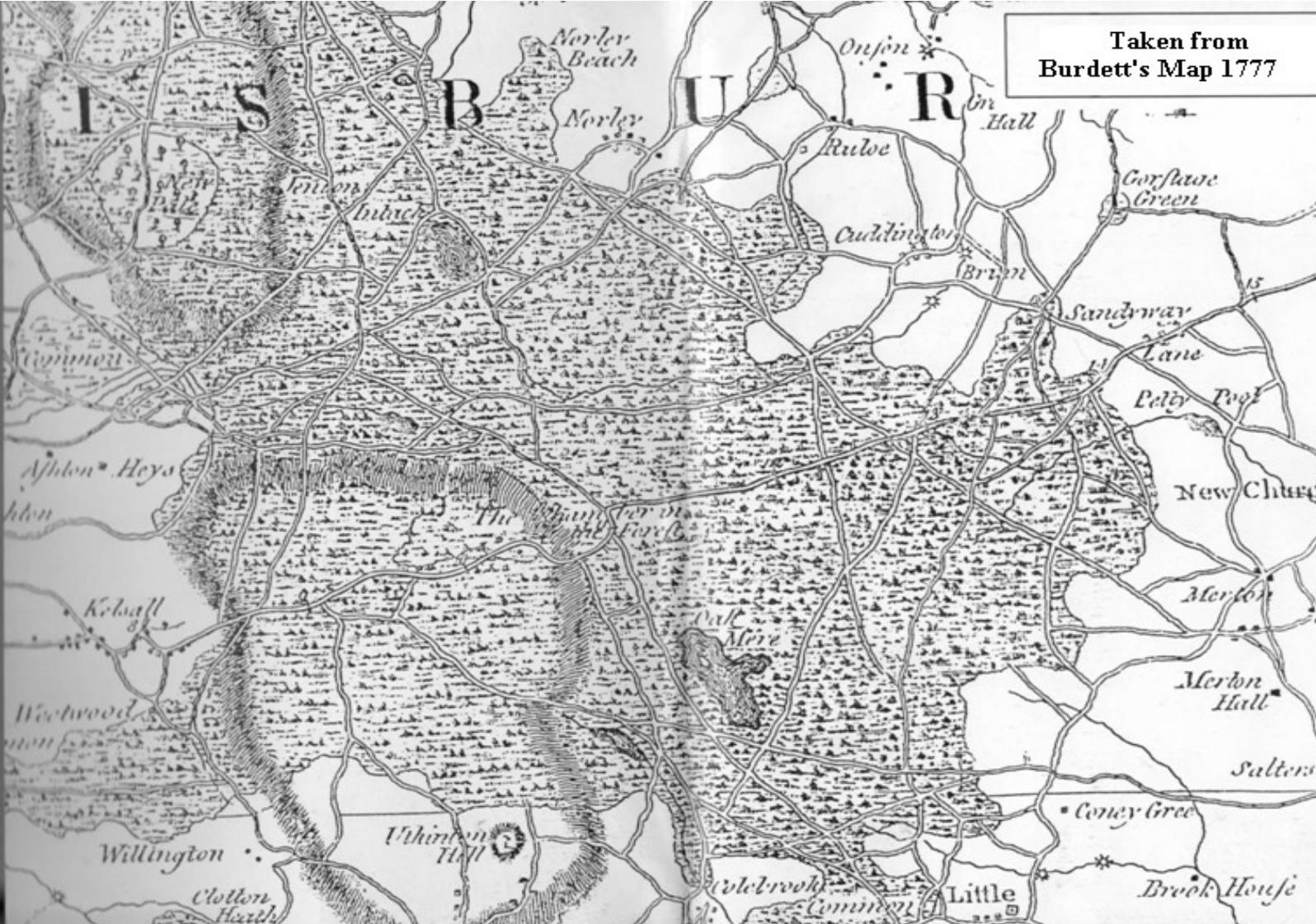


DELAMERE

Taken from
Burdett's Map 1777



Earlier titles in this series of histories of Cheshire villages are

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By Frank A. Latham

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By Local History Groups

Edited by Frank A. Latham

Cover entitled

DE LA MARE - THE FOREST OF THE LAKES

by Donald G. Wilson

DELAMERE

The History of a Cheshire Parish



(Including Notes on the extra-parochial
parish of WILLINGTON)

DELAMERE

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*Published by the Local History Group 1991 and printed by
Herald Printers (Whitchurch) Ltd., Whitchurch, Shropshire.
ISBN 0 9518292 0 3 (Hardback) '
ISBN 0 9518292 1 1 (Softback)*

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FOREWORD

Cheshire is once again indebted to Frank Latham for the latest volume of his local history series. This time he has chosen the ecclesiastical parish of Delamere and as usual he has gathered together an enthusiastic group of local historians and edited their contributions in his inimitable way.

I am fortunate to have breathed the Forest air all my life, despite the petrol fumes, living as I do at Sandy Brow, built some time before 1820, on what is now a busy (and notoriously dangerous) crossroads, the junction of what was originally a Roman road with a Saxon one, called Peytfinsty.

As we in Delamere act as hosts to an inordinate number of visitors throughout the year to enjoy the leisure facilities in the area, not least of which is the famous forest itself, the book will be of interest to a wide readership. The profits are for local benefit, so the hard work of the authors should be well rewarded. All who delve into it will gain immense pleasure from this fund of information, and from the legends, anecdotes, facts and figures about The Old Brown Forest of Rowland Egerton-Warburton's famous poem.

On a note of personal reminiscence, I can claim to have served in the Delamere Platoon of the Home Guard as a schoolboy. We were regularly on guard at the Golf Course in true "Dad's Army" tradition, patrolling the course with rifle and bayonet, ready to repel any German parachutist who dared to come. When off duty, we slept in very uncomfortable bunks beside a smelly stove in the caddies' hut. As a golf course, Delamere Forest has a high reputation and was used for the qualifying rounds when the Open Championship was last held at Hoylake in 1967, in keeping with the fact that, for the opening exhibition match of the Club in 1910, Arundell had been joined by The Great Triumvirate themselves — Vardon, Braid and Taylor, the world's leading golfers of the day, playing in Norfolk jackets and knickerbockers and wearing stiff white collars.

As it happens, Delamere Forest Golf Club is in the parish of Oakmere, and in the same way the highly commendable Delamere Community Centre just as much serves Oakmere and the rest of the neighbourhood. It was immensely satisfying when only last year, at incredibly short notice, the Oakmere parishioners rallied to their council to buy a six-acre woodland site at Bowyer's Waste for their own quiet enjoyment. There has also been a spirited attempt to ward off further sand quarrying in the area and so hopefully present-day and future inhabitants will be able to preserve our heritage and we, who are lucky enough to live here, will continue to provide recreation for all who care to visit us. Even Maria Hollingsworth, "the Old Woman of Delamere Forest" (she actually lived at Oak Mere) was a tourist attraction in her day.

Gordon Fergusson, Sandy Brow

EDITOR'S PREFACE

For most of the inhabitants of Cheshire and the adjoining counties the title of this book will conjure up memories of jaunts to the country, of picnics and of rambles through the forest. Certainly being sited in the heart of Cheshire and therefore conveniently placed for day trips from all the major towns, it has the reputation of being the most visited area for such purposes in the whole county. However, it is much more than just a place for sight-seers to visit at the weekends. It is rich in history and, partly because they have not been developed, both the forest and the parish which was created out of it early in the nineteenth century, have been the scenes of many important archaeological discoveries over the years, while the very nature of the area makes it a paradise for naturalists. Many articles have extolled the beauties of its countryside, and some learned papers have been published regarding its pre-history in particular, but no general history of the forest and its townships has previously been written.

This book is an attempt to redress the balance, although it does not pretend to be scholarly. Like others in this series of village histories, it has been researched and written by local people, partly for past, present and future inhabitants of Delamere but, equally, for visitors to the forest and the parish who increase in numbers year by year.

It was about two years ago that work on the book began and the Delamere Local History Group was formed. Since then its members have searched continuously to gather information from libraries, museums and many other sources within the county, as well as from the parish itself, where numerous people have been interviewed. Firstly I must thank the members of the Group for their diligence and co-operation. They have been a marvellous team and I am most grateful to them for allowing me to be their guide. I must also thank the inhabitants of the parish for supplying so much information and so many photographs, diaries and other documents without which the book could never have been written.

In particular I would also like to thank an old friend, Gordon Fergusson, who is well known in the parish and has been kind enough to write the Foreword. We are all most grateful to him for writing the sections on the Map of 1687, Racing, Training, the Sandy Brow Estate and the Oakmere Logboat, as well as for his reminiscences of the last fifty years. His help has been invaluable.

We would like to thank the County and City Libraries, the Grosvenor Museum and the County and City Archivists for their assistance, as well as certain others, both from inside the parish and from other areas, who have been especially helpful. These include Norman Ackerley, John Boumphrey, John Cherry (British Museum), Geoffrey Culey, Peter Done (notes on the Done family), Dilys Fowler, Arthur Heap, Tony Legward, Margaret M. Nixon, Dr. David Norman, Michael Platt, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Reade, Dr. Adrian Tyndall, Harry Vickers, E. Waddelove (former Manager of Delamere Forest), Derek Wallis, Miss E. Wright, Mr. and Mrs. John Wright, as well as the Rector, Rev. S. W. Winton. I would also like to add my personal thanks to Ann, my wife, for her continuing support and for undertaking some of the typing.

We have done our best to write a history that is both accurate and interesting. For lack of space there are bound to be omissions, but (hopefully) not too many inaccuracies. For these we ask your forgiveness.

F. A. LATHAM,
Hilbre Grange, Alpraham

A HAPPY PLACE

In Mara's wood the catkins sway,
Young larch sends forth new green,
A warbler pipes his merry note,
And badger cubs are seen.
For Spring to Mondrem lends her grace
To Ethelfleda's "happy place".

In Mara's woods the shade lies deep
Where peaty paths wind cool
Beneath Scots pine, bedecked with cone,
To reed encircled pool,
For June to forest grants her grace,
To Saxon settlers' "happy place".

The time of rustling leaves is come,
When beech leaves are a-blaze,
When chestnuts shed their prickly fruit,
And dawn's a misty haze.
As Autumn grants her mellow grace
To Norman huntsman's "happy place".

Then conifers are tipped with snow.
Frost sparkles in the sun,
While eager children choose their tree,
Festivity's begun,
As Christmas brings its joy and cheer,
In darkest season of the year.

Margaret M. Nixon

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Long ago, much of what is now known as the County of Cheshire was covered with forests. These were known as the Forests of Wirral, Macclesfield and the twin Forests of Mara and Mondrem. The first two were deforested some centuries ago, but Mara and Mondrem, with which this book is concerned, although gradually decreased in size, survived under these names until medieval times. Even then, however, what were Royal hunting forests used by the Norman Earls covered an extensive area reaching to the Mersey in the north and almost to Nantwich in the south. They included about fifty townships within their boundaries and these are listed in the Appendix. It was only in the early nineteenth century that the parish of Delamere was created.

As "man the hunter" became "man the agriculturist" it was inevitable that further deforestation should take place. In addition to being used for sport, the Forest was also used for supplying timber for many buildings in the county, and over the past thousand years the vegetation must have changed considerably. By the sixteenth century the area is said to have been mainly scrub and heathland, but three hundred years later the need for timber for the navy and for other commercial purposes resulted in a change of use to forestry, and this was intensified with the arrival of the Forestry Commission in the 1920s. Today the parish of Delamere is still partly used for timber production although much is also utilised for agriculture.

Although the forest is of importance, it must be said now that this book is primarily about the parish of Delamere as defined by the boundaries laid down at the beginning of the last century. Apart from some papers on scientific discoveries and various pamphlets for tourists, perhaps one reason why no earlier history exists is because so many civil boundary changes have taken place over the years. With a few exceptions, therefore, this book is only concerned with the townships of Delamere, Eddisbury, Oakmere and Kingswood, with notes on the extra parochial township of Willington (the largest of such in Cheshire).

From the historian's point of view, all these places seem to have been originally in the Hundred of Roelau until the Hundred of Eddisbury was formed, probably between 1180 and 1200. From that time Delamere, Eddisbury and Oakmere were considered to be in the East division of Eddisbury and Kingswood in the West.

The township of Delamere is stated to be 176 miles from London and is sited 10 miles east-north-east from Chester. For civil purposes, under the Public Health Act of 1872, Kingswood became part of the Runcorn Rural District, and the other townships part of the Northwich Rural District, and so they remained for many years

until the parish came under the jurisdiction of Vale Royal in 1974. For ecclesiastical purposes the parish is now in the rural deanery of Middlewich and the archdeaconry and diocese of Chester. The population figures are given elsewhere in detail, but it is worth noting that when the parish was formed the figures showed about four hundred inhabitants. There was little change until the Census of 1871 when an increase of about two hundred was accounted for by the opening of the railway. Between 1881 and 1971 the population rose from 578 to 1,304. Although an up-to-date Census was taken in 1991 the figures were not available at the time of printing. The population of the parish in 1981, however, stood at a total of 1,916 inhabitants.

Apart from forestry and farming there is some commerce in the area and much excavating for sand takes place. Tourism, however, might be considered as the growth industry.

Improved travel facilities over the past hundred years have popularised Delamere Forest for visitors by rail, car and bicycle. Its attractions are well known. The wooded paths are ideal for walkers and, although the deer are long gone, the opportunities for naturalists are unique.

The object of the chapters that follow is to try to record the changes that have taken place, both in the forest and in the parish, and, mainly from written sources, to relate something of the lives of those who have lived in the locality century by century. In these changing times it is always difficult to foretell the future, but hopefully, in this area at least, much expansion and the creation of "new villages" seems unlikely. Being ideally situated in the middle of the county and thus easily accessible for the extra leisure time that is promised for the future, Delamere must be protected from the developers. Being one of the most picturesque and interesting areas in the region, for Cheshire, this must be "The Jewel in her Crown".

PREHISTORY

The name of Delamere forest appeared in Norman times (firstly in 1248), when the forest was designated the Forest de la Mare — the Forest of the Lakes. The name reflects the prehistory of the area which is a complex of hillocks and deep sided hollows within the framework of the sandstone ridge.

The sandstones can be seen in natural outcrops on Old Pale Heights and in Urchin's Kitchen, within Primrose Hill Wood. The value of this sandstone for building material has left a sequence of quarry faces, the most dramatic being the site on Eddisbury Hill, where material for Vale Royal Abbey was cut. Smaller quarries are found in Nettleford Wood. The area abounds with buildings

constructed of local stone and sandstone walls are characteristic at the base of hedge embankments, particularly from the period of the enclosures.

The Triassic sandstones are typical of central Cheshire and in the Delamere area the material described is largely of the Helsby sandstone formation within the Sherwood sandstone series. These rocks were laid down some two hundred million years ago when this part of the earth's crust is believed to have been much closer to the equator and exposed to desert conditions. The sand was transported by both wind and stream systems with influxes of pebbly material during floods. Towards the end of the Triassic widespread subsidence led to the invasion of the sea giving rise to mud flats now seen as red marl overlying the sandstone and deep deposits of salt in the lagoon to the east of the Delamere area.

It is evident from the bedding planes within the sandstones that the earth's crust was not stable and further stretching and uplifting in the Mesozoic created the broken line of the central Cheshire ridge which forms the western edge of Delamere. The highest ground lies at Eddisbury Hill and Old Pale Heights with passes in the ridge at Mouldsworth and Organsdale. These passes have formed the natural lines of communication between Chester and Manchester and were significant features in the Pleistocene glaciations. At its maximum the whole of the Delamere area would have been glaciated by the north-west ice sheet moving from south-west Scotland across the Irish sea basin and Cumbria. The erosive force of this mass removed much of the post Triassic deposits and subglacial channels gave rise to the dramatic features like Urchin's Kitchen. Here is a tortured channel carved down through the sandstones and undercutting the more resistant layers in the bedrock. This could only have been formed under the vast pressure and discharge of a channel under a considerable ice cap. A similar channel is mirrored on the slopes of Pale Heights forming Hanging Stones. The ice retreated on the eastern side of the Central ridge first (10-12,000 years ago) leaving the active ice front on the western scarp discharging sediments from braiding meltwater streams through the Mouldsworth Gap. This built up debris of sand and gravel around a complex of stranded iceblocks. Iceblocks break away from the retreating edge of an active ice front as glaciers retreat. These would vary enormously in size but would be partially or wholly buried whilst still in the permafrost zone. The melted icebergs therefore gave rise to steep-sided pools. Thus the Mouldsworth Gap is occupied with undulating deposits of sands and gravels interspersed with deep sided hollows, many of which were small pools or meres in a barren post-glacial landscape 10,000 years ago. A few still remain as largely open water to this day, the most outstanding being Hatchmere. The majority have become infilled with acid peat formed beneath floating rafts of sphagnum moss. These mosses have created a unique sequence of habitats which have their own story.

In the higher Organsdale Gap there is no such equivalent land form. Here there is a broad valley with a steep river cut channel dwindling eastwards. However, significant mosses do occur even within this less undulating landscape, linking with the complex in the Mouldsworth Gap.

Today the main drainage from the Mouldsworth Gap flows westwards into the Gowy basin through the Ashton brook. Hatchmere itself joins the stream system flowing eastwards into the Weaver basin. At Organsdale the channel is historically described as Hindswell gutter draining into Fishpool. Today the gutter carries such little flow that Fishpool is now well terrestrialised.

Much of the ground water is held in the deep moss basins which have their own water table. Hatchmere is unique in retaining a high nutrient level believed to come from an underwater spring.

The barren sands and pools 10,000 years ago were a classic lowland early post-glacial landscape awaiting colonisation. For evidence of this period we must turn to the pollen records preserved in the depths of the mosses and meres. The most accurate estimates for the area are those recorded from the sediments at Hatchmere. Here the basin has filled up to 9 m. depth of lake sediment with just 3 m. of water remaining. It seems likely that Bog Myrtle was a significant pioneer in the glacial outwash with birch and pine woodland developing by 8,000 years ago. The surge of broadleaved diversity would reflect the influence of the milder climate so that by 6,000 years ago the area was a mixed oak forest in relatively stable conditions. It seems likely that the woodland along the sandstone ridge would have been more open with predominantly birch heath communities.

Thus man probably first came into Cheshire along the more accessible high ground. These early pioneers came as hunter gatherers creating temporary settlements in the forest and making small clearances. This is reflected in sudden pollen changes and also increased levels of sediments in the mere basins. At Hatchmere first evidence of this type is dated at 3500 BC, in the Neolithic.

Most evidence of early human settlement has been destroyed in subsequent landuse. However excavations and chance finds together with written reference to sites previously known and evidence left in the scattering of place names all contribute to a picture of life in Delamere in prehistory. Again the lake sediments contribute evidence of major forest clearance in this period and the scattering of late Neolithic age axes found around Eddisbury Hill and Kelsborrow suggest focal areas of settlement. The five axes found together at the foot of Eddisbury are described as decorative, whilst one axe is identified as a wood-hafted implement used in forest clearance. The distribution of these finds suggests that Kelsborrow and Eddisbury were important places for people before the construction of the Iron Age encampments. This was a period of expansion of settlement across Britain during favourable climatic

conditions. The quality of life from this period has left considerable evidence of a sophisticated culture. Cremation was a significant burial system with some interment of ashes in urns alongside valued personal possessions, in distinctive earth mounds now described as "barrows" but referred to as "lows" in Old English and "cobs" in local dialect. Thirteen such sites were recorded in the Delamere area between 1882 and 1976. The most distinctive group of burial mounds were known as Seven Lows, recorded as two metres high and up to 30 metres in diameter. Sadly all of these sites have been largely destroyed. Others lie hidden in place-names such as Roughlow and Houndslow. The site at Houndslow is also known as Glead Hill Cob. It was excavated in 1879 and levelled. It revealed 12 urns, an incense cup, flint arrowheads, scraper, knife and bronze pin.

It has been estimated that a typical Bronze Age barrow involves the quarrying of 50 tons of stone and piling up 200 tons of earth and gravel. The distribution of barrows in Delamere reflects a sophisticated level of culture in North West England from the early Bronze Age some 4,000 years ago.

The location of hillforts along the central Cheshire ridge suggests a line of communication along the higher ground. In addition to the hillfort at Eddisbury and the promontory fort at Kelsborrow, a further earthworks is described on the edge of Oakmere. The major hillfort encampment in the Iron Age was that on Eddisbury. Significant excavations were carried out in 1935 at a period when archeological techniques were limited. This revealed evidence of occupation during the Roman period. It seems likely that the adjacent siting of the military road from Chester to Manchester made this step essential. The Iron Age remnants include evidence of a substantial fortress with double embankments enclosing small stone huts and with a gateposted entrance.

These settlements must have had substantial impact on the natural woodland. Clearance of immediate timber must have given rise to local grazing and initial husbandry. It is perhaps significant that Eddisbury has remained the focal point of Delamere through subsequent history into the Norman period when the clearing was enclosed into a pale for grazing deer.

THE ROMANS

After the conquest of Gaul the Romans, in their quest for Imperial expansion, looked across the Channel to Britain. After two unsuccessful landings in Kent by Julius Caesar in 55 and 54 BC, it was one hundred years before the Emperor Claudius invaded with four legions and auxiliary troops, thereby beginning the Roman occupation. This conquest of Britain was to continue over a long

period of time. The armies moved further and further north after the defeat of local tribesmen, who were already at war with each other and with foreign invaders. This disunity in Britain was, according to Tacitus, the Roman historian, the decisive factor in Rome's success.

By AD 47 the Roman armies had overrun southern England from Gloucester to Lincoln. To the north of this line lay powerful Celtic tribes. There were the hill-men of North Wales, the *Ordovices*, the *Deceangli* of what used to be Flintshire and towards the Pennines a confederation of tribesmen known as the *Brigantes*. The local tribesmen to be subdued were the *Cornovii*, with their tribal capital during the Roman period at Wroxeter (*Viroconium*), near Shrewsbury. Within ten years of the invasion by Claudius Roman units were active in the Chester area.

By AD 78 three legionary fortresses, which were to be occupied for centuries, had been established at Caerleon (*Isca*), Chester (*Deva*) and York (*Eboracum*). The Romans built the fortress of Deva on a raised sandstone ridge in a loop of the River Dee at its lowest crossing point. The site was perfect in every way for military and administrative purposes, standing as it did between the Pennines and North Wales and having a navigable estuary with superb facilities for the large scale supply by sea of the army in its northwards progress.

Thus between the first and fourth centuries AD the area was under Roman military occupation with the fortress at Deva, built initially by Legio II Adiutrix (*Pia Fidelis* — loyal and faithful) and later rebuilt and occupied by Legio XX Valeria Victrix (the brave and victorious) and with other Roman sites at *Salinae* (Middlewich), *Condate* (Northwich) and Wilderspool (now Warrington). The Twentieth Legion was established at Chester in the first century AD either by Frontinus, who completed the conquest of Wales, or by Agricola, under whom the army advanced into Scotland.

As the Roman occupation of Britain was initially military, in order to facilitate swift and frequent troop movements it was necessary to build good roads and at this the Roman soldiers excelled. They were first class engineers. In Cheshire most of the roads emanated and were controlled from *Deva*.

The most important road the Romans built in this area was the Antonine Iter II, otherwise locally known as Watling Street. It ran for 500 miles from the Roman port of Richborough (*Retupiae*) in Kent via Chester to the north of Hadrian's Wall. Watling Street leaves Chester by the Eastgate in the direction of Stamford Bridge, climbs the sandstone ridge to go through the Kelsall gap entering Nettleford Wood, which is that part of Delamere Forest north of the toll bar cottages, through a cutting in the rock 40ft. wide and 10ft. in depth. Extensive excavations by Edward Kirk in 1885 and by A. C. and E. Waddelove in 1982 reveal that the road had a

compacted gravel surface of a depth up to 30 cm. with some cobbles and drainage ditches. At the same time the junction of Watling Street with the road to Middlewich was also identified at this site. This spur follows the line of the present A54 through Sandy Brow on the edge of the parish and on to Middlewich. It was, no doubt, used in the transport of salt to Chester.

The exit of Watling Street from Nettleford Wood can be seen quite clearly in the adjacent field below Pale Heights. In the field behind Delamere School ruts made in the sandstone bedrock could have been made by the Roman chariots of the Twentieth Legion or by subsequent users of the road. Children from the school measured the distance between the grooves and found them to be 4ft. 6ins. apart. The road then crosses Stoney Lane, skirts Eddisbury Hill and drops down Black Hill to Station Road. It proceeds to Crabtree Green between Relicks Moss and Thieves' Moss. Recent sand extraction in the area has removed much of the visible evidence.

After crossing Crabtree Green Lane a branch goes to Cuddington where it joins up with the Wilderspool/Stretton/Middlewich Road, whilst Watling Street continues down Lob Slack across the old railway line, now the Whitegate Way, through the grounds of Oakmere Hall to join the line of the present A556 trunk road at the crossing of the A49 to Northwich and then to Manchester (*Mamucium*) and across the Pennines to York.

The early Iron Age hill-fort at Eddisbury was deemed by the Romans to be a threat to the Twentieth Legion as it marched below the hill along Watling Street, so they ransacked it and ousted the settlers. Subsequently it appears that, owing to its prominent position, it was used by them as a signalling station. This theory was propounded by Foote Gower in investigations into the Anglo-Saxon settlement on the same site.

During excavations in the past in this area there have been some finds of Roman artefacts. Foote Gower states that coins, urns and a Roman roof tile were found at Eddisbury hill-fort. Part of a sandstone quern and a pestle or grain crusher were found during road making behind the Nurses' Home at Crossley's Sanatorium in Delamere Forest. The quern fragment was 16ins. in diameter and 1.5ins. thick. The sandstone pestle or crusher was 3ins. wide x 4.5ins. long. At the same time the handle of an amphora and two pieces of red ware were found.

A most puzzling find was a collection of Roman sandstone hypocaust pilae, each 2ft. 9ins. high, at Keeper's Cottage on the shore of Oakmere Lake. As explained in the notes on Sandy Brow Estate, these came from Deva, and were taken to Oakmere by Philip Egerton who removed various types of material from Chester to Oulton Park at a time when he rented Oakmere from Thomas Cholmondeley. However, another pila was found some years ago not far away in Black Firs Wood. As well as this a small pottery flask of Roman date made in North Africa was found in this area in

1966 by the grandson of Mr. Harry Smith, a retired Bank Manager, who succeeded George Rock as the tenant of Keeper's Cottage in 1960.

The Chester fortress was occupied from the late first century until the end of Roman times. Part of the Second Adiutrix Legion left Britain in 83 AD when Domitian transferred it to the Rhine Frontier, and the remainder left in 87 AD when reinforcements were needed for the Danube region. It never returned. There is no positive proof of the presence of the Twentieth Legion at Chester after c. AD 250, but its departure and disappearance is strangely unrecorded and remains one of the unsolved mysteries of the Roman occupation. Did the Roman authorities take the troops away because their Empire had moved further east and Gaul and Italy were in imminent danger or was it because the plague was widespread in Europe at the time?

The Romans were very sophisticated and apart from bringing peace, industry and commerce perhaps the greatest legacy they left behind were their roads. Undeniably much archaeological excavation and field work are needed to tell more about Roman Cheshire.

THE DARK AGES

(410-1066)

With the Romans departed and the primitive Celts remaining, little is known about this period, from documentary or other sources, except for passing references in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles.

It is for this reason that these long centuries are referred to as The Dark Ages.

It was during this period that most villages were named for the first time, and although Delamere, as a place of population, did not exist, aet Eadesbyrig is mentioned in the Chronicles in 914. In this respect, therefore, the present researchers are fortunate, since many places mentioned in them are difficult to identify with villages still in existence.

There are several derivations of the name Eddisbury. The Oxford Dictionary of Place Names refers to it as Eadsburg (Ead's Stronghold) and other sources state that it takes its name from Ethelfleda, the Lady of the Mercians, the Saxon meaning of which is "Happy Place".

At that time the area is believed to have been heavily wooded with few clearings and was dominated by the ditches and ramparts of the old Iron Age fort on Eddisbury Hill. The forests would have been of oak, ash, birch and perhaps pine. The only clearances

would have been along the Weaver Valley to the east, and more extensive clearances to the west.

Travellers along the Roman road would have been unlikely to meet many inhabitants except, possibly, in the vicinity of the old fort.

Up until the early seventh century the present Delamere lay on the edge of a Celtic kingdom, which was later to be known as Powys and where there was a strong Welsh influence. In fact the names of neighbouring Kelsall, Tarporley and Tarvin are all of possible Welsh origin. The great woods to the east of Delamere, together with the Central Cheshire Ridge, seem to have acted as a border zone at the time of the Anglian incursions. In fact, places such as Eddisbury may have contributed, in part, to the Celtic population in the west. Sites such as these were gradually deserted in favour of the developing lowland area around Chester in the west.

During the fifth century England began to suffer the first invasions of the Angles in the south and east. At first, the forest and hills of this region seem to have protected the area to the west, but gradually the invaders infiltrated from the Pennine edge. They settled to the east of the hills of Delamere and began establishing themselves politically over the western lowlands, bringing with them both their farming and fighting skills.

The Celts were already practising Christians by the time the Angles settled in Cheshire and, by then, they also were Christians. However, perhaps because of the lack of population and the general poverty of the land, there was no apparent early church in Delamere.

By the late seventh century the Celtic hold had been broken politically, and Delamere became one of the northern areas of Mercia, centred on Tamworth. After the death of King Alfred in 901, Mercia was divided into Shires for administration purposes and Cheshire (Chester-Shire) was created. In turn, these Shires were subdivided into hundreds. Several theories are still held as to the origin of this name. Some say it was an area consisting of a hundred families, others claim it was an amount of land that contained a hundred hides. Whichever may be correct, it is known that much of the area around the modern Delamere parish was in the Roelau hundred until the Conquest.

The meeting place for this could well have been Eddisbury Hill, but the hundred of Eddisbury, of which it was to be a part until quite recently, was not created until the late twelfth century.

During the ninth and tenth centuries there was yet another series of invasions, this time by the Danes and the Northumbrians, both from the north and west. Chester itself was sacked in 894, but later besieged by Alfred the Great and recaptured by his son Edward the Elder and his daughter Ethelfleda.

It was at this time that Eddisbury entered a very important phase of its history, as it was here that Ethelfleda established a fortress against the Danes.

In 913 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles state that she built a fortress in Tamworth, another at Stafford, and in the early summer of 914 a third on the old Iron Age fort site on Eddisbury Hill.

It is easy to appreciate the strategic importance of Eddisbury fort, with its dominant position overlooking the Roman road from Chester, via Northwich and Manchester, to York. It helped to protect the Mercian farming communities of the Dee Valley, without whose surpluses Chester would have been indefensible. Some sources state that Eddisbury became a great town built, presumably, of timber, but this theory is questioned by modern writers. It seems more likely that it was built as a fortress against the northern army operating from Yorkshire as well as the unsettled and gathering forces of the Norse, dominating central Lancashire and the Ribble Estuary.

Ethelfleda herself is said to have lived for a time at Eddisbury and to have ruled it "wisely and well". She must have been a woman of great character and originality as, according to legend, she retired here after the birth of her only son "indignant and affronted that a daughter of a great king should have to suffer the humiliation and pain of childbirth". Legend also says that she was a well known figure in the area and that she "rode, dressed in white, around her domain".

Within a short while, Eddisbury Hill lost its importance as a fortress, having at first been supplemented and then replaced by a fortress at Runcorn. This served to overlook the Mersey ferry and block both the river routes from the Irish Sea to Northern Mercia, and also to control the easiest route between Dublin and York. Ethelfleda had also become involved in some alliances with the Northern Danes in the hope of keeping the Anglo-Danish kingdom of York from falling into the hands of the Dublin Vikings. It is said that she died at Tamworth on the twelfth of June 919 and was buried at St. Peter's Church at Gloucester. Only a few years after its reconstruction the fortress had become considerably run down and was eventually abandoned.

With the invasion of the Normans, the Dark Ages came to an end. The old fortress stood by itself in an area of about "a league square". Today the ditches and ramparts can still be seen, particularly on the north side from Station Road. On a misty winter evening one can still easily imagine the fortress as it was in its heyday, standing guard over Delamere and its forest.



Devil Stones

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

(1067-1400)

King William the Conqueror, after winning the decisive battle of Hastings, took several years to subdue his new kingdom. Chester was one of the last important towns to be brought under William's yoke in 1069—70, and much of Cheshire was then laid waste by the Normans. For nearly two centuries Cheshire was effectively ruled by feudal lords under the direction of a succession of Earls of Chester. The first Norman earl, a nephew of the Conqueror, was appointed in 1071. He was Hugh d'Avranches alias Hugh Lupus (perhaps because he hunted the forest wolves) and also known somewhat unflatteringly, but possibly accurately, as Hugh the Fat. The earls exercised almost regal control over Cheshire except in church affairs. It appears Cheshire was not then fully integrated with the rest of England for the earls issued their own charters, made their own laws and levied taxes.

Some say William created the "Palatinate" of Cheshire for strategic reasons, others say the Palatinate only dates from 1237, but the term was not accepted generally until the fifteenth century. In 1397, Richard II dignified Cheshire as a "Principality", but this dignity was short-lived for it was abandoned, and never to be resurrected, after Richard's death in 1399.

It is widely believed that Cheshire, in the early years after the Conquest, was largely covered by the three great forests of Wirral, Macclesfield and Mondrem/Mara. The county as a whole was sparsely populated and particularly so in the forests. There was little agriculture and it has been suggested that the menfolk of Cheshire left their homes annually to harvest corn in areas beyond the county boundaries.

Domesday Survey

In 1086 William instigated his Domesday Survey, first to ascertain what he had conquered, and second to enumerate the population, their property, land under cultivation and animals. The survey formed the base for levying the Danegeld, a tax to finance the costs of repelling possible Danish invasions. Domesday in the edited and standardised format that has survived, yields valuable though rather limited statistics of William's kingdom. Only the chief and subsidiary landowners are named though the rest of the population was counted. The locations, villages, manors or areas collectively formed an administrative area called a Hundred, several of which formed a Shire or County. Most of the then Cheshire hundreds are still identifiable in present times, but some name changes have occurred over the centuries in the Delamere area and these are outlined below.

Present-day Delamere was mainly in Roelau Hundred, but the vastly larger Norman forest extended into adjoining Risedon. Of

the following place names only Eddisbury and Willington can be located with certainty. Additionally, Alredelie, Done and Cockle even though their precise locations are now unknown, may, in the writer's view, be part of present-day Delamere. In the ancient Hundreds of Roelau and Risedon the Domesday Survey includes the following:

Earl Hugh Lupus holds

EDDISBURY. Godwin held it as a free man. 2 hides paying geld. Land for 6 ploughs. It was and is waste. The land is 1 league long and as wide.

ALREDELIE. Karl held it. 3 hides paying geld. Land for 6 ploughs. It was waste and is now in the Earl's forest. Value before 1066, 30s.

DONE. Wulfgeat held it as a free man. 2 hides paying geld. Land for 2 ploughs. It was waste and is now in the Earl's forest. Value before 1066, 10s.

Walter of Vernon holds

WILLINGTON from Earl Hugh. Erngeat held it; he was a free man. 1 hide paying geld. Land for 2 ploughs. 2 villagers have 1 plough. Woodland Vi league long and 1 acre wide. Value before 1066, 8s.; now 10s.; found waste.

Baldric holds

COCKLE from Earl Hugh. Wulfheah held it; he was a free man. 1 hide paying geld. Land for 1 plough. It is there, in lordship; 1 slave. Value before 1066, 40s.; now the same; found waste.

Difficulties arise when trying to interpret these statistics. As the precise definitions of many of the terms are now unknown much speculation must surround even tentative conclusions. For example, a hide appears to have been an area varying from 60 to 120 acres sufficient to support a family and dependents and a land league is usually 3 statute miles. It is interesting to note that length and area units are mixed in Willington. Even more confusion surrounds the term waste as it may describe uncultivated land, barren land, deserted land, devastated land (perhaps in William's "harrying of the north" about 1069) or merely wooded land. Forest probably consisted of a mixture of primeval forest and small clearings but the noun may also refer quite simply to an area where the earl hunted.

Few things can be gleaned with certainty from Domesday, but it is evident that the Delamere district was very sparsely populated and much is described as "waste and in the Earl's forest". Seemingly Eddisbury, Aldredelie and Done were uninhabited even though geld or tax was being paid. No mention is made of priests, churches or anything resembling trade or business other than domestic husbandry. By implication the area was reserved primarily for hunting by Royals and others and this is confirmed from other sources. Deforestation began in 1086 but, without doubt, the royal hunting interests retarded de-forestation of Delamere for several

centuries. In complete contrast areas around Kingsley and Weaverham were afforested expressly to increase the hunting area of the forest. Appendix 3 lists the villages within and around Mondrem and Mara and enables the extent of the combined forest area shortly after Domesday to be deduced. It has been suggested that the area containing present-day Delamere may have been "extra-parochial" to Frodsham. A royal connection can be traced from William the Conqueror through seven Norman Earls of Chester until 1237, when the last, John the Scot, was poisoned, and dying heirless the earldom reverted to the Crown. Modern Delamere, therefore, maintains an unbroken royal connection through Crown Lands and the Forestry Commission and the present Earl of Chester is the heir to the throne, Prince Charles.

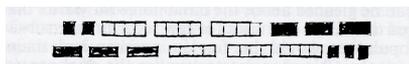
The Forest of Mara included an area bound between three rivers — the Gowy, Mersey and Weaver with the southern boundary running from Harthill through Acton to Hartford on the east. Present day Delamere is therefore roughly in the middle of the ancient Forest of Mara. In Norman times, sometime between the Conquest and about the middle of the thirteenth century, the ancient Hundreds of Roelau and Risedon were amalgamated to form a newly-named Eddisbury Hundred. The old name Roelau survives today as Ruloe Hill. Perhaps amalgamation was merely a convenient way of simplifying administration, possibly because both Roelau and Risedon may have come under the control of a single executive who held a Court situated on Eddisbury Hill. Concurrently the south-eastern boundary of the forest contracted to roughly the straight portion of the present A49 from near Utkinton to Cuddington. This boundary may have been delineated by Peytefinsty, the ancient road from Tarporley to Weaverham. The new neighbours were the abbots and monks of Vale Royal Abbey. The base of the "Headless Cross" situated at the side of the A49 near the crossing with the A54 may be a surviving reminder of the forest boundary.

The Inhabitants and Forest Administration

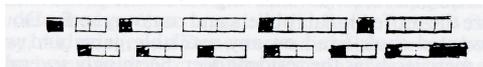
Little can be gleaned about the inhabitants of Mara Forest in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries for few records have survived. The native population would be few in number and mainly serfs working for their Norman masters under the dual constraints of feudal system and forest laws. Living even more precariously in the forest were the professional robbers and runaway serfs. Doubtlessly these unwanted souls lived on any available game and would be chased as mercilessly as the resident deer. Seemingly several ancient crosses in the forest served as safe-havens for travellers, which were respected even by the robbers provided the travellers reached there first. How long a traveller could stay in such a sanctuary or how to continue his journey can merely be speculated. Consequently, only the activities of the earls' nominated foresters and their staffs can be

assessed with any degree of confidence. Under the earl's Justice at Chester and the earl's Surveyor the foresters enforced the rigorous Forest Laws within the bounds and contents of the forest. Effective administration was achieved by regular visits from two under-foresters and a garcon. Every forest tenant holding more than an acre was obliged to provide "puture" for the inspecting trio of one night's supper, bed and breakfast about every six weeks.

In the earlier part of this period members of four Norman families (Kingsley, Wever, Merton and Grosvenor) had jurisdiction over Mara and Mondrem, but the details are now obscure. By 1123 the master forestship of the two forests was conferred by Earl Ranulf I on Ralph de Kingsley by the custody of a black horn which later became known as the Delamere Horn. Both the master forestship and horn were to stay with the Kingsleys until the marriage of Joan Kingsley to Henry Done, c1244. Consequent to this marriage a dispute arose between the Grosvenor and Done families. A warrant was brought against Richard Done, the Chief Forester, by Richard le Grosvenor of Budworth in 1358 and the ensuing lawsuit revealed the duties of the master forester together with his powers and privileges. The case was tried at "the pleas of the circuit of the forest of Mara and Mondrem before Sir Richard Willoughby and Sir Richard Stafford, kngs., John Delves and John Brunham, esqs., Justices in Eyre of the Lord Edward, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester". This Done/ Grosvenor dispute lingered on and was finally settled in 1534 when a Mara moiety was sold to the Dones. So the important office of master or chief forester, with tenure of the horn, passed through sixteen members of the Done family over a period of nearly four centuries until 1662, when Mary Done, the last of the direct line, died. Mary was a granddaughter of the Sir John Done whose extant portrait shows him wearing the Delamere horn of office. Whether or not the original horn and that carried by the last Sir John Done four centuries later are the same remains conjectural, but that the hereditary office of chief forester remained in the Done family for so long is undisputed.



Call to Hounds



The Kill



Call Off Hounds

Horn calls of medieval origin illustrating the different times in the chase were recorded by Hardouin, seigneur of Fontaines-Guerin. The "music" was written in Anjou, part of the Angevin Empire in 1394 and it is reasonable to suppose similar, if not identical, calls were used during hunts in Delamere Forest. Some examples are shown on the previous page.

The black and white notes of identical pitch represent long and short notes respectively and are grouped with spaces between for breath to be drawn.

Forest Laws

The Forest Laws in England were an innovation of the Conqueror. Quite simply the new laws ensured that all hunting and game preservation in designated areas was vested exclusively in the Crown. In the early days the penalties for even minor transgressions were both summary and severe. Death was the punishment for quite minor offences such as being caught in the forest with a dog on a lead, having a drawn bow, a bloody hand or carrying off a dead deer. Dogs were not allowed within a certain distance of the boundaries, but exceptions were made for a mastiff kept for household defence and dogs small enough to crawl through William's son Red Rufus's spur. Even the concession of keeping a watchdog in or near a royal forest required the poor beast to be "lawed" by having three toes removed thereby preventing it from chasing deer. The most severe enforcement of forest law lasted until the reign of King John, when following Magna Carta Earl Ranulf III, about 1215, enacted his own Cheshire charter. This charter eased the severity of the forest laws and allowed enclosure of arable land within the forest; tenants were allowed to keep unlawed dogs provided the deer remained unharmed.

Clearly the duties of the chief forester were time consuming and sometimes onerous. In return for preserving the Royal hunting facilities and being custodian of the trees he received no salary. He did, however, have plenty of perquisites and these included all the swarms of bees, the right shoulder of all deer killed by hunt or bow, half of all oak bark for tanning, bracken except in the hunting season, pannage and agistment of pigs, windfalls and lops of felled trees, rights to keep hounds and greyhounds, hunt foxes, hares, cats, vermin, and keep sparrowhawks, merlins and hobbeyes. Wolves were still present in the forest about 1300, for John de Wettenhall received fees of 12d. each for three of them.

During the two centuries after the Conquest both population and commerce gradually increased and some activities both local and further afield had an effect on the forest. Always the timber and potential grazing were coveted by all, so that court proceedings were sometimes required to settle arguments. Some of these cases describe activities of the master foresters together with interesting uses of the forest and its timber.

Forest Products

It is recorded that William Marmon, Abbot of St. Werburgh, in 1226, had the right to receive two cart loads of dead wood every day except in the month of fawning for the cooking of food in the kitchen. Richard Done with others in 1259 was accused by the Lady of Alpraham of taking cattle. King Edward I, the renowned castle builder, used Mara timber for Rhuddlan in 1282; possibly the timber was transported by sea and thence up the River Clwyd. The same king in 1285 renewed the tithes and privileges with respect to hunting deer. The monks from Vale Royal, who were busy building their Abbey church, were limited to taking six harts and six hinds per year.

Edward I sought to maintain his forests intact whilst others desired to seek gain both legally and otherwise. Clearly this caused friction between the king and his barons, and in 1305 a commission was set up to inquire into all things concerning the forests of Delamere and Wirral. There is mention of encroachments for clearings, fines for taking and cutting growing wood and taking game. The commission concluded that lords and freeholders of wood and waste could appropriate parts of the forest provided they obtained a licence from the foresters; the going rates were half a mark per acre for covert and five shillings out of covert, with no other rent. Without a licence the miscreant was fined and the land reverted to forest. Land newly brought into cultivation had to yield the first harvest to the forester. Inspections were made every three years by the Justiciar's orders and entered into the rolls. No encroachment could be made on the King's soil with or without licence.

At this commission the Abbot of St. Werburgh claimed he had always had common and pasture for his pigs in the forest of Delamere, also by charter from Earl Ranulf. This submission seemingly failed to impress the Justiciar who drove out and killed the Abbot's pigs. Not only that, the Justiciar put in his own swine and those of another so it would seem the Justiciar had a vested interest in the outcome. The commission decided the Justiciar was to leave the Abbot in peace, and provided the Abbot could prove his title he could have right to the common. Later he petitioned again against the foresters who distrained him for pannage (right to feed swine) and yet again the foresters disturbed him when collecting dead wood blown down by the wind in the forest.

Richard Done, Master Forester from shortly after his birth in 1311, was also Constable of Chester between 1349 and 1353, and was empowered to apprehend certain malefactors, robbers and disturbers of the peace. In 1351 this Richard Done was pardoned in connection with the death of Robert Cosyn who died from a wound inflicted whilst resisting arrest when actually caught killing a deer. The pardon was granted despite the traditional right of the master

forester to execute anyone poaching deer. It must be concluded that the master forester's right of summary execution of poachers would have been questionable by the middle of the fourteenth century.

An enclosure, called "The Old Pale", was made in 1337 to prevent the escape of the deer. It was of considerable size (about 450 acres) and included within its area the whole camp of Eddisbury. Perhaps by co-incidence about the same time a house known later as "The Chamber of the Forest" was erected for the domestic use and administrative use of the master forester. A writ, issued by Henry de Ferrars on behalf of Edward, Earl of Chester (the Black Prince), recites that great damage and loss had occurred to both vert (all that bears green leaves) and venison in the area, on account of the long distance from the forest of the lodgings of the forester and his men. The Prince wished to have a house erected, 40 feet long and 20 feet in breadth of two stories, to lodge the forester and others. Richard Done was appointed to execute the work with the liberty to take sufficient timber in the forest, but at his peril if there was any waste or destruction. The cost of the work, with fees, when complete was allowed at the exchequer in Chester. It seems doubtful if this work proceeded then, for in 1354, the Prince ordered an unroofed house from the Manor of Peckforton to be re-erected on the hill called Eddisbury. Probably the original Chamber was made of timber, but it is possible a more permanent building was erected later.

Much of the timber in Delamere Forest at that time was oak which was then, as now, valuable for building and structural use. Receipts in the Chester Chamberlains' Accounts show £26.5.4 and £56.12.2 were obtained from Mara Forest out of total budgets of £1,265 and £1,011 for the years 1302-03 and 1359-60 respectively. Clearly sales had increased, but evidently there was much abuse because a "Forest Eyre" meeting at Chester and Macclesfield in 1357 imposed a communal fine of £2,000, payable over five years, on Mara and Mondrem forests. There is, however, a suggestion that a more local eyre may have been held in Frodsham. An eyre was a sort of law court with powers to inquire into abuse of power and maladministration. It was therefore unpopular with the local leaders and had been unknown previously in Cheshire, but as it applied only to the area under forest law, opposition was limited. The principle of eyre courts was thereby established in Cheshire, but at a later date than in the rest of the country. It is arguable that the prime function of the eyre court was merely to raise money through fines, but the results could hardly be rated as wholly successful because antagonism was raised and the fines proved hard to collect.

Warrants for delivery of oaks were not infrequently issued by the earl himself, for in 1344 six were delivered to Robert de Starton and three to William de Stafford. 1353 was a busy year for Richard Done for he had to deliver to the Abbot and Convent of Chester an oak fit for making the post of a mill. Two oaks fit for timber were required by Master John de Burnham for repair of St. John's

Hospital, Chester and three more for Sir Peter de Gildesburgh towards the repair of his houses in Tarvin. Also noted in 1353 was the delivery by indenture to Hervey le Huve, Yeoman of the Scullery of the Royal Household, for as many trees as required for making dressers and tables for his office and the office of a hall in London. In the same year Richard Done arrested the swine of Agnes, the widow of John de Wettenhall and the lady appealed for the Prince's justice. Timber grade oaks were given to Sir Thomas de Swynarton in 1354, by command of the Prince himself.

At about the same time timber was required for Chester Castle and the Mills of Dee (1357). For repairs to Northwich Bridge (1392) John Doune received a warrant from Richard II for the delivery on the view of Master William de Newehall, the king's carpenter. Yet again, in June 1386 a warrant was issued to John Doune forester and Roger de Moldsworth equitator for twenty mastich (pine?) trees for making scaffolds to be used for repairs to Bunbury Church which Sir Hugh Calveley proposed to make. This order for a church must have been trivial when compared with the demands made for timber during the building of nearby Vale Royal Abbey.

Effect of Vale Royal Abbey

Though the location of Vale Royal Abbey is outside the present area of interest, it was such a large undertaking and affected the economy of the forest so significantly, it is useful to remember that Vale Royal Abbey as planned would have been comparable in area to the twentieth century Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. The Abbey was sponsored by the Black Prince and much information about the building of the Abbey can be gleaned from the Vale Royal Abbey Ledger Book. Apart from the Abbey usages, timber was also required for temporary accommodation buildings and workshops for all those employed at the various sites, together with stables for horses. Blacksmiths for shoeing horses and other tasks would require charcoal supplies. All the timber for this vast project came from the Forests of Mara and Mondrem and supplies were arranged officially by an order made on the Justiciar of Chester in May 1284. The Vale Royal Abbey project was, therefore, the first major exploitation of timber from Delamere Forest.

Stone was obtained by quarrying into the side of Eddisbury Hill followed by on-site trimming to avoid needless carriage, and then transported to the abbey site by one-horse and two-horse carts. The distance traversed would be about six miles, of which roughly half would be within the bounds of the present-day Delamere parish. It was recorded that in a period of three years over thirty-five thousand journeys were made to carry stone. Three grades of artisan at the quarries were employed, master quarriers, cutters and trimmers who received rates of pay amounting to eighteen, twelve and ten pence per week respectively. The quarries at Eddisbury could not have been wholly administered by the Crown, as one man

and his servant are recorded as being employed at his own quarry and supplying stone to the Abbey. It is believed few of the skilled men were local and the majority were jobbing or itinerant men, probably travelling from one project to another, as happened six centuries later when the railways were constructed.

An activity of the monks was the farming of fish in the local pools, one pool is still remembered today by Fishpool Road and the nearby Fish Pool Inn. Fish would be required as part of the Friday diet and fresh fish, obtained economically from the local ponds, would be much preferable to uncertain and probably costly alternative sources of supply.

It is interesting to note that the Black Prince was aware of the need to conserve timber and restricted tree felling. According to the Prince's register, all timber for delivery had to be specially marked to correspond with like-marked stumps. Even the Abbot of Vale Royal Abbey was restricted to timber for building purposes only, and was compelled to seek alternative fuel supplies. The Prince, however, applied similar rules for his own timber demands and made his officials keep proper records. It is interesting to speculate if the Prince were a true conservationist, or merely extracted the maximum revenue from the forest to help finance his on-going and expensive continental battles.

In Europe the influence of England in France declined rapidly from its zenith in 1356, after the Black Prince's victory at Poitiers, so that by 1374 only Calais and little else of France remained under English control. At home visitations of the plague took their toll. The Black Prince died in 1377 and his death was followed the next year by that of his father, the long reigning Edward III. So Richard II, a minor, succeeded his grandfather and was loyally supported in his early kingship by his uncle, John of Gaunt. For the next twenty or so years there was a profusion of plots and power seekers. Richard, in an attempt to consolidate his own position, recruited a private army including substantial numbers of Cheshire archers who were proud to wear his famous white hart badge. It is probable that these archers, numbering over 2,000, were financed by funds from the newly created Principality of Cheshire and from Richard's private funds. It appears they were disliked greatly for they have been described as "a praetorian guard composed of the dregs of Cheshire society". Some of the Cheshire archers were employed as Richard's personal bodyguard and were divided into seven watches commanded by Cheshire gentlemen. They were: John de Legh del Bothes, Thomas Cholmondeley, Ralph de Davenport, Adam de Bostock, John Done, Thomas de Beeston and Thomas de Holford. Two of these commanders had Delamere interests. John Done was the son of a namesake, chief forester of Mondrem and Mara. John, the son, entered the service of Richard II in 1397 and in the next year was granted frithmote (forest privileges) and customs of Delamere to a value of £21 per annum. Thomas de Beeston was heir to an

Eddisbury landholder. Most of the commanders had men from their own areas of influence for it is recorded Beeston's watch included men from Nantwich, and Done had some Eddisbury men under his command.

By 1397 Richard had neutralised most of his enemies and could act freely. Unfortunately he became megalomaniacal, he ignored the established laws and soon found himself extremely unpopular. The exiled Henry Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, taking advantage of Richard's absence in Ireland, landed at Ravenspur and was offered little resistance. Seeing Henry's triumphal progress even the Cheshire archers, one of the mainstays of Richard's power, discarded their badges and deserted in droves. On returning from Ireland Richard soon became the prisoner of Bolingbroke, and later died mysteriously (he was probably murdered) at Pontefract in 1399.

So the century ended with the demise of the Plantagenets and the accession of Henry IV, Duke of Lancaster, as the new king. It is doubtful if any of these momentous national changes affected the inhabitants of Delamere Forest, but the news when it became known must, at least, have made a welcome change to routine forest gossip.

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

(1400-1600)

Under Henry IV (1399-1413) there was unrest and, indeed, during these two centuries there were "wars and rumours of wars". At home, in 1403, the rebellion of Owen Glendower, the Welsh "thorn in the flesh" of English Kings, was suppressed at Shrewsbury. There were heavy casualties on both sides which included Cheshire knights, squires and gentlemen. Revenge on the rebels followed with the execution of two prominent county leaders, Sir Richard Venables of Kinderton and Richard Vernon of Shipbrook whose bodies were afterwards displayed publicly in Chester. There were also land forfeitures for some of the rebel side although John Done of Utkinton, Master Forester of Delamere, secured a pardon from the King. Henceforth the Dones, the Fittons of Gawsworth and the Mainwarings of Over Peover supported the Lancastrian dynasty. The Dones in these troubled times used their heads and were careful not to lose their heads in family feuds and local friction as will be noted later.

However, in the bloody battle of Blore Heath (1459), fighting the King's cause, Sir John Done (8th Master Forester bearing the name Done) lost his life along with other Cheshire gentry Sir Thomas Duddon, Sir John Egerton and Sir Hugh Venables. The outcome of

the battle was a terrible blow to Lancastrian supporters and especially to the Done family, whose ranks were now severely depleted. Lord Audley, father-in-law of Hugh Done of Oulton, Richard Done of Crowton, Sir John Troutbeck his brother-in-law and his cousin Sir Thomas Troutbeck all perished at Blore Heath. The opening stages of the Wars of the Roses had clearly left its mark on local Cheshire gentry and it was complicated by the determined efforts of some noblemen to exploit the prevailing mood of lawlessness and family feuds during respites from isolated pitched battles.

The decisive Battle of Tewkesbury (1471) coupled with the death of the sickly and unworldly King Henry VI (last of the Lancastrian dynasty) had firmly established the Yorkist leader (Edward IV) on the throne. Once again Cheshire was divided against itself. On the Lancastrian side members of the Delves family of Doddington fought and died while John, a representative of the Stanley family, championed the Yorkists and was knighted on the battlefield. The Stanleys were apparently the great rivals of the Dones in the quest for local power and certainly succeeded by "playing their cards" well in an age of fickle loyalties. Thus, Lord Stanley, whom Edward IV had promoted chief justice of Chester and his brother, Sir William chamberlain, mustered many retainers from Cheshire for Richard III's cause at Bosworth Field (1485), but once more the Stanleys' hand was not played openly until late in the battle. They then turned the balance to the side of Henry Tudor. Significantly it was Sir William Stanley of the Cheshire/Wales border who placed the crown on Henry Tudor's head before the smoke of battle cleared.

Sir John Done (Master Forester) continued to fight for the Lancastrian cause at the second Battle of St. Albans (Feb. 1461) but in many conflicts there were Dones on both sides — hence the terse remark, "a Done doth kill a Done". However, in the earlier Hundred Years War, in foreign fields, the Stanleys and the Dones had fought for a common cause — the King's. At the victorious Battle of Agincourt (1415) John Done, the younger, fought for king and country. Indeed, the Done loyalty to the Crown produced a good response in the number of archers raised from the Delamere Forest area. The loss of English possessions in France in 1455 (except for Calais) heralded the end of the Hundred Years War and the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses in which the Dones were also involved as described.

From about 1244 to 1639, bearing the symbol of the Delamere Horn, successive leaders of the Done family continued to hold office as master foresters. Of the sixteen bearers of the title eight were named "John" and four of these were dubbed knights, hence the complex task of recording the family fortunes in Cheshire. Their powers in the forest were enormous and tended to increase with the passage of time. In 1428, John Done was given to hold a forest

court called Swanimote, which met three times a year to arrange for the use of the Crown's woodland. By 1443 his son and successor was assisted by a staff of eight under foresters and two garcons, the latter billeted on tenants. Whether the Chamber in the Forest as the chief forestry residence dates from this period is a matter of speculation.

One of the most important functions of the master foresters was to issue warrants (with royal authority) to provide timber from the forest to repair and maintain secular and religious buildings. The following list reflects the widespread use of Delamere timber, which again suggests increasing encroachments on the forest area:-

- 1403 John Done. A grant of a warrant to deliver four oaks for the repair of the church at Tarporley.
- 1418 Oaks despatched for a religious building (St. Leonard's Hospital at Frodsham).
- 1419 and 1464 Oak for the repair of Frodsham Bridge.
- 1435 Oak for the repair of the Pleas Hall (Court Room), public oven and the gaol at Middlewich.
- 1486, 1491 and 1504 Timber supplied for maintenance work at the Dee Mills, Chester.
- 1500 Trees felled for work at Vale Royal Abbey.
- 1584 Timber (as the gift of Queen Elizabeth I) transported to rebuild the many houses destroyed or burnt in Nantwich after the disastrous fire of 1583.
- 1511-12 and 1515-16 Considerable quantities of timber were also sent for the maintenance and repair of Chester Castle (still a bastion on the English/Welsh border). In addition, some Delamere oak must also have been used for boat building.

Under the Tudors the Done family links with Delamere continued. Honours and offices were conferred on its holders despite their quarrelsome and impulsive natures. In 1513 Richard Done raised men locally for the King's campaign against the troublesome Scots and fought alongside the Stanleys in the victorious Battle of Flodden Field. In 1516 he was appointed Sheriff of Chester.

As master foresters the Dones were very jealous of their rights within the forest area and a number of court cases resulted. In 1535, for example, a complaint was lodged with Thomas Cromwell (the King's Secretary) that "a servant of Sir John Done was killed in the forest about 23rd July last by persons unknown". Again, in the same year, Sir John sent a Petition to King Henry VIII against Sir Piers Duddon alleging that "as Ranger of Mara and Mondrem he had killed one buck, one stag and three does by day and by night; that he had excited a riot of 50 persons against the servants of Sir John Done". This violent antagonism between the two knights persisted, although they were closely connected by marriage and descent.

The changes introduced by the religious Reformation movement under successive Tudor rulers from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I left some indelible marks in the Delamere area. Uniquely important was the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536-39) as the Abbey of Vale Royal and its estate lay within the then extensive Delamere Forest. Ironically the founding of the Abbey had been the inspiration of an earlier king (1277); its suppression and destruction stemmed from the will of a Tudor king in 1539. Between these two milestones there had been fourteen abbots of the Cistercian abbey at Vale Royal. During this span of the centuries the early spiritual ideals of obedience, poverty and chastity had become increasingly eclipsed by the pursuit of worldly power and poverty. Monastic wealth accumulated through land leases, manors, titles, offerings and adwosons. Vale Royal, however, was certainly not as wealthy as St. Werburgh's in Chester, for which King Henry had other plans. Thomas Cromwell, the King's Vicar General, and his Commissioners visited the monastic houses, compiling records of their assets of all kinds, and Vale Royal, along with others, was helpless to resist the storm of suppression. In 1539 it was forfeited to the Crown, its net income being valued at £540-6-2d. In 1543 the King granted Thomas (later Sir Thomas) Holcroft the abbey buildings, mills, etc., for £450-10-6d. He also took over Petty Pool, the mere called Oakmere with all fishing rights, commons and properties in the area, including Delamere Forest, the tenure of Sir John Done. Possession of the church properties in the area followed in 1548, and in this respect Sir John Done and Sir Philip Egerton were appointed to represent the Hundred of Eddisbury. Thus the Done family leaders supported the new reformed ecclesiastical constitution.

An observant traveller passing through the forest about 1540 was John Leland. He described it as "fair and large" but with little corn "because of the deer". As he rode he noticed the forest ground on the right hand to be plain, black heathy land, and on the left hand somewhat hilly and woody. He referred to the meres as "pools"; such as Petty Pool. The origins of these he attributed to the digging of marl for "fattening the barren ground thus to bear good corn". He noted "the place in the forest of Delamere called Seven Lowes, where be seen VII castle dikes. The people there speak much of them. I think they were made by men of war." He also noted the house of Sir John Done who "dwelleth at Utkinton". While continuing his travels in 1539/40, the Abbey of St. Werburgh had attracted the attention of King Henry. There the abbot had previously enjoyed royal favours, such as, in 1425, when a grant was renewed for providing the abbot with "6 bucks and 6 does a year from the forest, also a tenth of the venison taken and a gift of a stag on St. Werburgh's Feast Day (21st June)". Now times had changed. The Reformation Parliament of Henry VIII from 1529 passed a series of Acts to effect "the breach with Rome". In 1534

the Acts of Succession and Supremacy demanded allegiance to the Crown and not to a foreign Pope. St. Werburgh's was also subject to the 1536 Act and was of particular interest to the King since it was the richest Abbey in Cheshire with an income of £1,104. It too surrendered on 20th January 1540 but, unlike Vale Royal, its buildings were not destroyed but transformed into the Cathedral of a new Diocese some sixteen months later. The last abbot, Thomas Clark, became the first Dean of the Cathedral Chapter.

During the next two reigns England experienced what might be described as "the swing of the religious pendulum". Under Henry VIII the changes in the religious establishment had been essentially constitutional rather than doctrinal and the concept of a national church had taken root. Under the young and sickly King Edward VI, his uncle, the Duke of Somerset, became protector of the realm. It was the self seeking and arrogant Somerset who steered the ship of state by royal proclamations towards the treacherous waters of foreign radical religious liberalism. By the Act of Uniformity (1549) the use of a new Book of Common Prayer was ordered, largely the work of Cranmer, and the stamp of Protestant teachings and practices completely blurred the traditional Catholic doctrines and ritual. English was replacing Latin in services. Concepts of the priesthood and the Eucharist were considerably modified along Protestant lines. Popular reaction to these changes, coupled with much economic and social discontent, led to rebellions and rioting, particularly in the south. By the end of 1549 Somerset's reputation was shattered; he capitulated and was imprisoned in the Tower. He was replaced by the Earl of Warwick, created Duke of Northumberland in 1551.

By 1550 the tiller was tilted towards further religious innovation. Nicholas Ridley, a keen reformer, was appointed to the See of London in 1550, and John Hooper was nominated to Gloucester. In 1552 the uncompromisingly Protestant Second Book of Common Prayer appeared. Eucharistic vestments were replaced by the plain surplice, altars became Communion tables, and thus vestiges of the Mass were erased. The 42 Articles (later revised by Queen Elizabeth as the 39) stipulated the doctrines of the reformed church. At first there was probably resentment, but the long term effect of "official" Protestantism was bound to be considerable. Vested interests in the new order were inclosing lay and clerical ranks, yet not sufficiently widespread to prevent the accession of the Catholic Queen Mary. By 1553 Northumberland's policies on the economic, social and political fronts had become very precarious. His position depended on the life of the young King Edward who was now seriously ill. The vital question of succession was raised. Edward died on 6th July 1553. In spite of Henry VIII's will that the crown should not pass to Mary, she had herself proclaimed Queen at Bury St. Edmunds and this caused much confusion. Finally, the principle of hereditary succession was upheld, and on 19th July Mary was

proclaimed Queen in London despite her Catholicism, bastardy and dependence on foreign Hapsburg sponsorship.

The first wave of the Protestant Reformation was over and Catholicism was slowly beginning to win back its straying sheep. From 1554, Mary lost her support from her subjects, however, when her marriage treaty was concluded with Philip of Spain, which was already a powerful lever in the hands of the Papal counter-Reformation movement, and thus failed in her efforts to re-unite England with Rome. Englishmen had gone too far along the road to Protestantism. The reign of terror was set in motion and about 800 Protestants fled abroad, mainly to Germany. An underground movement developed in the country. Altogether some 280 heretics were burnt at the stake, mostly in the south-east. The 21 clergy executed included Archbishop Cranmer, Bishop Ridley and Hugh Latimer — the Oxford Martyrs. The burnings caused much resentment and there was further rebellion. During the summer of 1558 Mary was dangerously ill and, under pressure, she acknowledged Elizabeth as her successor. She died in London on 17th November 1558, and the English Protestants from abroad were able to hasten home from exile.

During this period it is possible that the people of Cheshire were less disturbed by the doctrinal and liturgical changes than elsewhere in the kingdom. Perhaps their general acquiescence was largely due to traditional loyalty to the crown based on historical links forged by the Earldom of Chester. Indeed, the Church and the clergy remained pivotal to both spiritual and social life. Holy days were leisure days and, therefore, church festivals were not readily brushed aside and forgotten.

The accession of Queen Elizabeth I in 1558 proved crucial in the realignment of the established Church of England. The new queen was not a dedicated Protestant, neither was she a Roman Catholic although she had quietly conformed under Mary. She seemed to favour a non-papal Catholicism. The Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity of 1559, enforcing the use of a new Prayer Book, established a national church of "the middle way" (*Viamedia Anglicana*). Clerical loyalty for the "new order" was enforced by commissioners, but recusants were increasing. The Papal Edict of Excommunication (1570) amounted to a declaration of war on Elizabeth and her nation state by Roman Catholic European leaders. Gathering storm clouds from the direction of Roman Catholic Spain soon broke in the open threat to England and the Queen by the sailing of the Armada. Queen Elizabeth was compelled to "tighten the religious belt", consequently, recusants were now hounded and persecuted in the interests of national unity and survival.

Religiously, the Armada crisis year of 1588 proved to be a "watershed" in the Queen's ecclesiastical policy. Before the defeat of the Armada, rules of conformity were stringently enforced with

compulsory church attendance and fines for offenders. After 1588, when the external danger was over, the Queen could afford to relax penal laws and even tolerate the growing number of Puritans, who no longer operated underground but came out into the open. One such agent of Puritan nuisance was John Bruen of Stapleford Hall, in Tarvin Parish. His hunting exploits and destruction of a cross in Delamere Forest are described elsewhere.

The main effects of the Reformation, as far as the villages of Cheshire were concerned, were probably the facts that church services were no longer said in Latin, that the priests were no longer required to be celibate or to hear confession, and that the monasteries and convents had been suddenly suppressed. Delamere would, of course, have been affected by the closure of Vale Royal, but being such a remote area that it had no church it probably remained unaware of many of the changes taking place in other parts of the country.

Ormerod mentions that in 1436 John Stanley was appointed Chief Ranger of Macclesfield, Mara and Mondrem forests. His office, at that time, would therefore appear to be senior to that of the Master or Chief Forester, held by the Kingsley, Done and Arden families. The Chester Plea Rolls of 1499 mention the free fishing rights enjoyed by the Abbot of Vale Royal at Oakmere, and in 1514, the Ranger of Delamere Forest, Sir Ralph Egerton, was appointed Standard Bearer of England for life with a salary of £100 per year.

Apart from these notes and the histories of the members of the Done family mentioned earlier in the chapter, the records for the Delamere area are remarkably silent during these two centuries.

WHISTLEBITCH WELL

An examination of the ancient forest maps will show several named wells, such as Hind's Well, Lord's Well and Swan's Well and, although most of these can still be located, the only one that is usually marked on modern maps is that known as Whistlebitch. This is situated on the edge of Primrose Hill Wood, near the Willington boundary and about a mile and a half from the Chamber. It became famous during the closing years of the sixteenth century because of its reputed healing powers, and may even be the more modern name for St. Stephen's Well which was known to have existed in the area many centuries earlier. It has been suggested that Whistlebitch Well was once known as Twisel-bache; meaning "valley stream with a fork".

It is said to have attracted notice by the accidental cure of a John Greenway, of Utkinton, and three of his sons who were "sick of the ague" and who bathed in its cool waters. Such "spas" were not unknown in Cheshire.

The only documentary evidence for the powers of Whistlebitch Well comes from an anonymous twenty-six page tract in the form of

a letter printed by "F. Kingston for T. Man, 1600". Only about four copies are known to exist; one is in the Bodleian Library and one at the British Museum. The tract begins, "Newes out of Cheshire, concerning the new found well, as it is contained in a letter lately sent a Cheshire man to a gentleman a deere friend of his in Northamptonshire."

The whole is printed in Cheshire Notes and Queries (1896, vol. 1 No. 4) and the following are extracts:-

Towards the Southwest side of the forrest is situate the New found Wel. All the Westerly and Southerly site of the forrest is mountainous, and full of vaste uneven hilles, scattringly beautified with many okes (yet most of them shrubby and of low growth) and not fewe queaches (thorns) and thicks of Hull (holly) and Hawthornes the hils themselves for the most distinguished by galles and gutters made by waters falling from springs and other places which in continuance of time have worn and eaten deep passages.

In the side of one of these hilles, whose declining lyeth almost full upon the North and North-east, ariseth the spring, head, and fountaine its self now called the New found Wel, the same insensibly issuing from firm ground at the roote or foote of a shrubbe hill or hollintree, yet so as the same hull standing at the South-west corner of the Wel there is some twentie inches distance betweene them.

The Wel or Cesterne being bordered with three or foure flagge stones (at the compasse of it without breaking any earth about it would give leave) is almost foure square, conteyning south and north about thirty inches, west and east about twenty six inches.

The descent of the hill beneath the wel Northward is steepe and the waste water falling North from the fountaine hath both of it owne course, and shortly meeting with some other rilles, worne the ground to a great hollow dingle, which carrieth them downe to a brooke at the foot of the hill, by which they are conveyed to a great poole of Sir John Egertons neere Little Budworth, which serveth Olton Milles; so that, albeit the Spring sendeth his water at the first Northerly, yet within lesse than one quarter of a miles labour it windeth about the hill skirte, and then holdeth his course full Southerly.

What the vaines of the Earth about it maybe ... I dare not take upon me to set downe ... All that I can say in this respect is that the upper part or face of the earth there seemes to be a stiffe clay, insomuch that the resorters thither having made some one or two slender weake dammes to stay the water, half a dozen yards or more beneath the fountaine, there are by that meanes two small lakes or pooles, wherein poore people, when they are disposed, do bathe and wash themselves ... which pooles ... be very unfit for that purpose, being very

unhandsomely thicke and muddy with the clay and soyle of the earth.

There be many that at their first taste of the water, doe confidently affirme they feel as it were some relish or smacke of an allome-like composition; and not a fewe I have heard censure that there seemes to them a little resemblance to the tast of licoris.

The "newes" of John Greenway's cure spread rapidly and eventually as many as two thousand people a day visited the spring. To control the crowds, John Frodsham (Keeper of one of the Forest Walks) had to be placed in charge to prevent inconvenience to the neighbourhood and disturbance to the deer. The Master Forester, Mr. Done, nevertheless arranged for provisions to be supplied regularly, and servants were placed to take care that no money was exacted for the use of the waters.

They were supposed to be effective against "coldes, stoppings, grypings, gnawings, collicks, ulcers, blindnesse, deafnesse and nearly every other infirmity". The tract gives a lengthy list of those who were said to have been cured, and a number of these came from outside the county boundaries. Among the local population who had benefited were: Anne Nield of Rushton, Roger Nickson of Over (the Mayor), Robert Hall of Whitegate, John Olton of Wettenhall, Randle Nield of Utkinton, James Okenthorpe of Eaton, and John Wytur of Tarporley.

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL STRIFE (1600-1699)

The new century brought little change to the way of life for the residents in Delamere Forest, which was still kept primarily as a royal hunting ground. Few would have forecast that, by mid-century, national religious and political strife would be felt even in a remote Cheshire forest.

Master Foresters

Executive control of Delamere Forest remained with the Done family who were to continue, in the direct line, as hereditary master foresters for nearly another forty years. John Done, the thirteenth member of the Done family to be Master Forester, died in 1601, and was succeeded by his eldest son, another John, who was later knighted, to hold office until 1629.

Without doubt the Dones had fulfilled their primary objective over the centuries, which was to nurture sufficient deer for any royal hunting party. Perhaps the Dones were too successful, for the deer became a nuisance to neighbouring farmers and forest dwellers

alike. It would appear, however, that some effort was made to keep the numbers of deer under control, for the master foresters hunted the deer themselves, doubtlessly for the pleasures of the chase and for food. The master foresters included their friends in their hunting parties and John Bruen of Bruen-Stapleford, later to become a noted Puritan preacher and author, was one of these. It was recorded, "At the time of his marriage John Bruen led the life of a country squire, hunting and hawking in Delamere Forest. He and Ralph Done, of Utkinton, kept betwixt them fourteen couple of Great-mouthed dogs."

Several hundred years had passed since a reigning monarch, Edward I, had used Delamere Forest for hunting. This royal absence was soon to be remedied by James I who hunted, for just a single day in 1617, with the royal hounds during a return journey from Scotland. Evidently the hunting found royal favour for the incumbent Master Forester, John Done, received a knighthood at Utkinton Hall on the 25th August. Webb, in his itinerary of the visit, records, "Making the house of Vale Royal four days his Royal Court, he solaced himself and took pleasure entertaining his disports in the forest ... The day following it pleased him graciously to calculate the hours and confer with the keepers, and his honourable attendants of the particular events in that sport, and to question them whether they ever saw or heard of the like expedition, and true performance of hounds well hunting. At which his Highness Princely contentment we had cause to rejoice; and the rallier for that diligence and service of Sir John Done had so properly prepared his Majesty's sports, which he also as graciously accepted." During his stay in Delamere, King James found time to refresh himself and plant mulberry trees in the garden of "The Chamber of the Forest", the former administrative centre of Delamere Forest. So, as far as is known, the forest provided royal hunting for just one day in a period of over three hundred years. It is to be wondered if this very small amount of royal utilisation concerned the king, for, as described below, plans were formulated some twenty years later to dispose of the deer. Fortunately for everybody concerned, James enjoyed his Delamere visit and resumed his journey.

In 1622 Webb described the forest and Chamber thus: "No small store of deer, both red and fallow; plenty of pasture in the vales, wood upon the hills, fern and heath in the plains, great store of fish and fowl in the meres, pewits or sea mawes in the flashes, and both kinds of turf for fuel; upon the highest hill, a delicate house (the Chamber) for the chief forester himself; and, disposed on every side of the said forest, pretty and handsome lodgings for the keepers in each walk." Webb also mentions horse-racing in the forest.

This idyllic picture describes Delamere Forest towards the end of its function as a royal hunting ground. Clearly the forest, at that lime, was not all trees as "plenty of pasture" and "heath in the

plains" are described. It was not to last, for a plan was drawn up to indemnify the Dones by a land grant, to abolish the oppressive jurisdiction attached to the master forester's office and to reduce the number of deer. Even in the previous century Leland had recorded: "In the foreste I saw but little corne, bicause of the deere." In connection with this plan Sir John Done wrote, in 1626, to the Commissioners of the Forests and listed his "Profits appertaining to my Office of Forester or Bailiff", as follows:

	£	s	d
The searn in the forest, known by the name of sengern	66	13	4
The wind-blown wood, which are now but birches, and a few dead oaks	6	13	4
The crops of trees, and half of the bark cut down with an axe, not any these many years	0	0	0
The forfeitures of bulls, oxen, heifers, goats, &c. taken within the forest between Michaelmas and Martinmas, after the rate of a halfpenny a beast, no certain sum, but sometimes worth, about	3	0	0
The sparrow-hawks, hobbies, &c.	0	0	0
The benefit of bees taken within the forest	5	0	0
The fee of deer, their shoulders, heads, suet, chines, skins, and fees for their killing, which are sixty or eighty every year browse wood, and after pannage	0	0	0
All the wayfes within the forest, worth, one year with another	6	0	0
Drinking for keepers, and oats and provender	1	10	0
My privilege to keep greyhounds, to course and kill hares within the forest, not valued	0	0	0
There are ten keepers, two woodmen, and four lodges: one of the lodges I live in myself. All of them have allowance from me, within the forest, for their horses and cattle	0	0	0

Sir John Done continues, "Although the inheritance have been descended to me by many ancestors, who for the space of 500 years have enjoyed it, yet I am not so in love with it, but that for his Majesty's service and advance of his profit, I shall be content to leave it." And in conclusion, "I enjoy by lease, during the lifetime of myself, my son, and Sir Richard Wilbraham, all living, the agistment, herbage, and pannage, have yielded no certain profit, but some years more, some times less, neither hath the best profit been made of it. The turbary yields forty pounds yearly. For the other, I desire that enquiry be made of the reasonable yearly value of it, which I affirm at £40 the deer being continued, and what I increase would be of that value, the deer being removed; and that being known, I shall accept of a reasonable recompense in land, to

be set out in places convenient for me, which I desire may be a lodge, and a place called the old pale, where I was born and some places near adjoining." It seems doubtful if either the plan or Sir John's pleas were acted upon fully, for both deer hunting and poaching are recorded in later times.

Sir John was certainly the most well-documented member of the Done family and his portrait complete with the Delamere Horn survives. The portrait, dated 1619, is inscribed "Domi's Delameri Damaeque Dominatu", which translated means Lord of Delamere and Master of the Deer. Sir John was married to Dorothy, daughter of Thomas Wilbraham of Woodhey. She was famed for her good looks and gracious manners, so much so that when Cheshire folks wish to express their fullest commendation they may say: "As fair as the Lady Done" or "Oh!, there's a Lady Done for you." Sir John became Sheriff of Cheshire in 1626, died in 1629, and was buried at Tarporley on 14th April. Lady Done survived her husband by seven years and was buried at Tarporley on 1st February 1636. The office of Master Forester passed to their only surviving son, John, who matriculated at Brazenose College, Oxford and who was later admitted to Lincoln's Inn. Married to Mary, daughter of Sir Thomas Stanley in 1622, John died childless on 2nd October 1630, and, similarly to his father, was buried at Tarporley. So the direct line of Done of Utkinton, master foresters and holders of the Delamere Horn, terminated.

The master forestership reverted first to Jane, and second to Mary, the eldest and second daughters respectively of the late Sir John Done. The reversion was contested by Sir Ralph Done of Duddon, descended from a younger branch of the Done of Flaxyards family, but his suit failed, and the entire property was divided between the four surviving sisters of the last John Done. Mary Done married John Crewe and, on her death in 1690, the master forestership and horn passed to their eldest son, Sir John Crewe, who died in 1711.

Deer were still prevalent in 1637 for John Crewe complained that John Dutton of Kingsley, yeoman, Robert Massey of Budworth or Duddon and Christopher Wilbraham of Beeston, all of them "malzying" the property of the forest and "contrary to the law of the realm conspired with other persons to kill his Majesty's deer, &c, and did kill sixty harts, five stags, twenty bucks, twenty-five does, thirty fawns and other beasts and venison and fowls &c, &c." It would seem that this was poaching on a grand scale and the ringleaders were the local gentry; a few centuries earlier they would have been hung without the formality of a trial.

Wayside Crosses

Writing in the twentieth century it is difficult to be precise about items that were common-place and their uses unequivocal in earlier times. In this category are the Delamere wayside crosses. The

crosses are of great antiquity, and the stone-bases of two of them, Maidens Cross and Headless Cross, still mark the former extent of Delamere Forest today. It may well be that the crosses served merely as forest boundary markers, but as simple posts would have served equally well, it might be assumed that the crosses had a more significant religious function. Were they perhaps preaching locations, and served as forest centres for religious teaching? It must be remembered that prior to 1817 the area of the present Delamere Parish was, at best, extra-parochial to one or more of the local ancient parishes, possibly either Frodsham or Tarvin. An earlier chapter has described how the crosses were regarded as sanctuaries by travellers and robbers alike, but this usage must surely have been secondary.

On better historical foundation is the destruction of Cheshire wayside crosses by the Puritans. Crossley describes how John Bruen, the former hunter, was "responsible for the destruction of the wayside and churchyard crosses at Delamere, Tarvin, Christleton, Vicars Cross and Eccleston, also at Barrow — he with his men and various others going about in the night throwing them down using 'scornefull and provokefull speeches' telling the people of the various places 'that their Dagon was fallen down, and that crows pulled down the crosses and dawes must set them up again'." Quite rightly the civil authorities were concerned at wanton vandalism by one of the local gentry, and the Star Chamber Proceedings in James I time record a complaint by Sir John Savage about the destruction of four ancient crosses of squared stone, eight yards high or thereabouts, one of which was in Delamere Forest. The vandalised Delamere cross was Maidens Cross, the socket of which can still be seen north west of the forest (M.R. 514736). As the base socket measures thirteen inches square it seems possible that a cross eight yards high could have been made of timber. Similarly the socket of Headless Cross, on the north side of the present-day A49 (M.R. 582678), measures fourteen inches square. Such wooden constructions, unlike the Sandbach Crosses, would have made vandalism by John Bruen and his gang of zealots relatively simple.

The Civil War

The Calvinistic King James I died in 1625 and was succeeded on the throne on 27th March by his second son, Charles. Within two months Charles had married Henrietta Maria, the Roman Catholic sister of King Louis XIII of France. Charles, though brought up as a Protestant, tended to favour high-church ritual and rites which brought him into conflict with the very strong Puritanical groups in Parliament. Always short of money, he was dependent on Parliament both to maintain his position and to finance wars with Spain and France. Eventually the friction between King and Parliament about religious and financial matters resulted in the whole country being embroiled in Civil War.

Even Delamere Forest felt the murmurings of the religious fervour for, as noted above, the ancient crosses were partially destroyed by the Puritans in the period prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Delamere Forest saw just one fairly small skirmish in the first phase of the Civil War in Cheshire. In a probably chance meeting of Fairfax's army, en route from Manchester to Tilston Heath, with one of Byron's patrols, the Royalists lost about thirty men as prisoners. The exact location of the Delamere skirmish is not now known with certainty, but it was probably on the route of the present-day A49 trunk road, near Nunsmere. The Delamere incident was just one of several skirmishes that preceded the decisive parliamentary success at the Battle of Nantwich. Later in 1644, the army of Sir William Brereton, the Parliamentary Commander in Cheshire, met a patrol of Colonel Marrow in Delamere who were pursued to Tarvin. Here the Royalists were routed, and Marrow, hit by a musket ball, died later in Chester. Without doubt Delamere Forest roads carried many an army on the march and doubtlessly too, these armies supplemented their rations with any available venison.

The Restoration

A rather interesting character, who later became the first Baron Delamere, was Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey. Although his actual associations with Delamere are rather obscure some of his exploits are worth mentioning. Sir George served in all the Commonwealth Parliaments and appeared to be a loyal Roundhead. Booth, however, after the death of Oliver Cromwell and the fall of his son Richard, became dissatisfied with the government and, in particular, the subservience of Parliament to the Army. Booth attempted changes by leading the armed Cheshire Rising of August 1659, the purpose of which was to create a Free Parliament. In company with recognised Royalists including Lords Cholmondeley, Derby and Kilmorey, together with many other Cheshire gentlemen, almost the entire county fell to Booth. He marched on Chester, but was repulsed at the castle by the Roundhead Colonel Croxton. Curiously, Sir George's army turned about, and set off for York, marching the route of the present-day A54/A556 roads, through Delamere Forest, reaching Northwich on the 18th August. Concurrently, Parliamentarian General Lambert's army coming from Nantwich also passed through Delamere Forest using the route of the present A49. Both armies observed each other, but it was too dark for serious engagement. By the next day Booth occupied a good defensive position near Winnington Bridge, but his army of four thousand men was no match for the experienced force of General Lambert. Booth's army was defeated easily and dispersed in what has been claimed to be the last recognised land-battle in northern England. Sir George escaped immediate capture by donning a woman's dress, but was later

"unfrocked" by an innkeeper and apprehended at Newport Pagnell on the 23rd August. So it was said of him, "All this glorious pretext of a free Parliament and the subjects' liberty is all ended under a wench's petticoat." Booth was imprisoned in the Tower of London and the Cheshire Rising of 1659 failed. Or did it? For very quickly moves to strengthen parliamentary independence and restore the monarchy were made. Booth was liberated, sat in the 1659-60 Parliament, and was one of twelve Members who carried the message of the Commons to the exiled King Charles II at the Hague. For his part in the Restoration, Sir George received a £10,000 grant in 1660, and on 20th April 1661 he was created Baron Delamere of Dunham Massey, with a licence to create six new knights. Baron Delamere died in 1684 and was buried at Bowdon.

With peace brought by the Restoration it became safe again for travellers to pass through Delamere Forest. It was recorded that Ralph Thorsby, the famous topographer and antiquary, passed through Delamere to Tarvin, commenting, "Through a most pleasant vale abounding with woods and fruitful pastures, which produce the famous Cheshire cheese." Fuller writing in 1662 says of Cheshire cheese, "the poor eat it for hunger, the rich for digestion". Similarly, Charles Cotton of Beresford Hall, Dovedale, in 1670 rode from Holmes Chapel to Chester. "Bought four shillings worth of ale, eight large bottles, probably for himself, host and his man . . . A rapid gallop through Delamere and early arrival at Chester, at two in the afternoon, on a Saturday." Holmes Chapel was a centre for bar-iron distribution and it is probable that charcoal supplies were obtained from Delamere for Cranage forge, established about 1660.

The Restoration, at best, brought only a temporary truce between the opposing religious parties. For even Charles II, shortly before his death on 6th February 1685, was received into the Roman Church. Dying without legitimate children Charles was succeeded by his brother, James II, a staunch Roman Catholic. Immediately political and religious intrigue intensified.

During this period of turbulence both sides watched each other very closely so that hired agents and spies were in great demand. Evidence of intrigue can be read into the account of an earlier visit of the Duke of Monmouth, the eldest illegitimate son of Charles I, to Delamere in 1682. On Monday, 11th September, Monmouth left Chester for the races at Wallasey. The Revd. Matthew Fowler, writing to the Rt. Hon. Sir L. Jenkins, Whitehall, reported as follows: "Tomorrow being the Race-day there will be a meeting of the Loyall gentry of Cheshire and the adjacent parts of the county of Salop upon the Forrest of Delamere about 8 miles from Chester. They met under the colour of Hunting and Race matches, but ye designe is to bee in readiness to prevent any ill attempts; God Almighty give them wisdom and sobriety, that they manage their meetings to the advantage of his Majesty. They will have their spies

upon the Racers of Wallacy from when I am promised the best account they can gett. But I lately heard tht the D. (Monmouth) intends to put off Wallacy Race till Thursday and to come and Hunt with the Gentleman at the Forrest." Later on 16th September, Fowler continued: "The Loyal Gentry of Cheshire had a very splendid meeting at the Forrest of Delamere, there were besides footmen and spectators, about six score of gentlemen well attended, wch made up the number of 500 horse, they pesued their game very quietly, dined together upon the Forrest, and so very civilly parted." This account of a Delamere hunt, written by an agent to his superior, fails to describe any treasonable activity to Monmouth. Another authority states, "Some loyal gentlemen prepared a meeting of armed supporters in Delamere Forest to take on Monmouth, if necessary." Many Protestants had supported Monmouth's claim, but after his abortive campaign to seize the Crown, he ended his days on the scaffold on 15th July 1685 with "courage and dignity", at the age of thirty-six.

The three year reign of James II ended in 1688 in confusion and disaster following the trial by jury and subsequent acquittal of seven bishops who had been charged with seditious libel. Neither the army nor the navy would fight for James and, in a panic, he abandoned both throne and country. The way became clear for the accession of William III and Mary II as joint monarchs and their reign heralded greater religious toleration.

Old and New Pale Enclosures

With the demise of the Done master foresters the Chamber of the Forest was probably abandoned, for its location became increasingly uncertain as the century progressed. In 1652 depositions were made at Tarvin that established that the house "upon" the hill in the Old Pale was the Chamber in the Forest. Distinction was made between the Chamber and the house and grounds "under" the hill that was reputed to be the lodge and grounds for the keeper of the Old Pale Office. At that time, it was recorded, no lands were usually ploughed or sown except "the Castle Croft upon the top of the hill, adjoining the house called the Chamber which contained three Cheshire acres". Yet another authority, Lysons (1810), while stating the Old Pale belonged to the master forester or bow bearer, continues that "Done is said to have built a brick house there mid-seventeenth century". Lysons also states that both the Old Pale and the New Pale "in former times were in the parish of St. Oswalds, Chester, but not for many years been esteemed part of that parish". Even the name, Chamber, became disused and the area became known as Merrick's Hill, possibly after Thomas Merrick of Eddisbury, whose will was proved at Chester in 1683. By 1700 Dr. Charles Leigh said of Eddisbury, "there is now nothing but rubbish, and at this day called the Chamber in the Forest".

The deforestation pressures on Delamere Forest continued and a roughly circular area of about 340 acres, called the New Pale, was enclosed in the seventeenth century. Similarly to the Old Pale the New Pale was supposedly enclosed to preserve vert and venison, but later both enclosures became farms. Contemporary with the New Pale enclosure is the date 1623, carved on a former door lintel, together with the initials, W.B. These initials probably refer to William Boulton, a man in the service of the Dones, who died in 1637.

An enigma remains — were the Old Pale and New Pale enclosures made to keep the deer "in" or "out"? Possibly the answer is that the Old Pale, with a view to nurturing the deer, was planned originally to include and protect the deer. As evidently there were deer excess to requirements by the early 1600s, it is certainly possible, if not probable, that the New Pale enclosure was established to exclude the deer.

Even if doubts exist about the use of two of the principal features in Delamere Forest, Savoy M. Nutt, writing in 1700, was in no doubt about its overall virtues. Perhaps paraphrasing an earlier Webb description, Nutt wrote, "Delamere Forest, a very delightful place for situation, not only nourishing great plenty of red and fallow deer for the King's table and pleasure, but also affording a great relief to the neighbouring townships, viz. pasture in the valleys, wood on the hills, fern on the plain, fish and fowl in the meres, turf for firing, &c."

So the seventeenth century that had seen Civil War result from opposing religious views and political freedoms ended. Delamere Forest had played a small part in national events and had adapted to change during the century. Administration, formerly active under the Dones to preserve deer, became more passive with the Crewes. Day-to-day life reflected the decline of deer and increased agricultural activity, in the still nominally Royal Forest of Delamere.

"THE FOREST" AS IT WAS IN 1687

In the Public Record Office (ref. MR640) there is a large handwritten map with Oak Mere in the centre. It was drawn in 1687 in response to a commission intended to establish the extent of royal rights in the forest and thus of its metes and bounds. One William Hey worth and twelve other surveyors appended their names to it. The detail is relatively scant as there were very few holdings, but the road network is clearly shown.

To the North lay the boundary of "Earle Rivers's Marbury Common at Weaverham". The land to the East in Whitegate "parrish" belonged to "Thomas Chumley, Esq." with "Earle of Shrewsbury's Common" the Little Budworth boundary and to the South was "John Crewe's land and warren" in "Tarporely Parrish John Arderne Lord of it".

The parish is bisected by the "Road from Fransum to Colebrooke" (*sic*). From what was the parish of Tarvin the road branches eastwards twice, the upper one being marked "Horse road from Chester to the Chamber".

The track passed by "Mr. Meakin's holding, 29 acres, 1 rood, 00 perches" close by the Chamber of the Forest above it, described on the map as "The Chamber or Headberry House". It also defines a "Barn" by the Chamber. Down the hill it went into a double bend past "Pedlar's Oake" and along to "Erbridge Cross and from thence to Northwyche" and another road forking off towards Weaverham.

The middle road, branching from what is now the fork at Organsdale, was the "Carrier's Road from Chester to Northwych", joining the other at Erbridge Cross by Crabtree Green. The lower road is the "Carrier's Road from Chester to Middlewych" and up the eastern side runs the "Road from Colebrooke to Pierce Massye's and thence to Weaverham".

A track called Padfield Way one hundred yards or so to the East runs parallel with this as far as Massye's House.

Pierce Massye's holding, one of the very few dwelling houses marked, is shown as 27 acres, 0 roods and 10 perches.

Other features defined are:

Oake Mare 40a. Or. 05p (with two islands marked). Fishpoole 11a. 3r. 12p.

Old Pale 222a. Or. 10p. Customary Cheshire Area (*sic*).

Hynde's Well.

Whistlebach sparoor (*sic*) well.

Sandyford Brook. Birch Hill.

Woodside Brook (on the Tarvin boundary).

Ralph Hornby's, one of his lodges and the ground he holds, 47a. 2r. 02p. (A symbol for a house is also marked here.)

Two other drawings of a house are "North House" near Willington Wood and at the eastern end of the parish near the Tarvin Boundary: "Deane of Chester's House and Stable". The Dean at that time was Dr. James Arderne (1636-1691).

THE PROPHET OF DELAMERE FOREST

Most people in Cheshire will have heard of the boy prophet, Robert Nixon. Unfortunately, reports regarding when or where he lived tend to conflict and certainly no one knows what he looked like. Egerton Leigh's "Ballads and Legends" of 1867 included a portrait of him as a rather good looking, if plump, young man, but a contributor to Cheshire Notes and Queries (1898) described him as being "short and squat of figure, with a large head, empty goggle eyes, and who drivelled as he spoke". The same contributor claimed

he was stupid and surly, and that he hated children, whom he would beat and chase. Since some doubt that he ever existed the notes that follow must be considered as legend rather than history.

Regarding his birth, there are two theories. One account states that he was born about 1467 in the time of Edward IV and the other that he lived during the reign of James I (1603-1625). If he did exist, then the second seems the most likely. It is said by some that he was born at Over at Bridge-end House, which used to be pointed out to visitors as his birthplace. Others suggest Bank House at Whitegate. Unfortunately, it is understood that Robert Nixon is mentioned in the register at neither Over nor Whitegate. However, here there is a story.

He is supposed to have worked as a farmer's boy on the Cholmondeley Estate when his prophecies started to be heard. Indeed, it is said, they were retold so far afield that eventually they were related to the King himself who immediately sent for the boy to come and stay at his court. At first, he refused, saying if he went he would be "starved to death", which seemed unlikely under the circumstances. However, eventually he was persuaded to go, and James I employed him in the kitchen at Hampton Court, where he was not popular with the other servants and became a nuisance "picking and licking" food in the household. Tiring of his unpleasant habits and to keep him out of the way, eventually the cooks locked him in a closet. Suddenly it was necessary for the King to "return to London and to take his retainers with him. Poor Robert Nixon was forgotten in the haste of departure and was later found still in the closet, "starved to death" as he had prophesied. Like his birthplace, the closet at Hampton Court also used to be shown to visitors.

During his lifetime he made many prophecies, especially when wandering in the forest at Delamere. The nineteenth century letter writer, Mrs. Linnell, even suggested that he "worked on the Old Pale farm in the middle of the forest at the time of Edward IV". He was supposed to prophesy under a great oak tree. Tradition says that when it was cut down and a table made from it, "his likeness appeared in the grain over the whole face of the wood". Although most concern Cheshire, his prophecies covered the whole country. In Delamere parish he foretold a great battle.

"A crow shall sit on the top of the Headless Cross In the forest
so grey,
And drink of the nobles' gentle blood so free.
Twenty thousand horses shall want masters
Till their girths rot under their bellies."

More than a century ago Egerton Leigh made further investigations regarding Robert Nixon. His findings were that he was never mentioned in the Cholmondeley Estate records, the closet at Hampton Court was only built in the reign of William III (1681-1702) and the first account of his prophecies only appeared

in 1714, some ninety years after the death of James I. His explanation appeared to be that some later writer had collected and published the prophecies under the name "Nixon". Originally, this could have been, as some point out, written as "Nick's son" — or Son of the Devil.

THE BIRTH OF METHODISM (1700-1800)

In the opening years of this century the country was beginning to recover from the Civil War, which, in part, had been caused by religious differences. During the reign of Queen Anne religion was very much entangled with politics and the Church of England itself tended to be divided between the High Church Tories and the Low Church Whigs. It was to be another twenty years before the intense worship of the seventeenth century became less political and when the "middle way" of the Church of England at last offered peace.

Unlike nearly every parish in Cheshire, this wild area, which was to become the parish of Delamere a hundred years later, still had no church within its boundaries. It was therefore opportune that a clergyman, who was to become the father of the Methodist Church should visit the neighbourhood. His name was John Wesley (1703-1791), and he began his great work as a travelling priest in 1739. During the next fifty-one years he travelled up and down Britain, often preaching fifteen sermons a week to crowds in the open air. It has been estimated that he journeyed 5,000 miles a year on horseback, and it is said that the enthusiasm of his followers sometimes encountered hostility from both the leaders of the established church and from ignorant mobs.

It must be remembered that even in this century the extent of the forest was considered to be greater than it is today and Wesley's visits tended to be concentrated more in the southern areas. He and his supporters who came to speak at Alpraham, for example, became known as the Pear Tree Preachers. Nevertheless, it seems that he frequently passed through the forest in Delamere on his journeys. In the same year that he preached at Chester in 1752, it is recorded that a certain Thomas Blower had been set upon in Delamere Forest and robbed of the great sum of ³Ad. This gentleman was fortunate in being intercepted by a robber of sympathetic nature, for 14d. was returned to the impoverished victim. Perhaps John Wesley was even more fortunate, for had he too been waylaid the incident would certainly have been mentioned in his diaries.

By the 1760s, however, the Wesleyans were becoming tolerated more readily and began to build their early preaching houses. The first of these was erected in Chester in 1764 to Wesley's favourite

octagonal design — "the best shape for the voice, and more commodious". By 1765 Chester was head of a large circuit which included Delamere, although no chapel was built there until early in the nineteenth century.

It is said that the first Methodists were small farmers. Slater's Chronicle reports that "In 1779 the New Pale, a large farm on the borders of Delamere Forest, was honoured by being the residence of a Mr. George Pugh, who is spoken of as being a veteran in the Lord's service. He was not only a Christian man, but it is said that he did more than any of his predecessors to renovate, reclaim, and cultivate that large farm. Verily, he was diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." He was very friendly with Mr. Janion — a staunch supporter of the cause at Frodsham when, in 1773, the Methodist preachers first visited the town.

By 1830, the Head Surveyor of Delamere Forest, Mr. Robert Pearson, was another keen Methodist. While in Norley, in 1836, there was an eminent American preacher and some Methodists who "in their mental agony" often retired into Delamere Forest where they "sought the Lord with strong cries and tears, and it was among the trees of that forest that they found the love of God".

At the end of the eighteenth century meetings in the forest were also held at the home of James Crawfoot, where the participants were known as the "Magic Methodists". These had a strong influence on Hugh Bourne (1772-1852) who later became one of the founders of Primitive Methodism.

Regarding the afore-mentioned Mr. Pugh, Joseph Janion speaks of a Love Feast being held at the New Pale about 1782. It is also recorded that the Methodists of New Pale and Woodside (near Mouldsworth) numbered nine in 1778, 24 in 1799 and 15 in 1810 (including George Pugh, Alice Pugh, his wife, Robert Pugh, his brother, and Esther Pugh who was probably Robert's wife). For some years services continued to be held at the New Pale, and Janion writes:

When I call to mind the public meetings which were held at the New Pale about 40 years ago (i.e. 1793), especially our love-feasts which came round once or twice in the year, I think I am back to the primitive ages of Christianity, when simplicity and godly sincerity occupied every bosom The influence of these love-feasts spread as far as Manchester and Bolton, and our friends came from every quarter. Such crowds came from neighbouring villages, that, at times we were obliged to hold the love feasts out of doors, or in some of the outbuildings, and great were our rejoicings on these occasions.

According to the historian, Pamela Horn, "their prayers would mount into a frenzy at these love feasts with men and women clasping each one another, crying out and throwing themselves on the floor in a kind of ecstasy".

Of the other houses in Delamere Forest in the eighteenth century little has been written, except for a description of the "Forrester's House" (the Old Pale) provided by Mrs. G. Linneaus Banks in her chapter in "Bygone Cheshire" published in 1895. Her great-grandmother, Sarah Bancroft, carried on a furriers business in Manchester, and because she supplied rabbit skins for making felt for hats, she had dealings with the "Chief Forrester" in Delamere. The aunt of Mrs. Banks eventually became friendly with the Forester's family "and frequently spent her holidays there from 1788 onwards". These visits made her aunt "familiar with the forest, and the forest house" as she called it. Mrs. Banks says "that I learned from her that it was just a rambling old farm house as so many of the fine old black and white timbered halls of Cheshire have become. It was one of this description, and if very old then, no wonder that the storms of a century have left nothing for the antiquary to bind his faith to."

The scrap book, edited by Mrs. Nancy Ackerley in the 1950s, claims that in the eighteenth century the stones from the original Chamber in the Forest were used to build a farmhouse. Legend has it that a murder was committed here, and because the blood stain could not be removed from the hearth stone it was abandoned and fell into ruin. The foundations were unearthed by W. J. Varley in 1936, and many stones from the building lay around the hillside at the time.

Most of the deforesting of the twin forests of Mara and Mondrem seems to have taken place in Medieval or Tudor times, but of the rest, of what is today known as Delamere Forest, much has also continued to be cleared and felled up to modern times. Part of the forest was reclaimed at the end of the eighteenth century to the extent of 4,023 acres, besides Old and New Pale farms of 755 acres under a lease from the Crown. By this time it is said that much of the natural vegetation had been destroyed by exploitation and little but low quality heathland remained.

An entry in Weaverham Parish Register for 1777, regarding the sad fate of John Barker of that parish would seem to support the description. On January 21st, it reads, "this poor man had been out with his team towards Cote Brook, had drunk too much, lost his team in the forest, and was starved to death".

Further to this, it also happens that Burdett's map was published in 1777. Apart from estate maps, this was the first large scale map of the county to be produced (one inch to one mile). This, too, gives the same impression. It marks a great number of roads and paths through the forest but only names New Pale and "Jenions Intack" in the north, and the Chamber in the Forest and Oakmere further south. In his recent history ("Squire and Tenant") Geoffrey Scard, in writing about Delamere during the eighteenth century, comments that it "had much open land because it included commons at Norley, Kingsley, Frodsham, Alvanley and Tarvin; all of which would be gone by 1830".

Among the Cholmondeley papers (15th March 1784), a lease is noted of the Old Pale being held by the Earl of Cholmondeley under the Crown at a yearly rent of £160 for 477 acres. A Mr. Stephens was the Earl's agent. They also mention that "it was formerly occupied by John Merrick, yeoman, and that there were two other offices known by the names of Merrick's office and Wright's office".

THE FORMATION OF THE PARISH (1800-1900)

During the first decade of this century there was still a good deal of uncultivated land in Cheshire and much of this consisted of forests, hills and peat moors. Writing in 1810, Lysons described the area around Delamere as "a large dreary tract of wasteland". The forest, he said, contained 10,000 acres, but by this time 2,000 acres had been enclosed. Willington was an extra-parochial township.

It was in 1812 that what was left of the medieval forest was officially deforested. The Crown retained some land and much of this was still farmed as Crown property. The modern historian, R. N. Dore states that 'the rest was allotted to private owners. Some of the Crown lands were reserved under the Surveyor of Woods and Forests (now the Forestry Commission) and planted with conifers. This was the foundation of the small modern Forest of Delamere which lies north-west and north-east of Delamere station."

The new parish of Delamere was created by an Act of Parliament which received the Royal Assent on 9th June 1812. This states that "The King (George III) is seised of the Forest or Chace of Mara and Mondrem, otherwise Delamere, containing by estimation 8,000 acres and lying open and unenclosed. He is also seised of two ancient enclosures within the boundaries of the Forest, called the Old Pale and the New Pale, comprising 750 acres. The said two Pales are the exclusive property of his Majesty, subject to rights of agistment and commonage on the unenclosed parts, of the owners and occupiers of any messuages, lands etc., in the townships, hamlets and places adjoining the Forest. The whole of the Forest is extra parochial.

"George James, Earl of Cholmondeley is lessee of the whole of the herbage, etc.

"John Arden of Harden, esq. is Chief Forester, Bowbearer and Forest Bailiff, and claims for himself and his under-keepers certain ancient lodges, offices, sheep walks, messuages, lands, conies and fishings.

"Thomas Cholmondeley, of Vale Royal, esquire, as owner of the dissolved monastery, claims Oakmere and a quarry called Eddisbury Hill Quarry.

"James Egerton of Oulton, esquire, claims Hatchew Mere and Fish Pool by a 99 years grant of 10th Nov: 1777, to Philip Egerton, esquire."

Various other properties are also mentioned, together with plans for building a church. The document ends as follows:

"The grounds and lands within the territory of the said Forest are hereby deforested and discharged from forestal rights, etc., except that John Arden, if he so claims, shall continue to retain the title of Chief Forester, Bowbearer and Forest Bailiff."

The boundaries of the Forest of Delamere are laid down in detail in other documents but, unfortunately, are too lengthy for inclusion in this work. The boundary stones are also named, including a "Mere Stone called Headless Cross". The commissioners for this work were named as Robert Harvey and Joseph Fenna and their final report appears to be dated 12th May 1813.

In 1819 the parish was divided into four — Kingswood, Eddisbury, Oakmere and Delamere. The King's half of the forest was divided into nine allotments — Castle Hill (869 acres), Linnere (1,041), Hindwell (16), Harewood Hill, Primrose Hill (695), Longridge (915), Plover's Moss (369), Forest House (84) and Lob Slack. Nine public carriageways were set out, repairable by the townships in which they lay, and occupation roads were made, to be kept in order by the people through whose land they passed.

Twenty parcels of land were set aside for public uses and these included five gravel pits, six marl and stone pits, four stone pits, two watering places for cattle and three more which were impossible to drain.

In 1856 a further Act was passed authorising the cultivation as farm land of still further tracts of forest.

In the forest there are no villages of any size, no old halls and no old churches. On the land set aside in the Act of 1812 Delamere Parish Church was built in 1816 and this was the first. Those at Kingsley, Norley, Crowton and Alvanley did not appear until after 1850. The new church was dedicated to St. Peter and was built with part of £1,000,000 given by the government for such purposes to commemorate a famous battle. Ever since it has been known as a "Waterloo" church.

During this century the Methodists continued to be active and George Pugh, who was noted in the last chapter, was mentioned in a document of March 1813 in connection with the enclosure. He had two sons, George and John. George junior married Hannah, a daughter of Joseph Janion who was also a devout Methodist. Her father writes that "she had serious impressions almost from her infancy". When about seven years old her aunt, a Mrs. Denton, used to teach her lessons and made a constant practice of praying with her once or twice a day when she came to dinner or supper.

James Crawfoot was another staunch supporter of the cause at this time. He began monthly meetings at his home in the forest

about 1809, and it was not unusual in the midst of the praying and conversation for persons to pass into a state of trance and have visions; hence the name, the Magic Methodists. He was a local preacher in the Northwich Circuit when Hugh Bourne agreed to give him ten shillings a week until Lady Day to support him in his teaching. He died suddenly in 1839 and was buried at Tarvin.

About the middle of the century, Mary became the last of the Pugh family to live at New Pale Lodge which she sold to a Gibson of Liverpool. In 1864 the Claim Farm, which included New Pale Lodge, was sold by the Duncufts, the then owners, to John Higson. He died in 1893, and in 1919 his son, Capt. William Higson of Oakmere Hall, conveyed the property to the solicitors for the Liverpool Sanatorium. Pugh's tenement is mentioned in this deed.

Delamere Chapel, situated in Willington Road, was built for the Calvinistic Methodists in 1817 (Minister: W. Evans of Queen St., Chester). The other chapel, for the New Connection Methodists, was erected in 1823. The Steward then was Richard Johnson who lived in Delamere. The same year Slater wrote in his Chronicle, "Delamere Forest is entirely wild and desolate from Kelsall to Over and from Kelsall to Vale Royal. There is not a home nor a fence, nor a carriage road, but merely a sort of sandy driftway for horses."

In 1817 a plan of the Forest of Delamere was drawn up by E. Fuller, and was revised and corrected in 1848 by the Chester surveyor, John Palin. The scale is 22½ chains to the inch (eighty chains equal one mile). A summary of Crown Property is shown as 4,022 acres of forest, and 755 acres of land under lease. A description of the trees at that time shows them to have been mainly oak, with some ash, chestnut, larch and Scots pine. The map is of a particular interest because the names of many of the occupiers are shown as well as certain features of the forest which are named after persons connected with it, or after purposes for which they were once used. For instance, George Wilbraham's name appears several times in the Hatchmere (once Hatchew-mere) area, and Hornby's Lodge, further south is given prominence. Gig Hole suggests a flax-drying oven, while Plague Hole is presumed to have been used for burying after a "Visitation" but whether for people or cattle is unknown. Massey's Lodge and Headless Cross are shown to the east. Urchins Kitchen (a sub-glacial channel), Whistle Bitch Well, and Rutter's Lodge are marked in the south. To the west, several gates, such as Grey's are shown and indicate entrances to the forest. In the middle stands The New Pale to the North and the Old Pale to the South. The Glebe allotment, of course, refers to land belonging to the church. Various mere Stones are shown which indicate boundaries, and in each part of the forest woodman's lodges are marked. In the nineteenth century each woodman was responsible for his own nursery. In more recent times Hind's Well, not far from the Turnpike Gate, was used for water to replenish the water needed by steam waggons.

At this time the Crown was the largest landowner in the parish. In 1841, however, other principal owners were shown as: *Delamere*: Lord Alvanley, the Earl of Shrewsbury and Colonel Tomkinson. *Eddisbury*: Lord Delamere and Lord Alvanley. *Oakmere*: Lord Delamere, George Wilbraham and Samuel Hornby. *Kingswood*: The Marquis of Cholmondeley. How and why these families came to own land in the parish is fully explained in George Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*. However, because of his "local" title, some further comment is required regarding Lord Delamere. It will be recalled that this title was formerly held by the Booth family but it became extinct about 1770 with the death of the fourth lord. The Vale Royal estate was held by Thomas Cholmondeley from 1779 to 1855, and when George IV wished to honour him, according to report, he was asked whether he would be called Lord Weaver or Lord Delamere and he selected the latter title. So it was, on 17th July 1821, that he was created Baron Delamere of Vale Royal. He was succeeded by his son, Hugh (1811-1887) and the 3rd Baron, born 1870, was also named Hugh. Again, because it is a local title, it might also be mentioned that Edward John, second Lord Stanley of Alderley was created Baron Eddisbury of Winnington, Cheshire, in 1848, during the lifetime of his father. The fifth Lord Stanley was Member for the Eddisbury political division of the county from 1906-1910. Some of these were undoubtedly absentee landlords and Ormerod had little to say about what might be called "the forest dwellers". Since such people seldom kept records this is a difficult task but, during research, certain documents and diaries have come to light and these are now used to tell something of the lives of those who resided in a large but scattered parish.

It would seem that in ancient times there were other townships in the forest that have disappeared, such as the village of Edlaston which was mentioned in the sixteenth year of the reign of Edward I, but is not included in Domesday. More recently, because it was newly created, Kingswood is not described in Ormerod's work. The 1841 Census shows that at this time there were 164 houses in the parish made up of 85 in Delamere, 31 in Eddisbury, 33 in Oakmere and 15 in Kingswood. With a few exceptions, it would seem that most of these were cottages and the inhabitants rather poor.

Early in the century, although enclosure often caused trouble in other parts of the country, in Cheshire it is said, it "proceeded gradually and peacefully and with the consent of all sections of the community". However, fluctuating fortunes in agriculture in the later years certainly resulted in civil unrest from the farm labourers, in particular, as they struggled for higher wages and better living conditions. Actually, the average wages of labourers in Cheshire were higher than in any other part of the country throughout the century and rose from 1 1/6d. per week in 1824 to 16/10d. in 1898, compared with 7/8d. to 12/7d. per week in many rural counties such as Cornwall. It has been stated that this was because of its

"proximity to industrial areas" but the wages of men living in Delamere may well have been below the average due to transport difficulties and isolation. It is interesting to note from the statistics that in 1863 it was necessary for children to work, and for six days a week, working from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. "minding cows grazing". They received 9d. per day. It is therefore perhaps understandable that families had difficulties in making enough to provide even sufficient food for themselves and, in an area such as Delamere, the temptation to poach was sometimes too strong. The notes which follow are taken from letters written by the wife of Mr. Thomas Linnell, forester of Delamere, to her son in Australia probably after 1874. It was written at Eddisbury Lodge, a mile west of Delamere Station, and describes events of about 1860.

We arrived in deep snow. The approach to Rangers Lodge, which was our home, was through an avenue of Spruce Firs, a mile and a quarter long, with a lodge at the end of it. We were two miles from a house, except the carter's cottage and the coachman's house, and two miles from three churches (Ashton, Delamere and Kelsall).

We came at a bad time, the former surveyor could not control the people; they tried to get possession of the whole place; six policemen paraded the Forest night and day from London, besides Foresters, four Woodmen and the Foreman. The people nailed threatening letters on the gates, put them under doors. Some were found saying the Master would find his grave in the Forest, and I have those letters now. The Foreman's pig was shot, some of our windows had been riddled with shot. Many acres had been lost through the people squatting, which is building a hut, and if not disturbed for seven years it became their own. Several houses had to have roofs taken off, whilst people were in them, to prevent them claiming them. A little firmness soon put things straight, first one policeman went, then another, till they all disappeared. Your father had a singular experience of firing out of the window if he heard anyone about towards night in the darkness. In their terror they believed the shots came straight for them. One man crept home on hands and knees and I have heard people racing up the drive.

About this time an order came for half the Forest to be made into farms. I thought it would all have to be cut down, but some ladies wrote such appealing letters that the Honourable Commissioner said he never would cut another tree. However, now it is practically dis-afforested, the Rangers Lodge being turned into a farm house and cavalry barracks are going to be built.

There are the remains of a castle and moat on the Old Pale Farm. There is also a remarkable stone called the Devil's Thumb Stone of many tons weight. When the dis-afforestation

began, it was removed to the Rectory. I forget how many men and women were required to move it, but a great many. The real history of it is that it must have floated here on an iceberg in some remote age. It was granite sandstone (*sic*) and the marks supposed to be the Devil's claw must have been made by the fretting of ice on it.

The bogs in the Forest were rather remarkable; there had been lakes as the name De la Mere describes. Some you could only run over, some you could not go over at all without getting in and some you could walk over, but they seemed to shake. One day a huntsman's horse got into the bog, and if there had not been men and rope at hand, he could not have been saved.

There was once great excitement. A bottle was found near the Black Lake with a paper inside saying that a man named William Harcourt from Liverpool had drowned himself in the lake as he could get no work, but that his last thoughts were for his dear wife and children. The ninth day, when the body was supposed to float, there were crowds in the Forest, but no body made its appearance. Then a deep cutting was made, the lake let off, but still nothing was found. The police were communicated with, but no trace of such a man was ever found.

There is a charming place called the Beech Avenue (now part of Eddisbury Lodge Farm). It seems as if it might be a quarter of a mile long. It is lovely in the summer, but best in the autumn, with its golden tints it is glorious. There is also the Chestnut Avenue, which is so lovely in the spring. The views from the top of the hill on the Old Pale are delightful; you can see the Mersey, Birkenhead, Liverpool and Snowdon sometimes, and Beeston, also the Derbyshire Hills.

It is known that Mrs. Linnell possessed much personal beauty in her youth, was the mother of a large family and that she died about 1897 at the age of 92 or 93. Although she seemed rather reluctant to go to Delamere she obviously grew to love the Forest, and other extracts from her writings are included in later chapters.

Apart from the Devils Thumb Stone, according to "Cheshire Proverbs" (1917), about 1850 there was another stone at the side of a road in Delamere Forest on the face of which were the words: "Turn me o'er and I'll tell thee plain." On the reverse was the inscription:

"Hot porridge will soak old crusts;
Turn me o'er again."

For the local historian, obituaries can sometimes be informative, and the following may give some insight into the life of at least one inhabitant at the end of the century.

In 1904 the death of William Dutton (Bishop Dutton) was reported. He had been born at Foxcover Lodge in 1832, one of a family of eleven. He used to walk to school at Weaverham, but had

very little education since he became ill with rheumatic fever at an early age which resulted in him becoming a cripple and being bedridden for eight years. His father died in 1861 leaving his large family destitute. However, in 1862, William opened a school in his mother's house and this prospered for some time. Having "signed the pledge" he became involved in temperance work and was a local preacher for 40 years as well as school attendance officer for 20 years. He was described as being "very quaint" and travelled about the parish on a donkey. Shortly before his death he was given a phaeton, pony and harness by his grateful flock.

Reading through church records and parish papers gives the impression that the sort of life led by William Dutton was not exceptional. Illness and poverty must have made life hard for many living in such a remote parish. Agricultural wages rose sharply during the Crimean War in 1853 and 1854, they increased in the period prior to 1871 and again between 1889 and 1902. For farmers, however, 1879 was a disastrous season and many must have been living in poverty. Even at their best, farm wages were said to be only 55% of the industrial rate.

However, during the nineteenth century the population continued to grow from 424 inhabitants in 1821 (Ancient Parish) to 1,473 inhabitants in 1901 (Civil Parish). Indeed, Sarah Cash of the parish reported on longevity in and about Delamere in 1896. In particular she mentioned Thomas Jamieson of Rue-loe (pronounced Rough low) who died in May of that year at 97 ("he was clear headed, strong, had good teeth and read without spectacles"). Mathew Darlington of Willington was buried in the churchyard aged 103. While Mrs. Martha Astbury ("old Matty Aspey") died aged 99. Apparently "she was very small. Sixty years ago, before the Id. post, she was the 'letter carrier'. She used to go to dances at the Black Dog in a white frock with a brown rose in her hair. This old inn was demolished many years ago, but Dog Lane, near Kelsall, still survives."

Mrs. Nancy Ackerley's notes written about 1950 also have tales to tell about the nineteenth century.

Delamere seems to have been blessed with rectors who were above the average as men of character. Mr. Fox, in whose day the school was built and who seems to have been keenly interested in education, was a cousin of Charles Darwin the naturalist. Darwin spent more than one holiday at Delamere.

In the rectory and school gardens are specimens of a unique umbrella fern, said to have been brought from South America by Darwin himself.

This Mr. Fox had so many children, eighteen it is believed, that half of them slept in the rectory farmhouse which was used as an overflow home.

The father of the late rector, Doctor Payne, left a vivid impression upon the parish.

He drove about in a phaeton and was a well known figure on the roads, ruling his parish as well as his household with a rod of iron. Every night he paid everyone who worked for him, no matter whether the job in hand be finished or not. "I might die in the night! I might die in debt," was his explanation.

One day he visited one of his parishioners and, enquiring for the man of the house, received from his trembling wife the reply, "He's out Doctor." "I'll wait," he announced, and sat in awful silence by the fire whilst the woman continued with her housework. At noon her husband returned. The rector gave him a look and said sharply, "John, do you know your way to Delamere Church?" "Yes, Doctor!" "Then why don't you come, man?" and so stalked out.

Two old men from Willington tell the tale of how, as boys, they dug a pit in Gooseberry Lane, covered it with leaves and branches, hid behind the hedge to wait for an unwary villager and, to their horror, caught Doctor Payne.

THE OLD WOMAN OF DELAMERE FOREST

As related in other chapters in this book, for those who lived in the rural areas of this country the first half of the nineteenth century was a period of great poverty for many. Wages were low, work was hard to find and some, during their search for employment, were without homes. During the early months of 1815, therefore, the tales that circulated about a woman who had come to live in a cart in the middle of Delamere Forest probably caused little surprise. It was on 17th of July that a mysterious stranger came on foot to Vale Royal, bringing a letter, of which the following is a copy: Madam, Madame Thumley, at Vale Royal, Cheshire. Most Honoreth, Highborn Lady, My Lady Thumley,

As I have heard that I am at the present tim, at your property, namely at the Oakmare — we are latly, comen out of Germany, were I lost my Husbant. As I came into England, I vind Rents so high, that I do not know how I do for to live, without charaty, as the same way as most of the people live abroad, so I am gone about, to seek some waste ground, for then I can live, and provide for myself, for I have a little to make a small beginning with, but Halas! I vind, that all the Commons are verbid. Now I am at rest, and this place I am able to live, if I may be there, but do not mean to make myself a Parish, for I never intent to submyt to Parish keeping, for I belong to a foring chapel, in London, but I may yet do for myself, if I am permyted. Therefore, I humbly beg, Noble lady, you would not denie me this favour, to stop here a few weeks, till I write up to London, for I cannot pay for lorging. I humbly beg, that your honour may send some of your trusty servants to enguire, and to see ware we are. We shall not trouble any body,

for anything, nor hurt, nor destroy anything, rather protect the
remanes of the trees, most noble lady, I humbly begg, deny my
not a little rest, at this peacable place.

I am,

Your most obligint and humble stranger,

Maria Hollingsworth

Oakmere, July 17th 1815

The poor woman's appearance was of great poverty, but her
miserable garments were tidy, and did not conceal the faded remains
of beauty. Her manners and language were impressive; even with
some degree of elegance.

She claimed to be the daughter of a Lutheran clergyman, of
Leuwarden, in West Friesland, where she was born in 1765. She
married an English soldier of the 22nd regiment, which formed a
part of an expedition to Germany, under the command of Lord
Cathcart, and followed him through many dangers till he fell at
Bergen op Zoom (1814) leaving her with two children, a boy and a
girl. The son was apprenticed to a carpenter in Hanover, but the
mother, who was recommended to the protection of Queen Charlotte
and obtained a small pension, journeyed to England with her
daughter.

For their travels, it appears that Maria Hollingsworth obtained a
small donkey cart which served as a shelter at night, and two goats
whose milk supplied the chief part of their nourishment. Thus they
wandered round the countryside, frequently being moved on by
parish officers as vagabonds. Eventually they turned towards
Liverpool, hoping to get a passage to America, and it was on this
journey that they came to Delamere Forest, at that time unenclosed,
and a dreary place with little habitation. Here, however, their spirits
revived and they were delighted with the solitude.

Having received permission from Mr. Thos. Cholmondeley to live
on his land, Mrs. Hollingsworth set to work to make a permanent
home. Upon a rising bank near Oakmere stood two ribs of a whale,
which had been placed there by Philip Egerton of Oulton. Between
these ribs she formed a rough sort of hut, making a wall of sods and
a roof of boughs.

Many fables circulated about Mrs. Hollingsworth and she became
an object of great curiosity in the neighbourhood. Visitors of all
ranks went to see her strange dwelling and often contributed a few
coins towards her needs. As her means increased some
improvements were made. The turf walls were raised, a door and a
small casement were introduced, and the hide of the donkey, which
had died, was stretched over the roof to make it more weather proof.
A fence of sods was constructed to enclose about half an acre for a
garden, the produce from which, together with a few chickens,
helped to give her some independence.

The hut is said to have measured 8ft. by 10ft. and was little more
than 5ft. high. Here the mother taught her daughter to read and

write English, French and German, and gave free instruction to some children of the neighbourhood.

In the year 1820 Mrs. Hollingsworth received a letter from her son stating he was leaving Hanover and sailing for Liverpool. His mother and sister were delighted at the prospect of meeting him again and spent long hours on a nearby eminence eagerly scanning the road for his return. At length they spotted a man who appeared to be a carpenter coming towards Oakmere. On his way he had to pass the cottage of someone who was supposed to be "of bad character". Here the traveller stopped, apparently to ask the way, went inside, but although the pair waited for him for a long time, he never reappeared. All night long mother and daughter worried and before dawn, hearing footsteps, went out and saw the neighbour and his son carrying a heavy sack which they threw into the mere. Apparently dissatisfied that it did not sink, however, they recovered it and disappeared behind the cottage carrying spades. The widow followed the men but lost sight of them. Quite distracted at the thought that her son had been murdered she returned home but brought the matter before the authorities in the morning. Mr. Wilbraham, of Delamere House, assisted her, but the mystery of the sack was never solved, nor was the identity of the traveller. Eventually, Mr. Wilbraham ascertained that the son was alive and well in Hanover, and after a period of time he came to Oakmere. He was accepted by his mother and sister as their missing kinsman, but without enthusiasm, and there the matter ended.

Later the old woman was nominated to fill a vacancy in one of the Dutch Almshouses in London and here she was living in 1832.

MODERN TIMES (1901-1991)

In the closing years of the nineteenth century the leaders in any village society were still the squire, the rector, and the school teacher, so Dr. Payne continued to be an awesome figure of some importance until the outbreak of the First World War. Unfortunately, however, and unlike those of many in his position, his parish magazines had little to say about everyday life in Delamere and confined themselves mainly to expenditure. Doubtless there was a service in the church to mourn the passing of Queen Victoria in 1901 as was the case in every village in the land, and the Coronation of Edward VII was certainly celebrated, as the magazine of May 1903 showed payments for "100 copies of the Coronation Service — 4s 6d" and "bunting for repairing the flag 2s ½d". Of purely local interest (May 1904), there was a government grant to the National School of £121.18.0, the headmaster paid nine

months rent of £12 for the School House, and at the school inspection in "Religious Knowledge, Group 2 was very disappointing especially in the Acts of the Apostles". At this 123 of the 130 pupils were present. In April 1910, the churchwardens, Mr. Cookson and Mr. Jeffs, "promised to see the churchyard was kept in better order". The following year, 1911, the magazine recorded that the Mothers' Union met at Mrs. Clegg's at Abbey Wood, and the forthcoming wedding of Dr. Payne's daughter, Mina, on 15th June was announced. In 1912 several payments to Mrs. Maddock "for brandy" were noted, but no explanations were given. By this time Mrs. Lewis (Old Pale Cottage) was being paid "2/- for cleaning the Church".

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth I the training of soldiers took place on the Roodeye at Chester and, in more recent times, so did that of the Yeomanry, until they were removed to Delamere Forest which, in 1905, still consisted of 2,596 acres. The Cheshire Yeomanry held their Annual Camps here in 1908 and 1925. On the second occasion this was "at Sandy Brow, the home of Capt. Fergusson of the 2nd Line". The Chester Chronicle of February 28th 1903 reported a "Presentation to Rev. S. W. Payne. During the long residence under canvas at Delamere of the N. Western District Mounted Infantry, the Rev. Dr. Payne of Delamere Rectory, acted as Honorary Chaplain and, together with his family, otherwise identified himself in a pleasing way with the life of the soldiers under Capt. Stodart MacLellan. On Monday a.m. the worthy Doctor received a magnificent silver box on the lid of which was the following inscription: 'Delamere Camp, Cheshire, to Rev. S. W. Payne, R.N., LL.D. as a slight token of regard and esteem to their Honorary Chaplain from the North Western District Mounted Infantry, 1902'." On this occasion the troops were encamped on fields which are now part of the Golf Club, and the officers had their H.Q. at Windy Howe.

George Rock

It was in 1911 that a man who came to be described as "one of Cheshire's most widely known characters" came to Oakmere. Born at Woodend, near Lichfield in 1880, George Edwin Rock came from a long line of gamekeepers and started his career as underkeeper to Sir Stewkeley Shuckburgh in Warwickshire where he stayed nine years until he married. In 1910 Oakmere was still part of the Vale Royal estate, but later the mere was bought by Lord Wavertree who planted trees and bushes to turn it into a bird sanctuary where only predators were killed, and the rare plants which made Oakmere a botanist's paradise were preserved. In this way George Rock became not only a gamekeeper but also a naturalist and, in an article written some twenty years ago, Norman Ellison described how he became friendly with many who were well known in this field, such as Coward, Boyd and Prof. Robert

Newstead. For fifty years, until his retirement in 1960, George Rock was the gamekeeper at Oakmere, but he was also involved in many local organisations. From 1922 he was an active member of the Oakmere Parish Council and its secretary from 1941, a lifelong member of the Delamere Village Club (the Community Centre), and for thirty-five years he acted as secretary of the Delamere District Conservative Association. His wife died in 1961 aged ninety-three, and George Rock, a tall enthusiastic man of great stamina, died on 17th February 1970 aged nearly ninety. Both were well liked and will always be remembered in the parish of Delamere.

Delamere Shire Horses

John Kenworthy of Castle Hill used to have a well-known stud of shire horses in the early part of this century, although the first registered stallion dated back to 1898. They had names with the prefix "Delamere" and were kept on land which is now Delamere Farm, where the strong wood post-and-rail fences and shelters can still be seen. One man was responsible for each horse, and the stallions would stand for a period in the larger villages or be transported by train from Delamere station to more distant parts.

Shire horses not only provided power on the farms, before the coming of the tractor, but were also used for haulage for industry. There are records of Delamere horses used by Sankey Sugar at Earlstown. It was an impressive sight to see these magnificent animals being exercised on the roads, or going to Kelsall Smithy to be shod. At one time there were as many as six stallions, but the last record of the Kenworthy Shires was in 1935 when the stud fee was fifty shillings.

The Delamere prefix was not used again until the 1970s, when it was taken by Ernest Nixon who had both shire stallions and mares; the last, in 1989, being Delamere Beauty.

The First World War

As in other parts of the country, when war broke out in 1914 Delamere was quite unprepared. Nevertheless, many from the parish rallied to the cause and volunteered for service in the armed forces, and of these thirty-six were never to return. It is said that during September and October of that year recruiting at Chester Castle averaged 120 men per day. In the early years at least, however, and apart from those who had friends and relations serving abroad, the war seemed to make little difference to the inhabitants of Delamere. Early in 1914 a minority went to Chester to stock up with food but otherwise life went on as usual. In 1915 women were taking up men's work, and post girls replaced post men, but, not for the first time, Mrs. Clegg of Abbey Wood and Mrs. Crewdson of The Grange paid for a Sunday School Treat at Christmas. Throughout the war, Evening Services at Church were held at 5.30 p.m. to save fuel and light in the winter. But there were

no air raids, and food shortages (due to submarines) didn't occur until 1917. However, conditions did deteriorate during the last year of the war. At times there was no beer in the public houses, and in 1918a General Rationing Scheme was introduced and this curtailed sales of meat, butter and margarine and lasted until 3rd May 1919. Nevertheless, being in a rural area, Delamere inhabitants were often self-supporting with vegetables and dairy products and probably suffered less than those living in the towns. Certainly parish records had little to say about the war throughout hostilities and the magazine still had space to record such items as (in February 1917) "the buying of curtains for the church from Browns of Chester for £11.13.6d".

The Twenties

The years following the end of the war saw a strengthening in the power of the Church. For example, the numbers of Ordination candidates rose nationally from 161 in 1919 to 346 in 1921, and during the month of March 1922 services at Delamere were held in church on no fewer than sixteen days.

The Miners Strike of 1921 and the General Strike of 1926 both invoked comments from the Rector, George Payne. Industry, he said, was "bleeding to death", and he set about trying to improve the morals and general behaviour of his parishioners. "Saying Grace after meals," he regretted, was becoming extinct, but he did acknowledge that drunkenness and bad language were no longer as "acceptable as they were in the days of our fathers". In 1921 he was responsible for "The White Crusade" which started, with the object of "raising moral standards through purity and self-discipline", at a meeting at Abbey Wood on 7th March, and others were held at Tarporley and Kelsall. This crusade does not appear to have succeeded as it is not mentioned again in the magazine. However, the Band of Hope and the Sunday School were both well established in Delamere during this decade.

The Band of Hope, which sought to promote temperance among the impressionable young, was founded in this country during the 1840s and was incorporated into the Sunday School movement from 1876. Many youngsters, of course, attended Sunday School not from personal inclination but because they were "sent" by parents anxious to enjoy a peaceful child-free sabbath, or concerned to ensure that their offspring were properly instructed in morality and religion. Its aims were similar to those of the Crusade.

In 1927 another well-known organisation formed a branch in Delamere on 17th May. This was the Girls Friendly Society who "banded together for the Glory of God", and their first meeting was attended by fifteen girls. This rapidly became popular and on 10th February 1928 they held their first dance. "Miss Ruby Buckley and Miss Rutter acted as M.Cs. for the dancing."

Just when the practice began is not clear, but in June 1921 an entry in the Parish Magazine asked that, "Those who wished to have Liverpool children should send their names to the Rector." This was an advertisement that was repeated each summer for many years. It seems that every July a party of children, presumably from the poorer areas of Liverpool, were given free holidays in the countryside around Delamere and these were largely paid for by the Liverpool Country Holiday Fund. They stayed for three weeks and their hosts were paid an allowance of 10/- to 11/- per head.

During the Twenties there is no doubt that there were plenty of amusements in the parish. During the winter there were usually three whist drives, lantern lectures and parish outings to such places as Blackpool, as well as the occasional concert. Rummage sales were frequently held to raise money for worthy causes. The Delamere Club was also growing in popularity. Here a Circulating Library started in 1923 and in 1925 the grounds around the building were laid out for bowls and tennis. Football and cricket matches were popular. There is no doubt, however, that the main attraction of the year was the Annual Garden Party which was held in the Rectory grounds every July. Such events followed the same pattern year after year. On 17th July 1926, for example, it was opened at 2.30 by Mrs. Arthur Midwood of Oakmere Hall. There was a bowling competition (cup presented by Mr. J. Anderton Naylor of Overdale), a tennis tournament (tennis shoes must be worn) and a performance by the Helsby Prize Band, which played all afternoon and in the evening for dancing between 6.0 and 10.0 p.m. The secretaries were G. E. Rock of Oakmere and W. Abrahams of Abbey Wood Lodge.

It is difficult, and perhaps dangerous, to name those who were prominent amongst so many who helped to run the Church and other organisations during this period. Local names who opened the Annual Garden Party might, however, be mentioned and these included Maj. C. Tomkinson, members of the Clegg and Crewdson families and Lady Nuttall of Overdale, whose husband's company at the time was building the Mersey Tunnel. Apart from these, the families of Abrahams, Worthington, Done, Rutter, Johnson and Burton also appear regularly in the records.

Other notes of interest which are taken from the Parish Magazines are as follows:

1921 (May) Mr. H. Burton retired as Delamere Station Master after 17 years. He had worked for the railways for 46 years.

(Aug) An epidemic of Whooping Cough.

(Sept) Attempts to replace oil lamps outside the Church with electricity.

1924 At the end of Nov. 1923, the Cattle Plague came with such violence that the Manager of the School and the Trustees of the Club felt compelled to close those places for public recreation. Farmers

received some compensation and the Plague lasted until March 1924.

- 1926 Rev. Richard Craven Garnett died in Hampshire aged 83 on March 3rd.
- 1927 Mr. Peter Frith became Chairman of the Chester Branch of the N.F.U. Twelve distributors were now taking round a record number of 200 magazines.
- 1928 The death of Mr. James Griffiths, School Head for 40 years until he retired in 1911. He was also Parish Clerk at Delamere for 40 years and Chairman of Eddisbury Parish Council for 16 years.

The year of 1928 was important for the parish as it was on 20th and 21st December, by direction of Lord Delamere, that 4,964 acres of the Vale Royal Estate were sold. Apart from woodland, some 70 country cottages were auctioned by Knight, Frank and Rutley, as well as The Abbey Arms Hotel and two other hotels in the vicinity; also Oakmere and Abbots Moss Training Gallops. Some of the land was described as possessing "an immediate development value". Many of the items in the catalogue were sold to sitting tenants, but the major part of the estate was bought by Lord Wavertree.

The Thirties

Throughout most of this period the Depression continued, with low wages and hard living conditions, particularly in the country districts. Tramps were not uncommon on the highways, begging a little money from any who were able to give.

It was in 1931 that Beatrice Tunstall's novel, "The Shiny Night" was published. This was a tale of a Bunbury man who was transported to Botany Bay for poaching and returned to live at the Image House in his native village (see "Bunbury", the History of a Cheshire Village). Since the Chamber in the Forest was to be mentioned in her book, Miss Tunstall spent some time researching in Delamere and had several conversations with the Rector. As a result, the Parish Magazine of October 1931 records the following: "It probably stood on the highest point of the Old Pale Farm. A Flag Staff supported by a heap of stones marked the spot up to a year or two ago. An old woman once showed Miss Tunstall this spot at a place where 'an old ancient house stood'. If you look at the ground around carefully you can still see the traces of the red stone ridges that formed the double ramparts of the 'Little City'. It ceased to be a dwelling place about 1820 and soon fell into a ruinous condition, and was finally demolished about 1861."

From the Magazines it seemed that parish life continued in much the same way as in the previous decade. Each January there was a tea at the School, which included "a concert and a dance" — all for 1/6d. whist drives and lantern lectures continued, the Liverpool

children came for their holidays up to the outbreak of war (by which time the chief work was undertaken by Mr. Ackerley and Mr. Norman Frith), and bowls, football and cricket were played throughout the period. However, the Delamere Garden Party was still the main annual attraction and at this a Rose Queen (Mona Joinson) was crowned in 1939 for the first time. The local personalities who performed the opening ceremony during this period included Mrs. Spiegelberg of Cotebrook, Mrs. Mortimer of Crofton Lodge, Mr. Philip Egerton of Oulton and Mrs. Cyril Dewhurst of Overdale. Indeed, during the '30s the Garden Party seemed to increase in popularity but problems in collecting the entrance money did arise as suggested by an entry in 1931 when "Mr. Goring (with the help of a well trained bull) promised to see that no gate crashers came in from the church path on to the grounds".

Probably most in the parish helped with annual functions but somehow, as in any village, there are always some names which appear in the records more frequently than others. In Delamere, during the decade, the families of Tomkinson, Goring, Frith, England, Morrey, Kenworthy, Hankey and Chrimes were among the more regular helpers.

A few items taken from the Parish Magazines are as follows:-

- 1930 (March) Ploughing and Hedging Competition held at the farm of Mr. W. Ellison at Kingswood.
- (May) Bought motor mower for the graveyard.
- (Dec.) Capt. W. G. Clegg became High Sheriff.
- 1931 (May) Mr. Peter Frith became Chairman of the R.D.C. after being a member for 21 years.
- 1932 (July) Mr. W. Frith died after serving on the Northwich R.D.C. for many years, and being a member of the School Management Committee. His place was taken by Mr. John Nixon of Ash Mount, Eddisbury.
- 1933 (March) Announcement of the death of Lord Wavertree in London on 2nd Feb. "He showed a kindly interest in the welfare of the working men on his estate. In 1915 he built the vestry and carried out certain other church improvements."
- 1934 (April) Nurse Povall of Wayside Bungalow, Delamere was the District Nurse.
- (June) On 2nd May a new water supply for the parish was officially inaugurated by Mr. Peter Frith.
- 1937 (Jan.) Mr. Arthur Midwood died in Australia (having left Oakmere in the autumn).
- (May) Marjorie Rutter (G.F.S.) won an award for Fine Needlework, which was sent to London for interdiocesan competition.
- (June) A report on Coronation Day festivities with a service at 1.15 p.m., and sports, tea, fireworks

and a dance at the Club. Tributes were paid to Frith Avenue for its "crowns, streamers and triumphal arches", and also to Dingle Lane "which was floodlit for two nights".

(Dec.) Mr. James Maddock died on 22nd November. For more than 30 years he was sexton, bell ringer and churchyard worker. He was aged 72.

After Munich, this time the parish was more prepared for war than it had been in 1914. On 2nd January 1939 Air Raid Precautions (A.R.P.) lectures for Wardens began at Delamere, Oakmere and Eddisbury.

The Second World War

On September 1st 1939 German forces invaded Poland, on 2nd September military service for all men in Britain aged 18-41 became compulsory, and at 11.0 a.m. on 3rd September war was declared on Germany. It was a warm sunny day, and probably everyone then living will remember how and where they heard the news broadcast in Chamberlain's famous announcement on the wireless. The Rector was quick to make his feelings known. "Germany," he said, "must face the conflict escorted by the ghosts of her victims. Jews, Communists, German Christians, Austrians, Czechs and now the murdered Poles represent a cumulative condemnation which not even the adroitest diplomacy, or even the firmest valour can sustain." "The times," he told his parishioners' "certainly call for insistent prayer, both public and private." His call for action did not go unheeded. By November 1939 the Girls Friendly Society were already making useful gifts for men on active service, and soon a Committee, organised by Norman Ackerley, was set up to send gifts of £1 to all those parishioners in the Forces. By March 1940 the following had joined up: Commander Noel Dixon R.N. and Mrs. Dixon (Group Commander A.T.S.), Maj. Gavin H. Clegg, Flight Lt. A. T. Smith, Albert Leach, Raymond and Alan Lightfoot, Charles Crawford, West Clarke, John Swinton, Cyril Ashbrook, Percy England, Frank Sheen, M. E. Johnson, Walter Tilston, John Leech, William and Harry Vickers and Herbert Walker.

Although, in 1940, there was no Garden Party, Empire Day was celebrated on 24th May, and children contributed, by means of a Penny Fund, to an Overseas League scheme by which tobacco and cigarettes were sent to men on active service (50 cigarettes cost 1/6d). Also during this year a unit of the Home Guard was formed and by November the £50 needed for hutments and furniture for its members had been raised by whist drives. At the beginning, the Platoon Commander was Mr. B. M. Bullock, of Folly Farm, Oakmere, but when there was an appeal for recruits (aged 17-65 years) in July 1941, the Platoon Commander was shown as Lt. C. A. Johnson of The Laurels, Delamere (affectionately known as

"Cloggie" Johnson). One of their main duties was a nightly patrol of the forest and a useful look-out post was the water tower. Gradually uniforms and armaments were issued and rifle practice was frequently heard at various places, such as at Mr. Bullock's farm. Amongst those who joined were Messrs. Woods, Watton, Bostock, Rutter, Bratt, Hough, Wright, Nixon, Edwards and W. Pritchard. Mr. R. Gore was the Sergeant.

The A.R.P. wardens, who had been training since early 1939 and whose main duty was to ensure that "Black Out" regulations were observed, were led by Mr. Norman Ackerley, and among his helpers were Messrs. Pearson, H. Pixton, J. G. Garner, Blakemore and G. Hignett. Firewatchers were also on nightly duty.

The only civilian casualty during the war was Mr. C. Ashbrook who died on 28th November 1940 when his cottage received a direct hit, but on many nights incendiary bombs rained down throughout the parish. On one occasion a number of cows were burnt and another night a landmine exploded at Organsdale in a field at the farm but without loss of life. Oakmere was a natural target for German bombers wishing to shed their loads when turned back from Liverpool by flak and many farms in the area sustained damage during the war years. On another particular night incendiaries rained down between Organsdale and Oakmere. Fortunately, the two which hit Sandy Brow failed to ignite, but others fell in the woods at Oakmere, one near Sandimere Bungalow and one near the road at Heathfield. During the war a Lancaster bomber crashed in Lobslack Wood near the railway line (now Whitegate Way) and people came from miles around to collect pieces of the wreckage as souvenirs. In the churchyard is the grave of a Battle of Britain pilot, Squadron Leader Andrew Smith of 610 Squadron, based at Biggin Hill. He came from Manley and was killed at Hawkinge on 25th July 1940.

Although the Mothers' Union had been in existence for a number of years, that other organisation for ladies in the country, the Women's Institute, did not start a branch in Delamere until the summer of 1941. They also did sterling work during the war with Mrs. Ackerley as their Secretary. Apart from their well-known speciality of jam making, they also helped by knitting comforts for the troops. In 1942 their President was Mrs. Hardy and their Treasurer Miss Rutter. In the same year Mrs. C. A. Johnson was Lady Commandant of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade and the Red Cross, while Mr. Norman Ackerley, who had become a Lay Reader in 1940 and helped with services in the Church, was also responsible for running the Youth Club.

Other notes from the Parish Magazine during the war years include:-

1940 (June) Mr. Norman Frith became Chairman of Northwich R.D.C. (thus following his uncle, Mr. Peter Frith, some years earlier, and who died at the age of 81 in 1941).

1941 (March) The death was announced of Mr. H. Burton, Churchwarden. He had been Secretary of the Church Council for some years and a School Manager.

1942 The Sunday School Teachers were Miss Rutter, Miss Mary Ford and Mrs. George Johnson.

Many will have their memories of wartime. Miss Polly Sheen, who lived in a cottage near the Fishpool Inn, of which her brother, Arthur Sheen was the landlord, was famed for her home-made bread. Although often busy, she always found time for a chat with her customers. District Nurses were ever popular. Nurse Povall stayed for many years and was a familiar figure on her bicycle. She attended many births, and often had to walk some miles through snow to attend patients. In 1947 she retired at Christmas, and was followed by the much-loved Nurse Doreen Joseph who stayed until 1970. Apart from these two, the parish appears to have been represented by few members of the medical profession. Earlier in the century, however, one of the local doctors was Dr. J. W. Smith of Weaverham who was held in such regard that between them his patients bought him his first car. Prior to this he served on the County Council as representative for Weaverham, between 1889 and 1913, and would cycle to Chester to attend meetings when he was over 60.

During the war Delamere Club Room was taken over by the army who paid £8.3.1id for "damage done to Room and Effects" in September 1945. In 1946 the Club had 90 members. Abbey Lane is still renowned for its Sweet Chestnut trees, and for many years people have travelled for miles to collect the nuts during the autumn. During the war many chestnuts were picked and taken to schools as far away as Northwich and Winsford where they were sold for 1d a bag to class mates. In 1990 it is said that they sell at £1 per lb. in Manchester. Some remember the search-lights on Eddisbury Hill between 1939 and 1945, and the sheep that used to graze at the Golf Club during the same period.

In May 1945 the war against Germany ended and gradually life in the parish returned to normality. In the same month the Delamere branch of the British Legion was formed, and the first meeting was largely organised by Mr. C. A. Johnson who became President. The other officers elected were Chairman, Rev. G. S. Payne; Secretary, Mr. H. Burton (whose father died in 1941) and Treasurer, Mr. R. Gore. Most of the members were men who had fought in the First World War, and meetings were held at the Rectory and the Delamere Club. Apart from collecting for Poppy Day, members have always tried to help one another in times of sickness and trouble. Membership has fluctuated between 40 and 90 over the years. In 1990 it has 40 members with Mr. Gouly as President and Mr. J. Nicholas as Chairman.

The Fifties and Sixties

Unlike many parishes, the population figures for the Civil Parish of Delamere have changed very little throughout the twentieth century. In 1911 the figure shown was 1,854, and although Eddisbury was joined to Delamere in 1936 and Kingswood was transferred to Manley in the same year, the figure given in 1951 was 1,637. Even by 1981 the population had only grown to 1,916 inhabitants. The conclusion that Delamere has so far escaped the developers and remains a rural area is obvious.

In 1951 parishioners were shocked to learn in February that their much loved Rector, Rev. G. S. Payne, had been killed by a motor car on the Chester Road. He was not awesome like his father, but was well known throughout the area. His sense of humour and kindly wit are still remembered by many. At the time of his death there were still folk living in Delamere who could recall his arrival at the Rectory as a small boy of seven clad in a kilt. His successor was Rev. C. H. Huggill.

By this time the war seemed to be forgotten; and in 1952 the new Rector welcomed about 400 to the Rectory again for the Garden Party on 5th July, although he felt bound "to apologise for the rabbits". It was opened by Mrs. Tomkinson. This was also the year in which the parish mourned the death of King George VI.

In 1953 Mr. G. L. Culey became Clerk to the Justices at the Magistrates Court, having followed his partner, Mr. A. W. Chambers of Tarporley, and was to hold this position until 1986. This met once a fortnight at the well-known Court House, which stands near the Abbey Arms Hotel in Oakmere. It was built in 1892 and incorporated the Police Station, manned by a Superintendent, an Inspector, a Sergeant and one Constable. Inside were at least two cells where drunks, poachers, etc., were held pending their appearance in court. During this century about 17 magistrates were elected to the Eddisbury Division. Before the Court House was built the magistrates sat in a room at the Abbey Arms, and occasionally at 16 Winnington Street, Northwich (office of the then Clerk to the Justices). The Court House was closed down about 1987 and the building was sold in 1988.

Mr. Huggill was interested in local history, and apart from providing a chapter on Ancient Parishes for "The Historical Atlas of Cheshire", examined his church records very carefully. In 1960 he reported in the Parish Magazine that up to that year, at St. Peter's, there had been 2,631 funerals, 2,917 baptisms but only 908 weddings (which averaged 16 per year in the early part of the 19th century). The first baptism was Thomas Rathbone on 17th December 1817, and the first burial was of someone named Stringfellow on January 7th 1820. Regarding his predecessors he commented that "Joseph Brocklebank was the only rector himself to marry a Delamere bride" and that "Darwin Fox had seventeen children".

During the 1960s another cure for Whistlebitch Well was claimed. "When Alan Clark lived at Primrose Hill Cottage an aged aunt who had cataracts on both eyes" bathed them with the water and "after a short while the cataracts disappeared."

For two weeks during August 1960 a round barrow at Gallowsclough Hill was excavated and Bronze Age human skeletal remains were discovered. These were verified by the Anatomy Dept. of Manchester University in May 1961. The hill lies on the north side of the A556 section of the main road from Chester to Northwich in the parish of Oakmere.

Of more general interest to the parish was the plan, announced in October 1962, to sell 2,000 acres owned by the Crown in the Delamere area. The Commissioners described the sale as being of "relatively less profitable estates", but they gave sitting tenants the opportunity of buying before the land was put on the market. Because the announcement was so unexpected it was accepted by the tenants with much reluctance, especially by those who had recently spent capital on improvements to their rented properties. During 1963 the whole issue was given much coverage in the press but, eventually, during the same year the land was sold and the incident now seems to have been forgotten. Until this time it was customary to invite certain tenants to Royal Garden Parties.

To the Present Day

Many of the parish personalities during the last twenty years bear the names of families who were prominent in the neighbourhood when the century was young. One of these is Miss Joan Hardy J.P. who is well known for her work with the W.R.V.S. and the Red Cross, and among the others are Mrs. Christine Frith J.P., Mr. Ralph Chisholm (died 1991) who was Treasurer of Cheshire County Council, and Mrs. Joan Salter the county councillor who became Mayor of Vale Royal Borough Council in 1989. Mrs. Salter is only the second Mayor of the Borough and the first Lady Mayor. As an example of long service to the community, it was also in October 1989 that Mr. W. Pritchard resigned from the Parish Council after being a member of it for 42 years.

There was a time when even in the local press the material was confined to national affairs but this is not the case today. Even during the last two years, while this history was being researched, there have been printed reports about all the townships in the parish. Early in 1990 a new Youth Club was formed with a membership of about twenty youngsters at the Community Centre. The group was led by Mrs. Jill Nixon with much help from other parents. The Delamere Golden Age Club came into prominence for older residents with many social events. In the summer of 1990 there were complaints about the exploitation of Delamere and Oakmere by sand extraction schemes. A strategic decision by the Cheshire County Council was taken to permit additional sand extraction on

three additional sites in the parishes of Delamere and Oakmere, although the local electorate were against it. However, in November Oakmere Parish Council was successful in purchasing the 6 ½ acre Waste Wood (locally known as Little Wood) as an amenity for the community. Led by the chairman, Sandy Henderson, and with much help from other councillors, the parish organised a door-to-door collection and raised the £16,750 needed to buy the wood and to ensure its preservation.

Crime is always popular news for local newspapers, and even in a quiet parish such as Delamere it is not unknown. In 1990 and 1991, as P.C. Dave Banton has reported, local crime has mainly consisted of thefts from parked cars, but in July 1990 sheep rustlers stole 56 lambs and 42 ewes from Paddock Farm in Kingswood, and in May 1991 police foiled an attempt to hold an Acid House Party on the fringe of Delamere Forest. Perhaps the most recent serious crime, however, was reported in August 1990 when Peter Wheelhouse of Delamere Post Office received well-deserved praise after stopping a "gun-wielding" raider from robbing his shop. During the struggle Mr. Wheelhouse received head injuries which required hospital treatment.

Throughout this book contemporary descriptions have been given whenever possible. Some appear conflicting and some appear confusing. So much depends on the viewer and on his purpose. What is certain about the forest, however, is that its usage has changed over the centuries from being a place of sport to becoming an area where trees were grown for their timber. The master foresters have lost their powers but the title survives. This has passed through a long line of Dones, the Ardens, the Baillie-Hamiltons and so to the O'Briens. Desmond Barnaby O'Brien died in 1969 and, not for the first time, the title has passed to a woman, his elder daughter Karen, now Karen Cowan.

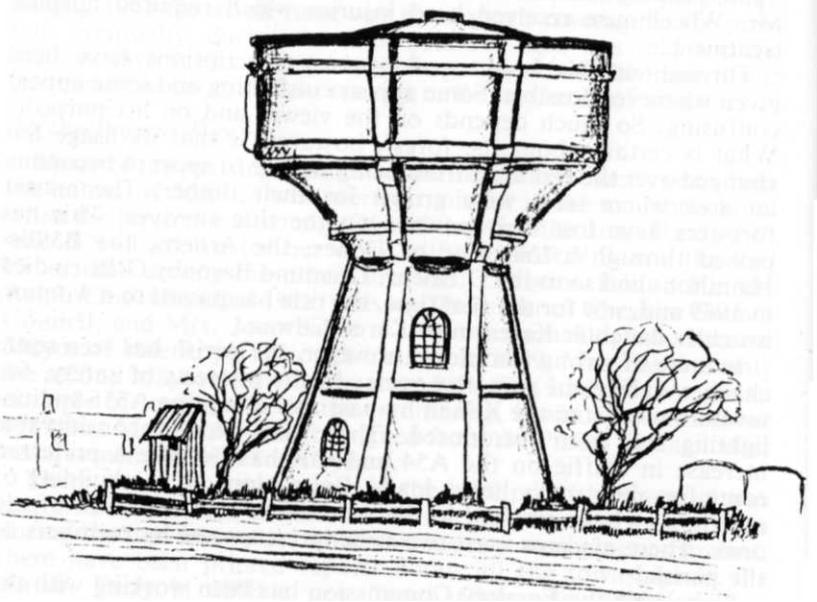
In spite of strong traditions, however, the parish has seen some changes during the past few years. In the interests of safety, for several miles from the Kelsall by-pass and along the A556 sodium lighting has been introduced. There has been a considerable increase in traffic on the A54 and this has become a preferred route for abnormally heavy loads. Restrictions on the building of new houses have resulted in the renovation and extension of old ones. There are now even two helicopters owned by members of the parish.

Since 1968 the Forestry Commission has been working with the Cheshire County Council Countryside and Recreation Department to open up Delamere for public leisure. Being well served by the railway, in 1978 the forest was described as "the most frequent resort for day trippers". Today the words conservation and leisure are on everyone's lips. Foresters are carrying out amenity planting for reasons of conservation and boundary fences are being removed to provide better access. While, recently, Countryside Rangers have

appeared to look after paths, stiles and litter collection, among their other duties.

All this is necessary in order that the roads should be safe, and that the beauties of the forest should remain unspoilt as they have been for so long. Visitors to Delamere continue to come in increasing numbers, and throughout the year. However, perhaps that pilgrimage to the forest in mid-December gives most delight to children, when their visit to choose and carry away a Christmas tree has almost become a tradition.

As Mary Nichols once wrote in an article thirty years ago: "The short winter daylight is fading as we return to the car. The last few stragglers are selecting from what remains of the trees. Tired foresters stamp out their fire, and prepare to close down. We turn homeward, agog to search out the glistening baubles, the tinsel and the lights."



Water Tower, Oakmere

PART II

CHURCH AND CHAPELS

"Where the Saints have trod . . . "

The Parish Church of St. Peter in Delamere may be regarded as a sacred edifice, epitomising a significant development from an ancient Royal Forest to a Royal Ecclesiastical Foundation — unique in Cheshire and in the Diocese of Chester, apart from the Cathedral Church. The Enclosure Act (1812) gave birth to both benefice and parish. Part of the once extensive forests of Mara and Mondrem was allocated to the Crown, then valued at £200 per annum, on which to build a church and a parsonage and with which to endow the benefice. On the allocated 200 acres of land the Parish Church of Delamere was built in 1817. The patronage of the Benefice was firmly vested in the Crown and each successive Rector has been favoured with Royal appointment, including the present Rector, Revd. Stanley W. Winton.

The Foundation Stone

This was laid amid Masonic pomp and splendour, the architect (J. Gunnery) himself being a Freemason. The description of the august occasion was reported in "The Chester Chronicle" for September 6th 1816 as follows:

About 12 o'clock the Provincial Grand Master Sir John Grey-Egerton Bart., arrived and immediately held a Lodge in the large room at the Globe Inn (Kelsall) . . . the Brotherhood again formed in procession and proceeded to the new church (site), about 2 miles distant. Here the different Lodges formed in a circle and the ceremony of laying the stone commenced. On the engraved plate (brass) which was placed in the cavity read the following inscription: "The Foundation Stone of this Church was laid by the Rt. Worshipful Sir John Grey-Egerton, Bart., P.M.G., of the County of Chester, on the 3rd day of September in the 56th year of the reign of King George III. AD 1816. A.L. 5816, attended by Sir John Cotgreave, Knt., Mayor of the City of Chester . . . "

Prayer was made by the Deputy P.G. Chaplain J. Fish. Then corn, wine and oil were poured upon the stone and the Masonic Hymn was sung by Brothers Brown and Evans, all the Lodges joining in the chorus. The Grand Master afterwards pronounced the dedicatory words — "We dedicate this building to the worship of God, in the name of our holy Patron, St. John." The ceremony was then concluded and was followed by the dispersal of large numbers to Oulton, the hospitable seat of the Grand Master, where they were entertained to a sumptuous dinner.

Significantly, no member of the Diocesan hierarchy seems to have taken part in the ceremony and thus possibly underlining the Royal connection through Masonry.

Dating

This makes very interesting reading and may have provided a subject of speculation to many who have viewed the small engraved brass plate now fixed to the inside of the church west wall near the font. The date A.L. 5816 may appear mystifying but traditionally Freemasons are reputed to calculate the date of the Creation of the World as BC 4004 (on an unfounded biblical basis). Thus to arrive at A.L. 5816, the 4 of 4004 is subtracted and the 4000 is added to AD 1816. The letters A.L. = Anno Lucis = In the year of Light.

Fabric and Consecration

Between September 16th 1816 and November 1817, a period of fifteen months, the church was in building. A petition of Consecration was made to the Bishop of Chester (Rt. Revd. George Henry Law, D.D.) on completion and on Thursday, 27th November 1817 in the Bishop's presence the Sentence of Consecration was "openly and publicly read and promulgated" with the attendance of the incumbents of Weaverham, Tarvin, Barrow and Little Budworth.

Apart from the addition of a small South Aisle (1887-8) and erection of a North-West Vestry (with organ removed) in 1915, the church has remained unaltered since its construction. It may have suffered slightly from ground vibration due to enemy action between 1941 and 1945, but no claim was established. The architectural style is Gothic Revival and it will seat 150 people. Cruciform in plan, it is composed of a Nave, Chancel, Sanctuary, old vestry (now partly incorporating the organ), small North and South Transepts, South Aisle, South-West Porch and the new North-West Vestry. A small tower (embattled) with spire dominates the western elevation and contains one bell and a clock, added in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Under part of the north-east end the heating apparatus is located. The site is well wooded especially on the northern boundary and has a natural fall from north to south.

The walls of the church throughout are stoutly constructed of red-sandstone (ashlar). The roofs are pitched and covered with Welsh slates. The spire is constructed of oak timbers, boards and covered with slates. Some notable features of the church include the Sanctuary and Chancel fittings, which are all of prime oak. The Altar, Reredos, Choir and Priests stalls were designed by T. A. Williams of Chester and constructed by Messrs. Bridgeman of Lichfield.

Memorials

There are no monuments and no burials in the church, but the many plaques and memorials testify to the loving care, generosity and faithful service of benefactors and parishioners as one generation followed another. These speak much louder than the words inscribed on them. The visitor will be rewarded by more than a cursory glance at them.

The following may be noted as some of local and wider interest:

1. The West Window. 1879. In memory of Anne Craven and John Jasper Garnett (children of Rev. R. C. Garnett).
2. Subscription List for the improvement of the church (1877-78) headed by H.M. Queen Victoria who donated £600.
3. The Tomkinson Memorials (of Willington Hall). The East Window (by Kempe). The Apostles and the Crucifixion as centre light. In memory of Emily Frances Tomkinson (1850-1905).
Brass Tablet on Chancel north wall (near the pulpit). In memory of Rt. Hon. James Tomkinson, P.C., M.P. (1840-1910) and his wife Emily Frances.
4. Brass Plaque. 1915. Erected by parishioners in gratitude to Col. W. Hall-Walker (later Lord Wavertree), D.L., M.C., of Sandy Brow, for the gift of a New Vestry and other improvements to the church undertaken in the year 1915.
5. War Memorials.
 - (a) Marble Plaque. 1920. Great War 1914-1918.
 - (b) Marble Plaque. 1948. Second World War 1939-1945. Names include one local civilian (Charles Ashbrook), who died through enemy action in the parish.
 - (c) New Oak Font cover. A thanksgiving from the parishioners after the Great War.
 - (d) Thanksgiving for Victory (1939-45). Choir Stalls in memory of Senior Commandant Mary Hester Dixon and Squadron Leader Andrew Thomas Smith and those who made the Supreme Sacrifice.
 - (e) Water Ewer. In memory of Bertram Vickers, Royal Field Artillery. Killed in action in France 23rd Oct., 1917, aged 24 years, donated by his mother, brothers and sister.
6. The Payne Family Memorials on the north wall of the Sanctuary, Tablets and a Processional Cross.
7. The Bishops Chair and Desk (1937). In memory of Claude Crosland Taylor.
8. Stained Glass Window (Sanctuary). In memory of Kathleen Marguerite Orr (died 1939).
9. Rector's Desk and Stall (1948) (Chancel). In memory of Rebecca (d. 1938) and Richard (d. 1940) Prestwich.
10. 3 Brass Tablets (pew ends) commemorating 3 church-wardens, Thomas Done (1911-32), Henry Burton (1906-08, 1917-22, 1933-36), Philip Newton Rutter (1929-52).

11. Oak Book Stand. In memory of Elsie Johnson (1892-1954).
12. Memorial Book and Case. In memory of May Marr(d. 1962).
13. Oak Gates (Communion Rail). In memory of Mary Broome (d. 1963).
14. Oak Tablet (Chancel). Inscribed: "Remember Bernard Spurry, much loved Rector of the Parish (1974-83) Hon. Canon of Chester Cathedral (d. 1983)."

Outside Memorials

1. Three lights on the drive (1971). Stone under 3rd light inscribed
"Philip Newton Rutter, deceased, former churchwarden."
2. Churchyard Gates. In memory of Rev. G. S. Payne.
3. Hearse House. Front wall records the date 1835.

(In 1834 and 1835 the sum of £86.6.2 was raised, mainly by "local gentry and the Rector", to provide a new hearse, harness, house and stable, etc., for the use of the parish. At a meeting in 1837 a charge of 5/- was agreed for its use, with a higher rate according to the distance over 10 miles. In 1990-91 it is being re-roofed for the use of the Sunday School and Youth groups.)

The Churchyard

The original burial ground was a part of that land allotted by the Crown. According to the first Register, the first burial took place on the 7th Jan., 1820, the Rector (Rev. W. Roland Hill) officiating. Since that time successive rectors and representatives have shown considerable initiative and care regarding the condition of "God's Acre". As the only burial ground within the parish and with increasing mobility of population, this sacred plot has claimed the generous response of parishioners to periodic appeals for financial support. The following landmarks may be noted:

- 1837 On 13th April, the burial of the second rector (Rev. J. Brocklebank).
- 1844 Repairs to churchyard wall £5.
- 1869 Churchyard enlarged.
- 1877 Decision to number the graves, with a charge of 1/- being added to funeral fees for the purpose.
- 1906/7 Further enlargement of the churchyard at a cost of £100 (£40 for land, £60 for walls, paths, etc.).
- 1929 Gift of bulbs by Mr. F. Morrey.
- 1949/50 Rose bushes planted in the old part of the churchyard.

The continuing good care of the parish churchyard is self evident to all who today visit this garden of peace and sacred memory.

The Rectory

The Old Rectory, part of the original glebe, though in salubrious surroundings, was not destined to remain as the tied house of the incumbent. As far back as 1821 it was reported that it was in a bad state. Its spacious grounds had been the venue of many parish

functions, especially garden fetes. However, its condition deteriorated and repair would have been costly. Consequently, during the incumbency of the Rev. C. H. Huggill plans were instituted to build a new one. The old Rectory was put up for sale and was valued on 18th May 1961 at £6,000. In 1963/64 the Rector moved into his new home which was in close proximity to the church. The old Rectory was converted into two dwellings by Mr. Ray Chambers, and is now occupied by Mr. C. R. Rees in the Old Rectory and by Mr. P. H. Thompson in Rowan House.

THE FREE CHURCH CHAPELS

The visits of John Wesley to the neighbourhood in the eighteenth century undoubtedly had a profound influence and inspired many followers of his religious movement (later known as "Methodism") to set up their own centres of worship. Generally, the policy of non-conformity was "to fill the gaps", where there were no parish churches or chapelries established and to form "pockets" (cells) of ardent evangelism at a time of Anglican religious recession, often connected with non-resident clergy and lack of missionary zeal. It is, therefore, significant that at a time when the establishment of Delamere Parish Church became a reality, the Free Church members in the area were challenged to build their own chapels, especially in the extra-parochial area of Willington on the southwest fringe of the parish. Distance from the newly-erected Parish Church may also have been a contributory factor.

The Old Chapel (Mission Room)

This was erected on a plot of land belonging to Abraham Bettley in Fishpool, Delamere. It was leased (1888) to two spinster sisters, Henrietta and Katherine Thompson, and others for "£15 for the land and thereafter an annual rent of 5/- for a period of twenty five years". No time was lost in building the Mission Room and it opened for services on 25th September, 1888. The speed of building and the limited items of expenditure incurred suggests that its fabric was quite basic. Nevertheless, it became a vital meeting place for the committed adherents to the Methodist cause. Subscriptions raised £100, and collections at the opening services of £24 went a long way to offset the total cost of £130.15s.: a record achievement by any standard.

The Chapel was destroyed by enemy action during the 1939-1945 war.

The Wesleyan Methodist (New) Chapel, 1913

The building of this new chapel in Oakmere, though significant just before the Great War, does not represent the first "Methodist presence" in the parish. Apparently there was an earlier edifice in the Oakmere township, but it was of an inferior fabric and too confined to accommodate the increasing numbers of the faithful

during the nineteenth century. The erection of this solid brick and well equipped chapel represented the missionary commitment and spiritual tenacity of dedicated Methodists.

For its building, the total subscription amounted to over £950, with Mr. Wm. Frith (£130) and Mrs. Crossley (£100) heading the list. One of the indefatigable promoters of the enterprise was Miss Katherine Thompson. The chapel has a Vestry, Committee Room and Kitchen. It also has a stable at the rear, reminiscent of by-gone means of travel. Inside, the chapel is adequately furnished to accommodate over 100 worshippers, and contains a number of memorials. These include a brass plaque to Katherine Thompson who died in 1946, aged 84 years, and a Holy Bible in memory of John Nixon, who died tragically in 1934. There is also a War Memorial (1939—45) bearing four names: William Kirkham, Frederick Robinson, John Lewis and Joseph Robinson.

The New Chapel opened for service on 20th August 1913.

Primitive Methodist Chapel

This was opened in the township of Kingswood in 1891 but was closed in 1971. The building is now used as a light engineering workshop.

FARMING

The parish of Delamere did not follow the same pattern of agricultural development as the rest of the county, where, after the Norman settlement, there was a vast programme of extending cultivations and of building up herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. The parish remained in valued, heavily wooded pasture until 1819 when enclosure awards were made for the Crown forests with the exception of the two large clearings — the New Pale and the Old Pale. Only peasants lived in the forest by courtesy of the Crown. They were strictly governed by various rights of common, and their living was derived from herding sheep or pigs. At one time there were 20,000 sheep in the forest with mutton being sold to neighbouring towns and wool to Yorkshire. Many pigs were kept by the right of "pannage" — the grazing of beech mast and acorns — and a trade of salted pork was set up with local towns because of the close proximity of the salt deposits at Middlewich. The edges of the forest were nibbled at by assarting — the ploughing of forest land illegally — so enabling cattle to be kept. If the cattle strayed into the forest the owners were heavily fined, because the forest was primarily for the production of timber, although agistment — feeding for cattle — could sometimes be obtained. By the same token the peasants were granted turbary — the right to cut peat for fuel — instead of having to burn wood from the forest.

The enclosure awards of 1812 which were enacted in 1819 meant that some land had to be sold to Vale Royal Abbey to cover the costs of enclosure. The new department of woods took half of the remainder of the forest whilst the rest was allotted to the Crown, including the New Pale and the Old Pale farms. Small farmers with rights of common were allotted access to the forest or compensated for the loss of their rights. The latter two farms were greatly improved at this time by "marling" the land. Marl was an earthy clay mixture of fine-grained minerals containing excellent soil conditioning properties such as calcium. It was spread at a depth of several inches over the whole area.

In 1650 Daniel King mentions that there was then "a kind of fat clay called Marl, both red and white, which they dig up and spread upon their arable land ... which bringeth corn in as great abundance as that which is dunged". Even in the late nineteenth century many teams were employed and these were governed by an old labourer who was known as the Lord of the Marl Pit. Neighbours who visited them were expected to pay the Lord either a sixpence or a shilling. A very merry crowd they were, and it was said that "the shouts of the marlers could be heard on fine summer evenings in almost every direction".

By 1856 the Government had become disenchanted with the lack of revenue from the Crown Forests and the obligation to grow timber was repealed. By 1863 the previous enclosures of Houndslough (just out of the parish), Longridge, Plovers Moss and Primrose Hill were all ridded out of the forest, heralding the advent of large scale cultivation in the parish. The fascinating story of the vast reclamation was written in detail for the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1864 by R. B. Grantham. As the marling of the Old and New Pale farms was so successful previously, it was decided to repeat the process with the 248 acres at Houndslough, the 800 acres at Delamere Lodge and the 540 acres at Organsdale. Nearby marl deposits were cleared of overlay and debris, and light rails on longitudinal sleepers were laid to the bottom of the beds, which were 10-17ft. deep and of red to slate-grey colouring. The railway was 2ft. 7ins. in gauge and waggons, which held 1 Vi cubic yards of marl and weighed 1 ton 18 cwt., were side-tipping. The waggons, once filled by hand, were drawn out of the pit by horses and made up into trains to be taken distances of up to 2 miles. Where there were slopes to be ascended a steam engine would wind the full waggons to the top whilst letting the empty ones down. Branch lines were easily removable and spaced 12 yds. apart, so that about 117 cubic yds. of marl could be spread per acre by tipping a truck every 5 yds. The cost then was about £71.4.11 per acre at a work rate of 31 acres per month. The work force consisted of 70 men and boys working with 11 horses, 60 waggons, 2,600 yds. of main rails, 2,500 yds. of moveable rails, 1 locomotive-windlass, barrows, planks and carts.

The cost effectiveness of the reclamation was shown by the fact that marled land could command a rent of 36 shillings and 6 pence instead of 5 shillings per acre on Delamere Lodge and 33 shillings instead of 7 shillings on Organsdale. The improvement enabled Mr. Leather of Delamere Lodge to institute an ambitious and intensive system of cropping in 1864:

- 125 acres first year grass with 75 mown for hay.
- 125 acres second year grass to be eaten off by hoggets, lambs and ewes.
- 125 acres third year grass with 75 acres to be ploughed by Hancock's plough and sown on the flat with swedes or turnips as soon as land can be spared.
- 125 acres — corn with 25 acres of stubble into winter tares.
- 125 acres — fallow crops, i.e. 50 acres of potatoes to be cleared off the ground in time for rape or turnips
- 50 acres swedes
- 25 acres swedes or turnips as tares are consumed.
- 125 acres corn sown out with grass seeds and clover.

A large flock of half-bred ewes (Cheviot crossed with Leicester) was kept and put to a strong Lincoln ram for fat lamb production. Approximately 1,790 lambs were sold in the following spring and summer.

The farming on the rest of the reclaimed land was also to be of a high standard due to the marling and large size of the holdings. The New Pale and Old Pale farms were now well established and the occupiers were even making cheese by this time.

In 1910 a decision was taken by the Crown Estate to split Houndslough and Delamere Lodge into 50 acre holdings, being laid out for the purpose of milk production. Delamere Lodge, owned by S. W. Morgan, is no longer part of the farm. Most of the work was done either by hand or by the use of horses. The larger farms used to employ Irish labour for the early potato planting and harvesting. There would often be a "shanty" or "bothy" in the farmyard where the labourers would live. Over thirty workers were employed on both the Old Pale and Organsdale farms just after the turn of the century, and horses remained as the main source of power until 1960. Milk and potatoes were sent to Manchester by train from Delamere station until local dairies were established. Manure from the many horses kept for haulage in Manchester was brought to Delamere Station by train and taken by local farmers to spread on their land to improve fertility.

A major change in the ownership of land in the parish occurred when Vale Royal Estate was sold in 1928. Fifty lots were sold. In 1963 the Crown Estate was also sold with forty lots going mainly to the tenants, thus significantly increasing the number of owner-occupiers.

Since 1960 there has been a gradual change in farming systems. With the advent of mechanisation far less labour is now employed even though output has quadrupled. Foot and Mouth disease

spread to the parish in 1967-68 with twelve farms having to have all their livestock slaughtered. They were:

- P. Dawson — Quarry Farm, Oakmere
- P. N. Rutter — Firs Farm, Oakmere
- N. A. Haworth — Organsdale, Delamere
- E. W. Peters — Delamere Farm, Kelsall
- W. Wright — Gallowsclough Farm, Oakmere
- P. W. Studley — Crown Farm, Oakmere
- B. Davidson — Eddisbury Lodge, Delamere
- T. L. Wallace — Castle Hill Farm, Delamere
- M. E. S. Higgin — Seven Lows Farm, Delamere
- D. W. Frith — Old Pale, Delamere
- H. A. Challoner — New Pale, Manley

S. C. Walker — Fox Hill Farm, Cotebrook Since then the dairy herds have either expanded the number of cows kept or ceased to exist. There are now only six dairy herds left in the parish whereas previously there had been more than thirty. The present herds are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| H. A. Challoner & Sons | — The New Pale |
| D. W. & D. N. Frith | — The Old Pale |
| N. A. & E. J. V. Haworth | — Organsdale |
| J. W. Peters | — Delamere Farm |
| M. Hardy | — Castle Hill Farm |
| R. C. Rutter & Son | — The Rectory Farm. |

Potato growing, which used to be one of the mainstays of most farms in the area, is now only carried on at two specialised farms in Kingswood, by T. W. Kinsey & Sons at Claim Farm and by H. A. Challoner & Sons at the New Pale. There is also a specialised, extremely high-health status pig farm in the parish owned by N. A. Haworth which exports breeding stock all over the world.

Now there are 48 registered agricultural holdings in the civil parishes of Delamere and Oakmere, but half of these are considered to be only part-time operations.

The eastern part of the parish is in the process of being completely reshaped by the extensive extraction of sand deposits. Some of the land is lost to agriculture for good where there is a "wet working". Further changes will occur in the parish if farming becomes less viable and diversification into the leisure industry is encouraged.

Horticulture

Commercial fruit growing has been operating in the area since the years between the two wars. It is mostly found on the west of the Sandstone Ridge because the soil is less sandy and the slopes drain the cold air to lower levels, so helping to avoid frost damage in the spring. At Eddisbury Fruit Farm, now farmed by L. Haworth Ltd., Cox's apples, at first grown on cordons, used to be said to be the furthest north commercial plantation. During World War II and after, soft fruit, blackcurrants and strawberries were particularly in

demand and large numbers of pickers were employed during the summer months. Fruit that was not sold retail was sent to the markets in Liverpool and Manchester. Strawberries, with early varieties under polythene and autumn late fruiterers, are grown at Willington by the Winsor family. Picking and marketing costs have encouraged the present trend of "pick your own fruit", which also gives the opportunity for a day out in the country. This can be successful in a dry summer but disastrous in a wet one. There is also a nursery, Perimeter Farms owned by R. West, growing soft fruit stock and raspberry canes; these go to wholesale outlets and farmers for "pick your own" fields.

Morrey's Forest Nursery

In addition to the soft and top fruit production on the slopes of Kelsall Hill the Morrey family at Forest Nursery has been well established since 1910. Originally flowers, mainly white marguerites, and fruit were sent by train to Manchester, but now hardy nursery stock, including azaleas, rhododendrons, roses and herbaceous plants, together with container grown nursery stock, are grown in vast numbers for both the retail and wholesale trade. The Morrey family have bred many interesting varieties from their basic collection of nursery stocks, and these are eagerly sought after by gardening connoisseurs.

Goats and Deer

A large beef unit at Eddisbury Lodge, owned by R. J. Weston, has been converted into housing for 200 milking goats by R. C. D. Sutton. The milk is frozen and sold through many outlets.

Deer have come back to the forest. This time the animals are not wild, but are "farmed" by Roger and Kath Ladson at Newpool Farm at Oakmere, where extra high fences have been erected to prevent them from straying. Venison is marketed locally.

Mr. D. L. Wallis, a local writer on the rural scene, lives at Forest House Farm which was originally one of the forest keepers' lodges. It was then known as Rutters Lodge, but had its name changed in the early nineteenth century. His hobby on this pig farm is to keep a suckler herd of rare breeds, a small herd of fallow deer — the same species that used to run wild in the forest — and many exotic animals including llamas. He also breeds indigenous wildfowl for release to support stocks in the district. His hobby has given many schoolchildren much pleasure over the years.

Water Supply

The geological formation through the middle of the parish is such that a large underground reserve of water lies at a depth of approximately 200ft. Over the years a large number of boreholes has been sunk to obtain this water for domestic, communal and agricultural use. The main boreholes are listed:

		<i>Yield in millions of gallons per day</i>	
		<i>Year Drilled</i>	
Eddisbury		1939	1
Delamere	Nos. 1 and 2	1905	out of use
	Nos. 3 and 4	1951	2
Sandyford		1926	0.31
Cotebrook		1926	1
Organsdale		1971	1

The old "Hills Group" of wells were drilled for the Northwich Rural District Council and operated by supplying seven feeder reservoirs in and around the parish. A large reservoir built in 1988 on the Pale Heights now supersedes the old feeder system. The Mid-Cheshire Water Board took over the pumping stations, but was itself taken over by the North West Water Authority in 1974. This was then privatised in 1989.

It is interesting that two other water supplies pass through the district in twin 36in. aqueducts. The Liverpool water supply from Lake Vyrnwy runs alongside the B5152 road from Stable Lane and past Delamere Station. The River Dee to Winsford pipes run along Saddlers Lane in the south of the parish.

SANDY BROW ESTATE

The part of Oakmere Parish which had previously belonged to Lord Delamere of Vale Royal, including Oak Mere itself, was bought by Lord Wavertree in 1927. The Keeper's House at Oakmere was built as a fishing lodge by Philip Egerton of Oulton in 1783. He had leased the mere for his collection of wild fowl from Thomas Cholmondeley in 1769 "in consideration of his friendship and five shillings ... and thereafter one shilling a year". Mr. Cholmondeley reserved the right to go fishing himself. It was Mr. Egerton who brought hypocaust stones there from the system discovered at that time in Lower Watergate Street, Chester. He also placed two whale ribs on the banks of the mere by the Iron Age Hill Fort.

The Roman hypocaust stones were subsequently used as building material and discovered when a larder wall was demolished when Lord Wavertree had the cottage renovated in 1931. At the same time the jawbone of a whale was discovered when the foundations were being dug. Both these circumstances gave rise to theories by experts, who should have known better, that not only had a prehistoric Greenland Bight whale been discovered in the sand, but that it was also a site of Roman occupation. Mr. Egerton is known to have had a sense of humour and intended to play a practical joke to be discovered one day by his successors. The ribs were removed *circa* 1835 to Whalebone Farm in New Inn Lane, now Abbey Lane, and gave it its name.

The holdings which Lord Wavertree bought included Corner Farm, Folly Farm, Waste Farm, New Inn Lane Farm, Oak Tree

Farm, Water Farm, Valley Farm and Hook House (then also called Oak Tree Farm). He rebuilt all the houses and cottages, many of which have his coat of arms on them in sandstone and the names Brucehaven, Limekilns, Fife Cottage and Rosyth Cottage were associated with his birthplace. The last two were to be lodges for a new house to be built by the lake.

Lord Delamere had sold the pumping rights at Oakmere to the Winsford Urban District Council who had built the Water Tower and Pumping Station at the east end of the mere. These remained in operation until 1953. Lord Wavertree died in February 1933 before his plans could be executed. Shortly after he had bought the property he employed some fifty farm labourers, and others who were out of work due to the General Strike, to reclaim wasteland and also create a network of lagoons and little islands from the peat morass beside the lake. The new house was to have overlooked this from the fields beyond the Iron Age Hill Fort behind Folly Farm. He had intended to purchase the Tudor half-timbered mansion, Dutton Hall, which, instead of being moved to Oakmere was dismantled and taken on a train to be re-erected at East Grinstead.

New Inn Lane Farm on the Sandy Brow Estate was renamed Horsley Farm in 1958, when the name of the road was changed to Abbey Lane, after Lord Wavertree's other residence, Horsley Hall, near Gresford.

Cabbage Hall

H. "Bummer" Buckley, the County Court Bailiff, had lived in the sandstone house at Waste Farm up to 1928, sharing the house with Randle Walker, one of "Cabbage" Walker's sons. Before that, up to about 1910 it had been occupied by Thomas Percival Walton, a gravel merchant who had supplied gravel for Eaton Hill reservoir and before him, prior to about 1880, it had been the home of Johnny Bowyer, who gave his name to Bowyer's Waste. It was he who had originally been responsible for pirating the sand and gravel from the land in the vicinity, causing all the various undulations.

"Cabbage" Walker was a tailor who kept the beer house on the main road, North of Jordan's Corner, until recently in Oakmere parish. The place had once been the haunt of salt smugglers and the story goes that in the time of the Napoleonic Wars when there was a Salt Tax, miners from Winsford exchanged salt for beer and the landlord delivered the contraband at dead of night, packed under a spare skin on his horse. A keen-eyed Customs Officer noticed the beast was thinner in day-time and always very fit despite always being turned out in the field. He caught the innkeeper red-handed next time he was out on one of his nocturnal excursions.

Cabbage Hall was given its name by Thomas Lawrinson Walker who held the licence in the latter part of last century. There was also a bakehouse there and he delivered his wife's delicious bread for miles around in a donkey cart. He collected the flour from Oulton

Mill. But he was really a tailor by profession and was patronized by some of the neighbouring landowners who would send him rolls of cloth to make up suits for their grooms, gamekeepers and servants. He acquired the sobriquet "Cabbage" from his expertise in "cabbaging" the cloth — cutting it in such a way as to have sufficient material left over to make up an extra suit or two to his own advantage.

He was a tall, thin figure with a large nose, white beard and curly moustache. On the advice of a doctor from Hartford he invested his money in Brunner Mond with such success that he was able to leave each of his eight sons £1,700 apiece.

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES

Because of the terrain, it is difficult to envisage the land around what is today known as Delamere Forest ever having been an industrial area. Nevertheless, throughout the centuries, timber from its trees has been used for firewood and charcoal, as well as for building purposes. Charcoal, for example, was needed for Cranage forge when it was established in 1660, and there are many instances of timber being required for building throughout the middle ages and in more modern times. In particular, much timber from the forest was needed for the navy in the days of wooden ships, and it has been stated that the availability of timber supplies had much to do with the localisation of shipyards. Delamere was well known in the Cheshire region, and its timber was used for building small vessels at Northwich in the eighteenth century. Even earlier than this there were regular worries about supplies as the forest dwindled in size. In 1351 the Black Prince stated that "the forests have been and still are daily destroyed". He ordered that certain restrictions should be enforced, and similar complaints have been voiced in more recent centuries. Stone from the quarries within the parish has been used for many important buildings in Cheshire. The best known of these were located at Eddisbury, a little to the east of the Old Pale, and on the north side of Watling Street. Apart from the use of natural materials, probably the earliest form of industry in Delamere was that of glass making.

The Glasshouse

It was in 1935 that evidence of this industry was accidentally discovered in Kingswood by a farmer at a spot now known as Glazier's Hollow. This lies about half a mile due east of the New Pale.

Excavations were carried out in 1935 and 1947 by Prof. R. Newstead, Rev. Maurice Ridgway and Mr. G. B. Leach. A large number of pieces of glass were found about a foot below the surface

and also what appeared to be part of the glazed red brick floor of a furnace. The planted trees made excavating difficult, but the conclusion was that this was an area on which material from the glasshouse had been dumped. Several fragments were dated back to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. Three sherds were considered to be distinctive of the coarse ware pottery in use at that time. Further excavations were carried out in 1971 and it has been suggested that the glasshouse may have been founded in the fourteenth century and re-used later. Although this industry was introduced into Britain by the Romans it went into decline with their departure. In the Middle Ages it was concentrated in heavily forested areas where the necessary materials, namely wood, sand and potash, were readily available. It was only in the sixteenth century that glass making became well-established. The Close Rolls of 1284 refer to the making of glass, and locally, there is evidence that the foresters had a glassworks on the abbey lands at Delamere in the reign of Edward II.

Occupations

It is evident from an examination of the Trade Directories of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that then there was very little industry or commerce in the parish of Delamere. Nearly all the inhabitants appear to have been engaged in farming, or occupied in the forest itself. The exception was perhaps the station. Apart from the small staff employed by the railway, this was also a local centre for coal. By the early 1930s three coal merchants had offices here, namely, The Wigan Coal Corporation Ltd., J. H. Billington Ltd. and Richard Evans and Co. Ltd. The 1934 Directory, however, showed that the area was to some extent residential. Most inhabitants were still farmers and some were employed in the public houses; a Refreshment Room had also opened up. Albert Savage had set up business as a Motor Engineer, and in 1934, outside farming of one sort or another, the following tradesmen appeared — Robert Cowap (butcher), J. M. & E. Lightfoot (grocers), John Pine (shopkeeper), Frank Roberts (tailor), Henry Roberts (saddler) and Edwin Watts (boot repairer).

Harringtons of Delamere

It was also in 1934 that the caravan depot was founded by Mr. William Dayer Harrington with his purchase of a piece of land at the corner of Waste Lane. It was here that he, with help from his wife May, and his 15 year old daughter Vera, opened their first office in a wooden shed, with a number of sectional garages being used as showrooms. A further large wooden shed at the rear became a workshop.

The business soon began to prosper, and a brick-built office was erected to take the place of the shed. Then came the Second World War and, having disposed of some of the stock of caravans to the

Admiralty for use in Scotland, the Harrington family decided to move to Southport. The depot was then requisitioned by the War Office, to become the home of a Territorial unit for several months before embarkation for France. Later, the sheds were used to store an emergency reserve of newsprint, while the workshop was taken over to house private cars belonging to oil companies.

Unfortunately Mr. Harrington died of a heart attack in 1943, but during the war his daughter Vera met and married Maj. Arthur Heap, who had once been engaged in a similar business in London. From 1945 they worked together to re-establish Harringtons with the head office at Delamere and with branches at Ormskirk and Gailey in Staffordshire. In 1959 Vera and Arthur Heap had the house named Ridgemere in Station Road built to their own design and lived here until their retirement in 1963.

Meanwhile, in 1957, Mr. G. W. Holloway had joined the company and took it over in 1963. He was assisted by his son, P. G. Holloway, who eventually became Managing Director on the death of his father.

Of the original buildings only the office block now remains, but the firm continues to expand and for some time has been one of the largest dealers in the north-west. It also has a depot at Blackburn in Lancashire.

In the workshops for modifications and servicing thirteen trained engineers are employed, while, for caravan accessories, the business has also had a shop for many years. More recently, however, a leisure shop was opened in 1986, and a large Conservatory and a Tea Room were both officially opened in 1991. On its ten acre site Harringtons today employ a work force of seventy-six.

Marley Roof Tiles

In the spring of 1924 the late Mr. Owen Aisher, the proprietor of the Marley Joinery Works at Harrietsham in Kent, made his first concrete roof tiles. From that modest beginning in a shed in a Kentish field has developed the multi-million pound Marley business with factories and depots all over the world. Rapid expansion has taken place over the past sixty years, including entry into the field of plastics in 1947, with the manufacture of thermo-plastic floor tiles in 1948, and the moulding of polyurethane foam into car arm rests in 1959. In that year also the company opened its first shop, and has continued to expand from its established base both by the acquisition of new companies and by innovation through research and product design. Eventually Marley PLC was formed with its shares on sale through the Stock Exchange.

The works at Delamere is one of seven similar factories in the U.K. forming part of the Marley Roof Tile Co. Ltd. subsidiary. Factories "specialise" in tile profile manufacture, and in fact they each produce a limited range and transfer between each other in order to hold sufficient stocks to meet likely local requirements.

Continuous production at Delamere commenced in 1947 with the making of Concrete Roof Tiles and, since 1988, a polymer based slate substitute. The sales area includes Lancashire, Cheshire, Gwynedd and Clwyd, and approximately 160 people are employed.

Quarries

The excavating for sand in this district has become widespread since the last war and has been the cause of much local opposition. This has been mainly due to the loss of agricultural land and woodland amenities, the increase in heavy traffic and also public concern over the after use of the wet workings once the extraction has been completed. In 1987, due to anxiety over land levels and subsidence, the Parish Councils of Oakmere and Delamere instigated and financed the carrying out of a Bench Marks Survey by the Brian Clancy Partnership of Altrincham, but the report stated that "sand extraction was not causing any adverse problems with the ground levels". It is, however, a geological fact of life that this is the part of the county where there are the best deposits of sand for use by the construction industry. At present there are three quarries providing sand for concrete, asphalt and mortar which is distributed to Manchester and Liverpool:

Tilcon Fourways Quarry in Chester Road, Oakmere, covers an area of 220 acres and began operating in the early 1970s. This employs 14 people and includes a lake created by the wet working.

Tilcon Crown Farm Quarry, in Stoneyford Lane, opened in 1987 in an area of 90 acres. It is dry working and employs 7 people.

McAlpine-Hogshead Quarry, also in Oakmere, has 3 employees on a 60 acre area, and is a dry working.

There is also a *Landfill Site* in Hogshead Lane which has been operated by Clugston Reclamation Ltd. since 1988, although it has been in use since 1979. This is due to close on 17th June 1991 and much care must be taken in the restoration of the site once tipping ceases, it is to be sealed off under a capping of Bentonite, with a metre of subsoil and top soil above. The whole site is to be landscaped. A five year management plan follows restoration, and the ultimate plan is to restore it to agricultural use. Five people are employed on the site which covers over 42 acres.

Earlier sand quarries include *Nunsmere* (wet working) and now a lake, and *Lobslack* (dry working) which is being developed as a "Nursery" for the Forestry Commission.

Horticulture

By the side of the approach road to Tarporley there has been a Garden Centre in the parish for many years. Sandymere Nurseries, as Rochfords Garden Centre, was taken over by *Jardinierie* in 1984. Nowadays it consists of ten large greenhouses, each one being approximately three-quarters of an acre in size, and nine of these being given over to the growing of houseplants. These growing

areas are well managed with automatic watering and thermal screening. After nearly seven years the company is now well established as one of the major centres of the area. On the site are many attractions, one being the Aquatic centre and another the well-stocked Bonsai section with many specimens and ornaments. Employees number 6 full time and 14 part time workers.

Situated behind the Garden Centre is *Keith Butters Ltd.*, a firm employing 18 people that deals with the wholesale distribution of plants, shrubs, bulbs and ceramics. A Cash and Carry is also operating. The business, with another depot in Spalding, buys in Holland and distributes all over the country, including the Isle of Man. Trading started in 1984.

The Motor Trade

There are two main garages in the parish, and both are in Oakmere. *Heron Garage* operates from the Chester Road, and *Oakmere Service Station* stands in Tarporley Road. The second firm provides diesel for commercial lorries, and undertakes repairs and maintenance for heavy goods vehicles.

Other firms in this field are *Rambler Haulage* (G. Parker and K. Armstrong), who employ eight people and have been operating in general haulage for ten years, and *Dimma Autostyling*. The second of these is situated by Heron Garage, near the Abbey Arms. It is operated by Mr. T. Pankhurst and Partners as "car customisers". It has 5 employees and has a countrywide business providing specialist design engines and converting bodywork to customers' own specifications.

General Businesses

Situated between the old Court House and the Abbey Arms is *Crownlake Ltd.* which started in August 1982, and Oakmere Technical Services, dating from January 1983, which are operated by Mr. G. Molyneux. The firm employs a minimum of 6 people in the production of creosote, processing oils, thinners and wood preservatives. In the same area is *Ash Marketing Ltd.* (Mr. A. Henderson), who are Automotive marine and industrial engineers. It is a sales orientated business providing new and reconditioned axles and gearboxes. It is primarily targeted at municipalities, and provides engine parts for ambulances, police vehicles, motoring organisations and British Rail.

Small businesses in Farm Road, Oakmere, include *Churook Inflatables* (A. H. Batkin), which employs 3 people, started in 1984, and produces one inflatable boat per week; also *Caravan Transport and Towing* (J. K. Alexander). A larger firm, *Leigh and Heywood Welding*, has a staff of ten and has been operating for over ten years. This business undertakes welding work for the Forestry Commission, the North West Water Authority and Tilcon Quarry. *The Fudge Factory* opened in Waste Lane in 1990 for the making of

Swiss Truffles. More recently, to attract a wider market, the owner (C. Hardy) decided to manufacture fudge.

A number of other businesses in the parish include Mr. Bernard Thompson's *Oakmere Crafts* specialising in high quality wood turning, and *Franbett Kennels* (G. M. Dolan) in the grounds of the Oakmere Hall estate. The owner of the second of these has a staff of six, and a licence for the boarding of 60 dogs and 20 cats. The kennels opened in 1955 and now have a trimming parlour and a shop.

The Post Office used to be in one of the Crown Cottages situated on Chester Road, Oakmere until 1927. In that year it was moved to some small wooden premises in Station Road, where it continued to do business until the present brick building was erected nearby in 1961. As well as providing a Post Office service for local people, the shop, being the only one in the district, sells a wide variety of goods in the tradition of the general village stores. Since 1988 the owners have been Mr. and Mrs. P. Wheelhouse.

EDUCATION

National Schools in Britain

From 1833 the National Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society received money from the Government to aid the building of schools. In accordance with their regulations and requirements Government grants increased after 1840, subject to schools having a management committee and being liable to inspection by officials known as His (Her) Majesty's Inspectors.

Attendance, examination and inspection controlled the pattern of school life in Victorian times. The annual financial support from the Treasury was based upon the level of pupils' attendance and the "passing" of the required standards of attainment. The per capita grant depended on a satisfactory report from the Inspectors.

Older children were tested in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic according to the standards which were nationally laid down. For any who "failed" there was a pro-rata reduction in the annual grant.

A list of "targets" for each "standard" was presented in a Code drawn up in 1862. There were six standards and later a seventh, but children often failed to get beyond Standard 5 because of home circumstances. By the time they were 12 or 13 the boys would be ready to work locally alongside their fathers and the girls went as living-in servants away from home. It was not until 1918 with the Fisher Education Act that attendance at school became compulsory until the age of 14.

In the examinations the emphasis was on the "three R's" and there was much rote learning and mechanical teaching. Religious

Education was very important and was examined annually by the Diocesan Inspector. The Scripture examination, which included repetition of the Catechism, took place in the morning and the children were given the rest of the day as a holiday.

The annual visits of the Government Inspector and the Diocesan Inspector were separate events. They were important dates on the school calendar and every effort was made to ensure maximum attendance. By 1902 an Attendance Officer was in regular contact with both the school and the parents to discover reasons for absence or to pursue truants.

Gradually the Curriculum broadened. Plain sewing was taught to the girls; physical education took the form of "drill" in the playground and by 1910, History and Geography were taught as well as the three R's. Between 1899 and 1930 various references were made in school log books to lectures on "Alcohol" by the Band of Hope Society.

Delamere Church of England School 1844 to 1900

In 1844 one acre of land was given to Delamere by Queen Victoria for the erection of a school. According to the deed of grant the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury gave and granted unto the Trustees, the Rector of Delamere, the Rector of Tarporley and the Vicar of Whitegate "an acre of land in the forest of Delamere for a site for a National School for promoting the education of the children of the poor in the principles of the established Church. If any acre of land ceased to be used for this purpose it would revert to her Majesty and her heirs and successors for ever."

In 1846 the National School opened, built on Crown land in the exact centre of the Ecclesiastical parish. "It is a handsome structure in the Gothic style, built in red sandstone with facings and mullions of lighter coloured freestone. It consists of two rooms each measuring 32 feet by 21 feet. The children sit in the two rooms, set in galleries with slates on their knees. Adjoining the school is the residence for the teachers, Joshua and Martha Jones. The whole has a chaste and elegant appearance." Thus runs Samuel Bagshaw's Survey of the County of Chester made in 1850.

The building is typical of a Victorian Church School with high gables and a bell tower perched prominently on the steep pitched roof. It has a symmetrical frontage and two canted bay windows with decorated tracery. It is, incidentally, interesting to note the striking resemblance between the then fashionable mock Gothic style of the school and the House of Commons, both of which buildings were illustrated by the Queen's lithographers, Day and Sons.

Known in its early years as Fox's School, since Mr. Fox was the Rector of Delamere at this time, it was later, and for some one hundred years, known as the Forest School. Children came from great distances. Approximately 250 pupils were on roll, arriving on

foot or on ponies which they tethered to the trees around, for it was set amid the forest.

The School House formed part of the main building at the back and on the old plan part of what is now the staffroom and library was then designated "parlour". Round about 1880 Mr. Griffiths, the Head Teacher, threatened to leave because the School House was damp. The village, thereupon, held a great fete on the Old Pale Heights. This continued for three days and people came from far and near so that £500 was raised for the erection of a new School House, which Mr. Griffiths designed himself. The old School House was then utilised by the school as classrooms for the Infants.

The aforementioned Mr. Griffiths seems to have been a man of some force of character. Many were the tales told of his wizardry with the cane. He kept it up his sleeve and shot it out suddenly upon the luckless offender. He also seems to have been something of an authority on land measurement and is reported to have measured up for the Irish workers on piece work.

Water and dust appear to have been two problems of the school in his day. The log book contains constant complaints about the dust raised by the horses' hoofs or the failure of the water supply. Rainwater was collected in a tank under the school and pumped up for washing purposes. The teachers brought a bottle of drinking water for their mid-day meal. Other drinking water was carried either from Hind's Well at Organsdale or a well near the Old Pale. Apparently Mr. Griffiths preferred the latter, for, an old pupil said, "He used to let me carry two buckets of water for him from the well up the lane and at dinner time I'd fetch him his ale and tobacco from the Abbey Arms." When asked if he was paid he replied, "On Saturday he'd give me an apple or two. You see I was his godson so I reckon he sort of favoured me."

On April 23rd 1888 the Managers drew up a scale of charges ranging from one penny per week for Infants under six, to four pence per week for Standard VI upwards. No labouring man of the parish had to pay more than nine pence per week and neighbouring parishes, with the exception of Willington, had to pay double fees. A log book entry of 1901 suggests that a "pupil teacher" was employed in the school as her salary was fixed at £35 per annum. A very small number of teachers had to cope with a large number of children and these "pupil teachers" and "monitors" used to assist. At this time absences from school were often associated with children being engaged in work on the land. Sometimes school holidays were taken to suit the potato planting and picking seasons.

The Twentieth Century

Overcrowding was a problem in the early 1900s and some internal alterations were made to facilitate the organisation of classes. An HMI report in 1903 stated "Infants are seated on an ill-sloped and inconvenient gallery. Their work would be greatly improved if the

gallery was removed and kindergarten desks substituted." These were brought into use in 1904 and remained until 1986.

A further HMI report in 1906 said, "The Headmaster is overweighted with 55 children in each of the four standards. The school is too full for really effective teaching and the provision of a new room for the Infants would be a great boon." In 1910 Mr. Nixon of Kelsall knocked out the middle partition so that the Infant classroom could be opened up into one large room. Further improvements were carried out in 1923 when water was brought into the school and in 1935 electricity replaced the oil lamps and flush toilets were installed instead of the pail closets.

Illness had been a constant problem since Victorian times and by the end of that era schools had the services of a Medical Officer of Health. Large numbers of children would be absent at the same time and it was often necessary to close the school for a week or more. Measles was the most common complaint, but between 1900 and 1920 there were also epidemics of diphtheria, scarlet fever, mumps and influenza. Whooping cough caused a closure of three weeks in 1921 and even in January 1940 twenty-seven children were absent with influenza and chicken pox, many more than in modern times.

One is constantly reminded of the severity of the winters in bygone days. Between 1905 and 1918 the school was frequently closed as roads were impassable. Some children had a long daily walk to and from school which made life difficult in the depth of winter. In 1908 only 36 children were present out of 139 and a few years later a log book reference reports, "Only 12 children present today. Imagine the parents have kept their children at home because of the danger of cars on the highway in the deep snow."

Annual events and special occasions brightened the school year. Empire Day was celebrated by the children singing patriotic songs. Royal weddings, coronations and funerals were excuses for an extra holiday. An annual visit was made to the seaside accompanied by the Chapel Sunday School.

During the Great War 1914-1918, whilst the Headmaster, Mr. Fugler, was serving in the Forces, the School House was let to two brothers and a sister of foreign extraction. The sister died and after keeping the corpse in the house for a week, the brothers were discovered digging in the back garden, apparently with the intention of burying her there.

In 1917 there was much emphasis on school gardening and the National Savings Bank was started. In April of that year the school closed for a week so that the children could help with agricultural work on the farms. One day in January 1918 only 42 children were in school as the rest had gone to see an aeroplane which had descended in a field two miles from the school. Next day 35 children and a teacher were allowed to go to see it before it left, presumably those who had not played truant previously. Some light relief in

1914 for 16 boys who were absent "acting as caddies on the golf links for a Ladies' Tournament". In 1927 children were actually allowed into the playground to view the eclipse of the sun. A treat indeed.

From 1935 until 1939 there were repeated complaints about "smoke and smells" referred to as "impossible to enter the classroom due to smoke problem" and "there is a vile unhealthy smell in and around school arising from the sewer behind the playground". The smoke problem became so acute that eventually Mr. Ackerley, the Headmaster, decided to close the school and treat the matter as an emergency.

A fire had broken out previously in December 1936. During the evening the Rector, the Rev. G. S. Payne, called at the school house saying that there was a light coming from the school roof. On investigation it was found that a square yard of ceiling adjacent to the chimney was burning furiously, caused by an oak beam being ignited. New furniture, log books and other documents were removed to safety and the Tarporley Fire Brigade got the fire under control before any major damage was done. Everything was very wet for several days and despite a tarpaulin on the roof, the Hall and classroom became flooded when it rained heavily the following night.

In September 1935 six choirboys left at 11.45 a.m. to attend a funeral and failed to return. "The Head Teacher will deal with them the next day" states the log book. 1935 saw the commencement of a milk scheme and hot cocoa was served at morning break. In May 1938 children were supplied with hot dinners for the first time at a cost of 2 Vpence per day.

At the outbreak of the Second World War seventy-six evacuees arrived and were taken to billets in the parish. The following week the Head Teacher took the children on a Nature ramble and a picnic to introduce the evacuees to the countryside. Perhaps the war had little meaning for the very young children, but it greatly altered the lives of the older pupils. To the Liverpool evacuees the local children, no doubt, seemed like "country bumpkins" but to Delamere children the city children seemed like foreigners with their strange accents and lack of country know-how. In May 1941 there were 86 Cheshire children and 75 evacuees on roll, but some of the latter could not settle to country life and returned home, so that by August 1942 there were only 36 evacuees. To help in the war effort boys and girls were allowed out of school to help on farms and the school garden was a hive of activity. By July 1945 most of the senior boys and five girls were going out daily to assist on the land.

The School Bell had been rung regularly to summon village children to school until the start of World War Two. At the end of the war a service was arranged to welcome back ex-servicemen, including prisoners of war. The service was conducted by Rev. Payne on the lawn in front of the school. Mr. Norman Ackerley,

Head Teacher at that time, recalls how two schoolboys were chosen to ring the bell to celebrate the end of hostilities. However, the enthusiastic boys rang the bell so vigorously that the clapper flew out and has never been seen since. The bell, minus clapper, now hangs on its original beam in the entrance hall of the school, where it was placed when the belfry was declared unsafe.

Three air-raid shelters in the school grounds were demolished in 1948, the work being done by two men employed for 14 days and an extra man for 7 days at a total cost of £96.

When the school celebrated its Centenary in 1946 the parents and teachers set to work to make it a momentous occasion. In place of the old and rather fearsome Biblical pictures on the walls, they bought modern pictures suited to the children in each class. All old pupils over the age of 65 were invited to a Centenary party and the oldest, aged 84, came from Frodsham and cut the celebration cake.

In June 1952 the school changed status from C. of E. Aided to C. of E. Controlled and in 1953 it ceased to be an all-age school. From that date children of eleven transferred to Tarporey Secondary Modern (now the High School) unless they had gained a scholarship to a Grammar School.

Head Teacher, Mrs. Ackerley, attended the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in the summer of 1961 and later that month she took the children to Chester to greet the Bishop as he set off on his pilgrimage of the Diocese. A local visit was made to the Old Pale Farm to view the mulberry tree planted by order of the Queen to replace the original one planted by James I in 1617, which had unfortunately blown down in a gale.

Modem Times

Moving on some twenty years the school was featured in a book on Village Schools. Jon Wyand recorded photographically many schools in England and Wales. Some of them no longer exist but some, like Delamere, still ring with the sound of children's voices and continue to make a unique contribution to the quality and character of rural life. As a special feature Mr. Wyand used for his book a photograph of the two stone tablets situated on the wall of the East classroom. These are inscribed with the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. The tablets were originally in the local church, one each side of the altar, and were read from during church services before the introduction of prayer books. It is thought that the stone tablets were removed and installed in the school when the church was refurbished in 1918.

On 14th March 1980 the Bishop of Chester, the Right Rev. Victor Whitsey, honoured the school with a visit. He was accompanied by the Diocesan Director of Education, Canon J. White. They were welcomed by the Rector, Canon Bernard Spurry, and the Head Teacher, Mrs. Mary Carter. This was a memorable occasion for everyone. The Bishop with his usual friendly manner visited each

class. The Junior boys were fascinated by his interest and knowledge of "Soccer" and delighted by the news that he had been at school with Sir Matt Busby. A short visit, spiced with humour, but with "pearls of wisdom" imparted on the way.

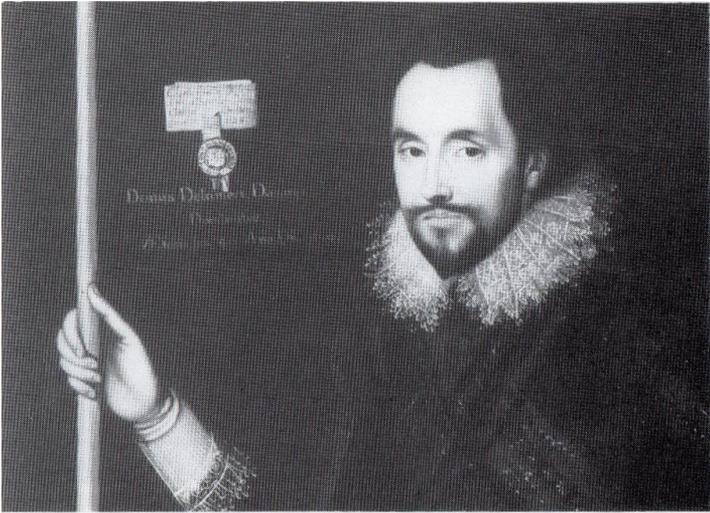
In keeping with the school's Victorian connections an Old Time Music Hall was planned for Christmas 1981. Heavy snow fell in December and many Cheshire schools were closed. Finally the performance took place in February when the school hall was crowded to capacity. The audience, dressed in Victorian costume, greeted each item on the programme with enthusiasm, joining in with many of the traditional Music Hall songs. The children provided the entertainment, thrilling the audience with a Victorian melodrama; dancing and singing their way through a Barber's shop routine and a Flanagan and Allen duet; baffling everyone by "sawing the lady in half"; the strong man in his leopard skin defied the laws of gravity and there was even a saucy Can-Can. Junior pupil, Robert George, resplendent in top hat and tails, held the show together, amazing everyone with his "loquacious lexicon of vexatious vernacular verbosity" in true Music Hall style.

Since April 1986 the school has been classed as a Grade II listed building. Modern improvements to the building have included an extension for indoor toilet and washroom facilities built in 1989. During the excavations for the foundations of the new building workmen unearthed the underground water chamber from which water was originally pumped. This was located under the old washroom floor, formerly the school house kitchen. The chamber proved to be an architectural masterpiece, strongly constructed with arched walls and a domed roof. Workmen went down, via a ladder, to investigate its inlets and outlets, and found that the water was quite clear, unpolluted and freeflowing into an underground stream. Some regret was felt when it was finally necessary to cap the top of the chamber, reinforce the floor and seal off the opening, possibly for ever.

During recent years the school curriculum has continued to widen and there is today much emphasis on individual tuition with a blend of modern progressive teaching with the preservation of traditional values. The school endeavours to create an atmosphere of learning that is relaxed and happy but essentially purposeful. The children are involved in various Educational visits during the year all of which are carefully integrated into the curriculum.

Parents have played an increasing role in the development of the school, actively involved in fund raising to purchase additional equipment and subsidise visits. Links between the Church and the local Community have remained strong.

Following the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the introduction of the National Curriculum there are nationally drawn up lists of "attainment targets" and "standards of attainment tests" which are reminiscent of the Code of 1862, which is where it all began.



*Sir John Done
Master Forester at Delamere from 1601 to 1629
(With acknowledgement to Chester City Council, Department of Leisure Services)*



*Mrs. Karen Cowan
Master Forester since 1969*



*Rev. G. S. Payne, M.A.
Rector of Delamere, 1913-51*



George E. Rock



Miss Marjorie E. Rutter



Mrs. Nancy Ackerley



Delamere Station between the wars



Vale Royal Abbey Arms, Oakmere 1991



Eddisbury Lodge 1990



Garden Party at Delamere Old Rectory c. 1950

Left to right: Mrs. P. Bumphrey, Rev. G. S. Payne, Mr. R. R. Crewdson, Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Paterson of "Oaklands, Spurstow

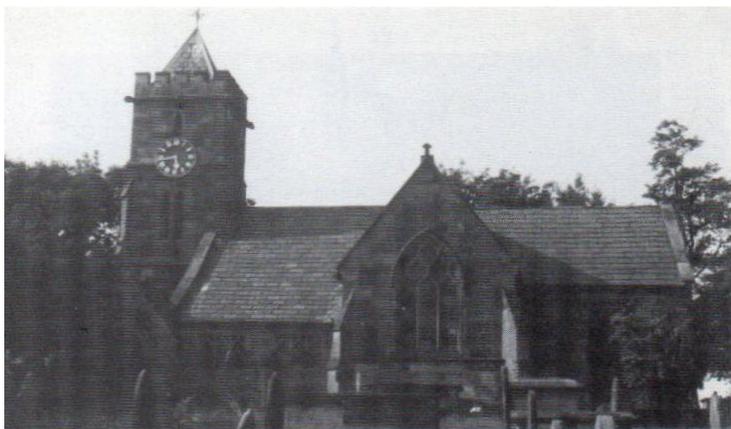


Presentation to Nurse Doreen Joseph 1970

Left to right: (standing) Norman H. Ackerley, Mrs. Mary Walker, Rev. Donald E. Marris, Mrs. Astbury, Mrs. Christine Frith, Philip N. Rutter; (seated) Nurse Joseph, Floss, Miss Marjorie E. Rutter



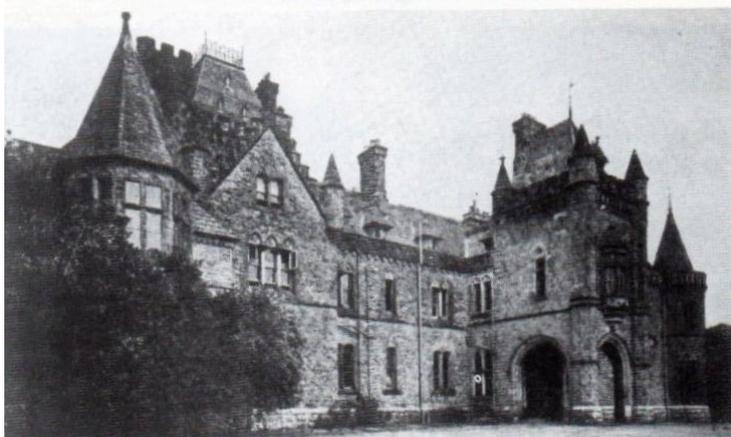
Boothsdale (Little Switzerland) 1991



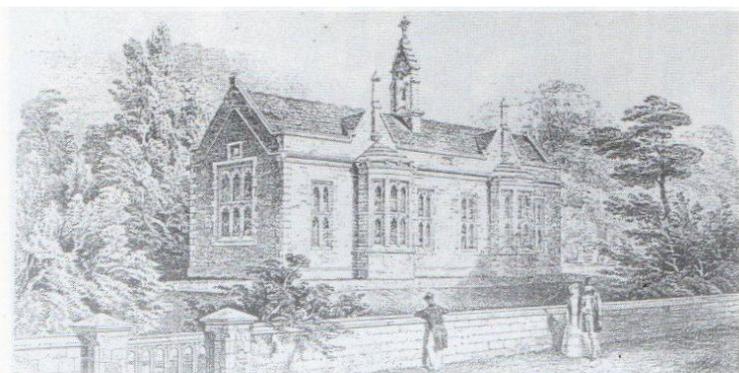
St. Peter's Church, Delamere 1991



Interior St. Peter's Church, Delamere 1991



Oakmere Hall c. 1945



Delamere School c. 1846 (from an engraving)



Delamere School Gardening Class 1912

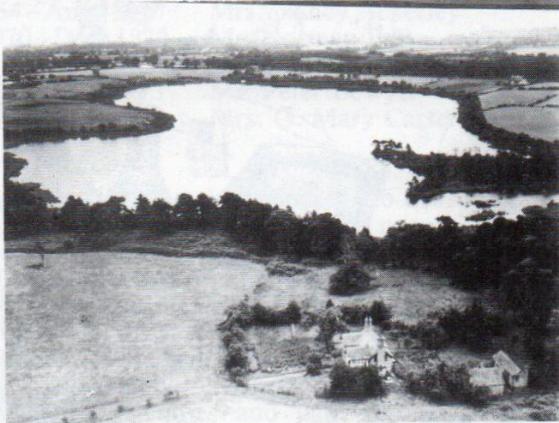
Left to right: (back row) Frank Goring, Jim Bailey, Reg. Gore, Harry Johnson, Bob Sheen, Sam Wright, Jimmy Duxbury, Harry Foster, Tom Done, Mr. Fugler; (front row) George Walker, Charlie Wright, Joe Whitfield, "Tabsy" Vernon, Joe Vernon, Arthur Robinson, George Lewis, Jim Lewis, Sam. Lewis; (sitting right hand side) Joe Wright, Alf Owen



Oakmere Toll Bar (undated)



Baron Wavertree of Delamere 1856–1933 (from a painting)



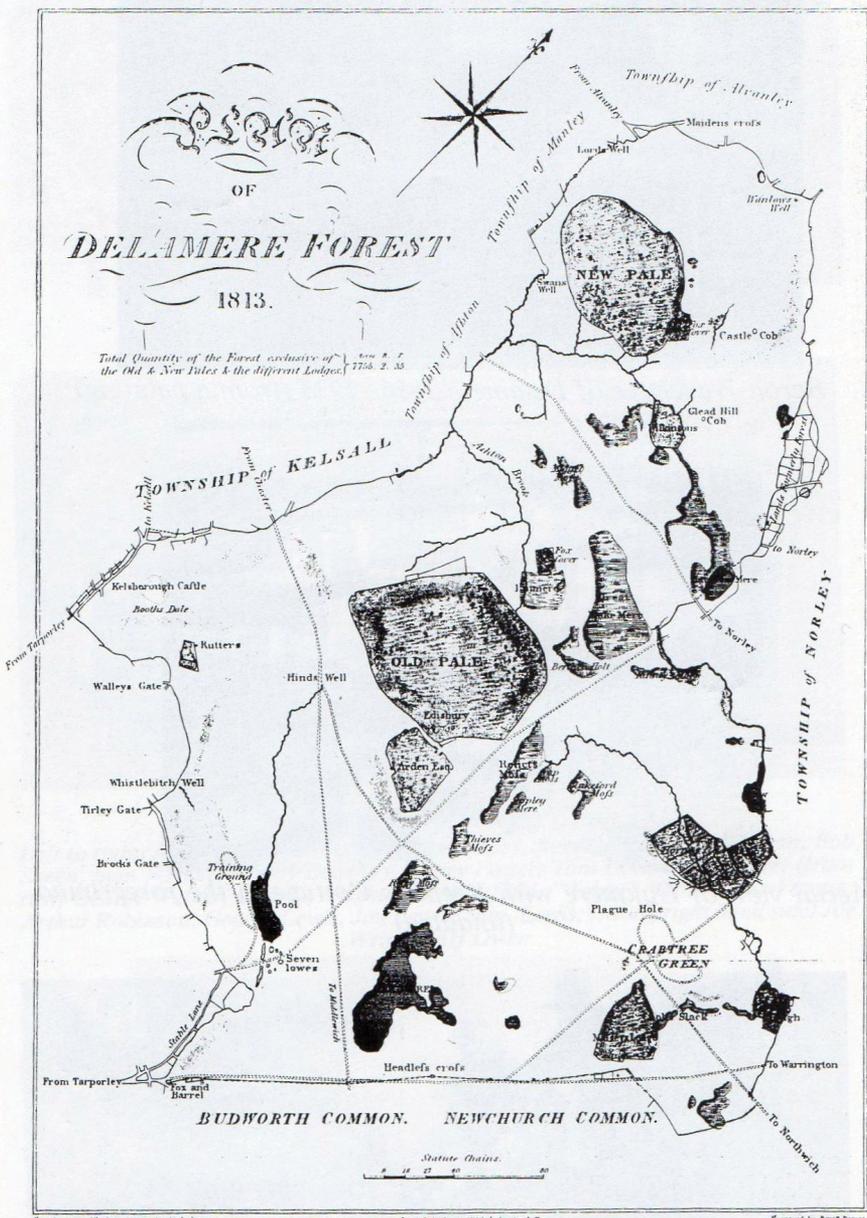
Aerial view of Oakmere with Keeper's Cottage in the foreground (undated)



Discovery of Oakmere canoe 1935 (George E. Rock on the left)

OF
DELAMERE FOREST
 1813.

Total Quantity of the Forest exclusive of the Old & New Pales & the different Lodges }
 7756. 2. 35



From the Survey of the Commissioners for the Inclosure.

Land Tax Act 10 1790 by Lamberton & Co.

Engraved by Henry Davies

Plan of Delamere Forest 1813

List of Head Teachers of Delamere C.E. School from the erection of the school in 1846

Early Period 1846-1872

Unfortunately the early log book, prior to 1890, is not available, therefore dates can only be approximate.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1846 | Joshua and Martha Jones — teachers |
| 1860 | Joseph Astbury — Schoolmaster and Mrs. Ann Astbury — Schoolmistress |

Later period 1872 onwards from the log book references

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1872-1911 | Mr. James Griffiths |
| 1911-1935 | Mr. Reginald Fugler. Absent on Military Service from September 1914 to December 1919. During his absence Miss Wilson took charge of the school. |
| 1935-Dec. 1953 | Mr. Norman H. Ackerley |
| Jan. 1954-Aug. 1970 | Mrs. Nancy Ackerley |
| Sept. 1970-Dec. 1970 | Mr. Norman Ball — acting Headteacher, County Emergency Staff |
| Jan. 1971-Aug. 1973 | Mr. Peter Bowyer |
| Sept. 1973-Present | Mrs. G. Mary Carter |

Kingswood School

In September 1989 an Independent Co-educational College was opened at Kingswood. This catered for nursery age children up to 18 year olds and had facilities for day pupils and boarders.

The Governing Body obtained the building from the former Crossley East Hospital. Standing in 34 acres, the house is Edwardian with more than 130 rooms. It aimed to cater eventually for 200 pupils and the school was also to be offered as a Conference Centre. Unfortunately, like so many organisations in 1990, it ran into financial difficulties and with the untimely death of its Principal, Mr. K. Taylor, B.Ed., B.Sc, F.R.S.A. in June 1991, its future is at present in doubt.

Fox Howl — Delamere Outdoor Education Centre

Delamere Forest has been a popular venue for school field work and outdoor activities since the 1950s. Environmental education developed in the 1960s and in Cheshire this led to the provision of a network of Outdoor Education Centres across the County. In 1973 Cheshire County Council bought the redundant Delamere Forest Youth Hostel and converted it to a residential and day centre for Cheshire Schools, Youth Groups and Colleges.

For the past seventeen years this small house has catered for the needs of 8,000 young visitors each year. It has been the base of field work for Infants, Juniors, GCSE students, A level students, Graduates and Post Graduates. It is a focus for Cheshire WATCH, the Education wing of the Cheshire Conservation Trust.

Known from its Youth Hostel days as Fox Howl, this unique site has responded to the challenge of Operation Raleigh by providing a

base for the national selection weekends for 17-24 year olds in the period of the expedition round the world from 1984 to 1988. It continues as a base for the Operation Raleigh Trust and supports the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme preparing the young people for exploration and conservation.

CAKES AND ALE

Delamere makes no claim to have had a tavern in Shakespearean days, but the spirit of friendship, welcome, good talk and good cheer would be recognised by Sir Toby in today's places of refreshment. Food as well as drink are now demanded by the customers, and ease of transport makes even a remote public house desirable. It is no longer necessary for it to be sited on a main road, provided that the service offered and the friendly atmosphere is there. Licensing records from the Eddisbury Register of Ale Houses one hundred years ago show that six licences were granted in Delamere and two in Oakmere, but the only house then with a full licence was the Abbey Arms.

The term "alehouse" referred to inns existing before 1828 which were permitted by law to sell not only ales and beer, but also all manner of spiritous liquors. This became known as a full licence. A beerhouse was allowed to sell only beer, and this type of establishment came into existence after 1830 as a result of the desire on the part of the government to see more beer drunk instead of spirits.

The *Vale Royal Abbey Arms*, situated on a busy crossroads, is a large, late Georgian building with a three bay centre and one bay lower wings. Red sandstone, probably from the same source, was used to build the Vale Royal Abbey itself over seven hundred years ago; the quarry is only half a mile away. It conjures up a picture of a posting inn in the days of coaches, when there would be a hive of activity with ostlers changing horses, lamps and roaring wood fires to welcome travellers. In 1890 it was recommended as a good house, with good accommodation, beds for three travellers, stables with ten stalls, and facilities to provide refreshments for forty persons. It was a free house, owned by the executors of Lord Delamere, and until the sale of the estate in 1928, possessed further land and property down Abbey Lane. In 1905 it became known as the Vale Royal Abbey Arms, and bears the crest of Vale Royal Abbey prominently over the front door. One of the two licensees for Sandiway in 1797 was probably the landlord then, and the inn doubled as the Oakmere Courthouse. It is now a Wilson's House, the Manchester brewers, but offers a choice of other brands,

different from the days when a tied house sold only that brewery's beer.

The Everitt family had a long association with the Abbey Arms, going back to 1908. Alfred was landlord for 28 years, and his son William for 23 years; his son Roy would have followed in his turn if brewery group policy had still allowed son to succeed father. St. Peter's Church held its annual Garden Party for several years on the lawns behind the hotel, which only recently ceased to offer accommodation. Now the inside is much altered to facilitate the serving of food. It is a Chef & Brewer house, and the licensee is Ian Conchie.

The other alehouse in Oakmere is the *Forest View* to be found at the very corner of the parish, on a crossroads where the three parishes of Oakmere, Norley and Cuddington meet; when it was built it was overlapping the boundary and rates had to be paid to two authorities. It was built by Samuel Hornby, a farmer and forester; Hornby's Rough is a patch of land just across the railway line. As a farm, it consisted of three largish fields, and the one facing the front of the View was called Race Course field. It was about a mile around the outside and was used for small events and challenge matches. In one such match between two mares, Hornby's against Wilbraham's of Delamere Park, the field was forfeited to settle the wager; Hornby's mare was later found to be in foal. The licence came back into the family when in 1941 Jane Clark, a granddaughter of Hornby, became the landlady, followed by her daughter Joan Keyes. The 1890 register says "that this cottage house was only used for drinking purposes, and was much frequented on Saturdays by so called bona fide travellers from Northwich, etc.". Nowadays customers come from further afield, and changes to the inside of the house make catering a big attraction. The "drink and drive" penalties have forced country inns to increase provision of food, so the term "ale house" really does not do them justice. L. G. Carthew is the present licensee.

At the opposite end of the parish is the *Boot Inn* at Willington. In 1815 the commissioners of Delamere Forest Enclosure Act sold six allotments of forest land to John Crawford, a labourer. Twenty years later he was classed as a yeoman of Delamere and left a dwelling house, land and buildings to his son George, who mortgaged the property and defaulted on his payments, so the small holding passed in 1868 to Samuel Prescott, a bag manufacturer from Liverpool. The first licensee was John Prescott in 1872, followed by Martin Prescott, then Agnes Prescott. Next, in 1931, came Joe Lloyd, possibly the best remembered local character. Joe was a thatcher (in straw, not reed), a basket maker, and a teller of tales. He caused much embarrassment to the village girls by giving each a wicker cradle as a wedding present. He took part in a countryside radio programme with the keeper George Rock of Oakmere (and the swear words used were frequently bleeped out).

Although beer was known to be served after closing time, Joe never had his licence revoked. He died in 1969.

Now the whole of the ground floor which once comprised a cellar, dwelling-house, inn, stone cottage and pigeon club room are all part of the Boot. The name may have been taken from the first four letters of Boothdale, but old residents remember it as the Cat. The story goes that a sign writer painting a picture for the Red Lion caused much derision, and the locals said it looked more like a cat on fire. It was acquired by Greenall Whitley in 1913, and is now in the capable hands of J. J. Meyer. Jean Jacques looks after the ale, and the landlord's wife, Judith, deals with the cakes.

Th' House At Top started life as Sadlers Beer House, with a shop and land, according to brewery records, and dates back to 1841 when the first licensee was James Pine. Harriet Pine in 1882 had the licence. She married John Sadler and succeeded him when he died in 1899. The house was extensively altered in 1903, renamed the Farmers Arms, and bought by Greenalls. Harriet, then known as Auntie Sadler, carried on business until 1919 when she made over the licence to Rudolf Bernett, who had married her niece Emily. Rudolf was a Royal Marine, and a teetotaler; he was the landlord until 1965, a total of forty-six years. The cellar is cut out of rock, and beer was carried up in enamel jugs six days a week. The customers were mostly Irish farm workers, and men employed in Delamere Forest. Big changes followed the acquisition of a full licence in 1965, and in 1988 extensions, taking in the old cart shed and stalls, doubled the space. New kitchens were built and, under John Barton, an Ambassador Restaurant was started; he has received a top award from the brewery for a "Best Inn keeper of a country public house". The inn stands at the top of Kelsall Hill on Chester Road, hence the change of name. Here the Cakes have caught up with the Ale.

About fifty yards away down Chester Road is the *Foresters Arms*; a good name as it stands on the edge of Delamere Forest. The first recorded licence was in 1861. It was a free house, and the owners and landlords up until 1902 were members of the Willis family. Two years later it was bought by Bents Brewery who also enlarged the buildings. A car park was made at the back about 1975, until which year there was only limited parking in front on the busy Chester Road. There was no by-pass in those days. The building in Bents' time included a house and grocery shop which is now part of the pub. About 1970 Bents was taken over by Bass Charrington, however now it is again a free house, not free ale only but a free choice by the landlord. The present owner, Graham Heath, opens at hours to suit his customers, and concentrates on good ale and a friendly atmosphere, without the distractions of serving food.

The *Fishpool*, a former beerhouse, lies just within the township of Delamere, being at the junction of the A54 and B5152 roads. The licence dates back to 1864, before which time it used to be two

cottages. It was part of the Fishpool Estate belonging to Sir Philip Egerton in 1872, and then to Hon. Marshall Brooks of Portal Lodge, Tarporley. Greenalls had a lease in 1891, and they bought the freehold in 1947. It is the only inn in the parish having a picture sign hanging over the roadway, and this shows a fish hooked on a line. A pity that there are not more of these traditional signs. In Austria a bunch of evergreen branches is hung outside the premises whenever wine is being sold. In the estate deeds there is a reference to a conveyance from H.M. The King to Middlewich U.B.C. in 1907 concerning the abstraction of water. No doubt because of this the water level of the Fishpool mere has since dropped dramatically. There is still land belonging to The Fishpool Inn, level and dry, and it is used as a football pitch and for church garden parties. A full licence was granted in 1953, and for twenty years Doug and Dorothy Jones kept a tidy and spotlessly clean house with gleaming brass, and cheering coal fires. It has since been tastefully altered and extended inside, although from the outside it looks unchanged, and food was put on the menu by Russell and Gillian Carter.

Although just a few yards outside the parish boundary, mention should be made of the *Delamere Forest Inn*. This used to be the Woodfields restaurant, but was sold with a full licence in 1986. It is a free house, close to the Forest on the road to Hatchmere, and Adam and Pat Whyte give you a warm welcome.

There was also once a beer house called *Carters Arms* on Quarry Lane, listed as having a licence before 1869. It was closed compulsorily in 1907 and in compensation the owner, John Burgess, received £470, and the landlord, Leonard Mort, £100. In 1880 there was also a six day licence for a "moderate" grocer's shop, run by William Austin, on Willington Corner. This is nowadays Willington Post Office.

Also in the parish are two further establishments that provide refreshments. *The Happy Eater*, on the main Chester Road, on the site previously occupied by Worths Caravans, was opened about 1988. It is owned by Trust House Forte and is open every day from 7 a.m.-10 p.m. and has room for at least one hundred customers. Facilities include access for wheelchairs, special meals for children and a conditional licence to serve drinks with food. The second is *Fourways Inn*, which started as a Country Club following the sale of property owned by Lord Delamere, in 1928. Mrs. Wilson bought 3 to 4 acres of land beside the Police Station and with Mrs. Arnold created the Fourways Country Club. There was horse riding, stables at the Abbey Arms being leased, and later their own stables were built below the Police Station. It was a very exclusive club, with a swimming pool, tennis courts, a badminton hall, and also a casino. During the war it was requisitioned by the army and used as a map office, with a NAAFI canteen and First Aid facilities. In 1965 the badminton hall was sold to Cheshire Farm Fare and used as a chicken factory. Fourways, not now a country club, was popular

for dances, particularly on Saturday nights, wedding receptions and social functions, for which purposes it became quite famous throughout the county. It changed hands and was taken over by the Lynch family in 1956. In recent years it has been much altered and extended. As well as a lounge bar and restaurant there is now the Delamere room which is designed for special occasions and caters for up to 250 persons. It became the Fourway Inn in 1968 and displays two hanging signs over the road, the reverse showing that Tetleys Bitter is sold within.

Many changes have taken place in the last hundred years, and today ale houses, particularly country ale houses, have assumed respectability. No longer does the inn keeper need to have a second occupation, which used to be mainly farming since there was always some land available with each house. Instead of mostly male drinkers, the whole family is now welcome, and not only locals, for with a car, customers have a wide choice of where to eat and drink.

The slur against drinking implied in the quotation, "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" would now seem to be less true.

SPORTING LIFE

The history of field sports in this country starts at the time of the Conquest in the eleventh century. The Normans were prodigiously fond of hunting and brought the taste with them from the Continent. They quickly learned to appreciate the opportunities in England for their sport, particularly in the Forests, which even then were not entirely covered with trees but were the areas where the beasts of the chase had taken refuge. William quickly declared these areas to be his and put a stop to the gradual encroachments of the plough. At all costs the "venison" (the deer and the boar) must be preserved for him. Indeed, future kings considered these forests to be their playgrounds. In 1189, when Bishop of London, Richard FitzNigel declared that they were the secret places of kings where they went to hunt and put away their cares, in between fighting wars abroad and their constant progress around the country administering justice. In the north-west it seems that the Earl of Chester, Hugh Lupus (1071 — 1101) was as enthusiastic about hunting as was his king, and created several forests, including Delamere, for his own diversion. The harsh forest laws then in force have been mentioned elsewhere, and the peasantry were not even permitted to add a cony to the pot without fear of punishment. However, for those owning land within the boundaries it seems they were allowed to hunt the lesser game, such as hares, foxes and badgers. Medieval pictures show huntsmen galloping after their prey, but in early times hunting deer probably showed little

resemblance to the fox hunt of the present day. In those times hunting was with a mixed pack; hounds to drive the beast from his lair, strong hounds to attack and kill, and swift hounds to pursue if the quarry got away. The main party would wait in a clearing for the huntsmen to drive the animal out of the thickets, and would shoot when it broke cover. Killing with an arrow from the back of a horse was not easy, and the beast was often only wounded, and then dispatched when the hounds had pulled it down. No one seems to know when the deer finally disappeared from the forest but they were certainly hunted during the seventeenth century.

Following the Reformation local festivals provided entertainment for many, including Celtic New Year's Eve (Hallowe'en) and May Day, although May Poles were banned by the Puritans in 1644. However, more tolerance came with the Restoration in 1660, and as far as hunting was concerned, many country squires filled in their spare time "coursing, hunting hares or bucks and going to race meetings". The map of 1687 notes "Crabtree Greene" as a large area (not defined or specified) and on it, alongside the road, is marked "Race \$ Post on Crabtree Greene".

Racing "On The Forest"

Sir Willoughby Aston of Aston recorded in his diary after the Restoration that there were monthly race meetings at Delamere Forest. The Rev. Matthew Fowler, writing from Whitchurch in 1682, confirms this, but reckoned it was not just for sport that the gentry met at Delamere. His comments have been included in the chapter covering the Civil War.

The Lysons brothers, writing in 1810, state that "there were formerly, about the reign of Charles I horfe races, near Little Budworth, it was a four-mile courfe, and there was an annual plate of £20 value", but the only reference they give to Crabtree Green Races concerns the Tarporley Hunt Meeting, held for the first time in 1775, though the course was clearly shown on the 1687 survey.

But Heber, who published records of horse races and cockfights before the Jockey Club's official record, *The Racing Calendar*, came into being, includes it as an official racemeeting. On 22nd August 1757 at Crabtree Green:

"Mr. Wynn's Bay Filly beat Mr. Egerton's Bay Colt, Little Devil, Wt. 8 st. 7 lb., 1 four Mile Heat, 200 Guineas." and again on September 27th/28th 1762:

"Mr. Piggot and Mr. Egerton run four matches for 100 Guineas each, three of which were won by the former, one by the latter.

At this Meeting Mr. Piggot's grey horse Fox beat Mr. Slaughter's bay mare."

"This meeting a Sweepstakes was won by Sir Thomas Broughton starting against Mr. Crewe of Crewe, Lord Stamford, Geo.

Wilbraham and Lord Kilmorey paid Forfeit," reads the first reference to the races in the Tarporley Hunt Club's record of proceedings in 1775, although there was to have been a match the previous year, but Sir Thomas Broughton paid forfeit to the Hon. Booth Grey. Thereafter it became an annual event and in due course was recognised by the Jockey Club and held under its Rules, no longer being referred to as "Crabtree Green", but as "Tarporley Hunt".

The course evidently consisted of a circuit with races being run in heats, varying once, twice or thrice round, according to the race conditions, the normal probably being two mile heats, although the distances are not given until 1809 in *The Racing Calendar*. The Club events as officially recorded often resulted in walk-overs being given. Until 1783 it was customary for the winning owner to present the Club with "a dozen of Claret". It was a colourful occasion with those of the thirty-six Members of the Club who were present being obliged under penalty of a guinea fine to wear their green collared scarlet coats. There were doubtless also unofficial events on the card for local half-bred horses and Mr. Wilbraham was required to provide ropes for which he was reimbursed £5 17s. 9d. The first mention of a stand was in 1803.

The races were at first restricted to horses owned or nominated by Members, but in 1809 a Silver Cup was given for horses belonging to Cheshire Farmers. The entertainment of the farmers, over whose land they hunted, was always a great tradition of the Club.

The last race meeting held on Crabtree Green was in November 1815. Though still racing on the flat, there was a great deal of grief that year with horses bolting and falling and one being killed. The Act of Enclosure of Delamere Forest meant an end to it as a racecourse. The meeting was held on Billington's Training Ground in 1816 and 1817 before being "Over the New Course on Delamere Forest".

Billington's Training Ground was on land owned by Lord Shrewsbury, adjacent to Seven Lows Farm, leased for many years to John Hinde and his family, and included both a sand and a turf gallop. The New Course was next door towards Cotebrook and incorporated Billington's Training Ground as well as the present sand circuit at Gorselands off Racecourse Lane. The Tarporley Hunt races continued here until 1875, before eventually moving to a site on the Arderne Estate near Ash Wood at Tarporley, when it became a Steeplechase fixture under National Hunt Rules, 1939 being the last. At Cotebrook the horses started with their backs to the main road and the finish was in front of Stand House which used to have a balcony off an upper room for the Club's use. In 1848 a Welter Hurdle Race had been introduced, two miles over six flights, 13 St., thoroughbred horses 10 lb. extra; to be ridden by Members. When it moved it became a Spring Meeting.

Cockfighting

Not infrequently, before the races began, cockfighting took place. On one occasion at Cotebrook in 1751, the result was published from London in Reginald Heber's "Historical List of Horse-Matches Run", including the principal Cock-Matches of the year.

"At Cotebrook on the 28th February and the following Days, the Gentlemen of Cheshire fought the Gentlemen of Lancashire for Five Guineas a Battle and an hundred Main.

"This Match consisted of twenty-three Battles, fourteen of which were won by Cheshire and nine by Lancashire."

It might be added that Bull Baiting which took place at Bunbury until 1848 was held afterwards, secretly, in Delamere Forest. Although it no longer has a race course, the training of racehorses in Delamere still continues.

Trained on Delamere Forest

The Cheshire Hunt Kennels at Sandiway have always been known as the Forest Kennels and anyone living between Cotebrook and Weaverham was always proud to have been brought up "on the Forest air". The area has long traditions for training horses, though in many cases the credit nationally has often gone to Tarporley, being the postal district.

Besides Billington's Training Ground there was also an extensive gallop just on the south side of the old Fishpool which had a stream running into it from Hinds Well. This is marked on a map of Delamere Forest dated 1813. It also clearly shows that the Crabtree Green racecourse was by then an oval course bisected by the horsetrack to Norley.

The 12th Earl of Derby had his horses trained at Delamere Forest by W. Saunders, Senr. Their successes included The Oaks in 1779 and 1794 and The Derby in 1786 with Sir Peter Teazle, which won first time out and went on to win sixteen other races before being retired to stud. It is probable that Saunders used the Fishpool gallops and possibly also Lord Delamere's extensive gallops and sand gallops at Abbot's Moss opposite Folly Farm at the eastern extremity of Oakmere parish.

The 14th Earl of Derby, as Lord Stanley, also had his horses trained at Delamere by a man called Bloss.

John Mytton, the eccentric squire of Halston in Shropshire, as soon as he came of age in 1817, had his horses trained at Delamere Forest, first by William Dunn, then successively by M. Jones, William Dilly and Thomas Horsley.

Another trainer of note in Delamere was John Billington, whose establishment gave its name to Stable Lane and was at the premises now occupied by Mr. Derek Davies, Sidebotham Farm, with his gallops at Seven Lows and also by the Fishpool. In 1732 Ralph

Arden had leased the property to a John Sidebotham. It was subsequently called "Sidebotham's Stables". He and his wife Hannah's children were Thomas and Mary. From 1759 to 1803 the tenant was Joseph Burgess. John Billington was there in 1809.

Between 1833 and 1841 he trained a bay mare by Whisker, called Catherina, and established a record which has never been broken by winning 79 races, being placed on almost as many occasions. She ran 174 times under Jockey Club Rules. She was owned by a Mr. W. Barrow and only ran twice as a two-year-old, finishing second each time. The first three races she won were on successive days at Heaton Park, ridden by no less a personality than Squire Osbaldeston.

When Mr. Derek Davies's shippon was being cleaned by a pressure hose during the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 1967 her name and her trainer's initials were revealed beneath many layers of whitewash, carved on a loosebox door.

For a decade or so about 1850 this farmhouse became a public house, known as The Axe and Cleaver.

"Paganini" Smith also had remarkable success from here in the late 1860s with a colt he had bred himself. Paganini was another prolific winner for his owner-trainer, Mr. T. Smith, who won races with him all over England. Many of his wins were in Scotland and as a five-year-old he won the Goodwood Stakes and the Ebor Handicap among other races.

In more recent times Sandy Brow, at Delamere, has always been the most prominent racing stables in the district. In 1887, when the place was owned by Mr. E. J. Thornewill, who raced under the nom-de-sport of "Mr. E. Jay", his trainer Jimmy Jordan saddled Gamecock to win the Grand National for him. He was ridden by a local jockey, Billy Daniels and was given his final preparation on the Tuesday by galloping four times round a mile circuit in Oulton Park with a fresh horse to jump in and take him on each time he came round. Given a rest on Wednesday, he was led from another horse to Aintree the next day and won the Grand National on the Friday. Daniels had lost a stirrup but managed to get up in a driving finish, although the judge gave him a verdict of three lengths. Jordan saddled him again on the Saturday, carrying 12 st. 10 lb. for the three miles Champion Steeple Chase which he won easily, a unique Aintree double, covering seven-and-a-half miles over the stiff Aintree course which in those days included some plough.

Sandy Brow Cross-Roads has since then been known by many as Jordan's Corner. The name Sandy Brow first appears on the 1st Edition of the Ordnance Survey dated 1833, as does Folly Farm.

Many winners under both codes have since been trained at Sandy Brow on turf gallops near the mere as well as those at Abbot's Moss. Folly Farm has also been used as a racing stable. From 1897 to 1933 Sandy Brow was part of Lord Wavertree's racing empire. As Col. William Hall Walker he was Leading Owner in 1905 and 1907 and

founded the National Stud at Tully, Co. Kildare in 1916. R. T. Beckett of Liverpool, who built St. Werburgh Street, Chester and many fine houses in Northwich, was the architect of the stableyard at Sandy Brow, built in 1906.

The Colonel bought Sandy Brow at the time of his marriage the year after he had won the Grand National with *The Soarer*. He was elected M.P. for the Widnes Division of Lancashire in 1900 and remained in office until 1919 when he was created Baron Wavertree of Delamere. Although his principal residence was Gateacre Grange, Childwall and later Horsley Hall, Gresford, he always loved the days he spent at Sandy Brow, which he used as a hunting box. He was Master of the Cheshire Hounds, 1915 to 1918. Mrs. Hall Walker kept a pack of pocket beagles there for several years.

At that time Mr. "Jock" Fergusson, leading Amateur Rider under National Hunt Rules with over five hundred winners to his credit, was Colonel Hall Walker's racing manager with old John Bostock as the trainer and "head lad" in the days before trainers were licensed by the Jockey Club. The latter, who lived at Glen Royal, named after a horse on which Mr. Fergusson won the National Hunt Steeplechase for the Colonel, died in 1926, aged eighty-six.

By then Captain Fergusson, who served with the Cheshire Yeomanry during the First World War, had been the licensed trainer for some years and turned out many winners in the famous "Blue and White Check and Cerise Cap" and for other local patrons. Since 1934 after Captain "Jock" Fergusson's retirement, following the Lord Wavertree's death, successive trainers as tenants of Sandy Brow Stables have saddled numerous winners under both the Rules of Racing and National Hunt Rules at all the principal meetings. They have included Charles A. Cowie, the Chester Seed Merchant, Captain John Hill, M.R.C.V.S., Albert Cooper, Jack Mason, Morgan Scannell, Joe Hartigan and for over twenty-five years Eric Cousins, whose principal patron was Mr. Robert Sangster when he first took up racing.

One season a trainer won a race with every single one of the twenty-seven horses he had in the yard. In recent years horses have been placed in Classics and there have been two winners of the Lincolnshire Handicap and numerous winners at Royal Ascot, Epsom, Goodwood, including the Steward's Cup, and Newmarket, including the Cambridgeshire — with two-year-old winners throughout the year. Other races won include the Ayr Gold Cup (five times) and the Kempton Park Great Jubilee Handicap (four years running).

H. L. (Harry) Cottrill was another famous trainer in Delamere. At the time of Lord Shrewsbury's sale in 1917, he was the tenant of Woodbine Lodge (now Sandiford Lodge) before he moved to Seven Barrows at Lambourn. Before World War II Bertie Bullock trained successfully from Folly Farm.

In addition to the professional trainers, there have been many horses sent out from both private and livery stables in the district to win Point-to-Point Steeplechases and Hunter Chases. One of the most successful of such establishments was that run at Gorselands by Tommy Stokes, and after his death his son Simon.

GENERAL ENTERTAINMENTS (1825-1991)

Turning back to those letters written by the forester's wife, Mrs. Linnell, they also record that she entered into the social life of the district in the last century.

"One winter we went to 17 parties, then there were those delightful Bon meetings held in the different parks round the Forest. Sometimes we drove ten miles to the Chester Balls. When the Hunt had been established 100 years (1863), we were invited to the Grand Ball given on the occasion. The gentlemen in their scarlet coats with green collars, the military uniforms and the ladies blazing in their jewels was a sight to remember.

"Then there were the Forest Races in the Forest when the members sported their new coats — rather an aristocratic affair. Then in the cub hunting season and after besides, to hear the horn ringing through the Forest and see the scarlet coats dotted among the trees and the hounds in full cry, was enchanting. Sometimes, we were roused from our slumbers by a flute which a friend of our Rector carried when searching barefooted for bog plants and fungi."

The problems encountered by poor rural families in finding food and shelter for themselves in the first part of the nineteenth century have already been mentioned. As a result of these, at that time poaching became prevalent. With farm labourers fighting for 2/- per day, and with a rapidly growing population, it was inevitable that some should turn to stealing game to provide themselves with food. Beef and mutton cost 4d. to 5d. per pound but a pheasant could be sold for 5/-, and a hare for 7/6, which obviously made poaching profitable. By now the old forest laws were seldom observed, but new game laws confirmed the rights of proprietors to all manner of wild game and keepers were employed to patrol the estates. In 1825 a head keeper was earning £70 per year — about the same amount that could be made by taking game illegally in one week. Although the punishment could mean transportation, gangs of poachers roamed the countryside and were quite prepared to fight if necessary. Mrs. Linnell remembered such incidents well.

"It was not considered wise to have any large quantity of game in the Forest. People came from Manchester 50 in a gang, to an estate near, where it was strictly private and which joined the Forest, and the keepers had no power over so many. They jeered the keepers for not feeding the pheasants fatter, and sometimes they gave us parting shot.

"One old poacher ... continued his little games and somehow got into prison every year, and at last died in prison. One night two of our servants who were walking a little way from home with a farmer's wife, got entangled in the netting and about nine men poaching. The men told them to go about their business, but if they ever told their names vengeance would overtake them."

However, all was not violent in the forest in the middle of the last century. "The Recollections of my life" by John D. Steele tells of his boyhood memories of the Christmas vacation, "although school boys who were farmers sons had little relaxation even then". They had what they called "Merry Nights" however, and, according to Mr. Steele, as they were in possession of Christmas wages, there was no shortage of money. For employers, dinner and tea drinking parties were held at almost every house. Cowslip wine was provided for the ladies, and strong home-brewed ale for the gentlemen. Cards were played after tea and supper was served before the company retired. Before Christmas, "A sort of wandering minstrels" made themselves heard at the farm house, singing Carols, for which a gratuity was expected. In the spring there were "chanting prayers for Easter eggs", and on 29th May it was customary to place a bough of oak by the side of each door to commemorate "the alleged concealment of Charles II in an oak tree". On Easter Monday the young men would "lift" the young women, by seizing their legs and shoulders and elevating them to a convenient height, with a "woo-eee that made the welkin ring". This was in commemoration of the Ascension of the Saviour.

Later in the century, the gentry continued to hunt, to attend balls, and to hold dinner parties. Those having a landed income of more than a hundred pounds a year were also authorised by the game laws to take out a licence to kill game. For the rest, however, apart from tea parties and the amusements provided at the various festivals there was little to do in the forest during their limited leisure time when not actually working. It was then that the alehouses became popular. These were used exclusively by the men for gossip and conversation, but there was less drunkenness than might be imagined since there was a shortage of money and half, or perhaps a pint, of ale was made to last all night. Their wives stayed at home looking after the children, and from these alehouses the "village establishment" stayed aloof. They were often kept by widows to make an honest living, and they were not like the inns which were larger and grander. For the poorer folk, improvements came around 1900 with the starting of clubs and other forms of entertainment for which the church was largely responsible, as well as Delamere School.

Older residents remember the "sixpenny hops that were held in a small shop at the bottom of Black Hill" (Eddisbury Hill). A Mr. Jim Maddock of Abbey Lane taught many young people to dance

while he played the music. "Parochials" were held every New Year at the school where "tea concert and dance" cost 1/-; a Mr. Newall from Norley did the catering. In the 1920s Delamere had a strong Football and Cricket Club, and the training of young people was helped by Mr. Saunders from "up Black Hill". At Vale Royal Abbey and Oulton Park Sheep Dog Trials were held. Both at Oulton Park and Willington Hall outdoor sports were held each year and these included races, boxing and tug o' war. The Parish Magazine records a Bowling Competition at the Annual Garden Party on 18th July 1926, against the Bears Paw of Frodsham. The trophy was the "Lord Wavertree Cup which was retained by Delamere". In May 1926 it congratulated the "Football Club on a successful season". Out of 24 games it had won 18, with 5 drawn and only one lost. The following year, in August 1927, the Magazine mentioned that the Delamere Cricket Club had played 14 matches, having won 5, lost 6 and drawn 3. At that time the club had more than thirty members.

The Delamere Club

In 1920 Capt. and Mrs. W. G. Clegg of Abbey Wood gave an army hut to the parish to be used for social activities. It stood on a piece of land in Station Road which belonged to the Rectory Farm. The first meeting was held in 1921 and attended by nearly fifty people. On the proposition of Mr. Russell Crewdson, the Rector, The Rev. G. S. Payne, was elected chairman, and a name — The Delamere Club — was chosen. Mr. H. Burton (sen.) became the Secretary and Mr. P. Saunders the Treasurer. It was then decided that,

- (a) no game should be played for money, and
 - (b) that no bad language should be used, nor should intoxicating liquor be allowed on the premises.
- In May 1921 the Club Room was opened with over 80 members. Capt. and Mrs. Clegg presented a billiard table and seating. The membership fee was 5/- annually with 1/- entrance, and 5/- extra for playing tennis (on a piece of land outside the room). Later, a bowling green was added. It was replaced with a brick building in 1970, which cost £16,000 and was sited on one of the tennis courts and renamed Delamere Community Centre. In September 1990 an application was made to Vale Royal Borough Council for an extension on the south side of the building.

Delamere Forest Golf Club

In the early years of the present century those engaged in field sports, and particularly those who hunted, felt they would like to form a club which could be used in the summer months. So it came about that on 31st March 1910 the hunting fraternity held a meeting at Daleford and the *Delamere Forest Golf Club* was born. The owner of the house, Harry Dewhurst, became the first

chairman, with his brother, Cyril Dewhurst, and William Clegg of Abbey Wood as the driving forces. The present Club house was built in the same year in the middle of 170 acres of ground which included woodland. Apart from the two World Wars, the Club has sustained a steady growth rate ever since, and was redesigned and lengthened in 1921 by the golf club architects, Fowler and Simpson. In this year the first Cheshire County Championship was held on the course, and is still held here every eight to ten years. It has the reputation of being the best all-weather course in the county. Until 1990 the Club had had only two professionals, 1910-1946 Jimmy Arundell, and 1946-1990 Dennis Comboy. Mr. Comboy's wife, Carol, was Captain of the Great Britain and Ireland Curtis Cup team for two matches versus America in 1978 and 1980. She was Captain of England in 1975, 1976 and 1977. Ellis Jones became the new professional in 1990.

With a total of over 500 members in various categories paying subscriptions, the future is secure. In 1990 Lord Winstanley, the former Liberal M.P. and T.V. personality, was the Captain, while Leslie Parkin continues to be the Club Secretary in 1991. The Captain of the Ladies Section is Mrs. David Roberts. For the last eight years the Steward has been Jack Harker who lives on the premises with his wife, Jean, who looks after the catering.

Among the Club personalities is George Johnson, who used to be a plate-layer on the railway. He started at Delamere as a caddy in 1921/22 and, with a scratch handicap, became a member after the 2nd World War. He played for Cheshire many times and was famed as a long hitter. Today he is a Life Member and looks after the Club Shop. For many years Mrs. Pat Boumphrey was Secretary of the Ladies Section and retired quite recently.

Orienteering

This challenging sport is for the mentally active and physically fit, combining map-reading skills with speed and practical strategies.

At a casual level the visitor to the forest can use the detailed orienteering map to explore the small paths and topographical features. A permanent wayfaring course is maintained in the Primrose Hill section and a further permanent course is managed for educational use to the north of the Outdoor Education Centre on Ashton Road (the Switchback).

In addition competitive orienteering events are set in the forest at a maximum of one per month by agreement with the Forestry Commission. Maps for Delamere and the major events are managed by the Deeside Orienteering Club.

The present day sporting activities in the parish are too numerous to mention in detail, but the usual team games are still played. *Football* takes place on the field behind the Fishpool Inn, and the *Oakmere Cricket Club* plays in the Cheshire League on a ground

with pavilion in Overdale Lane. There is a Delamere *Badminton* team which appears in the newspapers from time to time, and *Bowls* is particularly popular. In July 1990 the Guardian Cup went to Delamere for the first time in its 44 year history, when Gerald Merry beat the Chester holder, Jason Come, 21-17 in the final at Castle Private.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Roads

The origins of many of England's trackways and roadways probably pre-date her earliest recorded history.

Some, which may have started as animal tracks, would have become the most convenient route between any two points, thus avoiding such obstacles as hills, meres and marshy ground. Others, because the first necessity of trade is good communications, would have eventually developed into roads for reasons of commerce. There is said to have been trade between Britain and Gaul as early as the Bronze Age, and the Normans were certainly trading with this country for years before the Conquest. The construction of some roads, therefore, may well have taken place for this purpose.

In many parts of the country these old tracks have long disappeared due to urbanization and deep ploughing. However, in an agricultural county such as Cheshire, far more have survived. In the parish of Delamere in particular, which has suffered less from the developers than most, a significant number do survive and, in some cases, are still in regular use.

Burdett's map of 1777 shows the main route through the parish was still the Roman road leading from Chester to Manchester. Indeed, in 1724, Dr. Stavely refers to travelling from Manchester and "passing through Delamere Forest upon the Roman road on our way to Chester". A secondary track was also the path of a Roman road to Middlewich, joining Watling Street in Nettleford Wood. Later this became the A54, as it is known today. The road to Frodsham, the present Station Road, passed some way from its present route, and crossed Watling Street at Pedlar's Oak Gap, by Thieves Moss, before resuming its course somewhere near Delamere Station. Some historians consider this route could possibly have been a Roman road from Warrington to Middlewich, but for this theory there is no conclusive evidence.

Fuller's map of 1817 shows many other tracks through the forest, but these are probably of a much later date and could have been made in the interests of forestry, comparatively recently. Some of these have long forgotten names such as Battle Axe Road, Windsor Oak Road, Crook Hill and Ten Yards Road. There is also an old track to Whistlebitch Well, traces of which can still be seen today

amongst the undergrowth. This lies near Tirley Farm to the south of the parish.

From an early age, therefore, the parish was well served with transitory routes. Today, following the line of the Roman Road over the fields, it is easy to imagine the thousands of travellers who have passed this way over the centuries. There would have been the people of the Iron Age and the Celts, picking their way on tracks, keeping to the high ground and avoiding the meres. Later came the Roman Legions, then the carters taking stone from the quarries to build Vale Royal Abbey, and wood for the bridges at Northwich, nobles, horsemen and the humblest dwellers in the forest all passing and going about their business. What a miserable journey it must have been, passing westwards from the damp lands of Oakmere and beyond, through bogs and meres, thickets and stunted trees. What a relief it must have been to reach the heights of Eddisbury Hill and from there to have seen Chester and the distant Welsh mountains for the first time.

Throughout these centuries Delamere proved to be an ideal location for highway robbery, as many a traveller found to his cost. In medieval times and earlier, such crimes were seldom recorded, but in the coaching era, when highwaymen were not uncommon, it is said that the perils on the dusty roads of the forest were grave. Often robbers would "entertain" potential travellers in the Chester hostelries and then set out late with their intended victims. Once in the forest, these same people would be attacked and robbed, the robbers quickly making a getaway amongst the trees, their victims considering themselves lucky if they escaped with their lives. It is said that Thieves Moss gained its name from such activities, and who knows why and how Gallowsclough was so named.

In addition to robbers and to those going about their lawful business, in the Middle Ages these roads were used by pedlars and small traders. These had to be licensed by Quarter Sessions, and they were allowed to buy corn and provisions in one place and to sell them in another. Perhaps the long forgotten "Pedlars Oak" at the junction of Watling Street and the Frodsham Road gained its name from such people.

In 1663 the Turnpike Trusts came into being with the object of improving the country's roads. Up to this time their maintenance was the responsibility of the parishes through which they passed. For sparsely populated areas, such as those around Delamere Forest, this was becoming a particularly difficult task and, in consequence, these roads were falling into disrepair. These Trusts had power to appoint staff and maintain the roads in return for exacting tolls at various points along the way. The Chester to Northwich road was turnpiked in 1769 and this radically affected the main route, Watling Street, through the parish. The old route finally began to fall into disuse as the new route, following the course of the present A556, was constructed.

The Trust at Delamere built a toll cottage, which is still in existence, at Gresty's waste, and a second at Oakmere, on the site of the present Sandiway Service Station. These cottages were each staffed by a toll collector or pikeman. Tolls varied, but a farthing per head of cattle was charged and 6d. for a coach and horses. Local cart traffic and funerals were exempt, while a stage coach would be charged between 4¹/₂d. and 6d. depending on the width between their wheels. These Trusts lasted until the late 1880s when responsibility for maintenance passed to the County Council, which was formed in 1888.

By the middle of the last century, when the present roads were well established, the old Roman Road was disappearing, speeded by disafforestation, with the accompanying use of locomotives on tram lines to remove the tree routes. The raised banks were lowered and the sides of the old road, the ditches, were filled in, so within a few years a passing stranger would have had no knowledge of its existence.

Little is known about coaching in the parish, although the Abbey Arms still has the stabling for the use of travellers.

As is shown in other chapters, the horse, in Delamere Forest, has continued to be of significant importance for work or sport right up to the present day. Its use for transport was unaffected by the Canal Age at the end of the eighteenth century, since there is no canal within the parish boundaries. For driving, however, the story is different. The middle years of the nineteenth century brought the introduction of the steam engine and, because of this, the rapid demise of the stage coach.

Railways

So Delamere did not escape the railway revolution. Indeed, George Stephenson himself surveyed several routes for the Chester and Crewe Railway between 1826 and 1836. The shortest route would have been from Chester to the Weaver Viaduct, to connect with the main line, but because of gradients near Delamere this route was declared unsuitable, and the much longer one passing near to Tarporley was chosen instead.

The railway through Delamere that is known today, was constructed by the West Cheshire Railway (eventually part of the Cheshire Lines Committee), to run from Northwich to Helsby, via Mouldsworth, opened on 1st September 1869 for goods traffic and on 1st June 1870 as a passenger service. Chester itself was reached in 1874, when the line was opened from Mouldsworth to Chester direct. Over the years Delamere became a very busy station, especially for goods. The building itself was constructed to a similar design as other stations on the line, and in its heyday it had all the facilities required to handle both goods and passenger services. The goods shed and its associated sidings were situated on the present Linnere picnic area car park, and could look after all types of

freight, including cattle, horse boxes, and even large heavy loads with the aid of a 5-ton crane. There used to be a signal box, the site of which can still be seen, in a recess in the bank on the north side of the station. The station building was in the charge of a station-master, who lived on the premises, and numerous clerks, porters and signal-men were employed. These people lived in the railway cottages by the present car park, some of which are still standing. Staff numbers varied over the years, and during the Second World War, all were female. To replenish the steam engines, after their long climb from Chester, water columns were used and these were sited at the ends of the platforms.

The timetables of 1905 show that then eight trains per day in each direction covered the journey between Chester and Manchester, and there were also seasonal excursions for tourists from Birkenhead. Delamere continues to be well served by the railway for passengers with about twenty journeys per day in each direction.

The importance of the freight service up to forty years ago is vouched for by many local inhabitants. Two milk trains stopped at Delamere each day. Trains also collected other farming produce, cattle, fruit, shrubs and particularly potatoes. Long queues of potato carts used to line up to unload in the station yard, and these came from as far afield as Tarporley. Trains were also used for coal deliveries, and many coal agents used to frequent the station forecourts to handle this traffic. Eventually, with the increase in road transport, the use of the railways for freight declined, and the goods shed was finally closed in 1965. Passenger services, however, survived the Beeching era and still continue, although the station itself has had no staff since about 1972. Since that date the station building has deteriorated but, quite recently, renovations for private occupation have begun, while British Rail have constructed a passenger shelter in keeping with the rest of the station.

In 1870 a branch line from Cuddington to Winsford was opened, and was single track throughout. It, too, was for passengers and goods and had an intermediate stop at Whitegate. Its course ran through Oakmere, to the west of Oakmere Hall and below Lobslack Wood. As well as other general merchandise, the line's main purpose was to carry coal and salt to and from the salt works at Over. Financially this line was never a success and revenue from passenger services was always less than expected, in spite of the introduction of a special passenger service introduced in 1892, following pressure from the local council. In 1914 six trains ran daily, and the six mile journey took twenty minutes to complete. In 1929 services ran directly from Northwich with just a single coach. Despite much protest passenger services were withdrawn in 1931, and with the decline in salt traffic after the Second World War, goods traffic ceased altogether in 1963. The track was lifted shortly afterwards and in recent times became the well known Whitegate Way.

Buses

Horse-drawn buses first made an appearance in the early part of this century, and jaunts to Chester in those owned by Lightfoots became popular. Pickerings set up in opposition and bought one of the first motorbuses. By the 1920s Crosville and the North Western had regular services operating between Northwich and Chester. On market days other services were operated by Pascoes to Tarporley, and others by Zacchaeus Woodfin of Tarvin. These extra services were of great benefit to the community who, until this time, had had limited easy access to the outlying areas.

Today the parish is adequately served by public transport, and Delamere can consider itself fortunate that, for a rural area, it still has its bus and rail services. The trains still run hourly to Chester and Manchester while Crosville and Deva buses still vie with each other for the few passengers boarding at Delamere.

Unfortunately the A556 is a fast and dangerous trunk road and the crossroads by the Abbey Arms are particular accident blackspots. There is much debate as to how this problem of drivers motoring at excessive speeds can be overcome. However, it is still possible to amble around the country lanes of Delamere in beautiful surroundings, with little sign of motorists, much in the same way as men and women would have done in times past.

There is one more form of transport not yet described. This concerns one of the most interesting finds in the parish — the famous "Oakmere Canoe". It has not been mentioned earlier because doubts about its age have been expressed. Only during recent months have tests been completed, and a summary of the findings together with notes on its discovery, are now given.

The Oakmere Logboat

In 1935 the level of Oakmere had been very low after two dry summers. Gulls had even nested in the trees to escape the foxes. In September George Rock, who had lived there as gamekeeper since 1910, was walking round the mere looking for a wounded duck, following a shoot the previous day. Walking back below Valley Farm, he noticed what was the prow sticking up out of the shallow water and his "eye" told him it was something man-made and not just a tree-root.

He reported it to his employer, Mr. Russell Crewdson of The Grange, and between them they excavated it under the supervision of Professor Robert Newstead of Liverpool University, who published a detailed paper about it and was widely quoted that in his opinion it was at least 2,000 years old. It was naturally assumed to have been used by the Iron Age dwellers at the Oakmere Hill Fort.

The canoe was loaned by Lord Wavertree's Trustees to the Grosvenor Museum and in 1980 it was sent to the Maritime Museum at Greenwich, where a study of logboats was being carried

out. It was not until 1990 that the result of a radiocarbon assay became known, dating it between 1395 and 1470 AD.

The Marine Archaeologist, Professor Sean McGrail of Oxford, carried out the test and gave his opinion that this boat was used in the fifteenth century AD, stating that whereas in the past many people, including professional archaeologists, assumed that all logboats were pre-Roman, it was now clear that these simple boats continued to be constructed well into medieval times and beyond, even into the eighteenth century. They were ideal for fishing, fowling and the collection of reeds for thatching. This logboat is one of fifty-six which have been studied, of which only thirteen are pre-Roman, four Roman and the remaining thirty-nine of medieval date from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries.

Radio Masts

The Pale Heights, 560 feet above sea level, is one of the highest points on the Sandstone Ridge which runs through the parish. With its view of the sea to the west and the Pennines to the east, it was a natural site for what was formerly the Post Office (and is now British Telecom) to select for one of its main radio masts to complete its national network.

The network is a high capacity radio-relay link for Dublin, Chester, Liverpool and Manchester to carry television signals and thousands of trunk telephone circuits. It is envisaged that in the future it will also cater for industrial closed circuit television and high speed data services between Liverpool and the remainder of the United Kingdom.

The "Eiffel" type tower was erected in 1976, is 200 foot high and is capable of carrying up to twenty-eight twelve foot dish-type aerials for the receiving and transmitting of various signals.

The Pale Heights has for many years carried the twin masts for the radio communication system of the Cheshire Constabulary. These masts and support buildings were upgraded in 1979. The old Forestry Commission fire watch tower was also located on this site.

The neighbouring Castle Hill to the south has carried a large wooden 120 foot mast since 1952 for the sole use of the National Air Traffic Services. This unit acts as the area cover for ground control and for in-flight communications of aircraft, including both Manchester and Liverpool Airports. All information is then relayed to West Drayton, near Heathrow Airport, which is the centre of the National Air Traffic Control.

The Sandstone Trail

This 34 mile route along the mid-Cheshire Ridge is an excellent example of a valuable recreational resource which has been created by rationalisation of existing footpaths and development of permissive paths. The section from Barnbridge Gates in the forest to Duckington at the southern end of the Sandstone Ridge was

completed by 1975 with extensions at each end to complete the routes in 1978. The negotiations involved were carried out by the County Footpaths Officer, Jack Maker. The route is maintained by the County Countryside Rangers. In addition an excellent resource pack was developed for the entire route with a section devoted to the route through the Kelsall Gap and through Primrose Hill Wood to Utkinton. It is most likely that the Sandstone Trail lies upon the route which has the earliest links with human occupation of Cheshire and could be the trail by which Bronze Age communities established their settlements along the higher and more accessible terrain.

WHEREIN MAN DWELLS

Earliest Buildings

With a few exceptions, most houses from the end of the Roman period to about 1200 AD were built of forest timber. Wood was used by the Lord of the Manor and only the slender branches, no more than 6 to 9 inches in diameter, were available for the peasants. Many, however, enjoyed the customary right to "lopping and topping" in the Lord's woods and these were produced by coppicing.

After felling, ash and oak soon produced shoots which, after 15 years, grew into small timbers that were harvested. These were set directly into the ground and erected between a fence of wattle, which was then daubed with a muddy mixture of earth, straw and dung. Roofing was probably carried out with lashed light branches covered with thatch made from heather, moss and turf, but particularly from straw. Thus houses had to be completely rebuilt fairly often and evidence of such buildings is seldom found. Most villages have no houses dating before the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Because of transport difficulties, usually only local materials were used. Thus timber was used mainly in Delamere and even sandstone did not become fashionable until the eighteenth century, except for churches and larger properties.

Houses in Delamere Parish

In the middle of the seventeenth century there were three sets of buildings in the vicinity of Eddisbury belonging to the Forest of Delamere. The first, the Old Pale Lodge or *Eddisbury Lodge* was the hunting lodge of the Dones and was first erected by their distant kinsman, Richard Done. It was bought from the Crown and rebuilt in 1961 and has been the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Weston since 1981. The second would appear to be the farm by the roadside at the foot of the hill.

The third of these buildings is *New Pale Lodge* at Manley owned by Mr. and Mrs. Blacks. The story of New Pale Lodge and its various owners is convincingly set out by the carved stones containing initials and dates which have been built into the structure at different times. The original date-stone "WB 1623" came from over the door and is now used as a lintel for one of the fireplaces. In 1936 Mr. Andrew Smith, a man who had spent his boyhood in the neighbourhood, bought the house and he and his wife set about the gigantic task of restoration. The house had been unoccupied for quite a time and although the greater part of the walls were sound, most of the roof had fallen in. To many local people, the house appeared to be doomed and its complete disintegration only a matter of time. The rebuilding was carried out in sandstone to match the existing stone and every possible care was taken to preserve old features such as the early stone mullion windows and the two unusual roundels on the upper storey. The restoration was completed early in 1937. It is fitting that the house at which Cromwell is supposed to have stayed on his way to Vale Royal and which John Wesley visited and where he preached, should have been given a new lease of life.

In addition to the Chamber in the Forest built by order of the Black Prince in 1337, lodges were built for the use of the foresters and some of these, such as Rutter's and Massey's Lodges, were listed when the area was enclosed in the early nineteenth century. Rutter's Lodge, now known as *Forest House*, is situated in Waste Lane, Kelsall and is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Derek Wallis.

Massey's Lodge, owned by Mr. and Mrs. G. Mitten, has been much altered and improved from time to time. Some parts are very old. It was in the centre of a fine hunting district close to the Cheshire Kennels and the surrounding coverts provided a safe refuge for the hunted fox after a hard run. It formed part of the Wilbraham Estate. Mr. Wyndham Smith, one of the first twentieth century owners, was a solicitor and hunted with the Cheshire Hounds. Other twentieth century owners were Mr. and Mrs. Lovel Mack.

Other properties in the region of Eddisbury Hill are *Eddisbury Lodge Cottage*, owned by Mr. and Mrs. J. Gladstone, and *The Cottage*, built in 1841.

After ascending Eddisbury Hill in a westerly direction, the *Old Pale*, farmed by Mr. D. Frith, stands prominently on the right side of the hill, while nestling below are the seven cottages known as the *Old Pale Cottages*, at one time all tenanted by the farm workers.

At the bend in the road before descending into Stoney Lane stands *The Paddocks*. The original cottages which stood on this site were demolished during an air raid in the early 1940s. While his family sheltered in the air raid shelters in the school grounds, Mr. Charles Ashbrook returned to his cottage for his shoes and a bomb fell directly on to the house. Later his body was recovered from the

ruins. In 1967, after vacating the School House, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Ackerley built the present house.

In 1933 *Council houses* were built in Stoney Lane and later in 1946 and 1947 the Council estate was enlarged to include Watling Drive. There had been Council houses many years before this in Frith Avenue, those on the north side were built in 1915 and on the south side in 1926. In the Oakmere area Chrimes Drive houses were erected in the early 1930s and the estate here was enlarged to include Mere Crescent in the post-war years. As in other places many of these houses are now privately owned.

Organsdale House is a Victorian house built on the Crown Estate in 1863 as shown by the stone plaque with the Royal cipher V.R. on the north facing wall. The unusual name generates much interest and is thought to be derived either from the Latin name of a plant found in the valley or from a row of trees resembling a range of organ pipes. Organsdale House is the farmhouse of a large farm of 500 acres with a lodge at the bottom of the drive, two cottages in the farmyard (originally the coachman's house) and six cottages between the house and the farmyard. The first tenants were Henry and Maria Thompson, whose two daughters were associated with the old "tin chapel" at the Fishpool. In 1888 William and Sarah Wright took over the tenancy and it has remained in the same family ever since. The second generation, Peter and Sarah Frith, came in 1899 followed by the third generation, John and Dorothy Frith, in 1934. The fourth generation, Allan and Joan Haworth, purchased the property when the Crown Estate was sold in 1964.

On the hill above Organsdale in the middle of the forest stands *Primrose Hill Cottage* which was once the home of the Cooksons who were well known cheese-makers.

Originally called Summertrees, *The Dial House* in Tirley Lane was renamed by its present owners, Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Paton, as there is a sun dial fixed to the front of the house. A pump in the garden inscribed 1866 would appear to date the house which was built by a wine merchant, hence its large cellar. *Wood Cottage* in Gooseberry Lane is the home of television personality Diana Mather.

At the time of the Act of Enclosure in 1813 twenty-seven plots of land out of the forest were eventually sold by the Commissioners at an auction held in the Red Lion at Tarvin in 1815. As a result small cottages were built in what is now Morrey's Lane and the adjoining Forest Gate Lane. These have been extended to very much larger desirable residences. According to Mr. A. Goultly of *Downdale*, the plot on which his house is built was purchased for the princely sum of £104 at the original auction.

The Grange is a large house on the west side of Abbey Lane. A house named Kenmare once stood where the Grange is now, but there is no evidence to suggest why it was demolished. The present house was built in 1910 and since that time it has been extended

twice. It is an attractive house, partly black and white timbered. Bought by the Crewdsons in 1914, it eventually passed to Mr. Russell Crewdson. His family were cotton manufacturers and during their time the estate was much larger and included the *Grange Cottages* adjacent to the Fishpool Inn. Mr. Crewdson hunted with the Cheshire Beagles and was an avid collector of china. His brother Robert had an extensive collection of moths which was passed on to a museum. The gardens of the Grange were planned and laid out by Mr. Fowler, who was gardener to the Crewdson family for fifty years until his death in 1963. The lawns were laid out on a bed of seaweed. Mr. Fowler's son and his wife live in Oakmere at *The Homestead*. The present owners of the Grange are Mr. and Mrs. P. Meyrick who have lived there for the past six years.

Another large house in this area is *Abbey Wood* which was built in 1908 for the Clegg family, who provided work for many local residents throughout a number of years. Prior to the Second World War there was an indoor staff of 12 and an outdoor staff of 10, including three grooms. Mr. and Mrs. Clegg were both members of the Cheshire Hunt and the Hunt Balls were frequently held at the house. The stables were demolished and part of the house damaged by a land mine in 1940. Mrs. Clegg eventually sold the house in 1953 to Mr. A. Pilkington of Pilkington Glass. Both the Cleggs and the Crewdsons were benefactors and friends to Delamere residents. As far back as 1915 they treated local children to a Christmas Party each year. Mr. H. Rowlinson has owned *Abbey Wood* since 1988 and in 1991 plans were passed for its conversion into an hotel.

The oldest house in *Abbey Lane* is 200 years old and is owned by Mrs. Brenda Browning. *Whalebone Cottage* derives its name from the two whaleribs originally placed on the banks of Oak Mere by Mr. Egerton in the eighteenth century. Later Maria Hollingsworth had her dwelling close by and on her departure they were removed to this smallholding. One still survives as a sign post. The house, once part of the Delamere Estate, was sold after the First World War by Lord Delamere.

Delamere Lodge was built as a farmhouse when the forest was cleared in 1863 to create a farm of 1,000 acres. This was one of the last clearings of the forest. There were two tenants, Simeon Leather and Peter Snelson, before the farm was divided up to make smaller farms in 1910. It was then let as a private house, the first tenant being Major P. Dewhurst. In 1963 when the Crown sold the estate, the house was bought by Major J. A. Readman. The present owners are Mr. and Mrs. S. Morgan.

Not far from Oak Mere in spacious grounds stands *Sandymere*, built originally for Major Noel Brooks who sold it to Mr. and Mrs. J. D. McKechnie in 1947. The present owner is Mr. W. J. Timpson. Mrs. I. M. Hunt lives at *Saddler's House*, a sandstone cottage which was once known as *Roberts' Cottage*, thus named after the two

brothers who were the local saddlers. They carried out their trade nearby in Saddler's Cottage, owned today by Mr. Barry Stallard. When digging out the foundations for a dry stone wall in his garden Mr. Stallard unearthed a number of artefacts connected with the saddlery business, leather offcuts, buckles and pieces of brass harness.

Mr. and Mrs. John Bownes have been the proud owners of *Plovers Moss* for the past eight years. An Edwardian house built in 1903, it is unique in that it has never been altered, but well preserved with the original fireplaces, bathrooms, oak floors and oak staircase. Built in the Cheshire style of half brick and half timbered, it stands in an attractive garden with a variety of very old trees and shrubs which were planted when the house was first built.

Oakmere Hall was designed by the well known architect, John Douglas, and was one of his earliest houses. It was built in 1867 for John Higson, a Liverpool merchant, who never actually lived there as he had to leave for Australia for health reasons. His son, Captain William Higson, a joint Master of the Cheshire Hunt and head of Higson's Brewery in Liverpool, lived there from 1893 until the mid 1920s. The Hall cost £70,000 and took 14 years to build. It is said that the first part is so strongly built and was so expensive that the builders went bankrupt and the remainder of the building was finished using rather cheaper materials. This Gothic style mansion has many interesting architectural features. In 1869 stone built lodges were erected at the entrances to the front and back driveways, a black and white lodge at the Forest Road entrance, a most unusual octagonal house in the grounds called *Mushroom Cottage*, together with the home farm across the main road, now *Oakmere Hall Farm*, the home of Mrs. J. M. Salter, Vale Royal District Councillor and a J.P.

These neighbouring properties formed part of the Oakmere Hall estate as did the cottages in Overdale Lane, originally the homes of workers on the Hall estate. This lane is marked as Lobslack Lane on old maps, but became Laundry Lane when a laundry for the whole estate was established in one of the cottages. Mr. and Mrs. William Jameson were the last tenants to work the laundry until Harriet Jameson's death in 1959 and the lane was then renamed. When the lake was created in the grounds, remains of the Roman road were discovered running parallel to the present highway, through Lobslack Wood and then passing through the gardens. The grave stones of two house dogs were found, one of which was called "Jinks", who died on 15th November 1893.

Between the wars the Hall was owned by Mr. Arthur Midwood, brother of Mr. Walter Midwood, another Master of the Cheshire Hunt, and well known locally. The annual Horticultural Show was held in the grounds and the Sandiway fete on August Bank holidays. Local people tell of the "grand" place the Hall was at this time and that the butler was paid £100 per annum and the

housemaid £40 per annum. Two other families lived at the Hall, firstly Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lamb who stayed until 1939 and then a family called Whitehead.

During its time in private ownership Oakmere Hall was a very handsome residence standing in lovely parkland with sunken rose gardens and an ornamental lake. There was a large walled kitchen garden and greenhouses, fine stabling for nine hunters and coach houses, with a clock tower at the entrance to the stableyard, which was demolished in May 1961. For a time during the Second World War, Italian prisoners-of-war were housed within the stable block and a sentry was posted on duty at the gates of the back lodge. The Hall is at present undergoing great changes being converted into luxury flats. The houses in the grounds, including the two main lodges, are being extended.

Overdale Lane takes its name from the House *Overdale* which was built by the Wilbraham family. This many chimneyed building is a typical country residence, occupied between the wars at one time or another by Sir Keith Nuttall, Major Cyril Dewhurst and Mr. Reg Taylor. Sir Keith was associated with the civil engineering contractors who were responsible for the Mersey Tunnel, from where, it is said, some of the sandstone round the Fishpool originated. Major Dewhurst was a member of the well known cotton family. Since 1954 Overdale has been the home of the Dentons, formerly of Northwich steelworks and the Misses Denton are the present occupiers.

Hospitals

On the high ground in the township of Kingswood two hospitals were built for the treatment of tuberculosis. One hundred years ago this complaint was prevalent in industrial cities and, because it was highly infectious, isolation was essential. Fresh air treatment was then the only known method of combating this disease. *The Liverpool Sanatoria*, opened in 1901, occupied a site of forty acres at 500 feet above sea level, overlooking the valleys of the Dee and Mersey. The foundation stone was laid by Lord Derby, President of the National Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis and the cost of £15,000 was defrayed by Lady Willoc and Sir W. P. Hartley. There were 49 beds.

Two years later the Manchester Sanatorium, known as *Crossley*, was built on a nearby site of some 66 acres with a south facing aspect at 480 feet above sea level. This impressive building, with a facade of 300 feet and three storeys high, could take 100 patients. It was built and paid for by Sir William Crossley from the Manchester engineering firm. Both hospitals were, of necessity, separate self-contained units with their own medical superintendents in charge and houses for nurses and other staff. Patients were not confined to bed longer than necessary but were encouraged to be mobile, feed in the dining hall and walk in the wooded grounds. Treatment involved

a long stay, often up to two years, so a camaraderie was built up despite long absences from home. The big change in treatment came in 1946, when the drug streptomycin, developed during the war, became available. This, combined with surgery, made possible the control of tuberculosis. Surgeons from Liverpool operated at Crossley and there was a quicker turn round of patients until in the 1960s the need for sanatoria on a large scale ceased. After alternative uses by the Health Authorities the buildings have passed back into private hands.

Crossley West, the Liverpool hospital, is now *Delamere Manor Nursing Home*. It is owned by Salix Care and takes fifty patients requiring constant nursing. The home provides excellent accommodation, catering for a variety of individual needs offering all patients twenty-four hour attention.

A *Miners' Rehabilitation Centre* was established at Oakmere in 1943 when the Hall was purchased by the Miners' Welfare Commission. Its purpose was to care for injured miners, to enable them to return to work in the quickest possible time and to be treated in the best possible surroundings. This served both the North Wales and Lancashire coalfields, being equi-distant from the two. In 1951 it was handed over to the National Health Service on the understanding that men from all industries should be given treatment. From 1968 onwards the Centre began to accept both male and female out-patients, mainly from the Vale Royal district. From 1974 it came under the administration of the Mersey Regional Health Authority. By now it treated patients with varying injuries and diseases such as neurological disorders, or those who had suffered disabling strokes. Children were treated for such conditions as cerebral palsy and spina-bifida. Physiotherapy and Hydrotherapy in concentrated individual programmes was provided for both residents and out-patients. In January 1978 the Hall was given a Grade II listing in Vale Royal District's Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest.

The architect John Douglas found fame in building places where people assembled for their faith and it would seem that those who chose Oakmere Hall as a place of healing also had faith that it would fulfill a special purpose.

Listed Buildings

- Church of St. Peter — Chester Road, Delamere
- Methodist Chapel — Chapel Lane, Willington, Delamere
- Delamere School — Chester Road, Delamere
- Kelsall Lodge — Chester Road, Delamere
- New Pale Lodge — New Pale Road, Manley
- Oakmere Hall — Chester Road, Oakmere
- The Old Toll House — Chester Road, Delamere

THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

During the Great War of 1914-18 it became clear that the timber stocks of the United Kingdom were becoming depleted. The increased requirement of timber for the war effort was exacerbated by the need to save shipping space for other material.

In 1916 a committee was set up under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. F. D. Acland to suggest ways of securing a continuing timber supply in the future. As a result the Forestry Commission was set up in 1919 with objectives which included the rehabilitation of the existing woodland estate, to provide a strategic reserve of timber, and to provide a source of rural employment.

The Commission was to carry out its responsibility under the two functions of Forest Authority and Forest Enterprise. As Forest Authority the Commission advised and encouraged owners to manage their woodland. As Forest Enterprise, the Commission set out to manage an increasing woodland estate of its own. Bare land was to be bought or leased for new planting, and occasionally existing woodland was added when it formed part of a larger purchase.

The Department of Woods, administered by the Crown Commissioners, had responsibility for the management of estates such as the Forest of Dean, Alice Holt Forest, the New Forest and Delamere. Under the Forestry (Transfer of Woods) Act 1923 the main forest areas, including Delamere, were transferred to the Forestry Commission.

The Act transferred 1,804 acres of Delamere to the Forestry Commission. Other areas were added by purchase or rent, and by 1951 the forest had an area of 1,937 acres. At the end of 1990, the total had become 2,367 acres, allowing for the purchase of land at Petty Pool, Abbots Moss and Lobslack, and the disposal of Bowyer's Waste, Crabtree Green and parts of Hogs Head Wood.

The area is, for the forester, a strange mix of dry, sandy sites, relatively impoverished, with peat hollows, often associated with a fluctuating water table.

The Forest Office acts as a Meteorological Station, and daily readings of rainfall, temperature and wind are taken. The average rainfall is in the order of 33 inches per annum, distributed fairly evenly throughout the year, with the least rain during February to June. Heavy falls of snow are unusual. The only months completely free from frost are July and August, although most years have the latest frost in April, and the earliest in September.

The prevailing wind is from the South-South West, although the forest does benefit from the winds which sweep down from the Dee estuary.

The choice of species is dictated by soil type, climate and exposure; and has proved to be a point of great interest and trial over the years. At the start of the eighteenth century the forest area

was a heathland, dominated by non-woodland species. Delamere was taken over by the Department of Woods and Forests at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and they explained in their first report in 1812 the shortage of Oak for the Navy, and their proposals for yielding sufficient timber from 100,000 acres of woodland. Accordingly the planting of Oak was started at Delamere, in mixture with Scots Pine. By 1851 the Forest was proving to be uneconomic. The Oak was 60 years away from maturity and the Pine was not being thinned on a regular basis. A private consultant, Mr. James Brown advised the department of woods that a regular programme of thinning should be installed in order to improve the ultimate crop and to increase annual income. However, the woodland did not thrive, and in 1908, E. P. Popert reported to the Crown Commissioner that, with the exception of the post 1893 plantation, the forest consisted mainly of scattered and stunted oak, birch, chestnut and Scots Pine. He also recommended a replanting programme using Scots Pine, Corsican Pine and, on the wet areas, Sitka Spruce. This policy was in place when Delamere was transferred to the Forestry Commission. In the intervening years, Corsican Pine has proved to be more successful than Scots Pine, and Western Hemlock has had a better survival rate in the wetland sites.

Forest management is based on the production of some 6,000 m³ of timber per year. Of this 4,000 m³ arise from sites which have been clear felled ready for replanting, and 2,000 m³ from thinnings, which gradually reduce the stocking on the ground, allow the remaining trees to increase in diameter at a faster rate, and yield an early income return. As a result of the wise plans laid down by Mr. Popert, and a subsequent planting, the Forest now has a wide range of age classes represented. Felling and thinning operations can proceed on a regular basis, the internal landscape can be both changed on a small scale and retained on a large scale, with the ever present backdrop of trees of varying ages.

Although the bulk of the planting uses Corsican Pine, at least 5% of the restocked area contains broadleaved species. The latter do not appear with rigid regularity, but are used to give a structure and interest to the forest by occurring along ridesides, in small groups, on badger setts, along streamsides, in wetland sites and in the Broadleaved belts which form a dominant feature along the public roads and the railway line.

Nowadays, Delamere is worked on a five year cycle, with each part of the forest making its contribution every five years. The clear felling areas are planned to yield a regular supply of timber and income, to add diversity and interest to the landscape and to gain benefit from the habitat and landforms that are revealed.

Each restocking site is: felled by timber contractors; gleaned by firewood merchants or local residents to remove any unused timber; cultivated by a scarifier which moves the branch wood and disturbs

the upper layers of the soil; planted during October-March with plants between 15—25 cm. tall and then kept free of weeds for a period of three years.

The plantations then grow on to about age 20, when thinning takes place, and is repeated every five years until the crop is clear felled at approximately age 50.

Throughout the Forest roads are maintained, drains are kept free-flowing, boundaries maintained and other general repairs carried out.

Each year the forest gears itself for the Sale of Christmas trees which are brought in from other Commission Forests or are grown at Delamere. The sales point is constructed, complete with car park, check-out huts and packing shed, and signs and fairy-lights erected to attract the customer. Approximately 30,000 people visit the forest for Christmas trees alone.

Delamere was declared a Forest Park in 1987 in recognition of its high use as a recreation area. More than 250,000 people per year visit the forest to walk, picnic, exercise dogs, travel along the cycleway, and to ride their horses. In addition there are orienteering events, pony club events, fun runs, dog training, educational outings and military exercises. Other facilities include the visitor centre; a trail specially designed for use by those who are infirm; a soils trail, where soil pits display the various soil types that occur; an arboretum; and a self guided forest trail. The forest has also been used as a location for film and T.V. productions, such as *Sherlock Holmes*.

The Forest has operated as a Forest Enterprise unit for all its time in the Commission. In 1984, its role was enhanced when the Forestry Commission was reorganised, and Delamere became the administration centre for Cheshire Forest District, with Forest Authority responsibilities in Cheshire, Manchester and Merseyside. The staff at Delamere are now involved in Plant Health Inspection, for the import and export of timber through the ports of the River Mersey; the giving of advice and planting grants to the owners of Private Woodlands; the control of tree felling; the investigation of cases of illegal felling; a wide range of educational commitments both in the Forest Classroom and at various organisations throughout the district, and for the planting and maintenance of almost 180 miles of motorway and mainroad plantation.

The same conditions of a generally dry soil and low rainfall that so closely determine choice of species, also make Delamere a suitable place for a Forest Nursery. In addition there is good access to the national motorway network; a ready availability of water and power; and a good pool of labour near to hand.

The Forestry Commission has three nurseries: at Newton in Morayshire; Wykeham in Yorkshire; and at Delamere. The three local nursery areas at Abbots Moss, Lobslack and the Old Pale produce about 10 million plants per annum — from 200 acres — and are considered to have one of the most complex product mixes

in the U.K. Both Broadleaved and Coniferous species are produced as bare rooted plants and container grown, by normal methods from seed and by cuttings, or vegetative propagation. The Nursery supplies all the coniferous requirements of Forestry Commission Units in Wales and in England south of the Humber-Merseyside. In addition, it produces all the Forestry Commission broadleaved requirements of more than 1 million plants.

The Forest District Manager is assisted in the administration and operation of the various projects by five forest officers, four clerical officers and 25 directly employed forest craftsmen. All the timber is felled by contractors employed by timber merchants, and extensive use is made of self employed contractors for seasonal work in the nursery.

The names of the Forester i/c Delamere down the years are shown below:

1923-25	H. C. Dyer
1926-57	G. W. Jones
1957-64	T. L. Jenkins
1964-69	E. Waddilove
1969-79	J. Wood
1979-84	P. Dineen
1984-date	A. C. Miller.

The Forest Staff in 1990 include: A. C. Miller, Manager; J. D. Lindsay, Nursery Manager; T. J. Cockerill, Nursery Forester; G. McGowan, Head Forester — Delamere Operations; C. W. Wood, Forester, Plant Health and Operations; G. S. Heddon, Private Woodlands; and 29 staff.

Species Mix: Corsican Pine 45%, Scots Pine 29%, Japanese Larch 5%, Western Hemlock 4%, Birch 4%, Oak 3%, Beech 2%7o, Mixed Conifer 5%, Mixed Broadleaves 3%.

DELAMERE HABITATS AND WILDLIFE

The area of Delamere Forest has been a focus of Natural History interest for many generations but most particularly in the period since the railway link was completed in 1869, which gave access from the urban communities. More recently car transport has increased visits to the forest by keen naturalists, both individually and in specialist group field meetings. The establishment of the Outdoor Education Centre at Fox Howl in 1973 and the development of the Cheshire Countryside Ranger Service has promoted the extent of natural history observations. The Nature Conservancy Council has classified a number of the moss sites as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The depths of peat in the forest have preserved a chronological record of the vegetation since the ice cover retreated 10,000 years

ago. From this we can assess a general pattern of woodland succession from pioneer birch to dominant pine, followed by broadleaved diversity developing to an oak dominated woodland with more open birch heath on the weathered ridge ground. This knowledge of pre-history is deduced from the distribution of preserved pollen grains within the peat. Each tree species has a distinctive pollen coat identified under the microscope. It is the species composition and distribution of these pollen investigations which provide the evidence for prevailing climatic conditions in pre-history.

The peat basins themselves have an interesting vegetational history, dominated by the development of *Sphagnum* floating rafts. The extent to which man has used these moss sites is not clear. *Sphagnum* is able to absorb up to x 200 its weight in water. It would undoubtedly have been a useful resource in its own right whilst the peat formed beneath the moss raft was taken throughout the medieval period as a source of turbarry (used for fuel). This resource was managed by Rights of Common under the Forest Laws between 1237 and 1815. Most of the moss sites are identifiable on the Crown Forest map of 1848 which indicates a total of forty mosses, each with its own name. Many of these are local settlement names or family names. The use of peat in prehistory is not known. Two of the peat basins are believed to have been open pools in medieval times providing water for the soaking (retting) of locally grown flax — Linmere and Flaxmere. Both these sites have been affected by drainage. In the case of Linmere, ditches were put in during the period 1817-1950. The change in water table allowed both these sites to be colonised with raft systems. Blakemere, which is the biggest of the "ice berg" holes in the Delamere area, must have been open water in Saxon times. Today open water remains at Hatchmere SSSI (just outside the parish boundary). This unique site appears to be a substantial "iceberg" hole overlying a geological fault. Hatchmere receives an underwater spring which sustains high levels of calcium and magnesium in the lake water ensuring an enormous diversity of species and a rich fish pool.

A site of similar ecological significance existed at Fishpool until the 1950s. This site, however, has silted up and water abstraction since 1952 may have changed the water table. The site now demonstrates woodland succession and is designated a County SBI (Site of Biological Importance).

Oakmere SSSI has a very different ecological balance and origin. It overlies the edges of the Cheshire salt beds and is generally believed to have been formed by subsidence. The site has a distinctively cyclical water table over a 10-15 year period. It is evident from this brief discussion that the varying water tables within the Delamere catchment substantially influence the nature of the natural communities. A contrasting example is seen at Windyhow where lack of drainage gave rise to a flooded valley in

the 1960s. This distinctive shallow lake with drowned trees was a notable landscape feature. Other examples of submerged trees may have developed by raft systems being flooded. This certainly occurred at Linnmere in 1984 when the water table rose to a metre above the raft, drowning the mature canopy of birch growing on the Sphagnum raft. At the time of writing this canopy is now largely decayed, and new vigorous growth is converting the site to an interesting swamp carr including a colony of marsh fern — an infrequent inhabitant of Cheshire. It must be noted that this site is extremely hazardous with a fragmented raft over 6 metres of water filled peat.

A smaller site with open water and a partial moss raft is to be seen at Black Lake. This is a site of Special Scientific Interest which is easily accessible within the forest. Previous recording indicates this small iceberg hole was dug out as a duck pond in 1820. It was observed as having a complete raft in 1945. The extent of the raft has declined in recent years, under various local influences. The acid water overlying peat at this site supports a distinctive dragonfly population. Indeed the range of water bodies described provides this part of Cheshire with one of the richest diversity of dragonfly species in Britain.

To the east of the A49, which appears to be the original divide between the forests of Mara and Mondrem, lies Abbot's Moss (SSSI). The name suggests a link with the Cistercian Abbey at Vale Royal and indicates the major transfer of land from the Crown to the Abbey from the forest of Mondrem. The name also indicates a moss habitat of some antiquity, perhaps going back to the twelfth century.

Extensive drainage in the afforestation programme of 1817 to 1848 must have radically altered conditions for many of the wetland communities. The drained peat surfaces have generated moorland communities. Not all the drainage channels have been maintained so that many of the smaller basins retain a "natural" water table supporting sphagnum based habitats.

Another sequence of water habitats in the forest has developed from the extraction of marl in 1863-1870 to reclaim 2,000 acres of land for agriculture at Houndslow, Longley and Organsdale. There is a magnificent example of a marl pit at Waterloo pool in Kingswood and there is a sequence of marl pits in Nettleford Wood adjacent to Eddisbury Hill. These sites are naturally nutrient rich and could be valuable water habitats. Like many marl pits, however, natural succession of vegetation has enclosed the water which is therefore heavily shaded and somewhat derelict.

The extent of peat basins in the area must influence the amount of water running into streams. Hatchmere and Blakemere together with the area east of Station Road, drain into the Weaver Catchment. Linnmere and the area northwards drain into the Goway Catchment. The nature of the small streams is variable from silted

slow flowing channels to bubbling pebbly based brooks. The stream banks carry more nutrients and moisture than most forest habitats and this is reflected in the diversity of plants. A few of the tributaries have been severely affected by farm effluent. Here the stream banks and flood plains have developed extensive nettle beds. Although these polluted sections support only sewage fungus and rat tailed maggots, the majority of forest streams have a varied and interesting fauna. Notable are the range of caddis-fly species whose larvae are often found in distinctive cases within the stream bed. Small fish are frequently seen and the brook lamprey is another notable resident.

The character of the present day woodland in the parish has been created by the sequence of fashions in forestry and the management practices in relation to maximum timber production. Intrinsically the older trees will support the greatest diversity of species. A mixture of tree species will have a greater natural history interest than a monoculture. Thus the roadside remnants of the Napoleonic forest and the deliberate amenity planting of broadleaved species provide the richest habitats for both insects and birds.

The compartments of pine trees offer a sequence of contrasting habitats of more specialist interest. Thus the newly planted areas are occupied by the opportunistic pioneering species. Particularly notable here are moss species. The young trees are now planted at 2 metre spacing (previously 1 metre) allowing a more "natural" succession to develop. The pioneering birch provides a delightful contrast to the crop itself. It is amongst the young pine/birch that heathland tends to develop with swathes of wavy hair grass, ling and gorse. Other less desirable species often invade the pioneer community. Bracken is a serious pest which if not managed can become entirely dominant. Rhododendron is as yet localised but has the potential for serious invasion. The young trees amongst heathland provide ideal conditions for Tree Pipits, Woodcock and Yellowhammers. These spaces also provide hunting territories for predators including Sparrowhawks and Goshawks.

Slightly older trees develop thicket with less light reaching the forest floor and a reduction in ground species. Here the migrant Willow Warblers seek out territories with repeated descending scales of song. Blackbird too seem to occupy the thicket stage and the thicket edges abound with Robins. The vigorously growing trees support aphids, ladybirds and specialist pine-needle eating caterpillars — a plentiful supply of food for the canopy feeding birds, particularly the Titmice and Goldcrests.

As the trees mature they begin to produce seed, becoming attractive to a new range of animals. The grey squirrel has successfully adapted to this source of food which is available all through the year except in June and July. This is a period of low seed production and the squirrels resort to bark stripping at the crown of the pine trees. The population is not adequately controlled

by any natural predator so it falls to the local forester to reduce the numbers to a level where the trees are not severely damaged. Woodpeckers are also active in feeding on the pine cones and Crossbills are notable regular visitors taking their food from the cones.

Throughout the forest cycle there is a proportion of tree mortality. There are often weak trees which have become stressed by a combination of fungal attack, insect damage, squirrel damage, wind damage and excess water or drought. These dead trees contribute to the diversity of habitat and promote the species which re-cycle the material of the forest for its regeneration. Notable are the wood eating insects and birds which feed upon them. In addition are the specialist fungi involved in the decay sequence. The most evident fungus is undoubtedly the stinkhorn which tends to be smelt from May until the onset of ground frosts in the autumn.

The older fringe broadleaves provide habitats for Tawny Owl, Wood Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher. It is beneath these trees that woodland flowers abound in the spring when the canopy is still open. Banks trampled by human feet cannot support this annual delight. Carefully managed woodland paths and picnic areas allow recolonisation of woodland flowers and increased broadleaved planting through the forest will encourage the woodland flowers to spread further.

The establishment of nest boxes on pine trees promotes the spread of insect eating birds into the pine plantations where nest sites are not available. This is particularly valuable in controlling the defoliating caterpillars.

The enclosure of the outlying section of the Delamere Parish led to the creation of rectangular field systems in the nineteenth century. Hawthorn is the standard hedge species with a sandstone embankment and frequent oak and ash hedge trees. Pasture predominates the area, providing both woodland and farmland species with access to a rich source of food. This makes the woodland fringe and hedgerow particularly popular sites for wildlife.

Today the bird life is a major attraction of the area. The substantial areas of water in the parish provide sheltered breeding sites for Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Coot, Mallard, Tufted Duck and Canada Goose. Moorhens eke out a living on even the smallest ponds whilst Mallard and sometimes Teal can be found in the wet hollows in the forest and Reed Warblers are more often heard than seen in the Phragmites reedbeds in Long Ridge quarry and at Hatchmere.

There is one heronry in the parish, at Oakmere, where thirty odd Heron nest in 20m tall Scots pines. No gulls now breed in Delamere but Black-Headed Gulls had a gullery first recorded in 1617 and again in 1860. T. A. Coward recorded only 15 pairs in 1899, but 500 pairs were recorded in the 1930s and 300 pairs in 1958. By 1965 the colony was deserted. Snipe, too have previously bred at Oakmere.

The Kestrel is the raptor most commonly seen, hovering over grasses before plunging on to its rodent prey. Sparrowhawks are now recovering from the disastrous effects of the agricultural pesticides used in the 1960s with almost every wood holding a breeding pair. Goshawks are much scarcer but are now recorded regularly from Delamere Forest. Coward recorded an Osprey at Petty Pool in 1890. Sadly it was shot. In 1898 a pair of Hobby bred at Oakmere. The Barn Owl has not been recorded in the area since the 1970s, but several pairs of Tawny Owl breed successfully each year. The young owls are particularly vulnerable but at least one nest is carefully watched each year adjacent to Fox Howl in the forest. The nest has been found to contain small rodents, remains of rabbit, frog and Pied Flycatchers which dare to nest close by. Little Owl is recorded from more open countryside and seen during the day.

In the 1930s the area was well known for the Nightjar which was heard on summer evenings, but by the 1950s the numbers had fallen to no more than six. None has been recorded since 1958. In contrast the Collared Dove was unknown in Cheshire until 1961 but is now common. Sand-martins have adapted to new sand cliffs in the parish which now has up to 500 breeding pairs. One juvenile bird ringed at Lobslack quarry was caught in Senegal, 4,500 km. away, in winter and found as a breeding male at Hogshead Wood quarry the next year. House-martins are also well established with a notable colony of up to 50 nests on the office block at the Marley site. The ubiquitous Swallow nests in dark farm buildings, gathering in large numbers to roost in the reeds at Hatchmere before they depart to South Africa in the autumn.

Wintering flocks of Fieldfares may be seen in open fields whilst Redwings feed in berry-laden hedges. Cuckoos usually use Dunnocks' nests to lay their eggs although A. W. Boyd recorded Cuckoos in Pied Wagtail nests in 1938 and 1941.

There are two main rookeries near Eddisbury Hill and at Organsdale. Jackdaws and Rooks often roost together in Hogshead Wood. Magpies have increased since the 1960s, but it is now believed they do not affect the population of other birds.

All three British species of Woodpecker are found in the forest. Several pairs of Green Woodpeckers hold large territories but much more commonly seen is the Greater Spotted Woodpecker.

Longtailed Tits often move in family parties, but much more common are the Great Tits, Blue Tits and Coal Tits which nest in holes in trees.

The Nuthatch and Tree-creepers are distinctive birds of the forest. The Nuthatch boldly moves downwards on the tree trunks whilst the tree "mouse" more typically spirals upwards in small jerky movements. The smallest bird, the Goldcrest, occurs in considerable numbers in the high pine forest, occasionally coming lower in the canopy in cold weather. Much less frequent is the shy

Woodcock. Crossbills are dramatic regular visitors for whom Black Lake seems to be a favourite watering spot. Large numbers of Siskin may visit the forest in winter but the warblers provide the most numerous summer visitors, filling the summer days with song.

The first known record of a Pied Flycatcher was in 1948, the first nest being noted in 1952. None is known to have bred from 1969 to 1982, but birds are now using the nest boxes at Fox Howl each spring providing an additional delight for visitors in May and June.

Hunting and trapping have been a significant influence on the Delamere wildlife. Wolves were still being trapped in 1302 whilst Red and Fallow Deer were hunted in the forest until 1656. Even after this Fallow Deer were maintained in ten adjacent parks. The Pine Marten vanished in the seventeenth century, whilst the Red Squirrel was last recorded in 1968.

Foxes were not regarded as good hunting until the eighteenth century when they became the prime species for sport. Fox coverts were managed in the forest. Today the forest provides a sanctuary to both fox and badger. The badger thrives in the pleasant land use with numerous setts in the deep sand adjacent to the worm-rich pastures but safe beneath the rafters of pine tree roots. The bigger setts are often shared by the more transient fox. Hares frequent the open fields and rabbits occur in considerable numbers on grassy banks. Bats are of particular interest in the Oakmere area where, in addition to the Pipistrelle and tree-roosting Noctule, Daubenton's bat skims over water, the Brown Long-eared bat occupies wooded areas, and the Whiskered bat is also recorded.

An adder was noted in Delamere in 1893 and at Abbots Moss in 1909. The heathland and brashpiles of the forest are ideal habitats, but there are no recent sightings.

Frogs and toads abound with a notable breeding site at Hatchmere. This gives rise to dramatic migrations in early spring. The movements take place after dark or on mild damp nights. Occasionally hundreds of toads can be seen crawling across the roads, the mature females often carrying one or more males. In the 1980s large numbers of dead toads led to the provision of a toad rescue and the placing of toad road signs in the migration period.

The outstanding insect life of the region is undoubtedly the range of dragonflies and damselflies associated with the pools and meres. It is also a well recorded location for moths and butterflies. The Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary lays its eggs on its larva food plant, the marsh violet, and has recently been recorded in the area after records at the beginning of the century. Other species such as the Green Hairstreak are associated with the Abbot's Moss habitat. Concern for the loss of habitat, particularly from drainage, is reflected in the number of species not recorded since the 1950s. The extent of natural birch has provided habitat for rarer species such as the White-barred Clearwing and the Welsh Clearwing, last recorded at the beginning of the century. Some species, like the Grizzled

Skipper, are at the northern edge of their range. The Dark Green Fritillary was recorded in 1981 in Delamere and is associated with woodland clearings, but is not known to breed.

The largest British ladybirds, the Eyed Ladybird, is found in coniferous woodland including Delamere, where it hunts the aphids of the pine canopy. Indeed ladybirds are a conspicuous group to be found in the forest, often congregating on the young pine shoots where aphids feed.

There are a number of spiders associated with wet heaths, and of these two rare money spiders are recorded from Delamere. A scarce crab spider is also known at Abbots Moss and a very rare jumping spider has been recorded from the Sphagnum bogs in the area.

Summer walks in Delamere may be spoilt by the number of biting insects and some precautions are necessary for those who hope to go badger watching or landscape painting. It is ironic that Cheshire's rarest insect, last recorded in the 1940s, is a horsefly (not known to feed on humans).

Come autumn a new delight catches the naturalist's eye as the fungal fruits appear amongst the rich autumn colours. The dramatic red and white Fly Agaric is often seen beneath the birch trees. This poisonous fruit was noted by Mrs. Linell in her delightful accounts of life in Delamere as a forester's wife. Perhaps Blakemere is the most notable site for this species and here, too, boletes and gaily coloured russulas abound. Most of the fungi grow in harmony with the trees. Just a few are aggressive and invade the weaker specimens. This is the case for the dramatic Birch Polypore which forms large brackets on dead and weak trees. Honey Fungus invades all tree species and is often found in clusters in the late autumn. Other fungi can be found in colourful array on dead wood, particularly Sulphur Tuft. These fungi and many others help to break down the dead wood on the forest floor. The forester is anxious to control the extent of Butt Rot which can destroy a crop of trees. As timber is felled a harmless fungus is introduced into the stumps to occupy the available habitat. This effective control is marked by purple or turquoise dye. The foresters check the woodland for evidence of aggressive insects which can be a serious threat to timber production. In the late 1980s Spruce Bark Beetle was located in Britain. Some of the spruce planted in the 1930s on drained mossland in Delamere was found to be infested and has been clearfelled. In the nursery the forester welcomes the specialist fungi which help the growth of young trees. As we move into the 1990s, there is renewed recognition of the need to enjoy, understand and work with the endless mechanisms of creation.

WILLINGTON

The Estates

This township is described by Dodgson as "an extra-parochial liberty peculiar to Whalley in Lancashire", and the Victoria History claims it was in the Ancient Parish of Whalley until 1841.

It is accepted as being the "Winfletone" of the Domesday Book in which it was allotted to Walter de Vernon. The entry reads: "Erniel held it, and was a free man. There is i hide rateable to the gelt. The land is ii carucates. Two villeins there have i carucate. There is a wood half a league long and an acre broad. In King Edward's time it was worth viii shillings, now x shillings. The Earl found it waste." In 1304 it was known as Wilaton, and the modern name was first noted in 1526. This means "Wynflaed's farm", and is derived from the Old English female personal name. The township was vested in the abbey and convent of Whalley until the dissolution. Shortly afterwards the manor was vested in the Leghs of Booths, and between 1593 and 1629 it was acquired by the Done family. It was from Lord Alvanley that it passed to Col. W. Tomkinson by purchase in 1828. Since that time the Tomkinsons have always been shown as the largest landowners in the township.

The family appear to have originated in Staffordshire and moved to the Nantwich area in 1754 when the lawyer, James Tomkinson of Bostock, bought Dorfold Hall from the Wilbrahams. It was here that William was born in 1790. By the time he was 17 years old he was a Cornet in the 16th Light Dragoons, soon to see active service overseas in the Peninsular War. During his career he kept a detailed chronicle of his life in the army and this was published by his son some 80 years later as "The Diary of a Cavalry Officer (1809-1815)" by Lt. Col. William Tomkinson. Although wounded on several occasions he returned, relatively unscathed, from four years fighting in the Peninsular and Waterloo campaign, retired in 1821 and settled at Willington. In the army he was described as "simple in tastes and habits but prompt and decisive in action and an excellent rider". Home in Cheshire he soon became a country gentleman, J.P., landlord and sportsman, who particularly distinguished himself in the hunting field. He was one of the trio hailed in verse by Egerton-Warburton as "The brothers from Dorfold sprung whom none of us could beat". In 1836 he married Sarah, daughter of Thomas Tarleton of Bolesworth Castle, and died in 1872 in his 83rd year.

The grounds of *Willington Hall* are said, by the family, to have been part of a small farm during the eighteenth century. The present house was built by the Nantwich architect, George Latham, and dates from 1829. The stable block was built a few years later. The Hall is described by Pevsner as a "neo-Elizabethan square brick house — somewhat in the style of the old family seat of Dorfold".

Another source states that the east front was added in 1878 for James Tomkinson, though its towers have since been removed. A porch was attached in 1955.

On the death of Col. Tomkinson, Willington Hall and the estate passed to his eldest surviving son, James Tomkinson, D.L., J.P., who, from 1900, was M.P. for the Crewe Division of Cheshire and lived at the Hall. He was born in 1840, married in 1871, served as High Sheriff in 1887, and was Hon. Lt. Col. of the Cheshire Yeomanry. In 1897 he ran The Forest Troop (Part of D Squadron) of the Yeomanry who met regularly at the Hall and used the Rifle Range marked on old maps of the area near the boundary with Delamere. Descendants of some who served in the Troop still live in the village.

When James was killed riding in the House of Commons Point-to-Point in 1910, the estate passed to his son Charles William Tomkinson (1877-1939) who gained a reputation as an oarsman while at Balliol College, Oxford. Two of his blades, dated 1898 and 1899, still hang in the hall at the family home. These are inscribed "Head of the River" and "Henley Royal Regatta" respectively.

Many of the family had served in cavalry regiments and all were renowned horsemen. The present owner of the Willington Hall Estate is no exception. After his father's death in 1939 the estate was managed by his mother until Richard Tomkinson was twenty-five. He became Master of the Cheshire Hounds for the 1962-63 season and continued as Joint Master up to 1976.

In 1978, in partnership with Ross Pigot (now responsible for its management), Richard Tomkinson converted Willington Hall into an hotel. With ten bedrooms, and lunches and dinners served every day, the hotel was soon a success and today is one of the most popular hotels in South Cheshire. It is rated as a Three Star Country House Hotel by both the A.A. and the R.A.C.

On the borders of Utkinton stands the only other large property in the township. Known today as *Tirley Garth*, this house was originally called Tirley Court when building commenced in 1906 with C. E. Hallows as the architect. It was intended for Bryan Leesmith, a director of Brunner Mond, later to become I.C.I., but by 1911 financial problems arose and Mr. Leesmith was negotiating a sale to his company. Work stopped abruptly, in March 1912 the unfinished house was sold to Brunner Mond, and towards the end of that year it was leased to R. H. Prestwich, a Manchester textile businessman (later to become the chairman of Burberry's).

Eventually his daughter, Miss Irene Prestwich, inherited the lease, and by the time her father died in 1940 she had decided that her mission in life was to establish a spiritual base here for Moral Re-Armament. In 1949 she bought the estate from I.C.I. and it is now the property of a trust which has retained the family rooms virtually unaltered, and the gardens have been kept in their original form largely by the efforts of those staying at Tirley Garth.

The Chapels

The Methodist Chapel, of Primitive persuasion, was built in 1823 on a plot of land donated by the Tomkinson family. Indeed, one of the family laid the foundation stone as is recorded on the side of the present edifice (now a private dwelling converted in 1988/9 from the original chapel but also preserving a few features of chapel architectural design). The early records of this place of worship not being accessible, the following account is based on gleanings from Mr. Sam Reade, a native of Willington and stalwart of the Primitive Chapel faith.

It appears that it was built by a Mr. Astbury of Tarvin and both he and his wife lie buried in its grounds. The Chapel accommodated about 100, but by 1939 the average congregation was 25. Inside, memorials were very few, but two, once on the walls, can be identified.

1. Memorial, in marble, to William Edwards (died in 1931) and buried in Kelsall Methodist Cemetery. A music teacher by profession, he acted as the Chapel organist and Choirmaster for many years.
2. Stone memorial to Ellis Hallam (died 1965), and buried in Kelsall Methodist Cemetery, also to his wife, Jessica. He served faithfully as a Local Preacher, Chapel Trustee, Steward and Superintendent of the Sunday School.

In September 1939 it was decided to erect a new vestry and to install a kitchen and lavatory for an estimated outlay of £285.0.0 with a subscription levy of 2/6d to the Chapel Fund. This was raised by February 1941. Another fund raising effort, in aid of roof repairs, took the form of a Gymkhana and Fete which was held on 2nd June 1952 at Green Lane Farm (the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. Blything). The commitment of Methodism to the cause of Overseas Missionary work is also evident here. In line with other Chapels, despite frequent appeals for support on "the home front", the wider Missionary needs were never forgotten.

The Presbyterian (Calvinistic) Chapel was built in 1817, to which was added Laburnum Cottage (Caretaker's residence) and with the Old Sunday School, small hay loft, shippon and about 1 Vi acres of paddock adjoining. Locally it was known as "The Chapel" — a meeting place for worship, Sunday School and social gatherings. A congregation of about 150 could be seated here, but this number had dwindled to about 8 members by 1972 and the last service was held in April of that year. The harmonium was moved to another chapel, and at the end of 1972 the building was sold for £1,700 to a local architect. Within four months it was transformed into a modern three-bedroomed house.

From interviews it is possible to record something of the history of the Chapel. Although no Welsh services were held here, and no minister was ever resident in the village, the Chapel was served by a

succession of Welsh-speaking ministers. The Rev. Llewellyn Hughes, William Morgan and F. A. Williams are still remembered. There were no memorials in the Chapel, and the walls and windows were plain, but at one time, behind the pulpit, there was a mural depicting a white dove, symbolising the Pentecostal Holy Spirit. Among the stalwarts still recalled are Mr. Arthur Wright, Secretary and Choirmaster (died 1961), and Mr. Robert Johnson, Organist, Treasurer and Sunday School Superintendent. In its heyday the Sunday School was attended by 30 to 40 children. There were many social events, often for fund raising, and these included tea parties and fetes. The needs of Foreign Missions were not forgotten. An important event was the annual "Visitation", when meetings were held at different chapels within the denomination. On these occasions local ministers met for business sessions in the afternoons and in the evenings crowds assembled to hear powerful sermons preached.

The School

The earliest records of education in the village come from the Tomkinson records.

Until his marriage, the two surviving sisters of Col. William Tomkinson, Maria and Fanny, lived with him at the Hall, and it was they who set up the beginning of a village school on the ground floor of the end of the farm building at "Darlington (Mr. Danson's) farm". This must, therefore, have been prior to 1836, and probably in what is now Home Farm. Although, doubtless, the two sisters helped with the running of the establishment, the records state that "Mrs. Hilditch, a good old soul, was the first mistress". The directories mention that at the "Free School (mixed) upwards of 60 children were educated there at a nominal charge of Id. per week from each scholar, and the schoolmaster, in 1860, was Angus Fulford. It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1890 for 98 pupils with Miss Sarah Jane Corkhill as mistress." By 1897 the map shows the school as being on the right of the road leading to Utkinton where there is now an entrance to Home Farm.

Between 1911 and 1921 the H.M.I. reports suggest that there were many staffing problems and work was at a low ebb, but the new mistress in 1922 devoted "thought and energy to rousing the children from their indifference to a gratifying extent".

Earlier log books are unavailable, but in that dated September 1919 there were 55 children on the Roll, and the notes that follow are taken mainly from subsequent similar records.

In October 1919 an entry notes that "School started late on the morning of 22nd as there was a meet of the hounds (nearby) in the woods". In 1923, another entry states that "the school was closed for several weeks in December due to Foot and Mouth disease, as it stands near a farm where there are pedigree cattle. The farm road runs through the schoolyard."

Special holidays were not infrequent. There was a day's holiday in July 1925 to allow the children to go to Chester to see the King at the Royal Show, and in December of that year the Christmas Party was held at Willington Hall. Another holiday was declared in 1927 for Tarporley Races "otherwise there would be a low attendance". This was again the reason for whole day closures in 1930 and 1932. Attendance was extremely bad for a week in October 1932 due to wet weather, and previously, in 1931, a boy and girl were reported to the Attendance Officer because they had gone to gather whinberries. Obviously this was considered more of a crime than a visit to the Races.

After commenting on the academic work, an H.M.I. report in 1929 remarked that "the teachers have improved the appearance of the walls by obtaining illustrations and have managed to grow a few flowers in the playground and tried to make the children more tidy, but have not been able to stop the dumping of ashes in the playground near one of the entrances".

The school was frequently closed by epidemics of measles, scarlet fever and influenza, a constant feature of life in the schools of that time. However, there was always the excitement of school outings to look forward to when the school was joined by Delamere Chapel and Willington Chapel to visit Rhyl, New Brighton or Blackpool.

Willington School eventually closed on 21st December 1934 with a party. After the closure pupils transferred to the new Council school at Kelsall.

But the children did not forget their last teacher, Nancy Cubbon, and she was always delighted to receive their letters. Truancy, in particular, has always been a problem in country schools, and this she seemed to forgive. All her memories were happy ones, as is evident from a letter kept by an old pupil which was written as recently as 1979 and recalls her arrival at Willington.

"On a cold January morning in 1924, I cycled nine long miles to take up my new post as Head Teacher. As there was no school house, I was to undertake this journey for many years, until I came to live in Quarry Lane at Kelsall.

"It was with some trepidation and an understandable nervousness that I entered the classroom — to be met by the curious gaze of sixty girls and boys, whose ages ranged from 5 to 14. The room was spotlessly clean and a large fire was burning merrily in the shining grate. Miss Cooper, the Infant teacher, was there to offer some moral support, and after we had sung the morning hymn and said some short prayers, everyone seemed visibly relaxed."

She recalled introducing "the school colours of 'light and dark blue'", and the syllabus ... "writing, arithmetic, tables, spelling and literature". "We did a great deal of needlework and toymaking, while every child had a small garden which they tended with great enthusiasm." "Parents' Day was held annually, and

examples of the work done were displayed." After school most of the children worked on the Willington Hall estate, "but some girls went in for nursing". Christmas brought its own delights, "with Nativity plays, a concert and carols sung by lamp light". Major and Mrs. Tomkinson gave a Christmas Party and each child was given a new shilling.

"It was a great sorrow to all concerned when it was decided that the school must close owing to the termination of the lease.

"I shall always feel that the Village School provided much of value for the children brought up in rural surroundings, and I should like to think that the children which I taught derived benefits which have helped them through their lives.

"With the passing of these schools went a traditional part of English life as we knew it then. And, regrettably, will not know again."

Head Teachers

Sept. 1919-March 1922	Miss M. C. Corbett
April 1922—Dec. 1923	Agnes Coleman
Jan. 1924-Dec. 1934	Nancy K. Cubbon

Commerce

In a village such as Willington, it is only natural that the main occupation of the inhabitants should always have been agriculture. As recently as 1934, of the eighteen names recorded in the commercial sections of the directories ten were farmers, three were employed as gardeners (either at Willington Hall or Tirley Garth) and the remainder were engaged in allied trades. There was only one shop, which was also the *Post Office*. During the 1920s (according to the 1928 directory) this was run by Frank Kennerley, but most of the time, and up to 1931, it was run by Winnie Jones at *Bramble Cottage*. From that year and until 1956 it was run as a Post Office only at *Pebble Cottage* by Mrs. T. W. Vickers. This is still the home of her son, Mr. Harry Vickers. Nowadays, the *Post Office and General Stores* is on the opposite corner of Willington Road and Chapel Lane and is run by Michael McIntyre. Like so many village shops this is now up for sale.

The old *Blacksmiths Shop* stood in Gooseberry Lane and was run as such by "Smithy" Edwards until about the end of the First World War. Another member of the family, William Edwards, taught music in the village during the 1920s. From that time Frank Brooks had a Smithy near the Mill until 1927 when he moved to *Oak Tree Farm*. He continued to operate from here until the 1950s when the business closed down. Meanwhile, the premises in Gooseberry Lane were converted into a private house and this has been rebuilt within the last ten years.

Down Mill Lane, off the Oscroft Road, stands *Willington Mill Farm*, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Barry Evans. Nearby once

stood the water-powered corn mill which is believed to date from the early nineteenth century. John Goulbourne ran it in 1824, and Thomas Beckett in 1892 ("steam and water"). The last millers were members of the Parry family who lived here before the Second World War. When milling ceased is unknown, but John Parry was described as "miller" in 1934. Only the pool now remains, the mill having been demolished about 1963. It is believed to have been a three-storey brick and slated building with an overshot wheel driving two pairs of stones, which were removed during the last war.

At the top of the hill on Willington Road stands quite a large building which, earlier in the present century, was used as a sawmill by Harry Wimpenny. For a while it was used as a shippon and later for the distribution of dairy produce. Since 1964 it has been the workshop of *F. Chadwick, Joinery Manufacturer*, with several employees. Nearby, at Oak Bank, *J. R. Bramall* has been in business as a cabinet maker since 1968. There are several well-known builders in the village including *W. A. Lancley, F. E. Ward* at Boothdale and, for the last four years, *Alan Ball (Joinery)* in Willington Road. In his youth, Mr. Lancley was a trapeze artiste, and still enjoys hang-gliding and an occasional parachute jump although over sixty.

Although he died about 1963, examples of the work of artist Francis Griffith can still be found in the area. During his lifetime, he was well-known locally as a painter and, particularly, as a cartoonist.

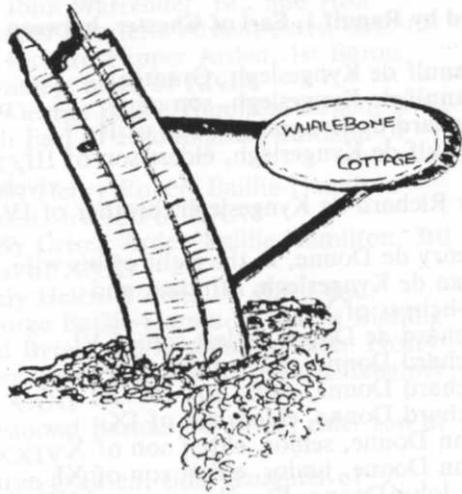
The Reading Room was built near Willington Corner by James Tomkinson in 1897 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The ground floor was used for games and reading. It contained a billiards room and a small library. The first floor was occupied by the District Nurse. Adjacent to the building was a small plot of land used as a bowling green. During the last war it was used as the H.Q. of the local Home Guard. About 1950 it was converted into a flat and later into two dwellings.

The Village

Perhaps it has been to its advantage, but it is a fact that the charming village of Willington has seldom been mentioned in print although a number of general histories of Cheshire have been published in this century describing its villages one by one. These have been written by such historians as Arthur Mee, T. A. Coward and Fred. Crossley and all have omitted Willington by name. Only George Ormerod, writing of Willington Wood in 1819, was pleased to describe it as "a beautiful wooded promontory of rock which shoots out from the forest near Kelsall Hill, and is a conspicuous object, commanding an extensive prospect". The Boot Inn is a very fine public house, but the village does not have a church nor does it contain houses of any great age, and these are what counted with historians of the past. The oldest house in the neighbourhood could

well be *Boothdale Farm*, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hough. Some remember thatched roofs in their childhood, and there are stone cottages which probably date back to the eighteenth century, but most of the other houses only date back to Victorian times and are mainly sited along the two sides of Willington Road. However, mention should be made of *Pear Tree House* which bears the date 1816, and the four *Memorial Cottages* in Chapel Lane which were built in 1912 in memory of James Tomkinson who was killed two years earlier. These cottages were made available to widows or deserving elderly couples in the locality without discrimination. At present they are all unoccupied while planning permission to develop the land in front is awaited. Very little development has been allowed recently and all of it in Chapel Lane. Here three houses date from 1960 and a few others were built between 1968 and 1970. The area of the township is 1,030 acres, and the population in 1971 was given as 132; almost the same as in 1881.

Nevertheless, it is certain that a modern visitor to the village must be more enthusiastic than Ormerod with his "conspicuous object" and his "extensive prospect". Climb the hill to Gooseberry Lane and to the area known as Little Switzerland where woods nestle under the shadow of the remains of Kelsborrow Castle. Stand for a while on the road to Roughlow, at that point in the road where, about 1946, some twenty German P.O.W.s shored up the wall with recovered anti-tank obstacles, and look down into the wooded valley where lies the spring, known as the Pearl Hole. The scenery in this area is little less than magnificent.



Whalebone at Whalebone Cottage

APPENDIX I — THE NORMAN EARLS

Gherbod, the Fleming	1070
Gherbod was imprisoned in Flanders so William ennobled:	
Hugh I (Hugh Lupus), nephew of the Conqueror, died 27 July, 1101	1071-1101
Richard, son of Hugh, drowned in the "White Ship", 1120	1101-1120
Ranulf I, nephew of Hugh Lupus, buried at Chester	1120-1129
Ranulf II, son of Ranulf I	1129-1153
Hugh II, son of Ranulf II, died at Leek, buried Chester	1153-1181
Ranulf III, son of Hugh II, died at Wallingford 28 October, 1232	1181-1232
John the Scot, nephew of Ranulf III, possibly poisoned 7 June, 1237 by his wife Helene	1232-1237

Notes

1. The hereditary Earldom of Chester reverted to the Crown after the demise of John the Scot.
2. Other sources refer to Ranulf as Ralph, Randle or Randolph.

APPENDIX II — THE MASTER FORESTERS

Office created by Ranulf I, Earl of Chester, between 1119 and 1128

I	Ranulf de Kyngeslegh, Grantee	c. 1123
II	Ranulf de Kyngeslegh, son of I	obiit ante 1199
III	Richard de Kyngeslegh, son of II	vivebat 218
IV	Ranulf de Kyngeslegh, eldest son of III	vivebat 1230-1232
V	Sir Richard de Kyngeslegh, brother of IV obiit ante 1244	vivebat 1241,
VI	Henry de Donne, in the right of his wife, Joan de Kyngeslegh, 4th dau. and co-heiress of V	c. 1244
VII	Richard de Donne, eldest son of VI	obiit 1259
VIII	Richard Donne, only son of VII	1259-1302
IX	Richard Donne, eldest son of VIII	1302-1312
X	Richard Donne, eldest son of IX	1312-1370
XI	John Donne, senior, eldest son of X	1370-1434
XII	John Donne, junior, eldest son of XI	1434-1440
XIII	Sir John Donne, Kt., eldest son of XII	1440-1459
XIV	Sir John Donne, Kt., eldest son of XIII	1459-1504
XV	Richard Donne, 2nd son of XIV	1504-1516

XVI	Sir John Done, Kt., eldest son of XV	1516-1561
XVII	Rauf Done, junior, of Flaxyards, great-great-great-grand nephew of XII	1561-1591
XVIII	John Done, eldest son of XVII	1591-1601
XIX	Sir John Done, Kt., eldest son of XVIII	1601-1629
XX	John Done, eldest son of XIX	1629-1630
XXI	Jane Done, eldest dau. of XX, obiit 1662	1630-1639
XXII	Mary Crewe, 2nd dau. of XX and wife of John Crewe	1639-1690
XXIII	Sir John Crewe, Kt., eldest son of XXII, by quitclaim from XXI	1690-1711
XXIV	Elizabeth Knightley, sister of XXIII, wife of Devereux Knightley	1711-1715
XXV	Richard Arderne of Harden, grandson of Ralph Arderne who married Elenor Done, 5th dau. of XIX	1715-1752
XXVI	John Arderne of Harden, eldest son of XXV	1752-1786
XXVII	John Arden of Harden, Utkinton and Pepper, eldest son of XXVI	1786-c. 1821
XXVIII	William Arden, 2nd Baron Alvanley, nephew of XXVII	c. 1821-1849
XXIX	Richard Pepper Arden, 3rd and last Baron Alvanley, brother of XXVIII	1849-1857
XXX	Helen Catherine Baillie-Hamilton, dau. Sir John Warrender, Bt., and Hon. Frances Henrietta Arden, eldest dau. of Sir Richard Pepper Arden, 1st Baron Alvanley, niece of XXIX	1857-1889
XXXI	Sir George Baillie-Hamilton-Arden, K.T., 11th Earl of Haddington, husband of XXX	1889-1917
XXXII	Hon. Henry Robert Baillie-Hamilton- Arden, 3rd son of XXXI	1917-1949
XXXIII	Lady Grisell Arden-Baillie-Hamilton, 3rd dau. of XXXI	1949-1957
XXXIV	Lady Helen O'Brien, O.B.E., dau. George Baillie-Hamilton, Baron Binning and Byres, and husband of Hon. Henry Barnaby O'Brien, M.C., grand-daughter of XXXI	1957-1959
XXXV	Desmond Barnaby O'Brien, elder son of XXXIV	1959-1969
XXXVI	Karen O'Brien, elder daughter of XXXV, now Karen Cowan	1969-

(By courtesy of Cheshire Sheaf)

APPENDIX III — THE MEDIEVAL TOWNSHIPS WITHIN THE FOREST

Some doubt still remains regarding the boundaries of the Forest of Mara and Mondrem. Little information is given in Domesday, except that Aldredelie, Conewardsley, Kingsley, Weaverham and Done are stated to be either wholly or partly within 'the earls's forest'.

A medieval list (MS 2115/79), however, exists in the Harleian collection which names the townships within the forest as follows:

Brugetroghford	Wymbaldetrogh ford
Thorneton	Ines
Elton	Happesford
Stony Dunham	Alvandeleg
Manleygh	Hellesby
Newton	Kyngeslegh
Norlegh	Crouton
Codynton	Onston
Acton	Weynynton
Castel Northwyc	Hertford and Horton
Weever	Wetenhale
Olton and Lowe	Budworth
Rusheton	Ayton
Torpylegh	Church Minshull
Aston	Worleston
Whytpoole	Barrellespull
Cholmundeston	Stoke
Bedaleheth	Wardhull
Calvylegh	Alpraham
Tydelston	Teverton
Utkynton	Weylaton
Clotton	Duddon
Ashton	Mykel Moldesworth
Lyttel Moldesworth	Horton with Asseton
Mykel Barea	Lytel Barea
Tervyn	Hockenhill
Weverham	Overe
Burgus de Frodesham	Overton
Netherton	Bradeleg
Mukesdale	Woodhowes
Kelshale	Merton

**APPENDIX IV — NAMES AND DWELLINGS TAKEN FROM THE
CHESHIRE DIRECTORIES 1850-1939**

<i>Name and Occupation</i>	<i>Name of Dwelling</i>
Delamere 1850	
Billington, Elizabeth, Farmer	
Badrock, Thomas, Blacksmith	
Crawford, Elizabeth, Farmer	
Crawford, George, Farmer	
Davies, Thomas, Farmer	
Gilbert, Samuel, Tailor	
Gunnery, J., Stone Mason & Quarryman	
Heath, William, Farmer	
Hignett, Thomas, Farmer	
Newport, Samuel, Beerhouse Keeper, Boot and Shoe Maker	
Pine, James, Beerhouse & Shopkeeper	
Rodgers, Thomas, Farmer	
Rutter, Thomas, Farmer	
Wade, Abraham, Tailor	
White, Abraham, Farmer	
Wright, Abraham, Stone Mason & Quarryman	
Eddisbury 1850	
Antwis, William, Farmer	The Old Pale
Brock, Robert, Farmer	
Dutton, Joseph, Farmer	
Lloyd, Samuel, Farmer	
Reece, Thomas, Farmer	
Libscomb, William, Deputy Surveyor of Delamere Forest	
Kingswood 1850	
Harrison, Richard, Farmer	New Pale
Hughes, William, Farmer	Castle Hill
Spruce, Samuel, Farmer	
Trickett, William, Farmer	
Oakmere 1850	
Bull, John, Farmer	
Clark, William, Victualler	Vale Royal Abbey Arms
Hornby, Samuel, Farmer	Forest House
Humphreys, Samuel, Farmer	
Johnson, John	The Lodge
Johnson, Thomas	The Lodge
Lee, Thomas, Farmer	
Walker, Tailor & Beerhouse Keeper	

*Name and Occupation**Name of Dwelling***Delamere 1878**

Austin, William, Shopkeeper
 Bate, William, Beer Retailer
 Billington, Henry, Farmer
 Billington, (Mrs.) Elizabeth, Farmer
 Blint, James, Farmer
 Bolton, Henry Byran, Farmer
 Cookson, Thomas, Joiner
 Crank, Joseph, Wheelwright
 Edwards, William, Blacksmith
 Gladstone, Robinson
 Griffis, James, Beer Retailer
 Morrey (Mrs.), Farmer
 Nicholas, Thomas, Farmer
 Plant, James, Farmer
 Rathbone, John, Carpenter & Blacksmith
 Rathbone, John, Shopkeeper
 Reece, Thomas, Sadler
 Roberts, Elizabeth (Mrs.), Shopkeeper
 Scornes, Lawrence, Beer Retailer
 Sproson, John, Farmer & Beer Retailer
 Wate, Abraham, Tailor
 Wilsby, Joseph, Farmer
 Willis, Richard, Bricklayer
 Wright, Job, Shopkeeper

Castle Hill

Castle Hill

Castle Hill

Eddisbury 1878

Bebbington, Thomas, Farmer
 Brock, Thomas, Farmer
 Greenway, John, Farmer
 Jameson, Thomas, Farmer
 Mumfield, Thomas, Farmer
 Reece, John, Farmer
 Sheen, John, Farmer
 Thompson, Henry
 Walker, John, Pig Dealer
 Wilson, (Mrs.) Ellen, Cow Keeper

Old Pale Farm

Kingswood 1878

Challoner, Joseph, Farmer
 Grice, Alick, Farmer
 Harrison, John, Farmer
 Spruce, Hannah (Mrs.), Huckster

Castle Hill

New Pale

Oakmere 1878

Dirding, William, Farmer
 Higson, John, J.P.

Oakmere Lodge

Name and Occupation

Holland, Lydia (Mrs.), Farmer
 Leather, Simeon, Farmer
 Lewis, William, Farmer
 Robinson, John, Farmer
 Saunders, Sarah (Mrs.), Farmer
 Walley, John, Farmer
 Wilson, Isaac
 Wright, Thomas, Farmer

Delamere 1890

Austin, William, Grocer
 Baldwin, Captain William E. H.
 Barnard, Alfred, Farmer
 Beard, Jonathon Downes, Farmer
 Bolton, (Mrs.) Ann Howe, Farmer
 Cawley, Mr. John
 Davenport, Mr. Henry
 Fairhurst, Henry, Farmer
 Gladstone, Mr. Robertson Harrison, Henry,
 Farmer
 Hassall, George, Farmer
 Johnson, William, Farmer
 Johnstone, Isaac, Farmer
 Mayers, Thomas, Pig Dealer
 Naylor, John, Beer Retailer
 Newall, Alfred, Station Master
 Prescott, Martha, Beer Retailer
 Packe, William, Wheelwright
 Robinson, Robert, Farmer
 Sadler, John, Farmer & Beer Retailer
 Welsby, Mr. Joseph Willis, Henry, Beer
 Retailer
 Wright, George, Joiners & Sons
 Wright, Jesse, Farmer & Beer Retailer
 Vernon, James, Grocer

Eddisbury 1890

Barker, Richard, Farmer & Carrier
 Frith, John, Farmer
 Harrison, Lancelot, Farmer
 Johnson, John, Farmer
 Jones, Samuel, Farmer
 Large, Thomas, Farmer
 Mountfield, Thos. Hy., Farmer
 Pinnington, Samuel, Farmer
 Reece, John, Farmer
 Rutter, Eliza, Farmer

Name of Dwelling

Delamere Lodge
 Folly Farm
 Crabtree Green

 Vale Royal Abbey Arms
 Massey's Lodge

Forest Farm
 Castle Hill Farm
 Summer Bank

Woodbine
 Castle Hill
 Sandibrow

Harewood Hill

Rectory Farm
 Farmers Arms
 Mount Pleasant

Old Pale
 Yell (Yeld)
 Yell (Yeld)
 Yell (Yeld)
 Mount Pleasant
 Forest Farm

Name and Occupation

Sheen, John, Farmer
 Stockton, Mark, Farmer
 Sutton, Thomas, Farmer
 Walker, John, Timber Merchants
 Walker, Thomas, Farmer
 Wright, Joseph, Farmer
 Wright, William, Farmer

Kingswood 1890

Ellison, William, Farmer
 Frith, Peter, Farmer
 Grice, Alexander, Farmer
 Hall, Joseph, Farmer
 Harbridge, Edward, Farmer
 Harrison, Mary, Farmer
 Watson, David, Farmer

Oakmere 1890

Antwis, Thos., Farm Bailiff
 Bate, George, Farmer
 Bell, James, Farmer
 Crank, Edward, Farmer & Bootmaker
 Crank, William, Farmer
 Daniels, William, Trainer & Jockey
 Holland, John, Farmer
 Higson, John, J.P.
 Jones, Mr. Walter
 Jones, Edward, Farmer
 Lewis, George, Beer Retailer & Farmer
 Lewis, James, Farmer
 Lewis, Joseph, Farmer
 Maddock, George, Farmer
 Robinson, John, Farmer
 Snelson, Mr. Peter
 Walley, William, Farmer
 Walton, Daniel, Farmer
 Walton, Thomas, Farmer
 Wilbraham, Mrs. Mary Jane
 Wilson, Isaac, Farmer
 Wright, Thomas, Farmer

Delamere 1914

Bostock, John, Stud Groom
 Carter, Peter, Farmer
 Cash, William H.
 Clegg, William Gavin
 Cliff, James, Farm Bailiff

Name of Dwelling

Eddisbury House
 Yell (Yeld)
 Eddisbury Lodge
 Yell (Yeld)
 Organsdale House

Claim Farm
 Houndslow

Birchdale
 Birch Hill
 New Pale
 Simmonds Hill

Onslow

Abbey Arms Lane
 Abbots Moss Cottage
 Forest House
 Oakmere Hall
 Blakemere
 New Pool

Claim Farm
 Folly Farm
 Hornby's Claim
 Crabtree Green
 Delamere Lodge
 Abbey Arms Lane
 Abbey Arms Lane
 Oakmere Water
 Overdale
 Abbey Arms
 Gallowscrough

Sandy Brow Cottage
 Heathfield
 The Eyrie
 Abbey Wood
 Primrose Hill

Name and Occupation

Cookson, Arthur
 Cookson, Mrs.
 Crewdson, Russell
 Cowap, Robert, Butcher
 Driffield, Peter Henry
 Edwards, William, Blacksmith
 Gleave, Thomas, Stone Merchant
 Hassell, George, Farmer
 Hassell, Thomas, Farmer
 Kenworthy, John Whittaker, J.P.
 Lings, Eric Massey
 Ledward, George, Farmer
 Lightfoot, John, Grocer
 Mort, Leonard, Farmer
 Nixon, Henry Edward, Farmer
 Nixon, William, Beer Retailer
 Page, William, Grocer
 Pine, John, Shopkeeper
 Pixton, Vincent, Farmer
 Prescott, Agnes (Miss), Beer Retailer
 Rathbone, Charles, Joiner & Farmer
 Reade, Edward, Farmer
 Roberts, Henry, Saddler
 Roberts, William, Tailor
 Rutter, Earle (Mrs.), Farmer
 Sadler, Harriet (Mrs.), Beer Retailer
 Spencer, Thos. Fred., Beer Retailer
 Willis & Wimpenny, Post Office
 Wimpenny, George, Farmer
 Walker, Col. Will. Hall
 Wigg, Charles Ernest
 Wright, George, Builder

Eddisbury 1914

Dutton, Benjamin, Grocer
 Foster, Joseph, Farmer
 Frith, Peter, Farmer
 Frith, William, Farmer
 Gilbert, Samuel, Farmer
 Gunnery, Henry, Farmer & Stone Merchant
 Johnson, William & Joseph, Joiners
 Johnson, Martha (Mrs.), Farmer
 Large, Joseph, Farmer
 Morrey, Frederick, Nurseryman
 Pinnington, George, Builder
 Pleavin, Frank, Farmer

Name of Dwelling

The Woodlands
 Castle View
 The Grange

 Quarry Lane

 Heatherdale

 Castle Hill
 Castleton
 Forest House

 Fishpool Farm

 Sunnybank
 Farmers Arms

 Sandy Brow
 The Cottage
 Valley View

 Eddisbury Hill Farm
 Organsdale
 Old Pale Farm

 Mount Pleasant
 Forest Nurseries

Name and Occupation

Profit, George, Farmer
 Stockton, Mark, Farmer
 Walker, Dennis, Farmer
 Wilson, Samuel, Farmer
 Wimpenny, George, Stone Merchant

Kingswood 1914

Adams, Alfred, M.D.
 Heathcote, Gilbert, L.R.C.P.
 Atherton, William, Shopkeeper
 Barnes, John B., Shopkeeper
 Booth, Thomas, Farmer
 Bushell, Thomas, Farmer
 Davenport, Frederick, Farmer
 Ellison, William, Farmer
 Grice, George, Farmer
 Harbridge, Hannah (Miss), Farmer
 Harrison, Walter, Farmer
 Molineaux, Thomas, Farmer
 Thomas, Robert D., Cab Proprietor
 Willis, Albert N., Farmer

Oakmere 1914

Arundel, Mrs.
 Brotherston, Robert, Beer Retailer
 Buckley, Henry, Farmer
 Clarke, John, Farmer
 Crank, Edward, Wheelwright
 Dixon, James, Farmer
 Done, Thomas, Farmer
 Edwards, Alfred W., Gardener
 Ellams, Albert
 Goring, William
 Greentree, Arthur, Head Gardener
 Gregory, Joseph, Farmer
 Higson, Captain William, J.P.
 Jeffs, Frederick, Farmer
 Jeffs, George Henry Moseley, Coal Agent
 Lewis, Henry, Farmer
 Jones, Walter John Henry
 Lewis, Sarah (Mrs.), Farmer
 Maddock, James M., Farmer
 Maddock, Robert E., Farmer
 Moseley, Martha (Mrs.), Shopkeeper
 Nield, John, Farmer
 Nixon, John, Farmer

Name of Dwelling

Yeld Croft
 Eddisbury Lodge
 Forest Farm

Liverpool Sanatorium

Crossley Sanatorium
 Sunny Bank Farm
 Birch Hill
 Ravens Lodge
 Claim Farm
 Clift View
 New Pale
 Waterloo
 Houndslough
 Windy Howe
 Waste Farm
 Park Farm
 Stud Farm
 Golf Links Farm
 Blakemere
 Crabtree Green
 Vale Royal Abbey Arms
 Oakmere Hall
 Oakmere Hall
 Lodge Farm
 Post Office
 Blakemere
 Folly Farm
 Crown Farm
 White House Farm
 Crown Cottages
 Cherry Orchard Farm
 Moss Farm

Name and Occupation

Neilson, Henry C.
 Oakes, Mary (Mrs.), Farmer
 Parton, Abraham, Farm Bailiff
 Proudlove, George, Farmer
 Rancee, Mary (Mrs.), Shopkeeper
 Rutter, Philip N., Farmer
 Wilson, John, Farmer
 Worthington, George, Farmer
 Wright, Albert, Farmer
 Yarwood, James, Farmer

Delamere 1923

Astbury, Sarah Elizabeth (Mrs.), Draper &
 Post Office
 Bennett, Rudolph, Beer Retailer
 Bostock, John, Stud Groom to Lord
 Wavertree
 Burgess, Miss
 Butcher, Thomas
 Carter, Peter, Farmer
 Clegg, William Gavin
 Cookson, Arthur
 Crewdson, Russell
 Cliff, James, Farm Bailiff
 Cowap, Robert, Butcher
 Duxbury, Isaac, Cowkeeper
 Driffield, Peter Henry
 Edwards, William, Blacksmith
 Gleave, Thomas, Stone Merchant
 Girdwood, James
 Hollinshall, Alfred W.
 Hassell, George, Farmer
 Hassell, Thomas, Farmer
 Jamion, James, Beer Retailer
 Illingworth, Miss Gertrude
 Inchle, Miss Mary Ellen
 Jones, Mrs.
 Kenworthy, John Whittaker, J.P.
 Ledwood, George, Farmer
 Lightfoot, Miss Lena Jane, Grocer
 Mort, Leonard, Farmer
 Nixon, Henry Edward, Farmer
 Nixon, William, Beer Retailer
 Mighal, Henry, Police Superintendent
 Pine, John, Shopkeeper
 Pixton, Vince, Farmer
 Prescott, Agnes (Miss), Beer Retailer

Name of Dwelling

Plovers Moss
 Forest House
 Oakmere Hall Farm
 Crown Farm
 Crown Cottage
 Firs Farm
 Brook Farm
 Woodside Farm
 Gallowslough Farm
 New Pool

Farmers Arms
 Sandybrow Cottage

Castleton
 Heathfield
 Abbey Wood
 The Woodlands
 The Grange
 Primrose Hill

Heather Dale
 Harewood Villa
 The Holt

Fishpool Inn
 Grange Cottage
 White Cottage
 Valley View
 Castle Hill
 Forest House

Fishpool Inn

Police Station House

Harewood Hill

Name and Occupation

Rathbone, Charles, Farmer
 Reade, Albert, Farmer
 Reade, Edwin, Farmer
 Roberts, Frank, Tailor
 Roberts, Henry, Saddler
 Ryder, Annie (Mrs.)
 Smith, Benjamin
 Sands, William, Cycle Agent
 Sheen, Thomas, Farmer
 Walker, Samuel, Cow Keeper
 Walker, Edward
 Wavertree, Lord
 Wood, Bertha (Miss)
 Wimpenny, Harry, Farmer & Saw Mills
 Wright, Joseph

Name of Dwelling

Summer Tree Farm

 Castle View
 The Uplands

 Waste Lane

 The Hillside
 Sandy Brow
 The Eyrie
 Wood View
 Holly Bank

Eddisbury 1923

Astbury, John, Farmer
 Cork, Harold, Farmer
 Cowper, Edward Charles, Farmer
 Foster, Joseph, Stone Mason
 Frith, Peter, Farmer
 Frith, William, Farmer
 Gilbert, Samuel, Farmer
 Haverson, Harry, Refreshment Rooms
 Johnson, William & Sons, Joiners
 Johnson, Abraham, Farmer
 Johnson, Charles, Farmer
 Johnson, Joseph, Joiner
 Large, Joseph B., Farmer
 Lyons, Alfred, Farmer
 Morrey, Frederick, Nurseryman & Florist
 Oldcock, Charlotte (Mrs.), Shopkeeper
 Pleavin, Frank, Farmer
 Snaith, John, Shopkeeper
 Wilson, Samuel, Farmer

Eddisbury Hill Farm
 Organsdale
 Old Pale Farm

 The Dingle Farm

 Mount Pleasant
 Forest Nurseries

 Forest Farm

Kingswood 1923

Adams, Alfred, M.D.
 Atherton, William, Shopkeeper
 Bone, Miss Elsie
 Booth, Thomas, Farmer
 Bushell, Thomas, Farmer
 Ellison, William, Farmer
 Frodsham, William J., Farmer
 Harbridge, Thomas, Farmer

Liverpool Sanatorium

 Birchdale
 Sunny Bank Farm
 Birch Hill
 Claim Farm
 Ravens Lodge
 Cliff View

Name and Occupation

Harrison, Walter, Farmer
 Heathcote, Gilbert, L.R.C.P.
 Molineaux, Thomas, Farmer
 Moss, George, Farmer
 Riley, William, Cab Proprietor
 Spruce, George Edward, Farmer
 Whitley, James, Shopkeeper

Name of Dwelling

New Pale
 Crossley Sanatorium
 Waterloo

 Rose Cottage
 Forest Gate

Oakmere 1923

Arundel, Mrs.
 Ellams, Albert, Farm Bailiff
 Briscoe, Richard, Farm Bailiff
 Brotherston, Martha (Mrs.), Beer Retailer
 Buckley, Henry, Farmer
 Crank, Frederick, Wheelwright
 Dixon, James, Farmer
 Done, Thomas, Farmer
 Ford, James, Farmer
 Foster, Sidney, Farmer
 Gregory, Joseph, Farmer
 Jeffs, Frederick, Farmer
 Kemp, John
 Lewis, James, Farmer
 Lewis, Sarah (Mrs.), Farmer
 Maddock, James M., Farmer
 Maddock, Robert E., Farmer
 Midwood, Arthur Reginald
 Nixon, George, Head Gardener to Mrs. R. M.
 Owen
 Nixon, John, Farmer
 Nield, John, Farmer
 Nuttall, Harold, Motor Engineer
 Proudlove, George, Farmer
 Robinson, John, Farmer
 Rutter, Philip Newton, Farmer
 Thorpe, William, Head Gardener to R. Midwood,
 Esquire
 Wilson, John, Farmer
 Worthington, George, Farmer
 Wright, Walter, Farmer

Windy Howe
 Crab Tree Green
 Oakmere Hall Farm

 Stud Farm
 Golf Links Farm
 Forest House
 Park Farm

 Lodge Farm
 V.R. Abbey Arms P.H.
 Newport
 Folly Farm
 Crown Farm
 Whitehouse Farm
 Oakmere Hall
 Tarporley Road

 Moss Farm
 Cherry Orchard
 Crown Cottages
 Crown Farm
 Station Farm
 Firs Farm
 Oakmere Hall Lodge

 Brook Farm
 Woodside Farm
 Gallowsclough Farm

Delamere 1939

Astbury, Sarah Elizabeth (Mrs.), Draper & Post
 Office
 Astle, Mary Jane (Mrs.), Smallholder
 Bonnalie, Colonel F. J.

Kelsall Hill

 Fishpool Lane
 The Weste (Waste)

Name and Occupation

Brooks, Noel Brand, M.C.
 Bernett, Rudolph, Publican
 Clegg, William Gavin, J.P.
 Crewdson, Russell
 Cowap, Robert, Butcher
 Dean, John Ward, Farmer
 Davis, Thomas
 Devereux, Hubert M.
 Done, Albert, Farmer
 Dixon, Comdr. Noel W., R.N. (Retired)
 Driffield, Peter Henry
 Fergusson, Captain John
 Foster, Blanche (Mrs.)
 Foden, Albert, Farmer
 Hardy, Donald Brown, Dairyman
 Herford, Rev. R. Travers
 Hassell, George, Farmer
 Hassall, Mary Jane (Mrs.), Farmer
 Johnson, Charles, Beer Retailer
 Lightfoot, J. M. & E., Grocers
 Lloyd, Joseph, Beer Retailer
 Nixon, Henry Edward, Farmer
 Pardoe, Richard
 Pine, John, Shopkeeper
 Pixton, Vincent, Farmer
 Pleavin, Frank, Smallholder
 Powell, Frederick, Farmer
 Reade, Albert, Farmer
 Reade, Edwin, Farmer
 Roberts, Clara (Mrs.), Refreshments
 Roberts, Sophia (Miss), District Nurse
 Sheen, Thomas, Farmer
 Walley, Frederick, Smallholder
 Walton, Arthur, Farmer
 Wood, Miss Bertha
 Wilkinson, Thomas, Insurance Agent
 Wimpenny, Harry, Farmer

Eddisbury 1939

Allan, Sidney C.
 Ashworth, William, Shopkeeper & Post Office
 Astbury, John, Farmer
 Astbury, William, Smallholder
 Bettley, George, Coal Merchant
 Cummings, Thomas, Farmer
 Ford, William Henry, Farmer

Name of Dwelling

Sandymere
 Farmers Arms
 Abbey Wood
 The Grange

 Delamere Farm
 The Woodlands
 Ankerdene

 Sandiford Lodge
 Quarry Lane
 Sandy Brow
 Zeminder
 Heathfield
 Castle Hill
 Summertrees

 The Boot Inn
 Fishpool Farm
 Castle View

 Harewood Hill

 Water Farm

 Mount Pleasant

 Waste Lane

 Fishpool Farm
 The Eyrie

 Wood View

 Eddisbury Lodge
 Station Road

 Mount Pleasant
 Rectory Farm

Name and Occupation

Frith, John, Farmer
 Frith, Norman, Farmer
 Garner, Mrs., Farmer
 Gresty, Emma (Mrs.), Refreshments
 Johnson, Philip, Farmer
 Jones, Hubert W., Forester
 Morrey, Frederick & Son, Nurseryman & Florist
 Sheen, William Arthur, Beer Retailer
 Snaith, John, Shop
 Ramsbottom, Horace R.
 Watts, Edwin, Boot Repairer
 Whitby, William, Farmer
 Williams, William, Smallholder
 Woodward, Richard, Smallholder

Kingswood 1939

Bushell, Arthur, Farmer
 Challoner, Arthur, Farmer
 Ellison, John Thomas, Farmer
 Erwin, G. Stoddart, M.D.
 Fryer, Wilfred, Farmer
 Harbridge, Thomas, Farmer
 Horton, John H., Clerk of Works
 Jackson, Edwin, Farmer
 Heathcote, Mrs. Edith
 Lewis, Hy. F., Farmer
 Mason, Ernest, Farmer
 Mather, John, Refreshments Room
 Moss, George, Farmer
 Miller, Alexander K., M.D.
 Riley, Blanche (Mrs.), Smallholder
 Smith, Andrew Thomas
 Spruce, George Edward, Farmer
 Whitley, James, Shopkeeper

Oakmere 1939

Boumphrey, A. N.
 Brieant, R. Sutton
 Bullock, B. Mitford, Horse Trainer
 Burgess, William Hall
 Clarke, William Moreton, Farmer
 Clark, Herbert
 Chapman, Gordon
 Clegg, Gavin Hamilton
 Dewhurst, Maj. Cyril
 Done, Thomas, Farmer

Name of Dwelling

Organsdale
 Old Pale Farm
 Coronation Farm
 Toll Bar Cottage
 Forest Farm
 Linmere
 Forest Nurseries
 Fishpool Inn

 Pine Cottage
 Waste Lane
 Stoney Butts Farm

Birch Hill
 New Pale Farm
 Claim Farm
 Liverpool Sanatorium
 Waterloo
 Cliff View
 Liverpool Sanatorium
 Houndslough Farm
 The Cob
 Houndslough Farm
 Pinewood Farm

Crossley Sanatorium
 Cherry Tree Farm
 New Pale Lodge
 Forest Gate

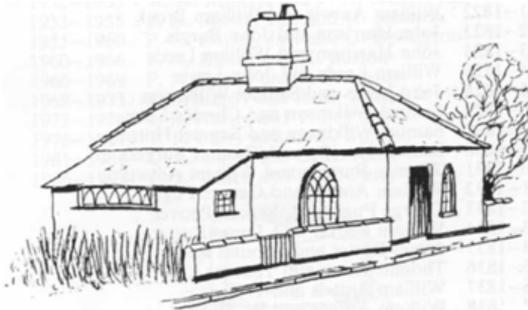
Windy Howe
 Abbots Moss Cottage
 Folly Farm
 Woodrough
 Oakmere Hall Farm
 Forest View Inn
 Woodpeckers
 Longridge
 Overdale
 Golf Links Farm

<i>Name and Occupation</i>	<i>Name of Dwelling</i>
Ford, Matthew, Farmer	Crab Tree Green
Forster, Mrs. E., Farmer	
Foster, Mary (Mrs.), Refreshments	
Fowler, George, Smallholder	
Greenwood, Mrs.	Massey's Lodge
Gleave, Thomas, Smallholder	Heatherdale
Goring, James	Abbey Arms Garage
Everitt, A.	Vale Royal Abbey Arms
Greenway, Arthur, Smallholder	Oaktree Farm
Howarth, Frank Gerald	Delamere Lodge
Irwin, John P., Farmer	Crown Farm
Jeffs, Frederick, Farmer	Lodge Farm
Jones, Edward, Farmer	Crown Farm
Jones, George, Farmer	Whitehouse Farm
Kinsey, Wilbraham, Farmer	Cherry Orchard
Lamb, Charles James	Oakmere Hall
Lewis, Anna (Miss), Poultry Farmer	New House
Maddock, Jim, Farmer	
Morgan, Cecil Bernard	Blakemere
Nixon, Joseph W., Farmer	
Orr, William J.	Plovers Moss
Powell, Frederick, Smallholder	Water Farm
Robinson, Edward, Farmer	Station Farm
Rutter, Philip Newton, Farmer	Firs Farm
Shelmerdine, P. A.	Oakmere Bungalow
Spruce, Albert B., Smallholder	Park Farm
Walker, John, Farmer	Stud Farm
Wheeldon, Harry, Farmer	Forest House Farm
Wilson, John, Farmer	Brook Farm
Wright, Walter, Farmer	Gallowsclough Farm

SOME PRESENT AND POST-WAR INHABITANTS

Abbey Wood	Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Pilkington
	Mr. & Mrs. Culdeep Dilhon
Cherry Orchard Farm	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Wilding
Delamere Lodge	Major & Mrs. John Readman
	Mr. & Mrs. F. H. Glazebrook
Folly Farm	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Oulton
	Mr. & Mrs. Eric Cousins
Glen Royal (formerly Sandy Brow Cottage)	Mr. & Mrs. Johnnie Booth
	Mr. J. H. Hartigan
	Mr. & Mrs. T. R. Summers
	Mr. & Mrs. J. D. P. Hunter
Keeper's Cottage	Mr. & Mrs. George Rock
	Mr. & Mrs. Harry Smith

Longridge	Mr. & Mrs. N. S. Price Parry
Massey's Lodge	Mr. & Mrs. Lovel Mack
	Mr. & Mrs. G. Mitten
Organsdale House	Mr. & Mrs. Allan Haworth
Overdale	Mr. & Mrs. Reginald Taylor
	Mr. & Mrs. Harold Denton
	The Misses Denton
Plover's Moss	Mr. & Mrs. R. M. West
	Mr. & Mrs. John Bownes
Sandiford Lodge (formerly Woodbine)	Commander & Mrs. Noel Dixon
	Major & Mrs. R. B. Verdin
	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Jones
	Mr. & Mrs. Watson
	Mr. & Mrs. Ray Bradshaw
Sandymere	Major & Mrs. Noel Brooks
	Mr. & Mrs. J. D. McKechnie
	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Higgin
	Mr. & Mrs. John Timpson
Sandy Brow	Captain & Mrs. J. G. Fergusson
Sidebottom Farm	Mr. & Mrs. Derek Davies
The Grange	Mr. & Mrs. Russell Crewdson
	Mr. Gerald Crewdson
Windy Howe	Mr. & Mrs. Noel Boumphrey
	Mr. & Mrs. Crawford
Woodpeckers	Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Taylor
	Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Pugh



Old Toll House

APPENDIX V — RECTORS OF DELAMERE CHURCH

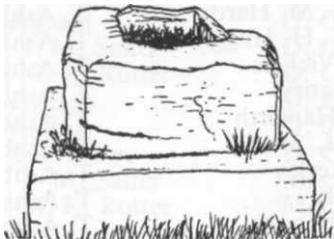
1817-	1827	Rev. Rowland Hill
1827-	1837	Rev. J. Brocklebank
1837-	1838	Rev. B. Moore
1838-	1874	Rev. W. Darwin Fox
1874-	1889	Rev. R. C. Garret
1889-	1913	Rev. Dr. S. W. Payne
1913-	1951	Rev. G. S. Payne
1951-	1965	Rev. C. H. Huggill
1966-	1969	Rev. D. E. Marrs
1969-	1974	Rev. D. R. Tassall
1974-	1983	Canon B. D. A. Spurry
1984-	1988	Rev. J. E. Richardson
1988-		Rev. S. W. Winton

There have been four Curates during these years. The Rev. Brocklehurst was Curate to the Rev. Rowland Hill before he became Rector himself. The Rev. Nixon was also Curate to the Rev. Darwin Fox for a time. The Rev. J. D. Payne was a Curate for five years to his father Rev. Dr. Payne, and was followed by the Rev. A. M. Carswell who remained till the Rev. G. S. Payne was appointed Rector.

**APPENDIX VI — CHURCH WARDENS AT
DELAMERE CHURCH**

1821 -1822	William Antwis and William Brock
1822-1823	John Harrison and John Burgis
1823 -1824	John Harrison and William Leeds
1824-1825	William Leeds and John Lewis
1825-1826	John Lewis and Samuel Wilkinson
1826-1827	Samuel Wilkinson and Charles Luke
1827-1829	Samuel Wilkinson and Samuel Hornby
1829-1830	Samuel Hornby and Thomas Burgess
1830-1831	Thomas Burgess and William Antwis
1831-1832	William Antwis and George Pugh
1832-1833	George Pugh and William Peover
1833-1834	William Peover and James Rutter
1834-1835	James Rutter and Thomas Reece
1835-1836	Thomas Reece and Thomas Lee
1836-1837	William Antwis and T. Lee
1837-1838	William Antwis and W. Hughes
1838-1839	William Antwis and Thos. Dodd
1839-1851	William Antwis and T. Lee
1851-1852	William Dean and T. Lee

1852-1864	William Dean and W. Clarke
1864-1865	Thomas Linnell and W. Clarke
1865-1875	Thomas Linnell and Simeon Leather
1875-1879	Joseph Welsby and Simeon Leather
1879-1881	Joseph Welsby and J. Robinson
1881-1883	W. Beard and J. Robinson
1884-1885	T. Mountfield and J. Robinson
1886-1889	T. Mountfield and Robert Robinson
1890-1894	T. Mountfield and Mr. Watson
1894-1897	T. Mountfield and Joseph Lewis of Folly Farm
1897-1901	A. Barnard and Isaac Wright
1901-1902	A. Barnard and John Robinson
1902-1903	A. Wright and John Robinson
1904-1905	T. Barnard and John Robinson
1905-1907	W. Barton and J. Cliffe
1907-1908	W. Barton and G. Jeffs
1908-1910	Leech and G. Jeffs
1910-1911	G. Jeffs and A. Cookson
1911-1918	G. Jeffs and T. Done
1918-1919	G. Jeffs and H. Burton
1919-1922	T. Done and H. Burton
1922-1924	T. Done and F. Foster
1924-1927	T. Done and W. Horrox
1927-1929	T. Done and Abrahams
1929-1933	T. Done and P. N. Rutter
1934-1936	P. N. Rutter and H. Burton
1936-1944	P. N. Rutter and M. Ford
1944-1952	P. N. Rutter and W. A. Roberts
1920-1953	W. A. Roberts and P. N. Rutter, Jr.
1921-1955	P. N. Rutter, Jr. and G. Johnson
1955-1960	P. N. Rutter, Jr. and G. Bebington
1960-1966	P. N. Rutter and H. Burton
1966-1969	P. N. Rutter and J. B. Hardy
1969-1973	J. B. Hardy and R. C. Rutter
1973-1976	J. B. Hardy and T. P. Parry
1976-1981	T. P. Parry and G. L. Culey
1981-1986	G. L. Culey and D. E. Salter
1986-1991	G. L. Culey and N. P. Parry



Headless Cross, Oakmere

APPENDIX VII — DELAMERE PARISH COUNCIL

	<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Clerk to the Parish</i>
1894- 1903	Rev. Dr. S. W. Payne	T. Large
1904- 1905	T. Cookson	T. Large
1905- 1906	T. Cookson	J. B. Large
1907- 1909	P. Frith	J. B. Large
1910- 1912	G. Wright	J. B. Large
1913- 1914	P. Carter	J. B. Large
1915- 1918	V. Pixton	J. B. Large
1919- 1920	G. Wright	J. B. Large
1921- 1922	G. Walker	J. B. Large
1922- 1923	V. Pixton	J. B. Large
1923- 1924	G. H. Walker	J. B. Large
1925- 1927	P. Frith	H. D. Owen
1928- 1930	V. Pixton	H. D. Owen
1931- 1933	G. Walker	H. D. Owen
1934- 1935	H. Joinson	H. D. Owen
July 23rd 1935 Amalgamation with Eddisbury P.C.		
1936- 1937	J. Frith	W. Johnson
1937- 1938	N. Frith	W. Johnson
1938- 1943	V. Pixton	W. Johnson
1944- 1945	J. Frith	W. Johnson
1945- 1946	N. Ackerley	W. Johnson
1946- 1947	N. Ackerley	H. Johnson
1948- 1949	T. Ashbrook	H. Johnson
1949- 1950	T. W. Vickers	H. Johnson
1950- 1951	Mrs. E. M. Hardy	H. Johnson
1951- 1952	F. Johnson	H. Johnson
1952- 1953	N. Frith	H. Johnson
1953- 1954	N. Ackerley	H. Johnson
1954- 1955	T. Ashbrook	H. Johnson
1955- 1956	T. W. Vickers	T. Ashbrook
1956- 1957	Mrs. E. M. Hardy	T. Ashbrook
1958- 1959	L. Wyatt	T. Ashbrook
1959- 1960	A. C. Eckton	T. Ashbrook
1960- 1961	F. E. Johnson	T. Ashbrook
1961- 1962	A. C. Eckton	T. Ashbrook
1962- 1963	Mrs. E. M. Hardy	T. Ashbrook
1963- 1964	Rev. C. H. Huggill	T. Ashbrook
1964- 1965	T. W. Vickers	T. Ashbrook
1965- 1966	N. Gregory	T. Ashbrook
1966- 1967	N. A. Haworth	T. Ashbrook
1967- 1968	R. W. L. Wood	T. Ashbrook
1968- 1969	N. Ackerley	T. Ashbrook
1969- 1970	N. Frith	T. Ashbrook
1970- 1971	F. E. Johnson	T. Ashbrook
1971- 1972	D. W. Frith	T. Ashbrook

	<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Clerk to the Parish</i>
1972- 1973	Mrs. E. M. Hardy	T. Ashbrook
1973- 1974	N. Gregory	T. Ashbrook
1974- 1975	N. A. Haworth	T. Ashbrook
1975- 1976	R. W. L. Wood	T. Ashbrook
1976- 1977	W. Darlington	T. Ashbrook
1977- 1978	N. Shaw	T. Ashbrook
1978- 1979	N. A. Haworth	T. Ashbrook
1979- 1980	A. N. Cook	T. Ashbrook
1980- 1981	R. W. L. Wood	T. Ashbrook
1981- 1982	Rev. B. D. A. Spurrey	T. Ashbrook
1982- 1983	F. Livesey	T. Ashbrook
1983- 1984	R. Penk	Mrs. F. Jones
1984- 1985	F. Johnson	Mrs. F. Jones
1985- 1986	A. Goulty	Mrs. F. Jones
1986- -1987	D. Cammack	Mrs. F. Jones
1987- 1988	K. Warburton	Mrs. F. Jones
1988- -1989	D. Goodwin	Mrs. F. Jones
1989- 1990	D. Wheeler	Mrs. A. Barnes
1990- -1991	J. Grimshaw	Mrs. A. Barnes
1991- -1992	Mrs. S. Hardy	Mrs. A. Barnes

OAKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

	<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Clerk to the Parish</i>
1894- 1897	Capt. H. E. Wilbraham	W. Dutton
1898- 1909	W. Smith	W. Dutton
1910- 1911	W. Smith	G. Jeffs
1911- 1913	W. Smith	W. Chrimes
1914- 1917	W. E. Clegg	W. Chrimes
1918- 1927	T. Gleave	W. Chrimes
1928- 1941	P. N. Rutter	W. Chrimes
1941- 1947	P. N. Rutter	G. E. Rock
1947- 1953	A. Everitt	G. E. Rock
1953- 1960	A. Heap	G. E. Rock
1960- 1962	A. Heap	G. W. Holloway
1962- 1964	W. Pritchard	G. W. Holloway
1964- 1981	W. Pritchard	D. Gore
1981- 1982	Miss M. E. Rutter	D. Gore
1982- 1983	R. Sergeant	D. Gore
1983- -1984	Mrs. J. M. Salter	D. Gore
1984- -1985	Miss M. E. Rutter	D. Gore
1985- -1986	R. Sergeant	D. Gore
1986- -1987	R. Wilding	D. Gore
1987- -1988	R. C. R. Allen	D. Gore
1988- -1989	Mrs. J. M. Salter	Mrs. G. M. Carter
1989- -1990	Miss M. E. Rutter	Mrs. G. M. Carter
1990- -1991	A. Henderson	Mrs. G. M. Carter
1991- -1992	R. Alexander	Mrs. G. M. Carter

**APPENDIX VIII — ROLL OF HONOUR
(DELAMERE BRITISH LEGION)**

**The First World
War 1914-1918**

Pte. M. Allen	<i>South Lancashire Regiment</i>
Sgt. R. Ashley	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Pte. W. H. Atherton	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Pte. H. S. Barlow	<i>Yorkshire Horse Yeomanry</i>
Pte. W. Billington	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Spr. G. Brooks	<i>Royal Engineers</i>
Pte. E. Carter	<i>Royal Welsh Fusiliers</i>
Pte. J. Cook	<i>Bucks. Horse Yeomanry</i>
Bombr. A. Crawford	<i>Royal Field Artillery</i>
Pte. H. Crawford	<i>North Staffs. Regiment</i>
Pte. W. Dale	<i>Manchester Regiment</i>
Pte. F. Fowles	<i>6th Dragoon Guards</i>
Pte. A. J. Fox	<i>Manchester Regiment</i>
Pte. T. Gouldbourne	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Pte. E. Grindley	<i>Grenadier Guards</i>
Sgt. W. Harrison	<i>Machine Gun Corps</i>
Pte. A. Hughes	<i>Welsh Guards</i>
Pte. W. Kirkham	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Pte. J. Lewis	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Sgt. J. Nield	<i>Queens Own Cameron Highlanders</i>
Pte. G. Harrison	<i>Manchester Regiment</i>
Gnr. B. Oram	<i>Royal Field Artillery</i>
Spr. T. Parry	<i>Royal Engineers</i>
Pte. J. Pritchard	<i>Royal Welsh Fusiliers</i>
L/Cpl. F. Robinson	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Pte. J. Robinson	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Capt. A. Saunders	<i>Royal Lancashire Regiment</i>
Rflman. P. Walker	<i>South Lancashire Regiment</i>
Pte. G. Weston	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
Pte. H. B. Weston	<i>Royal Warwick Regiment</i>
Pte. J. White	<i>Cheshire Regiment</i>
L/Cpl. T. Pritchard	<i>South Lancashire Regiment</i>
L/Cpl. R. Wilson	<i>Manchester Regiment</i>
Pte. W. Worrall	<i>South Wales Borderers</i>
Rflman. W. W. Wright	<i>Liverpool Regiment</i>
Gnr. B. Vickers	<i>Royal Field Artillery</i>

**The Second World War
1939-1945**

Mr. C. Ashbrook	<i>Auxiliary Territorial Service</i>
Sen. Commandant F. M. H. Dixon	<i>Royal Air Force</i>
Sgt. S. W. J. English	<i>Kings Own Royal Regiment</i>
Pte. J. P. Fugler	<i>Royal Tank Regiment</i>
Tpr. R. Hughes	<i>Royal Air Force</i>
F/O. P. R. E. Jenkins	<i>Royal Engineers</i>
Cpl. D. Jones	<i>Royal Artillery</i>
Cpt. R. N. K. Jones	<i>Royal Field Artillery</i>
L/Bombr. J. R. Rimmer	<i>Coldstream Guards</i>
Sgt. F. Sheen	<i>Royal Air Force</i>
S/Ldr. A. T. Smith	<i>Lancashire Fusiliers</i>
Fus. T. Stretch	<i>London Irish Rifles</i>
L/Sgt. A. F. Ward	



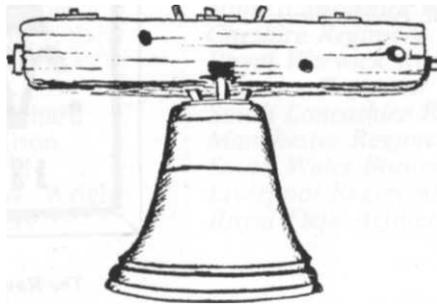
Coat of Arms, St. Peter's Church



The Royal Insignia

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 Domesday Book
 The Done Family (Peter Done)
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Delamere 1990

*A History of Vale Royal is now under consideration**

ISBN 0 9518292 0 3 (Hardback)
ISBN 0 9518292 1 1 (Softback)

*[*this has since been published]*