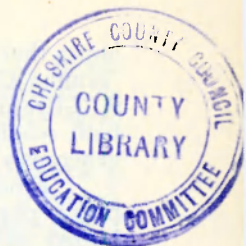


Introduction

BY

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THIS is the first number of "The Cheshire Historian," a booklet which the History Committee of the Cheshire Rural Community Council proposes to issue annually. It is hoped that it will be found of value to Cheshire folk interested in the history of their Country, and there are very many such

Signs are not lacking to warrant such a statement. Whenever a lecture is advertised on a topic dealing with the history of a locality, a packed audience is assured. W.E.A. Classes and University Extension lectures in Local History are always well attended. The Women's Institutes of the County are at present engaged in the production of "A Scrap Book of Local History" as one of their efforts to commemorate the Festival of Britain. Historic Societies and Field Clubs are flourishing as never before. Books dealing with the history of the County, its famous houses, or its glorious Churches have a ready sale and an edition is rapidly sold out. A publication like "Prehistoric Cheshire," the first of the Handbooks to the study of the history of this County, published by the Cheshire Rural Community Council in 1940, and one with only a limited appeal, is now out of print, though the demand for it remains unsatisfied.

"Why not produce a second edition?" is the natural rejoinder. Unfortunately this is far from easy to achieve. The book was copiously illustrated. Not only were the plates acclaimed as excellent by the many subscribers to the volume, but they proved of great attraction to the German bombers. For safety, most of the blocks were stored in the cellars of the Liverpool Museum, but the raiders found them and they went up in flames during the Merseyside holocaust. The few that were left at the Printers' warehouse shared a similar fate when their premises too went up in smoke. To re-issue the volume to sell at 4/6d. a copy is now impossible, and the money to encourage the Council to embark on the project at 1951 prices is not available.

So a second edition of Varley and Jackson's "Pre-historic Cheshire" must reluctantly await a more auspicious season. However, two other ventures are on the stocks and the Council

hopes that their launching will not be too long delayed. They are "Roman Cheshire" and "Pre-Conquest Cheshire," the former by R. Gilyard-Beer, F.S.A. and the latter by Dr. F. T. Wainwright, both scholars putting their services at the Council's disposal most generously without fee.

From the above it is obvious that the History Committee's major purpose of producing a series of handbooks to Cheshire history will occupy it for many years, for the difficulties in the way of a calendared programme of publication are insuperable. Partly to offset this disability, the present booklet has been produced. Through this medium the History Committee propose to acquaint readers with its aims and intentions and to secure their co-operation.

Here are some of them:

- (1) To survey the antiquities of the County.
- (2) To provide a panel of lecturers who can be called upon to talk to associations, clubs, etc. upon topics of local history.
- (3) To be of service to the schools and teachers in the County by informing them of the local history projects that are already being carried out in some schools, and by offering help and guidance to those about to embark on similar enterprises.
- (4) To keep readers informed of what is being done in the County to advance our knowledge of events and things of the past by excavation and research.
- (5) To support all endeavours to preserve "ancient monuments" from the hands of the despoiler.
- (6) To publish articles of interest to local historians. The Committee's intention is to make such articles authentic and informative but written so that they can be understood by the ordinary reader. Some articles will be complete in themselves; others may have to be serialised.
- (7) To provide an organ through the pages of which question and answer can be exchanged on matters of local history.
- (8) To make contact with all individuals and societies etc. interested in the study of local history.
- (9) To stress the importance of the preservation of old documents and manuscripts and the advisability of handing them over to the County Archivist so that they can be recorded and be available to the research student.

An amplification of the first objective is desirable, for the Survey of Antiquities begun before World War II and suspended during the war years is once more being revived. The main purpose is to compile a record of any surface find; agricultural!

implement; household tool, building etc., in the County of earlier date than 1820. In this way no matter what is unavoidably destroyed as a result of industrial or housing development, there will be some evidence of its once existence in the County.

People interested in the survey are asked to complete a card giving the location of the antiquity, its type, date or period, and a brief description of it, accompanied by a photograph if possible. Further information about any reference to it in published accounts, the name and address of its owner or occupier will also be of great value. Cards and other literature relevant to the survey can be obtained from the General Secretary of the Cheshire Rural Community Council, 22, Newgate Street, Chester.

Anyone who decides to engage in this "treasure hunt" will find it a fascinating pursuit, and one that will add to his knowledge and open up to him delights of which he was hitherto ignorant. His researches will lead to further study, for the thrill of trying to identify the "find" or of solving the mystery, can be most exciting.

To assist you in gaining the necessary skill, the Editor and Mr. Graham Webster, F.S.A., the Curator of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, present an article in this number.

Help us therefore, to make "The Cheshire Historian" a success by informing other interested people of its publication and by offering your assistance by a contribution to the pages of the next number. Contributions should be sent to The Editor, Mr. G. B. Leach, Ashton, Chester. Any suggestions for making future numbers having a wider appeal and an increased popularity will be gratefully received and carefully studied by the Editorial Sub-Committee. The opportunity is yours. Seize it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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