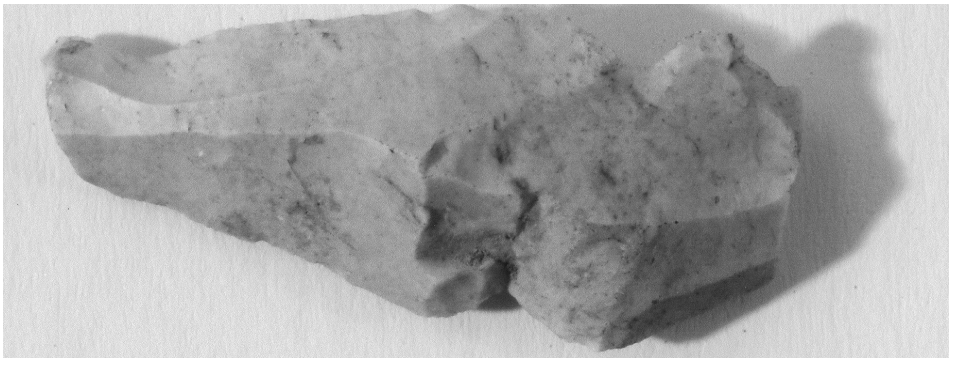
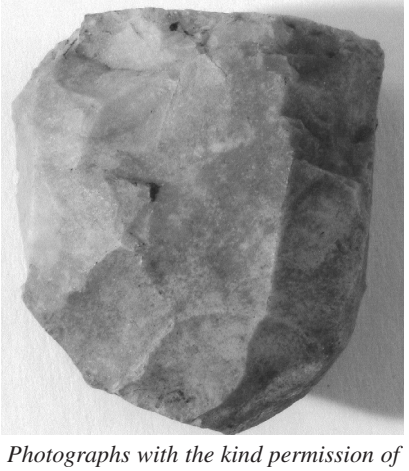
CHAPTER 3
Early History

Man's occupation of Upton dates back to the earliest of times. Prehistoric sites are extremely difficult to locate, and it is only a chance find that usually reveals its possible location. The other surprising area is the Saxon period, where the outline of Upton's original settlement has begun to show itself. This chapter also contains a glimpse of the awful times when the plague visited, with a detailed description of how the bodies were to be buried. It also became apparent as the research developed that there was a continuous time line of ownership for Upton. This too is presented but it must be noted that there have been many other people over the centuries who have also owned large parts of Upton. Too many to mention every one in this book.

The Prehistoric Period



Upton's history begins far back in prehistory. Evidence of man has been found in the Mesolithic Period some 11,000 to 4,350 BC. A local man, William Shore Jr, found several pieces of flint on the edges of Bache Pool about the time it was drained and filled in 1892. He published a work in 1911 entitled Prehistoric Man Cheshire, in which he recorded the flints and other finds and sites he found with other people. The Bache Pool site came under closer scrutiny more recently when an archaeological investigation was undertaken prior to the supermarket site expansion in the late 1990s. Another flint flake was found of the



Photographs with the kind permission of the Grosvenor Museum

same type. These flakes were used for cutting, chopping or as weapons by securing several pieces into a wooden handle. It was hoped to find the possible location of a settlement site, as a find of this kind is very unusual for Cheshire, though sadly none was found.

So why was man drawn to this particular spot? The name Bache means 'valley stream', which aptly describes the area's main feature. Such a freshwater source would have been a natural asset. The lightly wooded valley with sandy soils and the pool's animals and plants could have given the opportunity for settlement or cultivation on a permanent or temporary/seasonal basis.

The Roman Period

Only trace activity had been found in Upton until recently, stray coins and pottery shards but nothing structural. The area Upton covers forms a sort of no-mans-land immediately outside the Fortress City between two Roman roads. One runs on a NW alignment from Chester, although its exact course is not certain. It is thought that the Parkgate Road is the most probable. The other also comes close, as traces of it were found at Liverpool Road/Parkgate Road junction leading to Brook Lane and on to Hoole Bank.

As the Bache/Upton area was so close to the fortress it is unlikely to have had any widespread settlement except for the land used for agricultural purposes as it fell within the Prata Legionis, i.e. The Fields of the Legions. This was a specified area of land probably between the Rivers Dee and Gowy, including the Wirral, which would have supplied the fortress with produce, crops, leather, wood – anything in fact that was needed.

Upton Heath

In the summer of 1986 the Environmental Planning Service Department at Backford Hall was doing aerial recognisance in the area. They spotted features in the fields around Upton Grange Farm on Upton Heath. By 1989 a total of 5 enclosures were found lying between Acres Lane and Long Lane. The sites are roughly rectilinear with rounded corners and of a similar size, the shape of a playing card that is typically Roman. (See colour picture Ch 1)

There have been several investigations as to what exactly they are but it now seems clear that they fall into the category of practice camps. Roman soldiers used them when out on campaign or for practice and were only meant to be temporary, even for overnight.

In 1997 there was an evaluation of one of the enclosures which found a ditch and a row of postholes, which was interpreted as the remains of a wooden palisade. Radiocarbon dating from the bottom of the ditch gave a Roman date.

The Saxon Period

When the Roman occupation of Britain finally came to an end at the beginning of the 6th century, the county fell into a quieter period with the Saxon's gradual arrival. This period is often referred to as the Dark Ages but a lasting legacy of this era are the place names in our area.

Upton means the 'Higher-up farm' or enclosure and is of Saxon origin. Many of the surrounding villages also have names with Saxon origins – for example –

Picton	}	Pica's enclosure/farm
Chorlton	}	Churl's enclosure/farm
Newton	}	The new enclosure/farm
Moston	}	The moor-fold enclosure/farm

British (Celtic) names are still present in Cheshire mainly in the hills, rivers and streams, but as this area was a frontier zone between Saxons and Britons there are many TON settlements. The Saxons liked a rural setting but the economic importance of Chester would have drawn them to the vicinity. Chester was a market centre with sea trading links with the Irish Sea routes. It is at this intriguing time that Upton gets its first direct written mention and its first connection to the Cathedral that was St Weburgh's Abbey at the time.

Edgar, King of the Mercian's, granted St Werburgh's Abbey land for its foundation and Upton was part of the gift. Here is an excerpt from the document which is now lost but was copied at several times at later dates.

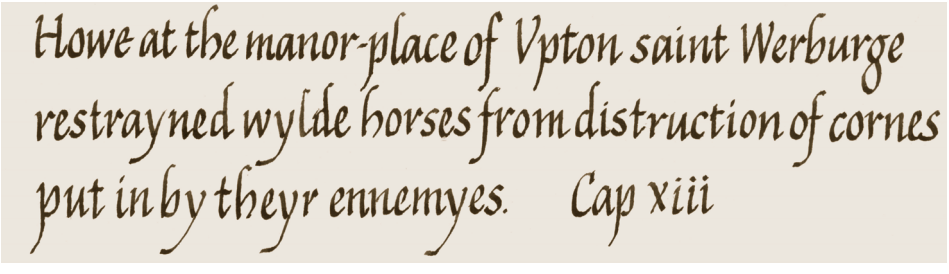
Almighty father, only hope of the world. Creator of the heavens. Founder of the earth. Who traverses the day by illuminating it with the burning rays of the brilliant Titan. And He dresses the night in the splendour of radiant Diana. He has given all goods to us, bestowing on us more than we merit. Just as in turn he was such an example through the gospel to others, so he has taught us through a corpus of other writings to give back in return. On account of which, I, Edgar, of the Kingdom of the Mercians, by the protecting grace of Christ, exulted to the rooftops, for the expiation of my soul and of my predecessors……. I give and freely grant to almighty God, to the (monks) in honour of the ever most holy virgin Werburg ….. thus they are Hodeshlid Ceofanlea Huntingdun ***Huptun*** *Easton Barue. I, Edgar, King of the Mercians have ordered this to be written with the agreement of the rest of the tribes. With the sign of the holy cross I have affirmed and corroborated it.*

The language used is a good illustration of the transitional times of the period. Christianity was the new religion that promised so much but there were those who still could not leave their old gods completely and this document shows that perhaps by mentioning everyone, you kept a foot in each camp and caused least offence. It is beautifully written, colourful and shows the importance of family past, present and future. The document is dated AD 958.

Henry Bradshaw was a monk from St Werburgh's Abbey who, just before his death in 1513, aged 48, wrote a book on the life of St Werburgh. The saint had an unusual connection with Upton.

Werburgh was the daughter of Wulfere, King of the Mercian Saxons, and was descended from four Saxon Kings. She gave up her life of royalty and riches to enter into holy orders at Ely Abbey as a Virgin. When she died her body was buried at Hanbury in Shropshire where she had founded a nunnery. There she lay for 200 years until the Viking invasion of 875 reached Mercia. The Danes got close to Hanbury so her shrine was moved to the secure city of Chester. It was here that the miracles started. Henry Bradshaw tells us tales of the Saint saving Chester from the Welsh, the Danes and the Scots. She cured the sick and brought an unlawfully hanged man back to life. She saved the city from fire when her shrine was carried in procession in 1180 and of course was responsible for the miracle of Upton Heath.

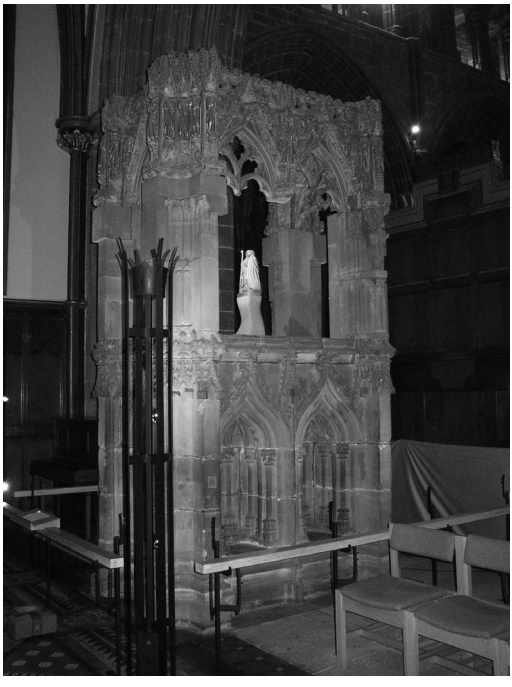
Bradshaw's story of



The Danes were threatening Chester so the people moved their valuable cattle and crops out of the city to the safety of Upton Heath, which was land owned by the Abbey. As the wild horsemen attacked, the Saint intervened striking them down with palsy, leprosy and blindness. Not only did this miracle save the day but also made sure they did not try again. St Werburgh's shrine can still be found inside Chester Cathedral today.

By 1066 St Werburgh's Abbey was the second richest landowner in the county after Earl Edwin, and this included the manor of Upton.

This concludes the literary sources for the time, so what other evidence is there for Saxon Upton? By the careful study of old maps information reveals itself that can be looked for in the present day surroundings. Three maps have been sourced; the 1735 Enclosure map of Upton Heath, the 1801 Estate map for the Egertons, and the 1839 Tithe map, and these have been used in combination. The earlier map shows the layout of what was probably the original settlement.



St Weburgh's shrine.
With kind permission of the Chapter of Chester Cathedral

One field in particular, in the very centre of the map, is surrounded on all four sides by lanes. Next to it are strip fields that indicate croft and toft farming facing on to what is now Upton Lane. We know that this stretch of Upton Lane was called Smoke Street until the first half of the 20th century. It has been previously remarked that the term street stands out when all other roads are called lanes. This is another piece of evidence as it indicates a very old name and derives from – STRETE – Old English for road.

By the time of the 1801 map, changes have been made, Smoke Street/Sandpit Lane has been straightened, losing the T junction at one corner of the enclosure, and a lane has also fallen out of use and become a field boundary. Although some older features have gone, it does show an increasing concentration of dwellings around the junctions of Church Lane and Upton Lane.

On the 1839 Tithe map the lost lane can still be seen as a field boundary and the field is called Footway field confirming the previous significance. The shape of the lost T-junction is visible as the boundary of Upton Lawn House and even though this property has also gone, the same shape is retained today in Lawn Drive.

Other field names of interest are on the 1735 map. Port, Tapa and Wing Fields are grouped together along Liverpool Road behind the Egerton Arms – Upton Drive area. Tapa is a personal name (NB Pica in Picton), words beginning with 'wing' in the Old English dictionary relate to vines but Port is the important name. Port means a town with market rights or entrance / portal. The position of this field on the edge of the city limits and on a main route does suggest that it could well of been the site of trading of some kind. This area is on the very doorstep of the City and could well have been the original starting point for settlement.

We can therefore find an enclosure, farming evidence, a well, road network, all forming a main settlement and 3 large fields of a possible secondary centre. There are important elements missing; the boundary of the area and a place of worship or church. The 1735 map has another large road marked which is another casualty on the 1801 map. Acres Lane continued straight into the zoo, crossing Flag Lane, and onwards arcing across open country to join Liverpool Road.

This could well form the northern limits of the settlement area – part of it still does today being the Upton/Moston boundary. There is no place name or map evidence for a church site in Upton and it seems most likely that there never was one. The nearest known church from this period is St Werburgh's Abbey in the city centre, and it was here that people from the outlying communities would worship. But, there is one last piece of evidence we are left to consider - Upton Cross. When the name was checked, four words of Latin and a date of 1398 were found and this led to an alternative story for Upton's plague stone. (See Ch 4)

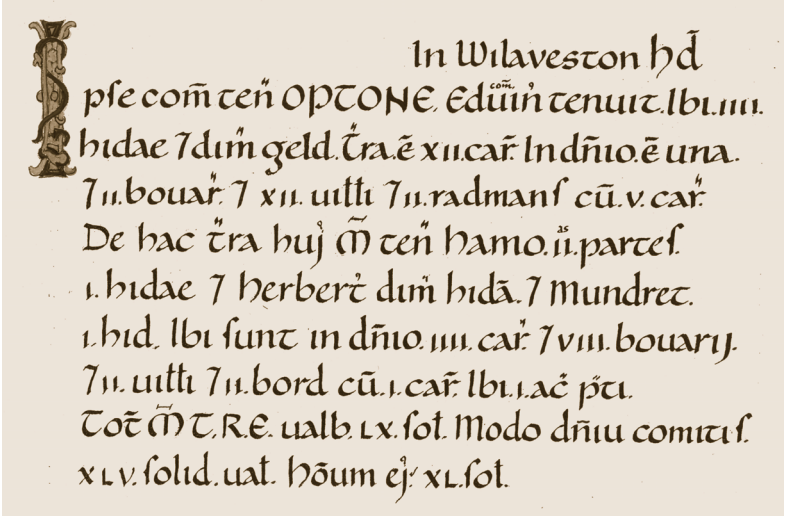
Part of the 1735 Upton Heath Enclosure map from the Egerton estate. This shows the focal point of the initial development of Upton, including its road lay-out and field patterns.

The Medieval Period

The end of the English era was marked by the Norman invasion of 1066, though the North of England was slow to acknowledge William as King. The Norman armies moved north, first to Northumbria and subsequently down through Cheshire to help change people's minds. They devastated everything in their way, burned houses and crops, killed or chased people away and laid many parts of Cheshire to waste. This was the winter of 1069-70.

King Edgar's Charter of 958 was made just before he became King of England and suggests that Upton was a Mercian royal vill. This is confirmed by its status in 1066 as a possession of Edwin, Earl of Mercia. This high status continued after the conquest when Upton became the possession of Hugh I, Earl of Chester.

Upton's entry into the Great Domesday Book of 1086 is as follows –


In Wilaveston hd
Ipse com ten OPTONE. Edūin tenuit. lb. iii.
hidae 7 dim geld. Tra. ē xii. car. In dnio. ē una.
7 ii. bouar. 7 xii. uilli 7 ii. radmans cū. v. car.
De hac tra huj M ten Hamo. ii. partes
i. hidae 7 Herbert dim hidā. 7 Mundret.
i. hid. Ibi sunt in dnio. iii. car. 7 viii. bouarij.
7 ii. uilli 7 ii. bord cū. i. car. Ibi. i. ac pti.
Tot M T.R.E. ualb. lx. sol. Modo dnii comitis
xl v. solid. uat. hōum ej. xl. sol.

In Wirral Hundred
Upton. Earl Edwin held it.41/2 hides paying tax. Land for 12 ploughs.
In lordship 1; 2 ploughmen;
12 villagers and 2 riders with 5 ploughs.
Of this land, Hamo holds 2 parts of 1 hide of this manor;
Herbert ½ hide; Mundret 1 hide. In lordship 4 ploughs; 8 ploughmen.
2 villagers and 2 smallholders with 1 plough. Meadow, 1 acre.
Value of the whole manor before 1066, 60s; now the Earl's lordship
45s, his men's 40s.

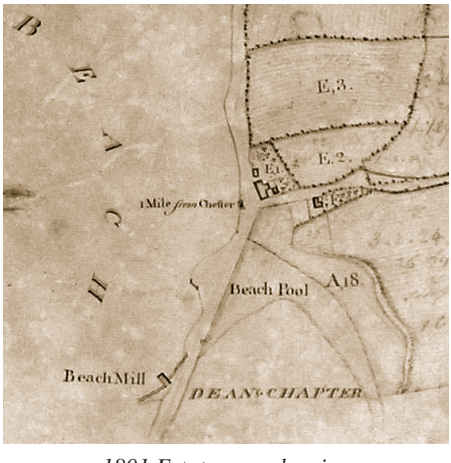
Parts of the manor were let to three others: Hamo de Macsi held two parts of one hide (about 80 acres of arable), Herbert held half a hide (about 60 acres) and Mundret. The Domesday survey for the area does have several omissions particularly in our immediate area north of Chester City. As we can see from the

Domesday entry for Upton its value was 60s in the reign of Edward. This was quite a high value locally compared to Wervin 30s, Croughton 10s, Chorlton 2s or Picton 40s. It does suggest, and so does Ormerod, '*that Upton was at this time head of several dependant estates*'. The three sublet portions of the vill were probably the later manors of Moston, Bache and Caughall. The manors of Bache and Moston continued to have lands at Upton as did the Abbot of St Werburgh's. The Abbey had lost its holdings in the township before 1066. Not until Earl Hugh I granted the tithes of Upton to the Abbey, when it was re-founded as a Benedictine House in 1293, was the connection remade. He did not, however, give land, just its income and neither did his successor Earl Richard. The third Earl, Ranulph le Maschin, did donate the manor of Upton to the Abbey as a '*post obit*' gift and this is where it stayed until the Dissolution of 20th January 1540. Upton was included in the Wirral Hundred for the Domesday survey, but it was probably moved to the Broxton Hundred about the time the third Earl was dividing his lands as gifts for the Abbey and rewards to his barons.

Bache Mill

The Township of Bache originally consisted of a single estate, Bache Hall was a moated manorial site of medieval date. There was a water mill associated with the Hall; the earliest reference to it was when it was granted to St Werburgh's Abbey by Earl Richard in 1119. Bache Mill pool was located where the current supermarket entrance and petrol station stands and was almost to Garth Drive. The mill building was on the other side of the road.

Watermills of this time were associated with well-established areas of arable farming and were costly installations, but very profitable. Earl Richard had also given the monks the land between the Abbey and Bache Mill, ie. Northgate Street. The soke rights that this gave the Monks meant that their tenants living on Northgate Street had to take their corn to be ground only at the monks mill at Bache. These rights were rigorously kept; milling at home was forbidden. The mill was therefore a financial asset to the owner and to the miller, especially if he leased the mill. A fascinating dispute is recorded between the Bache Mill and the Dee Mills. This took place in 1567 concerning these very rights.



1801 Estate map showing location of Bache water mill

Thomas Bavand worked the Bache Mill and had been Sheriff of Chester in the same year that Ralph Goodman had been Mayor, 1547. Goodman leased the Dee Mills. Bavand died leaving his Widow, Margaret, dependent on the mill for a living. She carried on the business and kept the old connections, including the

businesses of some citizens who did not live in Northgate Street. The Goodmans did nothing whilst Thomas Bavand was alive but did take actions against his widow.

The Goodmans' court case was also against four other local millers who were also taking lawful business away from them. The four gave in immediately with two of them giving evidence against Mrs Bavand but she stood firm declaring she acted within the law. Evidence was called on to prove her wrong and a court order was issued to prevent her, or her servants, from carrying on the practice.

Three years later in September 1570 a second Bill of Indictment was issued as she was in daily breach of the first. Another order was issued in March 1571, Margaret was taken to Chester Castle to be punished and kept until she could enter into bonds with sufficient sureties not to break the order again. She also had to pay the Goodmans 35 shillings in cost. The last piece of this story is that her son, Richard, takes over Bache Mill.

The mill stayed in operation and ownership of the Dean and Chapter of Chester Cathedral until it was sold off in March 1816. The Indenture shows that the Mill had already stopped milling grain and was used by John Dodd who was a skinner. It does provide the only physical description of the mill, which consisted of the mill building, shippon, sheds, pool, ponds, watercourses, floodgates, streams, fishing and Bache Pool. The exact end of the mill is not known, but it had stopped milling corn before 1816 and the millpond had mostly been allowed to silt up before it was filled in.

For over 700 years local people brought their corn to Bache Mill yet nothing physical remains of so many centuries of continuous industrial activity. Although in September 1973 workmen uncovered what was first thought to be a wooden dugout canoe but on removal to the Grosvenor Museum for cleaning and examination it was identified as a chute made from a single piece of oak measuring 3m long, 50cm wide and 35cm deep. The core had been dug out to create a trough with an opening cut at one end. It had peg holes and some pegs still in position. This is probably the last remaining piece of the lost mill.

Oak chute being removed from its find site.
Photographs used with kind permission of Chester City Council.

The Plague

The plague visited many times during the 16th and 17th centuries but in 1603 we have a detailed account of one such visitation. In the Mayor's Book for October of that year a decision was made to allow the burial of several Upton residents who had succumbed to the plague, including Widow Davy of Hogg House, in the churchyard of the Cathedral. The people of Upton could claim this right as part of Upton lay in the Parish of St Oswald i.e. the parish church of the Cathedral. Certain strict conditions had to be followed. They could take the usual route to the graveyard but when they reached Richard Bavand's house next door they could take some of the wall down to make it easier to carry the bodies. The dead were to be brought in at 6 o'clock in the evening by people carrying white rods to denote their business. After the bodies were buried they had to leave, still carrying the white rods in their hands, and were not allowed to converse with any inhabitants of the city or enter into any house.

The city was taking every step it could to contain the plague and prevent it spreading further. It must have been hard for the living to keep up with the plague and perhaps it was too dangerous to take the dead across the city to be buried at St Mary's on the Hill. It would make sense not to carry them through the city but take them to the nearer graveyard.

Beside the doorway of Holy Ascension Church can be found Upton's plague stone with an inscription put there in 1938 after some restoration. It had been found when the War Memorial foundations were begun in 1920. Between then and 1938 the stone seems to have moved location several times depending on various stories. It even spent some time back in its original position but upright, being used as a stile with villagers utilising the hollow as a step up.

In the church porch hangs an inscription offering an explanation of the stone, which details how people could use the stone as a place to pay or barter for food. This may have been necessary if people wanted to trade with one another but keep the risk of catching the plague to a minimum. The stone bowl was put there to represent where the coins would have been placed into the disinfectant. (See Ch4)

The Civil War – The Siege of Chester

The English Civil War was a time of great unheaval and divide in the country and our area was greatly affected. The Siege of the City of Chester meant that the close proximity of Bache and Upton brought war to the doorstep.

By the summer of 1642 Chester had begun to prepare itself for the imminent war. The City Assembly set about repairing the walls and gates and formed a City Regiment. Chester came into Royalist control when most of the leading and powerful men who controlled the city's trade were for that cause more than there being any organised opposition for the Parliamentarian side.

It was Sir William Brereton who commanded the Parliamentary forces in Cheshire. He had business interests in Chester where he owned a town house. He had been unsuccessful in some of his business enterprises because of opposition from the local authorities, including the Gamul family. This meant that he had more than a passing interest in seeing Chester brought into Parliamentarian hands.

The defences of the city were expanded in 1643 to include some of the northern and eastern suburbs. This included an extended mud/earth wall and trench, fortified with strategically placed bastions or mounts. This was to enclose extra space to be used by incoming Irish troops. The wall ran north from the NW corner of the City Walls and on to the first mount called Morgans, then NW to the Stone Bridge that carried the Neston Road over Flookers Brook, where another mount was built.

It then turned NE across two roads out of the city. Northgate Street was covered by a mount and this was also covered by another one the other side of Bache Lane (Liverpool Road) – called Dr Whalley's mount, and on to Flookers Brook mount. These mounts covered not just the roads but also the turnpikes and gates that cut through the wall. Flookersbrook Hall was initially protected. The wall went on to Boughton and down to the river. A deep lane was cut through the rock linking Stone Bridge Lane (Parkgate Road) and Bache Lane (Liverpool Road). This allowed the rapid movement of artillery; the road is still called Rock Lane.

The siege was biting hard by November 1643 when Colonel John Morrow was ordered to burn the Handbridge suburb, and this was done to prevent the rebels sheltering or attacking from so close to the city. The following day, Bache and Flookers Brook Halls were also burnt for the same reasons. This was a drastic action to take but the city was desparate to protect itself and its Royalist status. Upton Hall faired better being just out of the immediate vicinity of the city. Early in 1644 when the Parliamentarian Colonel Brereton was trying to tighten his stranglehold on Chester, he established several new garrisons, and one of these was Upton Hall. A detachment of troops from Christleton Hall moved in.

The inhabitants of Upton and the surrounding area would have felt the full force of the war. The sound of cannon fire and the sight of soldiers would have been an almost daily event. The scarcity of food had its own effect on the locality; not only were families to be fed but the soldiers garrison at Upton Hall would have taken anything available, leading to great deprivation. This eventually brought the siege to a head.

There were frequent skirmishes between both sides and each side built extensive earthworks in the area and across to Newton and Hoole. It seems that there would also have been such earthworks around Upton Hall, but they were mostly demolished when fighting finished and the remnants dispersed as the suburbs grew in later years.

From this time we have two cannon balls, both allegedly local, one found in the 1950s in the vicinity of Flag Lane, and now in the keeping of our Local History Group.

Small cannon ball
diameter 9cm

ULHG Cannon Ball

The siege ended in 1646 when the Royalist Commander, Lord Byron, surrendered the exhausted City to Brereton. The city was starving, impoverished and wrecked. The suburbs of Broughton, Handbridge and the Northgate area had been levelled, and Bache Hall was one of six large houses that were lost. It was the property of Edward Whitby at the time, he was a Recorder for the city and part of the City Assembly. The house was rebuilt as we can still see today.

A final legacy of the war was a re-visit of the plague, the citizens were weakened and in poor health and were very easy victims of the disease. Over 2000 died in and around Chester between June 1647 and April 1648. They either died or fled to the surrounding countryside leaving the city. The city, like Bache Hall, did rebuild itself and its economy.

The Ownership of Upton

Before 1882 when Upton became a Parish in its own right, it held the status of Township being mostly in St Mary's-on-the-Hill with a small piece in St. Oswald's Parish. Before this, Upton was a manor, which initially meant that it was a definite area of land under the outright ownership of one. The revenue from a manor, land within it, or indeed the whole manor was often used as gift or reward by the owner. Ancestors commonly re-granted these gifts in memory of their predecessor but manors could be bought, sold or inherited, and these situations have all happened to Upton.

It is possible to trace most of the chain that leads up to Upton becoming a Parish and its last Lord of the Manor, Sir Philip Grey-Egerton.

The first known owner was the Mercian King Edgar, and this reflects the Anglo-Saxon origins of Upton. There is no evidence to suggest that there was any kind of settlement here before this time. Edgar gave the manor to St Werburgh's Abbey, Chester, in 958, but between then and the Domesday record the land falls back to the Mercian Earl Edwin. The Norman Earl of Chester, Hugh I, takes over and grants the tithes to St Werburgh's in 1093, but Earl Ranulph I gives Upton Manor to the Abbey 1121-1129. These Norman earls were probably giving back what they had taken by force when they first came to power.

It seems that the Abbot's rule may have been a hard one as in 1381 news of riots in London reached Cheshire. The King's letters denouncing the rebellion of the Peasants' Rising were read at Chester. Cheshire had remained peaceful but some bondsmen of the Abbot held secret meetings in the woods in Wirral. A proclamation was issued forbidding the meetings; it also forbade the collection of money to help the disputes. Despite this, several men from Upton met with others at Lea-by-Backford and rose in arms, damaging goods and property belonging to the Abbot. This rising was typical in England at the time as social discontent was widespread, but the men of Chester were not treated any worse than others.

The Abbey, by way of confirmation, stays in possession of the Manor until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1541 when King Henry VIII confiscates all land owned by the St Werburgh's into crown hands. The Abbey was restored as a Cathedral with Dean and Chapter, but then fell on hard times after the reformation.

By 1552 the Dean of Chester and two canons had been imprisoned in Fleet, London, at the hand of Sir Richard Cotton, their crime – taking and selling the lead off the Cathedral roof. This seems an unduly harsh punishment but Sir Richard had very strong personal motives for manoeuvring the Dean – he wanted land and lots of it. Under intimidation the Dean signed over most of the Cathedral's land in return for a fixed annual payment, Sir Richard's blow was doubly hard as he also managed to get the lands for almost £100 less than their true value of over £700.

The lands were later sold on to many Cheshire gentlemen by George Cotton, Sir Richard's son, as he had died in 1556. These fee farmers had a fight on their hands to keep the land for which they were paying, as a peculiar situation had developed by the time Queen Elizabeth had come to the throne. With the huge amount of paperwork generated at the Dissolution and Reformation, errors were made with the wording on some documents. The flaws proved crucial, effectively rendering grants null and void and the Crown still in possession of the previous Abbey lands. Upton fell into the category of these 'concealed' lands. Queen Elizabeth commissioned Peter Grey to investigate Chester Cathedral's situation in September 1577. It did not take him long to find quite a long list of lands in error, including Upton, Moston and Wervin, a total value of £200 pa in all. Grey was in league with two others and sold on the leases as his reward to them, (Hitchcock, and Bostock who soon died). The fee farmers found that those leases were in danger and most came to terms with Hitchcock. The final outcome of the whole business was a court judgment of 1580, where the Dean and Chapter lost their freehold right to the lands to the fee farmers but were given the rents including a rise to a true value.

A document in the Egerton family deposit in the Record Office shows George Cotton selling Upton to George Calveley in 1580. It includes the signatures of George Cotton, Sir Hugh Cholmondeley, Sir George Calveley, Thomas Leigh and others who were the witnesses to the sale and the main Cheshire gentlemen who bought the land taken by Sir Richard Cotton from the Dean and Chapter. They were obviously a tight-knit group. This ends this turbulent time in our history but from now onwards the landowners were also residents.

Two families in particular became the major players. The Browns, who lived in Hoole, and the Brocks who became the Lords of the Manor and lived at Upton Hall. There are other Latin manuscripts left behind by the Brock family to be translated, and these will reveal yet more of their story. For many generations the Brocks held Upton – until 1734 – when the last William Brock died. His two sons had died before him and so it was to the eldest daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, John Egerton of Oulton, that Upton Manor came. The Egertons, or various branches of the family, held Upton until 1828 when it became invested in the Grey-Egertons of Oulton. The last Lord of the Manor was Sir Philip Henry Brian Grey-Egerton, 12th Baronet who, from 1891 until his death on 4th July 1937 saw the last of many hundreds of years of ownership of Upton as an estate. His sons had died in the First World War leaving no male heir but his daughter did take over the last few pieces of land that had not been sold to private developers.

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