

Barrow Old Hall and Twiss Green

Investigations of two sub-manorial estate centres
within the townships of Bold and Culcheth in the
Hundred of Warrington
1982-87

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with contributions by

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Contents

Contents.....	i
List of Figures	iii
Contributors.....	vi
Abbreviations.....	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Chapter 1 Introduction to the investigations at Barrow Old Hall and Twiss Green	1
Dan Garner and Jill Collens	
Chapter 2 Excavations at Barrow Old Hall, Great Sankey, Warrington.....	4
Jennifer Lewis and Dan Garner	
Introduction	4
Present condition	6
Historical evidence	8
The excavations	13
Trench A.....	14
Trench B	18
Area C - The bridge.....	19
The finds (Dan Garner).....	19
Pottery.....	19
Midland Purple-type wares	21
Catalogue	21
German stonewares	23
Catalogue	23
Cistercian-type wares	23
Catalogue	23
Ceramic building material.....	26
Clay tobacco pipe.....	26
Trench A.....	26
Trench B.....	26
Metalwork	26
Discussion.....	27
Archaeological work at Barrow Old Hall since 1987	28
Chapter 3 Barrow Old Hall – the documentary evidence	30
Martin Cleaver	
Historical background.....	30
The documentary evidence.....	32
Chapter 4 Excavations at Tanner's Farm moated site, Twiss Green, Culcheth, Warrington.....	37
David Freke and Dan Garner	
Introduction	37
Present condition	37
Historical evidence	37
The excavations	39
Pre-moat features.....	40
The moat	41
The leet.....	44
The bridge.....	44

The dwelling.....	47
The well.....	52
Clay floor (306).....	52
Rabbit warren (286), (307)	54
Other post-habitation features	54
The finds.....	54
Pottery (Dan Garner).....	54
Roman pottery	55
Roman pottery illustrated catalogue	55
Medieval pottery	55
Medieval pottery illustrated catalogue	55
Post-medieval pottery	62
Post-medieval pottery illustrated catalogue	65
Ceramic building material.....	85
Clay tobacco pipe (David A. Higgins).....	85
The coins (Margaret Warhurst).....	88
Glass (Dan Garner).....	89
Metalwork (Dan Garner).....	89
Copper alloy	89
Iron work	90
Worked flint (Dan Garner)	91
Worked stone (Dan Garner)	91
Leather (Dan Garner)	92
Bird bone (Clemency Fisher)	92
Animal bone (A.F. Roberts)	93
Discussion.....	94
Appendix 1	95
Chapter 5 Tanner's Farm moated site, Twiss Green – the documentary evidence	96
Alan Moulsdale	
Chapter 6 Barrow Old Hall and Twiss Green in context	99
Dan Garner and Jill Collens	
Bibliography.....	104

List of Figures

Figure 1 Location Plan of Barrow Old Hall and Twiss Green Warrington	1
Figure 2 Hundred of Warrington c.1086	2
Figure 3 Moated sites in Bold Township.....	4
Figure 4 Location map of Barrow Old Hall © Crown copyright. Reproduced by permission of the controller of HMSO Licence No. 100053067	5
Figure 5 Barrow Old Hall contour plan 1981.....	6
Figure 6 Vertical aerial photograph of Barrow Old Hall, 1992-1993 National Remote Sensing Centre Survey. Geonex International Corporation Ltd. Cheshire Historic Environment Record. © Cheshire West and Chester Council.....	7
Figure 7 South arm of moat, Barrow Old Hall, looking east, 2018.....	7
Figure 8 Detail from the tithe map of Bold township 1840, showing Barrow Old Hall © Crown copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of The National Archives, London, England	8
Figure 9 Detail from Ordnance Survey six-inch map 1849 Lancashire CVIII By permission of the National Library of Scotland....	9
Figure 10 Barrow Old Hall viewed from the southeast, by Thomas Davies, 1856. Courtesy of Warrington Museum & Art Gallery (Culture Warrington).....	9
Figure 11 Barrow Old Hall viewed from the southeast, undated. ? Courtesy of Warrington Museum & Art Gallery (Culture Warrington).....	10
Figure 12 Barrow Old Hall viewed from the northwest, Tonge Postcard, c. 1906. Courtesy of Warrington Museum & Art Gallery (Culture Warrington).....	10
Figure 13 Barrow Old Hall viewed from the southwest, by Oswald Garside, early 20th century. Courtesy of Warrington Museum & Art Gallery (Culture Warrington)	11
Figure 14 Detail from Ordnance Survey twenty five-inch map 1893 Lancashire CVIII.15. By permission of the National Library of Scotland.....	11
Figure 15 Ordnance Survey map twenty five-inch map 1907 Lancashire CVIII.15. By permission of the National Library of Scotland	12
Figure 16 Ordnance Survey map twenty five-inch map 1928 Lancashire CVIII.15. By permission of the National Library of Scotland	12
Figure 17 Suggested phasing of Barrow Old Hall (after Matrix Archaeology 2008)	13
Figure 18 Barrow Old Hall excavated areas.....	14
Figure 19 Plan of Trench A (earliest phase).....	15
Figure 20 Plan of Trench A (later phase).....	16
Figure 21 Trench A south facing section and Trench B west facing section	17
Figure 22 The bridge at Barrow Old Hall during a watching brief carried out in 1995. © Earthworks Archaeological Services....	18
Figure 23 Modern pottery recovered from Trenches A, B and C by sherd count and weight (in grams)	19
Figure 24 Barrow Old Hall, Midland Purple-type wares	20
Figure 25 Barrow Old Hall, Midland Purple-type wares (8–12) and German stonewares (13 and 14)	22
Figure 26 Barrow Old Hall, Cistercian-type wares	24
Figure 27 Catalogue no. 6: Midland Purple-type ware jar/cistern with stamped anthropomorphic design; and Catalogue no. 14: Base sherd of Siegburg stoneware drinking jug.....	25
Figure 28 Lead spindle whorl from Trench A	26
Figure 29 The moat at Barrow Old Hall, following clearance of modern debris in 1995. © Earthworks Archaeological Services	28
Figure 30 Barrow Old Hall archaeological interventions (after Matrix Archaeology 2008).....	29
Figure 31 Location map of Tanner's Farm, Twiss Green. © Crown copyright. Reproduced by permission of the controller of HMSO Licence No. 100053067.....	38
Figure 32 Vertical aerial photograph of Twiss Green prior to excavation. 1971-1973 Hunting Survey. Hunting Surveys Ltd. Cheshire Historic Environment Record. © Cheshire West and Chester Council	39
Figure 33 Culcheth estate boundaries	40

Figure 34 Twiss Green contour plan	41
Figure 35 Twiss Green excavated areas	42
Figure 36 Plan of the pre-moat features.....	43
Figure 37 Section across medieval ditch (184)	44
Figure 38 Plan of the post- medieval features	45
Figure 39 Sample section across the moat.....	46
Figure 40 Sample section across the moat.....	46
Figure 41 Section across the leet (160)	47
Figure 42 View of surviving bridge timbers	48
Figure 43 Detail of surviving bridge timbers.....	48
Figure 44 Isometric plan of the timber bridge.....	49
Figure 45 Reconstruction drawing of the bridge	49
Figure 46 Carpentry methods used on the bridge	50
Figure 47 Detail of moat section showing surviving bridge planks in upper silts.....	51
Figure 48 View of brick hearth (9) looking east	51
Figure 49 View of brick hearth (9) and area of burning (39) looking east	51
Figure 50 Section through post-medieval pit (171)	52
Figure 51 View of top of well (134) looking southwest	53
Figure 52 View of well (134) looking west.....	53
Figure 53 Twiss Green Roman pottery.....	55
Figure 54 Twiss Green medieval pottery from contexts (24), (78), (98), (117), (129), (147), (155) and (159).	56
Figure 55 Twiss Green medieval pottery from contexts (173) and (185)	58
Figure 56 Twiss Green medieval jug/cistern from medieval ditch fill (185)	59
Figure 57 Twiss Green medieval pottery from contexts (185), (193), (196), (222), (252) and (273)	60
Figure 58 Twiss Green medieval pottery from contexts (291), (292), (307), (315) and (320).....	61
Figure 59 Post-medieval pottery by ware and sherd count	62
Figure 60 Post-medieval pottery by ware and weight (grams).....	63
Figure 61 The stoneware ‘Bellarmine’ from context (7)	63
Figure 62 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (3), (6) and (8).....	66
Figure 63 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (11), (12), (13) and (19).....	67
Figure 64 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (19) and (20)	68
Figure 65 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (21), (23), (26), (30), (43) and (45)	70
Figure 66 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (63), (94) and (95).....	71
Figure 67 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (95) and (96)	72
Figure 68 Twiss Green 17th century tin-glazed earthenware drug jar from context (96)	73
Figure 69 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (102) and (110)	74
Figure 70 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (110).....	75
Figure 71 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (112) and (117)	76
Figure 72 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from context (125).....	77
Figure 73 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from context (126).....	78
Figure 74 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from context (126).....	79
Figure 75 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (126), (146) and (147)	80
Figure 76 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (149), (151), (155) and (157).....	81
Figure 77 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (159), (173), (175), (176) and (195).....	83

Figure 78 Twiss Green post-medieval pottery from contexts (204), (211), (252), (299) and (311).....	84
Figure 79 Post-medieval pottery groups	85
Figure 80 The clay tobacco pipe	86
Figure 81 Clay tobacco pipe by context.....	88
Figure 82 Roman melon bead.....	89
Figure 83 Seal top ring with pipe tamper and nutcracker	90
Figure 84 The iron ferrule.....	90
Figure 85 The quern stone.....	91
Figure 86 The leather shoe	92
Figure 87 Bird bone identification.....	92
Figure 88 Bird bone measurements (in millimetres).....	93
Figure 89 Domestic chicken tarsometatarsal measurements (in millimetres)	93
Figure 90 Animal bone identification	94
Figure 91 Harcourt's indices of shape for the four dog skulls found in the moat fill	94
Figure 92 Comparative medieval aisled hall building plans from excavations at Old Abbey Farm, Bewsey Old Hall, Twiss Green and Barrow Old Hall.....	100
Figure 93 Comparative moated dwelling building plans from excavations at Twiss Green and Bewsey Old Hall	101

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Abbreviations

LRO Lancashire Record Office

TNA The National Archives (including Public Record Office)

WL Warrington Library (archives held as part of Cheshire Archives and Local Studies)

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the investigations at Barrow Old Hall and Twiss Green

Dan Garner and Jill Collens

The moated sites at Barrow Old Hall, in the civil parish of Great Sankey and Tanner's Farm, Twiss Green, in the civil parish of Culcheth, lie within the unitary authority of Warrington, in North West England. Great Sankey lies 3.2 km west, and Culcheth 8 km northeast, of Warrington town centre and both form part of the suburbs of the town (Figure 1). Until 1974, both lay in Lancashire, but were moved into Cheshire by local government reorganisation in 1974. In 1998, both became part of the unitary authority of Warrington. Historically Barrow Old Hall lay in the manor of Bold, in the medieval parish of Prescot, while Twiss Green lay in the manor of Culcheth, in the medieval parish of Winwick, both within the ancient Hundred of Warrington (Figure 2).

Archaeological excavations were carried out at both sites in the 1980s, as part of a wider investigation of moated sites in the region, by the Archaeological Survey of Merseyside and the University of Liverpool. The Archaeological Survey of Merseyside was set up in 1977 to undertake a five-year archaeological survey of the county, as the basis for setting up the Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record. It initiated work at numerous sites in Merseyside (Lewis and Cowell 2002). In 1986 the Archaeological Survey became the Field Archaeology Section, based in Liverpool Museum and continued to maintain the Sites and Monuments Record until 2014, when the Record (now the Merseyside Historic Environment Record) transferred to the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service.

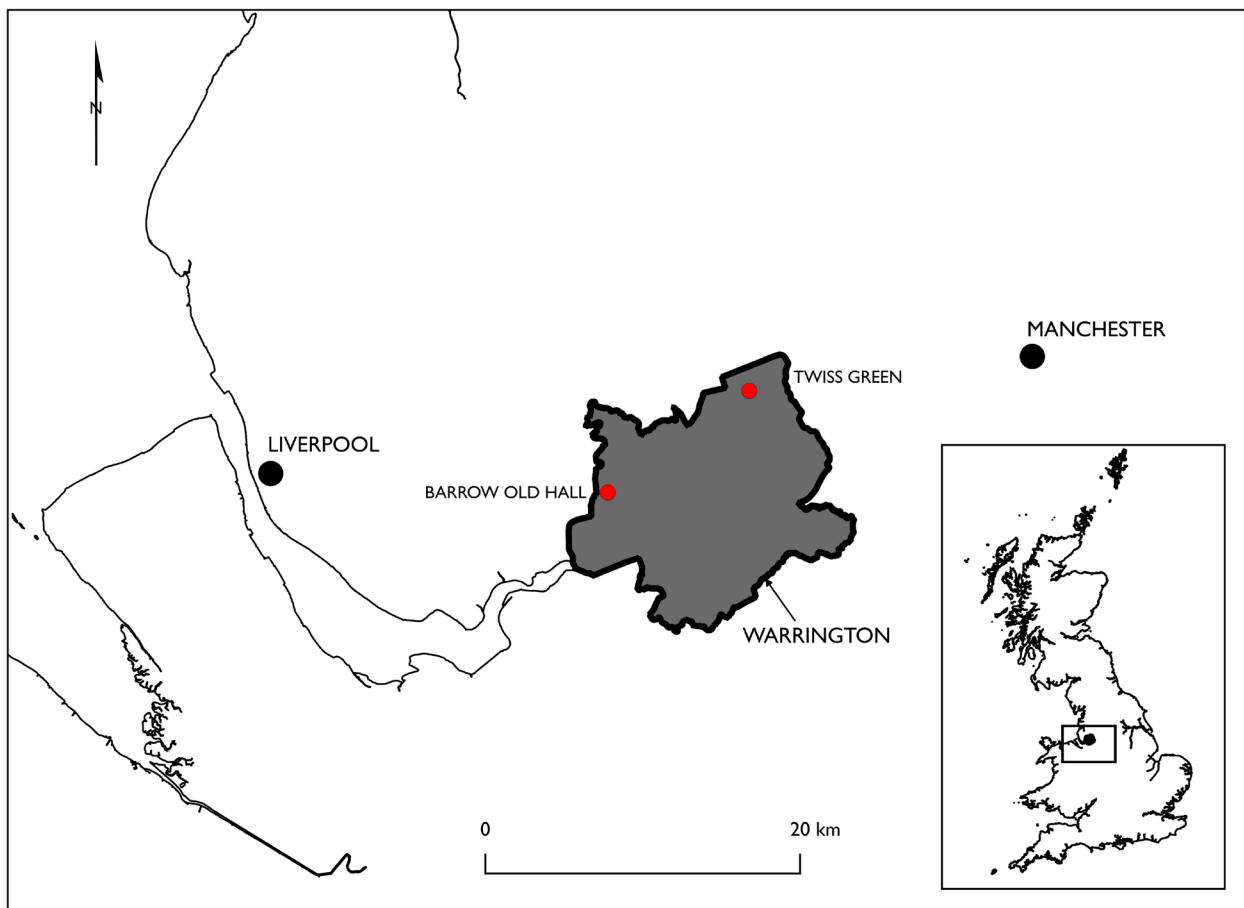


FIGURE 1 LOCATION PLAN OF BARROW OLD HALL AND TWISS GREEN, WARRINGTON

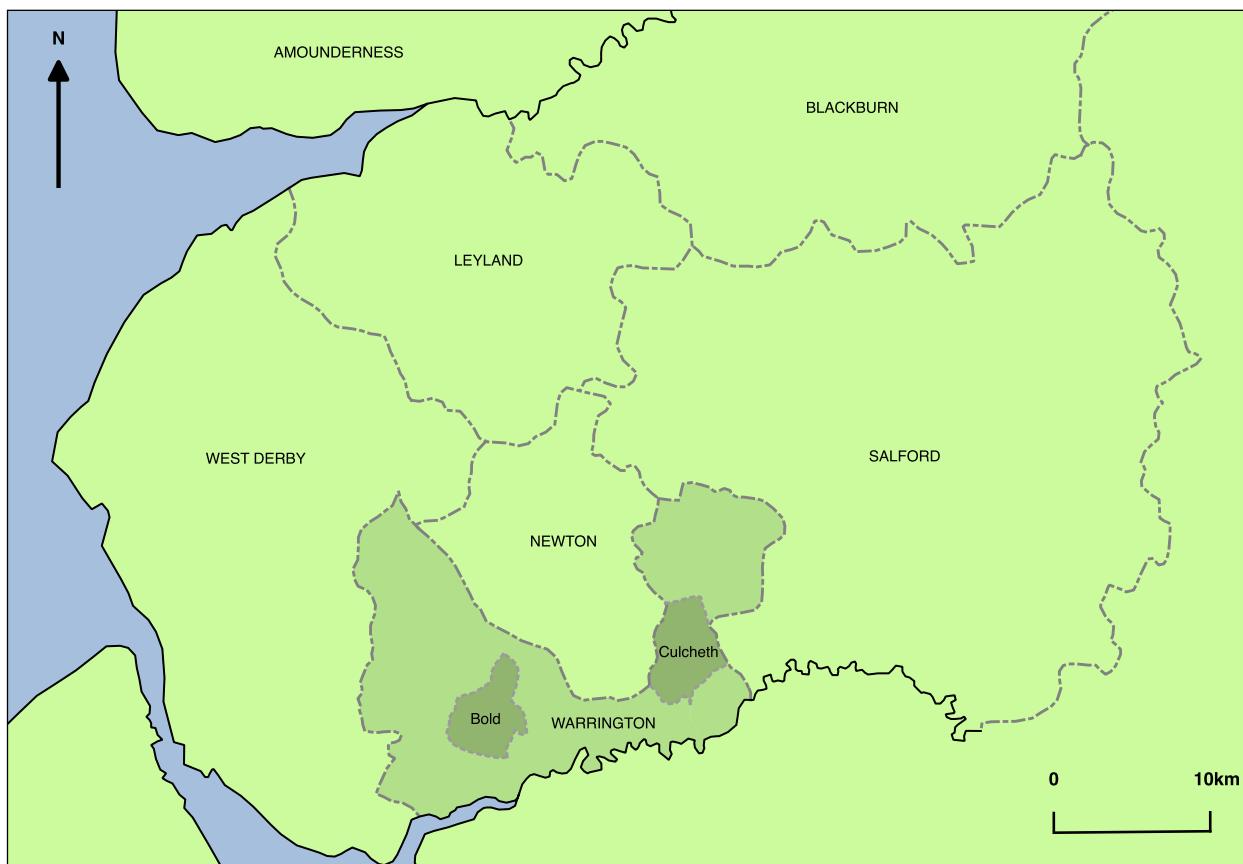


FIGURE 2 THE HUNDRED OF WARRINGTON C.1086

The Liverpool University Rescue Archaeology Unit was established in 1978 at Liverpool University, with staff funded through the government's Manpower Services Commission. It undertook excavations at sites in the region, including Twiss Green moated site. The North West Archaeological Trust was inaugurated in 1983, after funding for the Archaeology Unit was reduced. The Trust carried out a series of projects funded by the Manpower Services Commission of which, the Barrow Old Hall excavations, were one (Jennifer Lewis personal communication).

As is typical of the 1980s, the excavations at Barrow Old Hall and Twiss Green were funded by the Manpower Services Commission, which was responsible for co-ordinating training and employment services in the UK. However only limited funds were available for post-excavation analysis. Unpublished typescript site narratives, some specialist finds reports and the material archives from the excavations at both sites were eventually deposited with Warrington and Liverpool Museums.

In 2017, L-P Archaeology was approached by Mark Leah, Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader, Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service, Cheshire Shared Services, to bring the excavations at Barrow Old Hall and Twiss Green to

publication. This forms part of an on-going programme to address the post-excavation backlog of both developer and non-developer funded excavations in Cheshire, Warrington and Halton.

The project began with a post-excavation assessment in the form of a rapid review of the material held in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record and the archives held by Warrington Museum, to assess whether the excavations at these two sites could be brought to publication, the scope of any publication and a publication synopsis. Following this, the existing text was edited and new specialist summary reports, specifically covering the ceramic material, were prepared to produce this publication. Due to the limitations of the project in terms of both time and resources, it was not possible to revisit every aspect of the existing text, but attempts have been made to re-interpret the evidence where possible. The figures in the report are based on the original plans, sections, photographs and illustrations, where these could be identified in the archive. L-P Archaeology has been fortunate that the original authors, David Freke, who excavated Twiss Green in 1982, and Jennifer Lewis, who carried out the post-excavation of the Barrow Old Hall site in the late 1980s and early 1990s, have supported this project and this text has benefitted from their knowledge of the sites.

In addition to Barrow Old Hall and Twiss Green, two other moated sites at St Elphin's (Leigh *et al.* 1977) and Bewsey Old Hall (Lewis *et al.* 2011) were excavated in Warrington in the 1970s and 1980s. Further moated sites have since been examined following the advent of developer-funded archaeological excavation. Old Abbey Farm (Heawood *et al.* 2004) was subjected to major excavation and building recording in 1994–5, while the following confirmed or possible moated sites

have been assessed during archaeological evaluation or watching briefs: Bruche (Earthworks Archaeological Services 1996), Lymm (Staffordshire University Centre of Archaeology 2015), Whittle Hall (Mottershead and Hinchliffe 2016), all in Warrington, and Cranshaw Hall in Halton (Matrix Archaeology 2006). This work has provided a substantial body of information, which has contributed to a greater understanding of this type of site in North West England.