Newton House (north of Plas Newton Lane)



Newton House was probably built c1830. It is located near the earlier Georgian-style Newton Hall. It is shown on the 1840 Newton Tithe Map – in the ownership of Henry Hesketh who possessed considerable land in Upton. This photograph of Newton House was taken in the early 1950s after the house had been bought by Cheshire County Council for use as a Care Home for the Elderly.

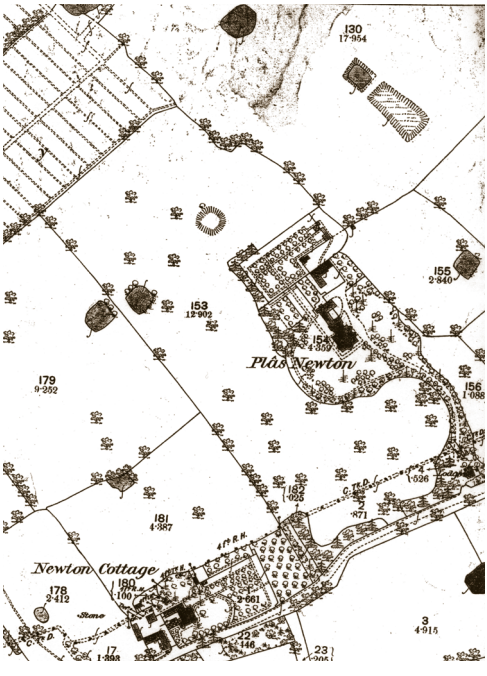
The last private owners were the Darcys – a brother & sister. The Darcy name occurs in the early Upton Township minutes. Cheshire County Council bought the full estate - subsequently selling land for housing development (incl Tiverton Close and the Boys Home - Appleton House - which was later demolished for the Bellway development - Arradon Ct & Breton Cl). In the early 1990s, Newton House, now owned by Chester City Council, was demolished and the new Care Home built.



The only remaining original building is the set of four tied cottages pictured here from a recent photograph. The stables at the far end of the cottages have since been demolished and garages built.

Plas Newton (north of Plas Newton Lane)

Plas Newton is not recorded on the 1839 Upton Tithe survey but a driveway is shown on the 1841 Newton Tithe survey. This suggests that Plas Newton – '*a fine country house'* - was built in the early 1840s. The first churchwarden of Upton church (before it became the parish church) was Col. E Evans-Lloyd who reputedly lived at Plas Newton in 1843. The 1873 map, shown here, records Plas Newton and its Lodge much as it remained. Its most famous owner was Alfred Tyrer - a senior partner of a Liverpool-based solicitors; he was believed also to have been the son of a Liverpool shipping owner. Reputed to have played polo for England and written a book on the subject, he was clearly a gentleman of considerable wealth, stabling many polo ponies. Alfred and his wife Ida Elizabeth played an active part in Upton village and church life. Garden parties were held on the lawns. Evacuees were billeted in the house during WW2. Alfred is reputed to have been among those who travelled on the first train to Hoylake in 1869 and he died at Plas Newton in 1946 at the age of 98. He is buried in Upton Parish church along with his wife who died in 1942.



Reproduced from the 1873 Ordnance Survey Map

Their Head Gardener was William Morgan who moved into the Lodge c1925. His son Bill who was born in Long Lane Upton in 1923 recounts his reminiscences (see Chapter 18). After Tyrer's death the house was cleared of its treasures through a major auction that drew buyers from far and wide. One of the later owners was Mr. Tyler - choirmaster/organist at the parish church. The Plas Newton estate has been gradually reduced until today only the name remains.

Newton Cottage is recorded on both the Upton 1839 and the Newton 1841 Tithe surveys although as a smaller set of properties than in the 1872 OS above. During WW1 Miss Clark-Lloyd of Newton Cottage was host to the family of the Emperor of Abyssinia and governess to his daughter. They were remembered attending Upton Church with brightly coloured umbrellas on wet days.

The Lloyd-Jones family farmed the Plas Newton estate for many years finally selling up farmland in the 1950s. Campbell Lloyd-Jones left the area in the 1960s moving to Bala where he started a golf course The farmhouse (see photograph page 117) and outbuildings were demolished/refurbished and the current modern Newton Mews built in 1989.

Other individual notable properties

Stanton House (previously known as Upton House & Upton Villa) was the home of part of the Dickson's dynasty (see page 152). All that remains today is the Lodge on the corner of Mill Lane and Bache Drive. The 1881 census records 'The Melford' inhabited by Mrs Longworth – wife of a retired clergyman. Two other dwellings are another Upton Villa inhabited by watch repairer Joseph Price and Cromwell Bank by boot manufacturer Frederick Jones. It is assumed that these are all part of the 1870s building to the north of the school.

In the Bache area, to the south of Bache Pool, stood the Bron-y-Garth estate only remembered today as the site of Garth Drive built in the 1950s. The Lodge to Bache Hall (see page 34) was lost as part of the Liverpool Road widening and development of the hospital. Similarly the hospital expansion saw the eventual demise of Bache House to the south of the hospital main entrance.

Within the northern part of Newton, Rose Cottage (see page 130) seems to have been built c1850 accessed down Well Lane and surrounded by Dicksons Nursery. Early in the 1900s Woodbine (later renamed Broomhurst) was built nearby off Well Lane but subsequently demolished and now the site of Dawpool Rd. Another cottage was surrounded by nursery – now known as WealStone cottage on Wealstone Ln. This first appears on the 1872 Ordnance survey and is understood to have been a school house at some point. Moss Bank (between the Firs school and Newton House) first shows on the 1872 Ordnance survey, develops on later maps and is still on the 1957 but now is remembered as the modern housing development, Bank Close.

Governance of Upton during the period 1840-1899

For Upton, Moston and the Bache, the population grew through the 1840s and 1850s from approx. 270 to 370 and then doubled to 750 by the end of the century (excluding the growing asylum numbers). Council was held at the Egerton Arms. Following an Act of Parliament in 1834 - the Township appointed a Guardian (of the Poor) who was that town's representative for the 'grouped' administration of 'the poor'. In 1871, Upton became part of a new grouping known as the Chester Union. Compared to the earlier role of 'Overseer of the Poor' there was now a reduced responsibility of settling the value of the 'rate' and ensuring its collection. The pages from the Upton Minutes mainly record the quarterly accounts along with any meetings - all relating to setting a rate (local tax) and administering local public costs. The key costs were the payment to the '*Union*' and to the County. Meetings were still held at the Egerton Arms with a typical attendance by six ratepayers - all local males of some *'local standing'* either farmers or significant property/land holders.

After a period, any new attending ratepayers were nominated as eligible to be 'Guardians'. Chairing the meetings and preparing the accounts seemed to circulate around the membership - each 'doing their bit' for a year or so (see page 62 for the names of ratepayers in 1839). Meetings set the rate e.g. '6^{d} in the £' based on the rateable value of land/property and occasionally discussed the need to reset certain rateable values. As well as electing in new 'Overseers' to collect the

rate they elected other roles within their number such as 'Surveyor of Highways' and 'Guardian of the Township' - whose duty was to represent the interests of Upton's poor at the Chester 'grouped workhouse'. Meetings sometimes discussed the state of certain roads (on one occasion Charles Potts even offering to pay £5 if used on the road providing access to his estate).

A typical quarterly account, based on an income of around £60, recorded –

13/9^{d} - constable R Turpin (25% salary - he served other townships)
£7/0/^{d} - County rate; 10/0^{d} - magistrates fees; £40 - to the 'Poor Union'
highways; general expenses; auditors fees etc (one case noted of paying a surgeon)

In 1840 Police Officer Robert Turpin served Upton and other parishes but after the County Police Act of 1856 there was a permanent police officer for Upton. When the first constabulary was actually set up in Upton has not been identified but we know from the 1881 census that Constable Francis Hindley lived in the Heath with his family (see below).

Towards the end of the century, the number of ratepayers (at least attending the meetings) had now doubled. It now included professional and business incomers as well as the vicar. Minutes included special meetings such as a meeting in the 1890s at the school for '*Property owners of Upton Heath*' to address concerns about a sewerage scheme for the area.



Upton Heath developments

By the 1839 Tithe survey, Upton Heath had become the main residential area of more modest cottages This was further expanded during the mid to late 1800s. The row of terraces – often referred to as Heath Row – were probably built around 1850. The photograph dates from c1920 and shows the cobbled pavement and gutter. The row acquired the nickname of '*Sheep's Head Row*' -

so named by the reputation that heads would appear at the stable doors whenever incidents happened in the road.

Heath Row is Upton's only terrace directly onto the road, with no set of front gardens, and is probably due to the large pond or pit to their rear.



Upton Heath – taken from the 1839 Tithe survey

This small section of the 1839 Tithe survey shows why these later buildings took place where they did. The large pool – the Chemistry Pit – is still clearly marked and avoided by buildings in both the 1872 and 1898 Ordnance surveys. The area behind Heath Row acquired the name of '*Chemistry Pits'* and excavations during recent building work has revealed past use as a rubbish dump. No convincing explanation for the use of the term 'Chemistry' has yet been identified.

The Heath's first shop (and possibly at some point a tearoom), is generally now remembered as Brookfields It was built in the late 1800s (see page 164, which includes a 1960s photograph). The 1881 census records a Heath grocer – Edward Swindley. Various references are made to Swindley's Row including early 1900s Upton Council minutes recording sanitation concerns over their privies. The location of this 'Swindley's Row' has not been identified but is likely to be either Heath Row or nos: 48 -64 Heath Road.

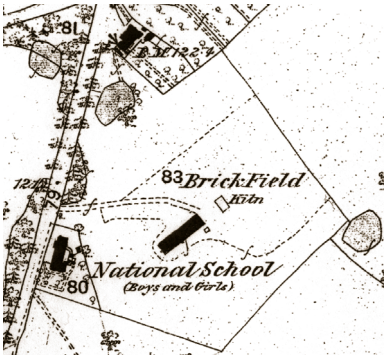
Cottages between the Wheatsheaf and the former 'Brookfields' shop existed at the time of the 1839 Tithe survey but were extended significantly in the late 1800s. Around 1897 two gable ended cottages were added to nos:54/56 - one at each end - and this presumably explains the name '1-4 Gable Cottages' as shown on early maps for nos:52-58 Heath Road. Shortly afterwards c1900 the building was extended west giving nos:48/50. No:48 had the name of Jubilee Cottage and became the police house while no:50 may have became the Post Office / grocers run by Swindley. Shown on the 1936 OS, this building was demolished later to extend the Wheatsheaf car park (the site of the other pond shown above)

The drive way to the east of no:58 led to a modest coal yard during the first half of the 20th century – run by Tom Harrison of no:58. Garages and remodelled gardens are there now. No:62 is shown on early maps as '1-3 Farm Cottages'. No:60 was only added in 1986/7

Across Heath Road from Upton Heath Motors, another property was built during this period. It was the only building on '*the Heath triangle'* until the 1900s but this has recently been replaced with a modern bungalow.

The first school arrives (see also page 239)

Upton had its first church school and school house before its first church. The first St. Mary's School was built in 1843, by the Rector of St. Mary's-on-the-Hill, on part of the Footway field donated by Egerton. This first school stood in front of the present school, much nearer to the road. Alongside the school ran a path to the brickyard at the rear, while opposite stretched fields. It was a Mixed School with an Infants' department and according to Ormerod accommodated 80 children. In 1859 the average attendance was 55.



Reproduced from the 1873 Ordnance Survey Map

Church services were held on Sundays until the church was built eleven years later. From 1877 it was a meeting place for the ratepayers of the township.

The old school was demolished in 1884 and on 24th July 1884, the corner stone of the new buildings was laid by Miss Mary Humberston. The school and house were built and presented to the parish, by the Humberstons of Mollington Banastre, to open on 16th April 1885. The new red brick school, described as '*very handsome and commodious'*, had a single large schoolroom with a platform at one end. On the 27th May 1885, an 'Industrial & Art Exhibition' was held in participation with surrounding villages. Later, an infants' classroom was erected at the expense of Miss Mary Humberston, and in 1896, it was further enlarged. In that year, too, water was laid on at the school. The photograph shows the class of 1907.



The Parish Church (see also Chapter 15)

The Church of the Holy Ascension was built in 1854 and came into being as a chapel of ease to St Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester. The rector of St Mary's at that time was Rev. William Henry Massie, who saw the need for places of worship in the more remote parts of the parish. Rev. Massie employed the eminent local architect James Harrison and the building began on land given by Sir Philip Grey Egerton. Richard, Marquis of Westminster was Patron of St. Mary-on-the-Hill and gave £1000 towards the building fund and a similar amount for the endowment. There were, of course, other contributions in cash and kind. Local people carted materials and the Rector rode out frequently to keep his eye on quality and progress. The foundation stone was laid by the Marquis on 10th March 1853, and only fourteen months later the church was consecrated by John Graham, Lord Bishop of Chester. On that day only £13 of the total cost remained outstanding.

About thirty years after the establishment of the Chapel of Ease, the population of the village had grown so much that it was decided to take steps to make Upton a parish in its own right. In February 1874 the Patron had been created Duke of Westminster and when he had settled the necessary compensation to St. Mary's, the new parish of Holy Ascension Upton was established on 8th December 1882. The photograph shown here dates from c1950.





Seven years after the appointment of Rev. Sparling as the first vicar it was decided that the new parish should have a vicarage. By the efforts of Colonel Evans-Lloyd a fund was started, generously supported locally and the balance made up by the Duke. The decision to build was made in March 1889, the foundation stone laid by Mrs Emily Logan on August 15th of the same year and the vicarage finished and occupied eleven months later. This was achieved without any financial help from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The photograph shows the centenary celebrations held by the church congregation

The first Chapel (see also Chapter 15)

In 1858 six young men from Queen Street Congregational Church began to hold open-air religious meetings in the wheelwright's yard where the Wheatsheaf Inn was later built. The interest in these gatherings increased, and the group of worshippers, which included the owner himself, began to use the wheelwright's shop for their meeting place.



As the congregations increased the County Union resolved to build a chapel at Upton. In 1860 the first Congregational Church building was completed and opened and a Sunday school was formed.

As the years went by, this first building became too small and inconvenient for the growing population. Plans were made and funds raised, and in June 1900 the foundation stone was laid for the new Congregational Church situated near the site of the original meeting-place. The sketch here dates from c1950 from 'the WI Book'. The old chapel became the Upton Heath Post Office for many years and also a newsagents – still known by its long established name of 'Jacksons' – see page 165.

Wheatsheaf public house

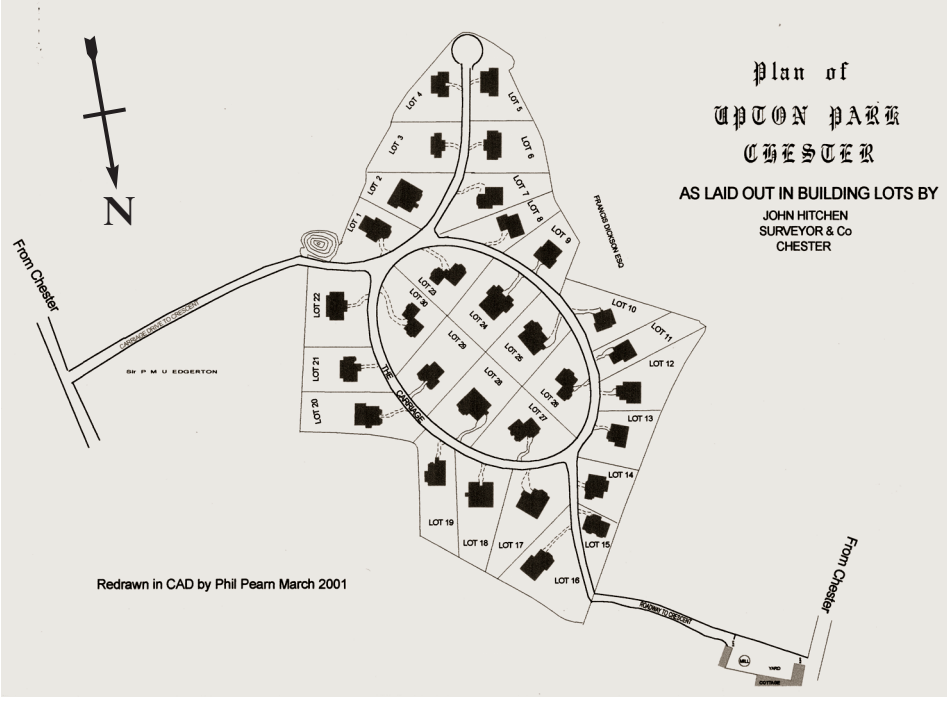
Thomas Knight acquired this plot of land in 1845 and a few years later built a wheelwright's shop. About 1850 he built a bake-house near this shop but in the directories and census still described himself as a wheelwright. Between 1857 and 1861 he altered and converted the bakehouse into a dwelling house, which sometime between 1864 and 1867 became a public house. In the 1874 Trade Directory he was both a wheelwright and a beer seller. The Birkenhead Brewery Company acquired the house from Thomas Knight on 17th February 1877. It is shown here towards the end of the 19th century.



In 1934 an outside covered stairway was erected on the far side to give easier access to a large room used by the British Legion.

Upton Park

Queens Park – on the south side of the River Dee from Chester city – had been a fairly successful early-1850s development, offering superior residences just outside the overcrowded city. In the mid-1850s three Chester entrepreneurs – land agent William Shone with Willian Pitt and Thomas Wood – engaged the same surveyor, John Hitchen, to design a 'Park' for Upton on similar fashionable lines. The following is redrawn from the existing original plan and shows the grand scheme that was never realised. The plots failed to sell as hoped and Upton Park developed over many decades as an enclave surrounded by countryside.



By 1857 the three estate developers had acquired all the land utilising the track off Mill Lane past Upton Mill and they created a circular carriageway and entrance drive out to the main lane linking Upton to Newton. By the 1861 census only four households existed with Pitt and Wood being two of these. By the 1890s however, all the inner circle plots and many of the outer had been developed although acquisition by Dicksons nursery had removed the intention of the cul-de-sac.

The Park grew as plots were individually bought and developed, providing housing referred to as 'artisans' villas'. The residents were a mix of owners and tenants – some the new clerical and professional classes and others '*living on annuities'*.

Some properties had stables and quarters for several servants while others were compact pairs of semi-detached cottages. By the 1880s, there were over 100 residents including servants – representing about one in six of Upton. This was a significant proportion of Upton's increase for the last few decades.

The tree-lined Avenue entrance has remained a feature of the Park and the high holly hedges and many trees have contributed to the City Council's decision in the late 1990s to make Upton Park a conservation area. All the photographs shown here were taken around 1912.



The Avenue poplars have been replaced and the diseased elms were felled in 1979.



The restrictive covenant covering much of the current Upton Park has been closely protected over recent decades. While some in-filling has continued until recent times, the density rules of the 1870 revised covenant have been retained.



The book '*Upton Park Chester – a community for 150 years'* by Phil Pearn, published in 2001, provides an in-depth history of the development and its community up to the present day.

Life in Upton in the late 1800s

An analysis of the late 1800s census records with the 1872 and 1898 Ordnance surveys allows a picture to be painted of life in the village as the century drew to a close. Unfortunately the archived Upton Township Minutes do not cover the period 1894 – 1912. The first Minute book following the 1894 Local Government Act has not been lodged with the Cheshire Records Office and its whereabouts is unknown.

There were four Upton farmers working approximately 50% of the Upton & Bache area although they could have farmed further land outside the parish. It appears they were all mainly tenant farmers but may have owned some land.

John Wainwright at the Acres (125 acres)

William Heath at Grange Farm (168 acres)

John Dickinson at Upton Farm (101 acres)

Thomas Ithell at Upton Hall (168 acres)

Much of the land in the south of the parish was either nursery land with the Dicksons or farmed out of Newton. So although there were several Gentleman's Country Estates, most only took a small proportion of the total land area for their private use. Roberts' Oakfield estate was easily the largest but he probably let some agricultural land to Upton farmers.

On the whole the small cottages and terraced property was occupied by labourers and their families or by those in domestic service but not living on their master's or mistress's premises. The larger houses either housed the 'nouveau rich' or those living comfortably 'from their own financial means'.

The parish church now had its established vicar – Rev. Wilfred Sparling - settled into the new Vicarage and active in village life. The new school provided education for the area and apparently for canal boat children who spent the day there while their parents by-passed Upton. The 'local barons' from the grand houses provided employment and a degree of the social fabric. Their influence along with the main farmers on the Council, was reducing as more of the professional classes were moving into the area.

By 1890, mains water was available throughout the area. When gas arrived has not been identified but some gas street lighting is known to have been established fairly early in the next century.