Council is very willing to accept for preservation any collection, large or small. As an aid to the study of the past there is nothing so valuable as the combination of official and unofficial records.

Before passing on to give details of the records at the Cheshire Record Office, perhaps I may be allowed to give some hints on the preservation of documents which will be within the capacity of any holder of documents, but of which they may not be aware.

- (i) Store away in parcels or boxes in a room free from damp, fire or vermin. If damp, dry before storing or everything in the parcel will be affected. Inspect regularly.
- (ii) To dry wet or damp documents, whether of parchment or paper, proceed as follows:—
 - (a) Separate the documents carefully and open them out.
 - (b) Scatter small paper balls on a dry flat surface and lay the documents on them. This will ensure sufficient ventilation.
 - (c) Documents of two or more pages or membranes of parchment should be treated as in (b) above with small paper balls between the pages or membranes.
 - (d) Books can be dried as in (c) above.
 - (e) The natural warmth of any well-ventilated room is quite sufficient to dry any document.
 - (f) NEVER dry documents of any kind in front of a fire or upon radiators or warm pipes, nor iron them with a flat-iron.

- (iii) If in any doubt as to the disposal of documents, plans, engravings, etc., or before deciding to dispose of any of them (however unimportant they may seem), it is hoped that an owner or custodian will communicate with the Clerk of the County Council, St. John's House, Chester, or with the County Archivist, either of whom will give every assistance.

QUARTER SESSIONS RECORDS.

The largest mass of official records is that of the Quarter Sessions Records. There are 123 Quarter Sessions Books covering the period 1559 to 1938, which contain Indictments, Orders, Presentments, Recognizances and Minutes. The series is complete except for the years 1643 and 1644. Along with these books are the Quarter Sessions Files and, like them, have reference to the judicial and administrative transactions of the Justices of the Peace. This series is complete for the period 1559 to 1888 and average four files for each year, namely for the Epiphany, Easter, Trinity and Michaelmas Sessions. Included in the Files are Bonds to keep the Peace, Informations, Lists of Constables and of Juries, Presentments, etc. Since the formation of the County Council, the judicial side of these records has been kept separately, i.e., one series containing the records of the Justices and another series the records of the County Council.

Names of the Justices are given in a series of Commissions of the Peace from 1681 to the present time, 22 documents. By the Test Act of 25 Charles II any person who wished to hold any office under the Crown had to attend a Parish Church and receive Holy Communion, after which he had to subscribe to a declaration against Transubstantiation. The Minister of the Church and at least one Churchwarden signed a Sacramental Certificate to the effect that the person had partaken according to the usage of the Church of England. To this Certificate was added another, subscribed by two persons of substance, to the effect that all had been carried out properly and that the declaration had been made. This latter certificate was sworn to at the Sessions. Though the main bulk of these Certificates, i.e., from 1673 to 1768, are at the Public Record Office in London, we have here 11 files of them covering the period 1741 to 1827. The Test Act was repealed in 1828.

Allied to the Sacramental Certificates are the Rolls of names of subscribers to the Oaths of Abjuration, Allegiance and Anti-Transubstantiation. Of these Rolls there are some 35, covering the period 1673 to 1835.

On the other side of the house we have Nonconformists and Papists. In regard to the Nonconformists the records seldom make any distinction between the Protestant Dissenters; only in one or two cases are any persons designated as Quakers or as belonging

to the Society of Friends. In this group are: (1) Register of Places certified for Religious Worship, 1689 to 1853; (2) Declaration of Persons in Holy Orders or Pretended Holy Orders as to Articles of Religion — 2 Rolls, 1704-1732; (3) List of Dissenters, 1706-7; (4) Names and Addresses of persons who had taken the Oath of Allegiance, 1723 — 4 books. (5) Register of Persons proving at General Quarter Sessions of their reception of the Sacrament and subscription to the Oaths of Allegiance and Abjuration, 1782-1817.

In respect of the Papists the records are: (1) Register of Papists' Estates, 1717-23, giving names of owners and localities, together with miscellaneous papers and rough notes for compiling the Register 1714-1718; (2) Deeds enrolled. These relate to conveyances and leases of lands belonging to Papists and were enrolled under the Act of 3.Geo.1. There are 8 Rolls covering the period 1715 to 1759; (3) Letters of Attorney and Rentals connected with the Register [See (1) above], 1717 to 1743; (4) Enrolments of Letters of Attorney and Rentals — 3 rolls, 1717-1743; (5) List of Wirral Papists summoned to take the Oath of Allegiance, with four certificates, 1743-4; (6) List of Papists and Non-Jurors in Wirral, 13. Mar., 1743; (7) Certificate of refusal of Papists (names given) to take the Oath of Allegiance, 2. Apr., 1744; (8) Bundle of various papers, including some lists of recusants, 1714-1723. In the Register of Places certified for Religious Worship, mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are a few Papist Places named. In addition to the above there are four books containing the names and addresses of persons subscribing to the Oath of Allegiance, 1723, but no indication is given as to their religion.

ALE HOUSES.

One of the matters which concerned the Justices was the licensing of Ale-houses and the licensees. The records of this are: Licences, 1630-1650, 1 file; Register of Licences, 1747-1758; Lists of Ale-house keepers' recognizances, giving their names and sureties, under the headings of the County Hundreds, 1749-1844 (not all years are represented); Bundles of Ale-sellers' Recognizances, arranged as above, 1754-1828.

BADGERS.

These were registered travelling provision merchants who were licensed to buy corn or other victuals in one place and to sell them in another. Register, 1759-1772, 1 book.

BRIDGES.

By the Act of 1. Anne, supplementing that of 22. Henry VIII, the Justices were empowered to raise money by taxation to repair and amend bridges in cases where no person responsible therefor could be ascertained. The records chiefly consist of contracts for this purpose and consist of bundles covering the period 1708 to 1881.

NAVIGATION.

The records concern the Rivers Dee, Irwell and Mersey, and Weaver. They concern minutes of meetings, appointment of Surveyor of Navigation, maps and agreements for land reclamation and appointment of Commissioners. Register of Vessels entering and leaving the Dee, 1740-1760. Accounts, Minute and Tonnage Books of the Weaver, 1733-1899. Register of Vessels using the navigable rivers, 1795-1812. Certificates of Registration of Vessels, 1795-1802.

GAMEKEEPERS.

By the Act of 9 Anne, to improve preservation of game, one gamekeeper for each manor was allowed. He was allowed to kill game and his name was recorded with the Clerk of the Peace. Register, 1711-1825.

DEPOSITED PLANS.

These are plans deposited with the Clerk of the Peace and begin in 1792 and continue onwards to the present. They are in respect of Electricity, Gas, Waterworks, Canals, Railways and Roads, and with most there is a book of reference. A charge of One shilling per hour for perusal of each document, or Two shillings per hour for making extracts or tracings, is made in respect of each document.

MAPS.

Speed, Teasdale, Kitchin, Carey, Greenwood: 1673-1830.

ENCLOSURE AWARDS.

The Record Office contains 74 Awards with their plans, either in originals or in copies, 1767-1898. (Note: There are no Tithe Awards in the Office).

POLL BOOKS.

These are manuscript books and were used to record the votes of the electors at elections for Knights of the Shire. 1714, 16. Feb., 7 books; 1722, 4. Apr., 7 books; 1722, 4. Apr., names of Wirral electors, 1 book. These are most interesting as they show how each elector voted, i.e., before the secret ballot was established.

EXTRACTS OF FINES.

These are extracts of Fines, etc. imposed or forfeited at the Sessions. There are many files and cover the period from 1560 to 1890.

MILITIA AND YEOMANRY.

There are only a few bundles of papers relating to these and are of the 18th and 19th centuries. These have not been arranged as yet.

ROADS.

These records are of contracts, etc., for maintenance of the approaches to and of the roads over bridges. They were made with private contractors, Highway Boards, Turnpike Trustees, etc. The Bundles cover the period 1833 to 1886, each contract covering a period of two to seven years.

TURNPIKE ROAD TRUSTS.

There are twenty four books, chiefly consisting of accounts for the Chester to Tarvin, Chester to Frodsham, and Chester to Northop roads, and cover the period 1769 to 1883. One box contains the Mortgages on the Tolls of these roads, and others, covering the period 1767 to 1832. The Returns of Income and Expenditure on roads cover the years 1822 to 1886.

VAGRANTS.

Certificates of Vagrants, Constables' Accounts and awards for apprehending vagrants, are contained in three files, 1701, 1773, 1783.

CHARTISTS.

Correspondence relating to their trial and to a possible attempt to release them from Chester Castle, which latter caused the calling up of the Militia, 1839.

UNOFFICIAL ACCESSIONS.

These accessions are so called because the records concerned do not arise from the judicial or administrative functions of the Justices or of the County Council. Some are deposited either as a gift or on loan by authorities and some by private persons. Naturally these accessions get the same care and attention as the official records.

CHESTER WILLS.

The collection of Wills, Letters of Administration and Inventories is at present the largest unofficial accession. It consists of some 50,000 documents and covers the period 1545 to 1858. These documents concern people who were described as of a place in Cheshire only. As the Chester Probate Court covered a much larger area, the Wills, etc., when transferred from the Probate authority, were divided into counties. Those of places in Lancashire are kept at Preston, where the sorting out took place: those for Wales are kept at the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. Indexes have been published by the Lancashire & Cheshire Record Society for the period 1545 to 1820, and they can be obtained from the Lancashire Record Office, County Hall, Preston. A card-index has been started for 1821 onwards at the Cheshire Record Office for the Wills, etc., of Cheshire persons, kept there. Details in regard to fees chargeable in respect of the Wills, etc., can be obtained from the "County Archivist, Cheshire Record

Office, The Castle, Chester," on request. To avoid delay in producing documents, it would be of great help if persons so requiring them for inspection would kindly write or telephone their requirements beforehand. (Chester 20121).

PRIVATE DEPOSITS.

These are collections of documents deposited with the County Council and the Standing Joint Committee by private persons and by custodians of documents.

Concerning the larger collections mention may be made of that of the Lord Vernon, D.L., of Sudbury, Derbyshire, concerning the Middlewich area; Major-General T. N. F. Wilson, C.B., D.S.O., the Sandbach area; I.C.I., the Alderley Park Estate; the Earl of Shrewsbury, estates in Cheshire; British Records Association, estates in Cheshire; Brigadier E. C. W. D. Walthall, C.M.G., D.S.O., Wistaston estate. The depositing of the Cholmondeley Castle estate documents by the Earl of Rocksavage, M.C., has been started; this is a very large collection, and for the present only the documents calendared will be available to research students.

Of the smaller collections mention may be made of those of Major H. P. Oldfield, of Harrow-on-the-Hill, documents of the Kelsall and Oldfield families in regard to estates all over the county; Mr. T. G. Lilley of Bournemouth, Moreton Hall correspondence 1774-1825; Captain M. K. Mainwaring of Oteley, Salop, the Mainwaring estate at Bromborough; the Victoria & Albert Museum, a collection of 19 water-colours of well known Cheshire places by contemporary artists from "The 'Recording Britain Collection';" Sir E. B. Royden, Bart., estates in Frankby area; Salop County Council, Coppenhall area.

Most of all the above-mentioned collections consist of conveyances of land, estate management, rentals, etc., interspersed with the occasional household accounts, marriage settlements, etc., and are of great interest to students of the countryside and its economics.

In addition to the above the County has acquired the collection of the late Lady Annabel Crewe. This contains a fine copy of Glover's Visitation of Cheshire with many beautifully executed coats of arms by him, the long lost Cowper papers (as noted recently by Miss Tunstall in "Cheshire Life"), and a pedigree of the family of Warihull or Warrall of Newton-by-Middlewich from temp. Henry III to 1632. A few old engravings of places of interest in the County have also been acquired.

It is hoped that this article will give readers a good, general picture of the records in the care of the County. In such a short space it is impossible to give more than the bare outlines, but the County Archivist will be glad to give students any help in their researches.

Chester Miracle Plays

By MARGARET M. PRITCHARD, B.A. (Admin.),

ASSIST. SECRETARY, CHESHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

IT was with great trepidation and cautiousness that the County Drama Committee of the Cheshire Rural Community Council first received the approach from the Chester City Council that it should undertake the production of the proposed revival of the Chester Miracle Plays for the City's part in the Festival of Britain. These plays which, until 1951, were last performed in 1600, form the earliest of the four surviving cycles of Miracle Plays which have come down from mediaeval times. The theme of these cycles was vast, ranging from the Creation of the World to the Last Judgment. When, during the 14th century, the responsibility for the presentation of the plays was taken from the clergy by the Guilds, each one took on, as far as possible, the play most suited to its own particular craft. The water-carriers of the Dee were responsible for the Deluge, and it became a deluge in which players, and some of the audience, were drenched, for these plays were always presented with the utmost naturalism.

It is interesting to note that the first approach to the County Drama Committee was only made at the end of September, 1950, and in less than nine months from that first tentative proposal the plays had been adapted so as to be in a suitable form for modern production, a producer engaged, over a hundred amateur players brought together from all over the county and the plays rehearsed and finally staged in a delightful mediaeval set with costumes specially designed and made for this production. Naturally, there were many obstacles to be surmounted ranging from such impressive matters as obtaining the Lord Chamberlain's permission to perform the plays, down to the none-the-less important details of arranging car park facilities for the actors. But, from the first, members of the Committee felt that if at all possible, the full performance of the Chester Miracle Plays should be given during the Festival year, although it was realised that it was quite a formidable task.

The first step, after the preliminary negotiations with the City Council, was to get the Plays adapted from the material available so that they could be easily performed and presented to a modern audience. This work was eventually accepted by the Rev. Joseph and Mrs. McCulloch of Warwick, and after carefully considering the material they reported that they anticipated telescoping the original twenty-four plays into six parts dealing with the Creation, Nativity and Resurrection equally. They felt that these six parts would perhaps take three nights to perform. Early in February the completed adaptation was received, and it was soon clear that

the aim of making the script easily intelligible without destroying the essential character of the work had been well achieved.

The whole cycle of the plays was now seen to have fallen neatly into three parts of more or less equal length — “In the Beginning,” “The Nativity” and “The Passion.” It was decided that the Plays should be performed on three successive evenings and it was on this basis that the selection of the groups to act in the Plays was eventually made.

About this time serious consideration was given as to where the Plays should be performed. Inevitably there were people who pressed for the full re-creation of the old method of presentation — on “pageants” or wagons, but for obvious reasons this was not practicable. The question then resolved itself into the straightforward one of either an indoor or an outdoor production. An approach had already been made to the Dean and Chapter, who had agreed to put the Abbey Green at the disposal of the City Council for this purpose. For an outdoor performance this was an ideal setting, but the usual pleas of inaudibility and the uncertainty of the weather were strongly pressed. The alternative was the Cathedral Refectory. Naturally, it was agreed that the final decision must rest with the Producer/Director when engaged, but it was decided to make further enquiries on both lines.

Events began to move so rapidly and so many things happened in so short a time that the work resolved itself, from necessity, into being done directly from the office with periodic meetings at odd hours during the day with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

On a recommendation of the Arts Council, an approach was made to Christopher Ede of London to undertake the direction of the Plays. After a preliminary visit to Chester and discussion with representatives of the City Council’s Development Committee and the County Drama Committee, Mr. Ede agreed in February, 1951, to undertake the production and general direction of the plays.

By now it was generally agreed that, although this production was primarily for part of Chester’s activities during the Festival of Britain year, it was hoped that, at the conclusion of the performance of the Plays, the City Council would have in its possession sufficient equipment in costumes and sets, to make the Plays’ further performance in future years a more practicable possibility.

It was, therefore, a complete picture of the preliminary work that was presented to the County Drama Committee at its meeting on the 24th February — the scripts were in the office. Christopher Ede had been engaged as Producer/Director and the Cathedral Refectory had been booked for the performance of the Plays to take place from the 8th—30th June, 1951 — the committee

was ready for the more detailed work. Although so much work had already gone into the project, time was moving swiftly and the actual production had hardly been put into operation. The Committee set out to consider the cast required, and as to how best the county might be divided into workable groups. From careful study it became obvious that each of the three Plays would have to be produced in three separate groups, though still maintaining the whole. The first approach was made to all known societies and groups by circular letter, giving particulars of the proposed production, and secretaries were asked to inform the office of the probable number of their members who would be likely to take part. By the end of March, 1951, the position was fairly clear and preliminary casting auditions were held in three centres: Frodsham, Acton and Chester. These meetings were only of an explanatory nature designed to ascertain what talent was available. Mr. Ede finally approved the casts on his visit to the County during the second week in April, when each play was read through and set. In his introductory talk to the cast, he made reference to the rules governing the performance in the Middle Ages when players were liable to be fined for late attendance at rehearsals or bad performance on the night.

The three sub-producers were then left with his instructions for carrying on until his next visit, with an assistant producer to oversee the whole in Mr. Ede's absence.

The costume designer, Miss Sheila Jackson, also travelled up from London that weekend and as far as possible took measurements of the cast. She brought with her the designs which she had made for the various characters. Miss Jackson and Michael Trangmar, who designed the set, bought many of the bits and pieces required for the costumes and props in London, and mention should be made of some of the receipts received for these articles — "leather for Devil's tail" and "pencil tops for the Devil's pitchfork."

From this point onwards the difficulties grew daily. The cast had a habit of changing rapidly, and this involved considerable difficulty with regard to costumes. The third play suffered particularly in this respect as finding twelve disciples as well as many other male characters was no easy task. Letters had to be written asking for some of the cast to be allowed to play in matinees; the programme had to be prepared with suitable programme notes; irons and a sewing machine had to be made available in the Refectory. Then, from the end of May onwards, hampers of unfinished costumes arrived from London, and unwilling casts had to grapple with the hemming of them. Somehow out of all this chaos, together with the other 101 tasks which are involved in any performance, and especially one of this size, order began to emerge. The Plays began to look like plays, and one could reasonably expect to see the same face in the same part

for two consecutive rehearsals. Memories of those last few weeks are more than hectic — the office began to look rather like a second-hand clothes dealer's — and the problems that confronted us became too numerous to record. Many of these concerned only small matters, but all needed time and patience to solve.

Apart from the principal characters, in each of the three plays there was also a crowd which played a part in each — pleading to be taken into the Ark, at Bethlehem and before Pilate. For the sake of economy, the same costumes for the crowd were common to all three plays, which may have saved the expense of having to make forty more costumes, but caused many a headache. To begin with, and not unnaturally, everyone would have liked to have had his or her own costume. It meant that the costumes could not be taken away from the Refectory, and after each performance I had to make myself thoroughly unpopular until I had successfully managed to get twelve women's crowd costumes folded neatly on one table and eight men's crowd costumes on another. Difficulty also arose from the wimples for the women — these, too, were common to all three crowds, and as they came into close contact with the grease paint, needed frequent laundering. But, with three matinees and six evening performances a week, they had to be done on the spot. Accordingly we had to organise "wimple-washing parties" of ladies in the cast who were able to spare an hour or two each day and who kindly came down to the Refectory to wash and iron the wimples. One day we ran into difficulties — I had gone up to the Refectory to see about some seating arrangements, and met the wimple-washing party with a pile of wet wimples ready to be ironed. In the whole of the Cathedral there appeared to be only one three-point plug. This was actually in the Refectory and the ironing was generally done there, but this particular afternoon there was a Bring and Buy Sale in progress and we were left with no ironing facilities and a performance in three hours! After searching around we did eventually find another plug for the iron in the workroom, and cleared out a carpenter's bench and sundry tools and set to work there.

Of the set and the props there is really little that I can say — its delightful mediaeval perspective has really to be seen to be appreciated and it is hard to describe its attractiveness. The actual plan of the set was discussed with Mr. Ede during March, it was designed by Michael Trangmer and built by Stage Decor, a firm in London. It arrived in Chester on Monday, 11th June, a week before the production opened. We arranged for a removal van to collect the set from the station and deliver it to the Refectory. The framework — tubular scaffolding — was erected and then little more could be done until Strand Electric had finished their work of fixing the lighting. Then the permanent part of the set — the archways each side and false proscenium which were common

to all three plays — were fixed, and the parts for the individual scenes stored in the Cloisters and the Undercroft. All this work took several men a good week to complete — yet it came down, with far less help, in a day and a half.

The plan of the set, allowed for a small raised platform which would be the musicians' gallery. Mr. Ede's original idea was that a group of eight or ten male singers, together with a group of oboe players, should take their place on this platform. Later, owing to the fact that the singers were required every night it was found more practicable to form a rota and this gave rise to even worse costume difficulties. In the end, the singers were heard from off-stage and the recorder players, with the Prompter, all three in costume, crossed the stage and took their place on the platform as the trumpet fanfare was sounding. Only a few days before the dress rehearsal was a trumpeter found to play the fanfare that began each play. This fanfare was played three times; once away in the Cloisters near to the Cathedral, and again nearer to the Refectory and the third time on the small flight of steps leading from the Cloisters to the stage in the Refectory. The house lights were dimmed between the second and the third fanfares and the musicians and the prompter took their places.

Dress rehearsals took place the weekend immediately prior to the opening night and, in retrospect, appear to be a confused jumble of a flurry of trying to wear wimples the right way, frantic exchanges of wigs, a confused mass of grease-paint, photographs, and trying to hear the players through a background of a visiting team of bell-ringers.

Of the actual fortnight of the production little can be said here — the Cathedral Refectory became a second home and one tended to forget that there was a life outside it. The milling crowds and the queues waiting in the hope of returned tickets faded once again when the lights went down and, with the sound of the first fanfare on the trumpet heard in the Cloisters and gradually coming nearer, we were taken back into the Middle Ages — the costumes and set designed so cleverly, with colours intermingling and their shades altering to the mood of the play — gay for Noah and his Ark and gradually merging into the sombre colours of the Passion. The music of the two recorders and the sound of the male voices from the background all became one with the splendour of the Story.

One could go on with the details of the mass of clearing up that had to be faced, the storing of the costumes, props and set and many other problems, but it is perhaps better to finish here at the culmination of the hard work and fun that went into this revival of the Chester Miracle Plays. We had barely finished the final packing of the costumes on their return from the cleaners when, in view of the outstanding success, the City Council decided to repeat the performance of the cycle in 1952.

The Chester Civic Sword

By C. BLAIR, B.A.

“Soc longe as Chester hugs its Sworde and Mace,
Soc longe shall Chester never knowe disgrace:
But lett they baubles ffrom her breast be torne,
Then shall that Citie straightly bee forlorne.”

OLD CHESHIRE RHYME.

THE sword (Pl. 4. Fig. 1) which forms the subject of this note is preserved amongst the Corporation regalia in Chester Town Hall, and is carried before the Mayor of that City on all important civic occasions. It is a large weapon (total length 47½ inches), of the type now usually classified as a bastard or hand-and-half sword, i.e. it is midway in size between an ordinary sword for use with one hand and a two-hander. The hilt is of iron covered with thin sheets of silver gilt, and consists of the following: lozenge-shaped pommel with a raised central rib; wooden grip, swelling slightly in the middle, and covered with fish-skin decorated with six thin longitudinal strips of silver, and encircled at each end by a narrow collar of the same metal; long (13 in.), flat, slightly arched quillons, their rounded tips, which turn upwards towards the blade, each being decorated on one side with a lion mask and on the other with a garb, both applied in silver gilt; fluted triangular *écussons* made separate from the quillons; narrow applied strips of silver gilt engraved with a herring-bone pattern mark-off the tips of the quillons and border each side of the *écussons*. The wide, tapering two-edged blade is of flat section and trebly grooved on each face for half its length: the 12 in. nearest to the hilt on both sides are etched and engraved with the following, against a diapered and granulated ground, (starting at at the top with the sword held point upwards): *Obverse*, (i) a shield bearing a version of the old City arms of Chester, *a sword erect between two* (instead of the usual three) *garbs*¹: (ii) the blade-smith's mark, an orb and cross partly inlaid in copper; (iii) a shield bearing the arms of the local family of Bostock, *a fess couped*, quartering those of the Earldom of Chester, *three garbs*, and surmounted by a helmet with one of the Bostock crests, *an antelope passant*: (iv) a shield bearing the Bostock arms with the addition of what appears to be a cadency mark, (now indecipherable), and surmounted by a crested helmet as in (iii). *Reverse*, (i) a shield bearing the arms of the Earldom of Chester; (ii) as under (iv) above: (iii) bearded warrior dressed in Classical armour. The engraving at the bottom of the blade is partly covered by the *écussons*.

(1) A similar version of these arms occurs on an impression of the Statute Merchant Seal of Chester attached to a document of 1589 in John Ryland's Library, Manchester (Rylands Ch. 1530).

The sheath is of wood, covered with red velvet trimmed down each side with silver galloon, (probably originally gold), and with silver gilt mounts; these consist of a chape, and four lockets set at intervals, one being at the mouth. They are engraved with the following, (starting at the mouth with the sheath held point upwards): Obverse (i), *Charles Earle of 1668*. Reverse, *Derby Maior 1668*. (ii) *Edward Oulton Esqr, Major (sic) 1687*. (iii) *John Minshull Esqr, Mayor, 1711*. (iv) *John Thomason Esqr, Mayor, Peace Proclaimed May the 12. 1713*²; (v) (*the chape*), *Pattn. Ellames Esqr, Mayor, 1781*, together with a volute of rococo foliage. In addition (ii) and (iii) have their edges cut into a series of fleurs-de-lys and (iv) is surmounted by a pierced crown. Between the lockets are small plates, also of silver gilt, all decorated with piercings except that between the first two which is engraved *Robt. Morry, Wm. Wilson, Treasurars (sic) 1669*; below this last is a silver gilt shield bearing the old arms of the City, (*a sword erect between three garbs*), in relief. On the reverse side of the sheath, near the mouth, is a silver plate engraved *Carried as the Sword of State at Carnarvon Castle, 13 July, 1911, before King George V & Queen Mary at the Investiture of the PRINCE of Wales (Earl of Chester)*. *D. L. Hewitt, Mayor*.

As it now exists the sword is composed of elements of various dates, the hilt, minus its decoration, being the only surviving portion of the original weapon. This belongs to a group of swords, all with the same distinctively shaped pommel and quillons, and all apparently made within about fifteen years of each other.³ An example almost identical in size and form to the Chester sword is borne behind King Alexander III of Scotland in an illustration to a manuscript *Scotichronicon* of c.1435-50 in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge⁴ (Pl. 4. Fig. 2), while slightly smaller specimens are shown on the brasses of Roger Elmebrygge Esq. (d. 1437) in Beddington Church, Surrey (Pl. 4. Fig. 3), and of Thomas de Saint Quintin Esq. (d. 1445) in Harpham Church, East Riding (Pl. 4. Fig. 4.). In addition the civic swords of both Newcastle-on-Tyne and Kingston-on-Hull are of the same type, and there can be little doubt that the second of these is the weapon made for the city in 1440, (the year in which Hull was first granted the privilege of having a sword), the account for which still survives.⁵ From the above, therefore, it seems that this group of swords, and with them the hilt of the Chester sword, may reasonably be assigned to the period c. 1435—c. 1450.

(2) This refers to the peace of Utrecht which terminated the War of the Spanish Succession.

(3) This group was first identified by Mr. C. R. Beard, *Connoisseur*, June, 1923.

(4) Abp. Parker's MSS. The manuscript can be dated fairly accurately by the costume shown in the same illustration.

(5) Ll. Jewitt and W. H. St. John Hope: *The Corporation Plate of England and Wales* (London, 1885), vol. 2, p. 517.

The blade originally fitted to the hilt would have been much stouter and heavier than the present one, which is of a type found on 16th and early 17th century swords, e.g. that on an early 17th century bastard sword in the Royal Armoury, Stockholm, signed PETER MUNSTEN, LONDON. The orb and cross mark indicates that it is probably German in origin, large quantities of blades having been imported from that country at this period. When it was substituted for the original, however, is by no means certain; the fact that it does not fit the hilt properly and also that part of the decoration is obscured by the quillons suggests that it was not made specially when a new blade was required, but was simply used because it was a convenient size, possibly being removed from another sword in the process. The coats of arms (which may have been added after the rest of the decoration), give no assistance. According to the *Heralds' Visitation of Chester*⁶ of 1580, Hawise, daughter of Hugh Kyvelioc, Earl of Chester, married Warine de Bostock as her second husband early in the reign of Henry II, and this would account for the quartering of the family arms with those of the Earldom. There appears, however, to have been no official connection between a member of any of the several branches of the Bostock family and the City of Chester at any time during the 16th and 17th centuries, and the presence of their arms on the sword is therefore something of a mystery. It is possible that when a new blade was required by the City (perhaps in 1668 when the sheath and mounts were made), it was presented by one of the Bostocks, but in the absence of further evidence no definite conclusion can be reached.

On the 20th September, 1644, during the siege of Chester, both the civic mace and sword were captured by the Parliamentarians and sent up to London, not being returned until 1647 after the fall of the city. The two objects no doubt suffered in the process and it is probably for this reason that Charles, 8th Earl of Derby (d. 1672), on becoming Mayor in 1668, presented the City with a new mace.⁷ The silver decoration on the sword apparently also belongs to the same period and it seems very probably, therefore, that the Earl, in addition to presenting the mace, had the sword refurbished, decorated (or redecorated), and fitted with a new sheath. In this connection it is significant to notice that the earliest inscription on the sheath commemorates the Earl's mayoralty.

We have seen that the Chester sword consists of a 15th century hilt allied to a 16th or early 17th century blade, and with decoration and sheath almost certainly added in 1668. It remains only to establish the date when the original weapon was first

(6) *Harleian Soc. Publications*, vol. 18, (1882), p. 28. See also G. Ormerod: *History of Cheshire* (Helsby's Edn. of 1882), vol. 3, p. 253.

(7) T. Hughes: *The Corporate Maces etc. of Cheshire* (Chester, 1872), p. 16.

acquired. The earliest of the municipal charters to mention a sword is that given by Henry VII in 1506 which provides that "the mayor of the said city, and his successors for the time being may have their sword which we gave them, or any other as may please them borne before them . . ." This clause has led to the belief that the existing sword is that referred to as having been presented by the King.⁸ Henry VII was renowned for his parsimony, but it seems unlikely that even he would give a sword that was over fifty years old to an important city. That Chester was in possession of a sword as early as 1458-59 is shown by a payment of eleven shillings made in that year by the City Treasurer to one Hugh Dutton, "sword-bearer" (*gladifero*).⁹ There can be little doubt, in view of its date, that the sword of which the present hilt formed part was that carried by Dutton, and from this it follows that it was probably obtained by the city at the time of its manufacture, i.e. between c.1435 and c.1450.¹⁰ The citizens of Chester presumably preferred their old sword to that presented by Henry, the fate of which is unknown, unless it is the one dating from c.1500 (now in the British Museum), which bears on its blade a spurious inscription attributing it to Hugh Lupus, the first Norman Earl of Chester.

I should like to express my gratitude to the following for assistance in preparing this article: A. R. Wagner, Esq., Richmond Herald; Graham Webster, Esq., Curator of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, Miss Margaret Groombridge and Miss S. Bailhache, successively City Archivists at Chester; Miss Blanche Byrne for drawing Figs. 2, 3 and 4.

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS USED.

CADENCY MARK, any one of a number of small devices placed on a coat of arms to distinguish different members or collateral branches of the same family.

CHAPE, metal terminal, usually pointed, of a sheath.

ECUSSONS, small shield-shaped projections in the centre of the quillons of a sword.

FESS, an heraldic term for a broad band extending horizontally across the centre of a shield. A **FESS COUPED** has a short piece cut off at each end.

(8) Jewitt and Hope, vol. 1, p. 60.

(9) *Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Historic Mss.* (1881), Appendix, Pt. I, Section II, p. 367b. For other references to Dutton see Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 13, where mention is also made of a city sword carried before Henry VII when he visited Chester in 1494.

(10) There is a tradition, unsupported by any evidence, that a sword was presented to Chester by Richard II in 1394 (*Ormerod*, vol. 1., p. 232); if so, it was presumably replaced by the present one. It is not impossible, however, that some confusion has arisen between this date and that of Henry VII's visit in 1494 referred to in the previous footnote.

GARB, an heraldic term for a wheatsheaf.

LOCKET, a metal band encircling a sheath, including that at the mouth.

PASSANT, an heraldic term describing an animal walking with its head in profile.

POMMEL, the termination of the hilt of a sword or dagger serving to counter-balance the blade.

QUILLONS, the guard in the form of a cross-bar on a sword-hilt.

“Cheshire Village Memories”

THIS is the title of an attractive and well-bound book of 128 pages, just published by The Cheshire Federation of Women's Institutes. It consists of alphabetically arranged accounts of seventy-four Cheshire Villages and is a representative selection from the “Village Scrap Books” that were produced by the Federation to commemorate the Festival of Britain in 1951.

Its contents will have a wide appeal for it tells about Cheshire folk of the past, particularly those of the 18th and 19th centuries. The many references to old customs and folk lore make it easy for the reader to re-live the past and to realise what a loss this sophisticated age has sustained by its “progress.” All Cheshire folk should read it and find out how many treasures the County still possesses. May the book stay the hand of the despoiler and arouse a greater veneration of our old buildings.

Twenty-three beautiful plates, three sketches and a handsome map that serves as end papers, add to the attractiveness of the contents. It is unfortunate that a punctuation error in the title scroll of the map mars so excellent a piece of cartography.

It is a book about Cheshire folk, the eccentric, the simple, the generous, the shrewd, the industrious, the high, the low, the rich and the poor. It brings the countryside to your fireside; Cheshire meadows, fields, lanes and buildings are spread before you. You may walk down Pig Nellie's Lane, or attend service at Buttermilk Church, meet Button Hall or Cradle Jimmy, find a railway engine stuck in the mud, purchase a “nail” and a “cabbage” of cloth, and feel the need for a draught of “dragon's blood” after the chilling passage of Cheshire's many ghosts.

Miss Clive may have found “that there were thirteen good reasons why she should not marry” the Rev. Sir Thomas Broughton, but she would have been unable to find one why she should not read this book.

The publishers are to be congratulated upon a splendid achievement. The price is only 7/6d.

A. O.

The Soul Cakers

An Old Village Memory

By C. B. HUTTON

"Here's one or two or three good-hearted lads,
We're all of one mind,
For this night we come a Souling;
We hope you'll prove kind.
If you gi' us nowt, we'll snatch nowt,
But wish you good cheer,
And we'll come no more a Souling
Till this time next year."

SO ran the first verse of our own Cheshire village Soul Caking Song, which up to half a century ago we were wont to hear at October ending in the dark, misty evening, heralding the Soul Cakers' Play. The song continued with an inviting reference to the household cellar full of "Ale, brandy, whiskey, and all sorts of wine," and ended with a blessing upon the Master and Mistress of the house, and all the little children. It was a somewhat doleful dirge, if sung slowly, as it usually was, but quite in fitting with the eerie atmosphere of Allhallows Eve, October 31st., with its Old Folks' tales of devils and witches, or the Eve of All Souls, November 1st., when once the Dead were supposed to re-visit their former earthly abodes. For these ghostly visitants it was once the custom to leave refreshments at night in the form of small spiced cakes, called Soul Cakes, and the Soul Cakers formerly came around begging for these spiced morsels. Of course we village youths of half a century ago, knew nothing of these origins, nor did we ever see a Soul Cake. The old custom to us was merely a convenient way to get money for fireworks on Bonfire Night, November 5th.

The Soul Cakers' Play, with which patrons were entertained, was just one of the several versions of the old Christmas Mummers' Play, but with the characters and words almost unrecognisably altered through ignorant, oral transmission down the centuries, for it seems that the play originated in the ancient, pagan fertility rites connected with the dying year, the central theme being a death and a rising again.

The chief characters in our (Frodsham) village play were King George, and the Violent (Valiant ?) Soldier, who indulged in mortal combat, the Soldier being slain, but restored to life again by the Doctor on the intercession of the mysterious Old Woman. Evidently King George and the Soldier were changes topically due

to the Napoleonic Wars. Before then, they were St. George and the Saracen Warrior, these dating from the Crusades. Earlier still they may have been the Norse Gods of Light and Evil, Baldur and Loki. Then there was the uncanny Horse's Head, a horse's skull, tarred, and with reddened teeth. It was mounted on a stout stick, and manipulated by a player hidden under a cloth behind. This property was highly treasured, the "uninitiated" not being allowed to handle it. It was "summat yo' munna do," an ancient taboo. This Horse's Head may date back to the time when a horse was sacrificed to Odin. The Driver of the Horse had to be something of a wag, using the evergreen old country jokes, such as the one of the man, who made his nag wear green spectacles to make wood shavings look like grass; and the other about the stingy owner, who had almost got his donkey to live upon nothing a day, when unfortunately it died. Some radio comedians still use these jokes, when hard up.

Other characters were Dairy Dout, which can have many interpretations, and Belsher Bob (elsewhere Belsie Bob). He was of course Beelzebub, an addition from some old mystery play of the Middle Ages. Belsher Bob carried a clog on his shoulder. One Authority tells us this clog was originally a club, another instance of the errors through oral transmission. Then there was Little Box, who declared "My box is of the finest wood. A copper or two will do it no harm. A shilling or so will do it some good." Open the Door is self-explanatory, but this part was not a favourite role, being given to the daftest, and thickest-skinned posteriorly, for some householders did not like their clean kitchens invaded by a mob of muddy-footed tatterdemalions.

For the players' costumes, coats were turned inside out, and adorned with numerous strips of coloured rags or paper pinned on. The Doctor wore a top hat and long coat in imitation of the travelling Quack. His "wizardry" had become the recitation of a string of many syllabled comic nostrums, and diseases. Other treasured properties were a red soldier's tunic and helmet. Soot or burnt cork, chalk and red raddle from a hillside quarry were the "greasepaints."

When rival gangs of Soul Cakers met, there would be dirty work at the crossroads. A fight between two Belsher Bobs could be a bloodsome affair. It would be a terrible disgrace if the Horse's Head were captured, for it meant disastrous ill-luck. Each year, after the Play, the Head was secretly buried again.

We still have our mince pies, and even hot cross buns and Simnel Cakes, but the recipe for the making of Soul Cakes has gone, although the old custom of providing ginger bread or parkin on Bonfire Night may furnish a likely clue.

Bunbury Church Repairs

By THE REV. M. H. RIDGWAY, B.A., F.S.A.

CONSIDERABLE interest has been shown during recent years in the repairs which are being done to Bunbury Church after the severe damage caused by a landmine in 1940. It is therefore, not out of place to indicate some of the main features of the damage and of the repair work so far carried out.

In 1950, when the official Restoration Committee was first set up, the church remained as it appeared nine years earlier. The services of the eminent architect, Mr. Marshall Sisson were secured, and the full extent of the war damage was assessed. An appeal for an estimated figure of £20,000 was then launched. Work was started immediately as further delay would have had serious consequences. The two main contractors for the work are William Browne and Son of Castle Street, Chester, and Henry Harding and Son of Nantwich, both firms of long and notable experience in this difficult work.

The most obvious damage, for example the shattered windows including the stone tracery, was not the most serious. The whole fabric had been severely shaken and a close examination revealed that the north-east corner of the north aisle was dangerously insecure, and that the nave and chancel roofs, the former Victorian and the latter mediaeval, were very badly damaged. The principals of the nave roof had been temporarily shored up as part of the original first aid shortly after bombing, but more serious damage had been overlooked. For example, one of the main camber beams above the effigy of Hugh Calveley in the chancel had been split almost in two, with a crack at one place seven inches wide. This might have given way at any time. It was therefore essential to run up steel scaffolding immediately to prevent its collapse. Although both roofs were in immediate need of attention, work was started on the chancel roof. This called for the removal, repair, cleaning and re-erection of every timber and the complete reconstruction of the outer roof.

At the end of 1951, when this work was half done, the nave roof began to give way. The action of the architect and committee in ordering the work on the chancel roof to cease and to be switched to the nave, has been fully justified. Had the roof collapsed, the slender pillars of the nave arcade might have been seriously damaged. Although winter lay ahead, the badly damaged beams of the roof were lowered to the ground and by February, the nave was roofless. The new roof was designed to be more in keeping with the character of the early 16th century nave. The impossibility of getting timber of the scantling required for such a roof, combined with the necessity for the walls to be tied together

to prevent any further thrust outwards, called for the erection of a steel frame roof with oak casing, re-inforced steel joists forming the cores of the ridge, principals, intermediates and wall plates. Around these has been built the new oak roof of considerably lower pitch than the previous one. By unblocking a fourteenth century opening in the tower, access can now be given both to the outer roof and also to the inner roof for inspection purposes. This was not possible before. There has been an avoidance of any over-elaboration in the roof, a pleasing effect being produced by the boldness of the mouldings and the occasional coloured bosses, nine to each bay. The bosses, with one or two obvious exceptions, are the patera and bosses from the earlier Victorian roof painted and gilded. At the time of writing (August 1952) this work is nearing completion.

The first work undertaken by the masons was the repair of the chancel windows, into one of which has been incorporated a small panel of 14th century glass. It had originally come from this window. Another chancel window on the north side awaits new coloured glass by Mr. Evetts of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and replaces two destroyed windows which commemorated members of the Dutton family. The glazing of the east window is in the competent hands of Mr. Christopher Webb. Sometime in the 19th century this window had been partly blocked. The original dimensions will be restored. The glazing of the clerestory windows, twelve in all, has been undertaken by Weir's of Stoke. These were formerly glazed in gaudy colours upon quarry backgrounds. The tracery lights on the south side alone remain. Two motifs, stripped from their badly damaged surroundings and repaired, have been placed against clear glass backgrounds further powdered with surviving undamaged quarries from the former windows. This gives a most pleasing effect. In all, twenty-four coloured glass windows were destroyed. Twelve crates of fragments, swept from the floor and collected from the churchyard, have been sorted and examined in an attempt to salvage any interesting features. Very few (and then very limited) reconstructions were possible. None of these windows was earlier than about 1865. Four were by Frampton, two by Shrigley and Hunt and others were reported to be by Wailes and Hardman. A Kempe window, though damaged, can be repaired. With the exception of the clerestory, the general policy respecting the clear glazing of the windows is that the 'lozenge' squares will appear in the 14th century windows and small rectangular panes in the later windows. The cast iron frames introduced in the early 19th century will not be returned to these windows.

The Royal Arms board, for long relegated to a dark corner in the choir vestry, has been rehung above the chancel arch after thorough but careful cleaning. The removal for cleaning of the wrought iron hanging for the mid-18th century candelabra,

showed that originally it had been painted blue. This colour has been retained but with the addition of touches of gold and red upon the terminal flowers. The angels supporting the wall posts of the roof, now carry shields bearing the arms of the eight families connected with the eight townships of the parish.

Quite apart from the Restoration Fund, a memorial bequest is making possible the refurbishing and repair of the Baptistry. When removing the Victorian base to the font it was found that it lay upon a foundation of incised mediaeval tiles. Beneath these was a deposit of late mediaeval glass. The 1663 font cover, for many generations painted with successive coats of brown paint, was most carefully cleaned and after careful research, it was found that the original colouring had been indian red, black and gold. The repainting in these colours was carried out by Bridgeman's of Lichfield. The freestone effigies and grave slabs which formerly 'adorned' the Baptistry have been moved to the north aisle where they are to be set up on low frames to make their inspection easier.

Much still remains to be done. Almost £13,000 of the original £20,000 has been collected, and if the full programme can be carried out, there will be at Bunbury in years to come a church of extreme beauty and interest.

A SHORT GLOSSARY.

BOSS—A carved piece of wood planted upon the intersections of the timbering of a roof.

CAMBERED BEAM—A beam which rises towards the centre from the wall posts to support the ridge and purlins of a roof, so designed to prevent sagging.

CORBEL—A projection in stone from a wall designed to act as a footing to the wall post.

INTERMEDIATES—i.e., intermediate rafters. The more important rafters used between the principals of a roof. They extend from wall plate to ridge.

PATERA—Literally 'plates,' a name given to ornamental pieces of wood planted on to the hollow of a mould.

PITCH—The angle or slope of a gable roof.

PRINCIPALS—The main rafters of a roof.

QUARRY—A diamond shaped piece of glass, sometimes called 'square.'

SCANTLING—The dimensions of a piece of timber with regard to its breadth and thickness.

WALL PLATE—The timber placed along the top edge of a wall.

WALL POST—The upright post placed against the wall, to take the thrust of the roof further down the wall. These usually rise from corbels.

Coins of the Chester Mint

RECENTLY the Chester Archaeological Society has acquired for the sum of £1,443, raised by public subscription, the Willoughby-Gardner collection of 652 Chester minted coins. Generous grants were received from the Chester City Council, the Pilgrim Trust and the National Art-Collections Fund. This collection will be housed in the Grosvenor Museum, which will then have the finest provincial series of early English coins. It is particularly fitting that this collection has been purchased instead of being dispersed, which is the fate of so many similar things today. Coins of this period are becoming increasingly difficult to acquire; this is due to the stricter application of the law of Treasure Trove (see note in *Cheshire Historian*, vol. 1). Fifty or more years ago when hoards were found they often became dispersed and many coins passed into the hands of collectors. Nowadays, the coins go into national and provincial museums and, as the source of these coins is almost entirely from hoards, the number available for purchase is constantly diminishing. Anglo-Saxon coins are thus gradually acquiring a scarcity value which makes it all the more difficult for a small provincial museum to obtain particular specimens.

Chester, from the early 10th century, was an important trading centre and under Aethelstan (A.D. 925-939) was allowed eight moneys. Coins were used almost entirely as bullion by the merchants, and the King allowed approved members of this class to mint them with dies which he sold to them for a handsome fee. The dies appear to have been changed every year and so the King enjoyed a considerable income by farming out the mint, at the same time a strict watch was kept on the quality of the silver and if the standard dropped, the moneyer was punished by mutilation and the loss of his right hand, sometimes remitted by a heavy fine.

On the obverse of the coin was the King's name and titles, usually REX and sometimes with the addition TOT(IVS) BRIT(ANNIAE) (the whole of Britain). The centre of the obverse is usually blank except for a small cross but a small percentage of coins bear a portrait of the King. The reverse carries the name of the moneyer together, in some cases, with the name of the town in which the coin was minted. In the case of Chester this appears as LECE (CEASTRE).

The importance of these coins for any historian, for the economic, political, social or artistic aspects of the period, need hardly be emphasised. Quite recently, a system of privy marking on Saxon coins has been noticed which previously was thought to date from the Norman reorganisation of the mint. From the artistic aspect,

one can trace the degeneration which came at the end of the Saxon period and which the Normans did nothing to arrest. The names of the moneyers help to assess the extent of Scandinavian influence in different parts of Britain. These are only a few of the important results of a study of the numismatics of early England.

This important collection will be available to students for study and research and it will be of inestimable value to future historians.

G.W.

CESHIRE MATERIAL CULLED FROM JOURNALS.

JOURNAL OF THE CHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Vol. 39, 1952.

EXCAVATIONS AT HERON BRIDGE, 1947-48, by Brian Hartley.

EXCAVATIONS ON THE LEGIONARY DEFENCES AT CHESTER, 1945-52 (Part i), by Graham Webster.

THE BLACK FRIARS OF CHESTER, by J. H. E. Bennett.

THE HISTORY OF CHESTER CATHEDRAL IN THE REIGNS OF JAMES I AND CHARLES I, by The Ven. R. V. H. Burne.

THE CITY GUILDS OF CHESTER, by Margaret J. Groombridge.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE, 1950, vol. 102:—

EXCAVATIONS OF THE CASTLE DITCH, EDDISBURY, 1935-38, by Prof. W. J. Varley, M.A., D.Phil., F.S.A.

THE HEAD PORT OF CHESTER; and LIVERPOOL, ITS CREEK AND MEMBER, by Rupert C. Jarvis, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

THE LESSER CHAPELS OF CHESHIRE, by Raymond Richards, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

1951, vol. 103:—

THE EARLDOM AND COUNTY PALATINE OF CHESTER, by Geoffrey Barraclough, M.A.

LANCASHIRE COAL, CHESHIRE SALT, AND THE RISE OF LIVERPOOL, by T. C. Barker, M.A., Ph.D.

Why not form a Local History Society ?

By ARTHUR OAKES, B.A.

IN 1932 six people met together to discuss the formation of a Local History Society in Bromborough which was as recently as 1914 a village: its population in 1910 was very little different from that of 1810, but at the end of the First World War, this village was scheduled for development and a start was made of the erection of some 1,000 Council houses, and this process went on uninterruptedly until 1939. The private builder also kept pace with the Council, and Bromborough, which we still call a village, became an urban district and is now part of the Borough of Bebington. Very little of the village is left and to see it as it was in 1910 needs a great effort of imagination.

A handsome row of stone Tudor cottages was demolished, the Manor Farm, another stone treasure, disappeared to make way for Irwin's shop, and later the Manor House itself followed suit and a hall associated with that illustrious Cheshire family, the Mainwarings, is no more. High Street passes through its garden and the space formerly occupied by its two great salons is a wilderness of weeds and brushwood awaiting shop and civic development. Therefore to attempt to arrest further rapid destruction and consequent decay caused this band of half a dozen people to sound the feelings of the community. From our knowledge, we were convinced there was sufficient evidence to show that the desire for such an organisation existed. A public meeting was called and the case put before the audience.

In this way, the Bromborough Society was formed, some thirty of those present enrolling as members at an annual subscription of one shilling. The subscription remained at this figure for over ten years, for the Society was fortunate in having a meeting room at the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, put at its disposal rent free.

From such simple beginnings, the Bromborough Society has grown and now numbers 302 active members. Since the year 1933 it has arranged a series of lectures, six in number each winter session, and in the summer from four to six field meetings annually. It maintained this programme during the War years, several of its lectures being disturbed by air-raid warnings and the consequent gun fire, etc.

Its objects are

- (1) To encourage an interest in the past history of the locality and its present and future development.

- (2) To preserve the records, relics and amenities of the district.
- (3) To make a survey of the antiquities of the neighbourhood.
- (4) To collect material for a folk museum.
- (5) To compile a record of the outstanding transactions of the Society.

Now what has the Bromborough Society accomplished? First of all the tangible things. It has been instrumental in saving from the scrap heap several valuable sculptured stones that graced the room in which King Charles stayed at the Manor House. It rescued from oblivion a gift-fountain presented by a generous benefactor of the past, and had placed in a position of safety the Ass's Head, the crest of the Mainwarings, and the headstone of the Bromborough Market Cross of 1278. When Stanhope House, a sandstone Stuart Building dating from 1693, was about to be razed to the ground to make way for a housing estate, the Bromborough Society intervened and was able to stay the demolition. The building now houses the local library.

The Society has made an extensive collection of photographs, newspaper cuttings, etc. of things of the past; it has amassed a great number of reference books and has in its possession, the nucleus of a folk museum. The Annual Report of its proceedings increases in volume each year.

Of the intangible results of the efforts of the Society, the chief are:—

- (1) The joy it has given to people who were no longer active enough for strenuous outdoor pursuits by providing them with another interest.
- (2) The curiosity it has aroused in them about the things around them which has encouraged them to make a study of some field of local history so that many of them have become real masters of the subject.
- (3) Through a common centre of interest it has developed an organisation where snobbishness and cliquishness are non-existent and where disparity of social position and age is forgotten.

Has it been a worthwhile undertaking? Yes, it has. Why not start one in your locality?



LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES OF
SOCIETIES.

The Cheshire Rural Community Council, 22, Newgate Street,
Chester:

General Secretary, N. G. Cottam.

Chairman, Local History Committee: A. Oakes.

Editor, Cheshire Historian: G. B. Leach.

The Standing Conference of Local History:

G. Dando, 26, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.

The Council for British Archaeology:

10, Bolton Gardens, London, S.W.5.

Regional Secretary: W. A. Silvester, 4, Claremont Road,
Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire.

Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings:

Local Correspondent — The Curator, Grosvenor Museum,
Chester.

Macclesfield and District Field Club:

Miss F. M. Chapman, 68, Chester Gate, Macclesfield.

The Chester and N. Wales Architectural, Archaeological and
Historical Society:

H. C. Wickham, 13, St. John Street, Chester.

The County Archivist, Cheshire Record Office:

Major F. G. C. Rowe, The Castle, Chester.

The City Archivist, Chester:

Miss S. L. Bailhache, The Town Hall, Chester.

The Grosvenor Museum, Chester:

Graham Webster, Curator.

Workers' Educational Association:

Frank Garstang, 62, Hope Street, Liverpool.

The Bromborough Society:

Miss J. D. Norris, 35, Bebington Road, New Ferry.

Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society:

H. Clegg, 10, Granary Lane, Worsley, Nr. Manchester.

Liverpool Geological Society:

R. G. C. Bathurst, Dept. of Geology, The University, Liverpool, 3.

Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:

R. Sharpe France, Lancashire Record Office, County Hall,
Preston.

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire:

G. Chandler, 202, Pitville Avenue, Liverpool 18.

Ancient Monuments Society:

L. M. Angus-Butterworth, Ashton New Hall, Ashton-on-
Mersey, Cheshire.

**THE CITY PRESS
OF CHESTER**