

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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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 Prescott, 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.

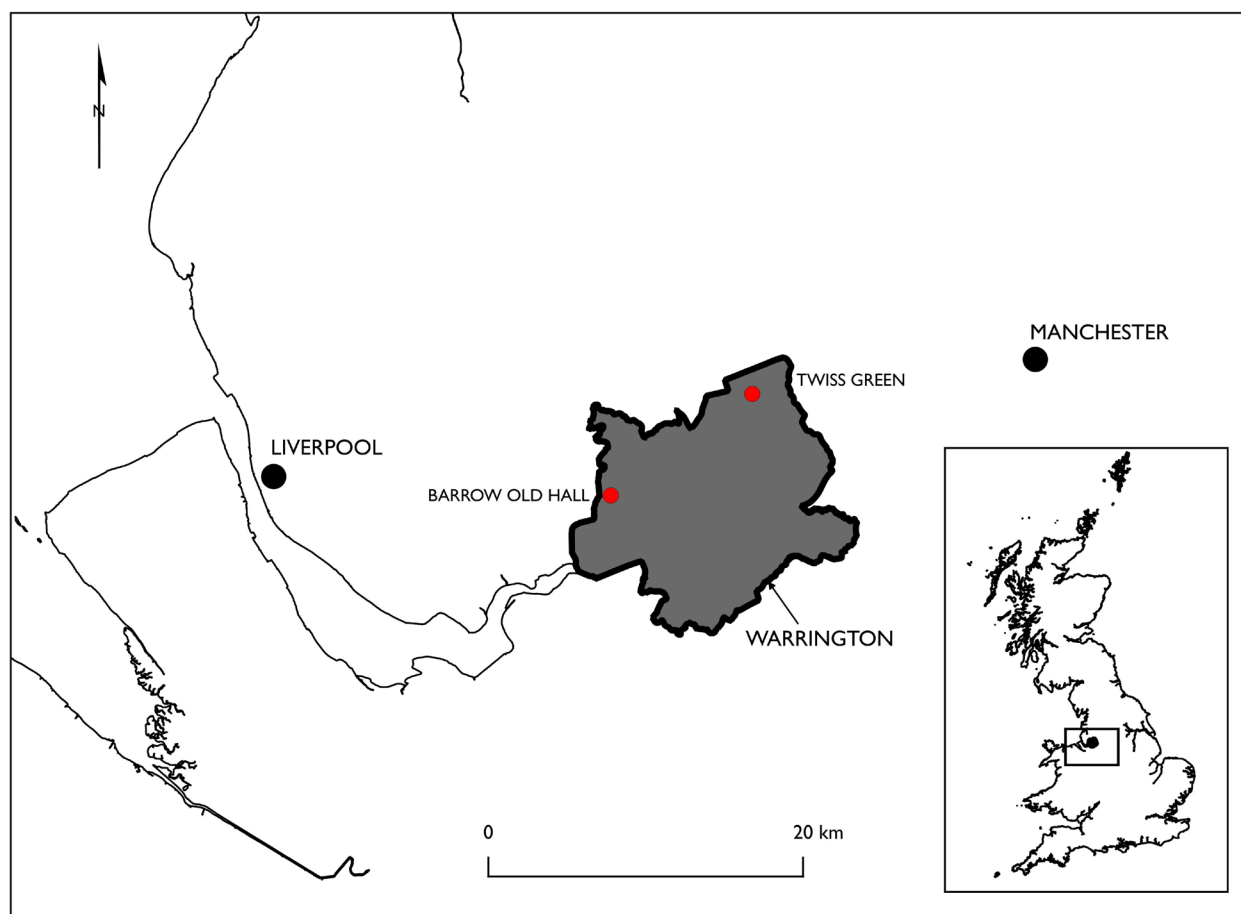


FIGURE 1 LOCATION PLAN OF BARROW OLD HALL AND TWISS GREEN, WARRINGTON

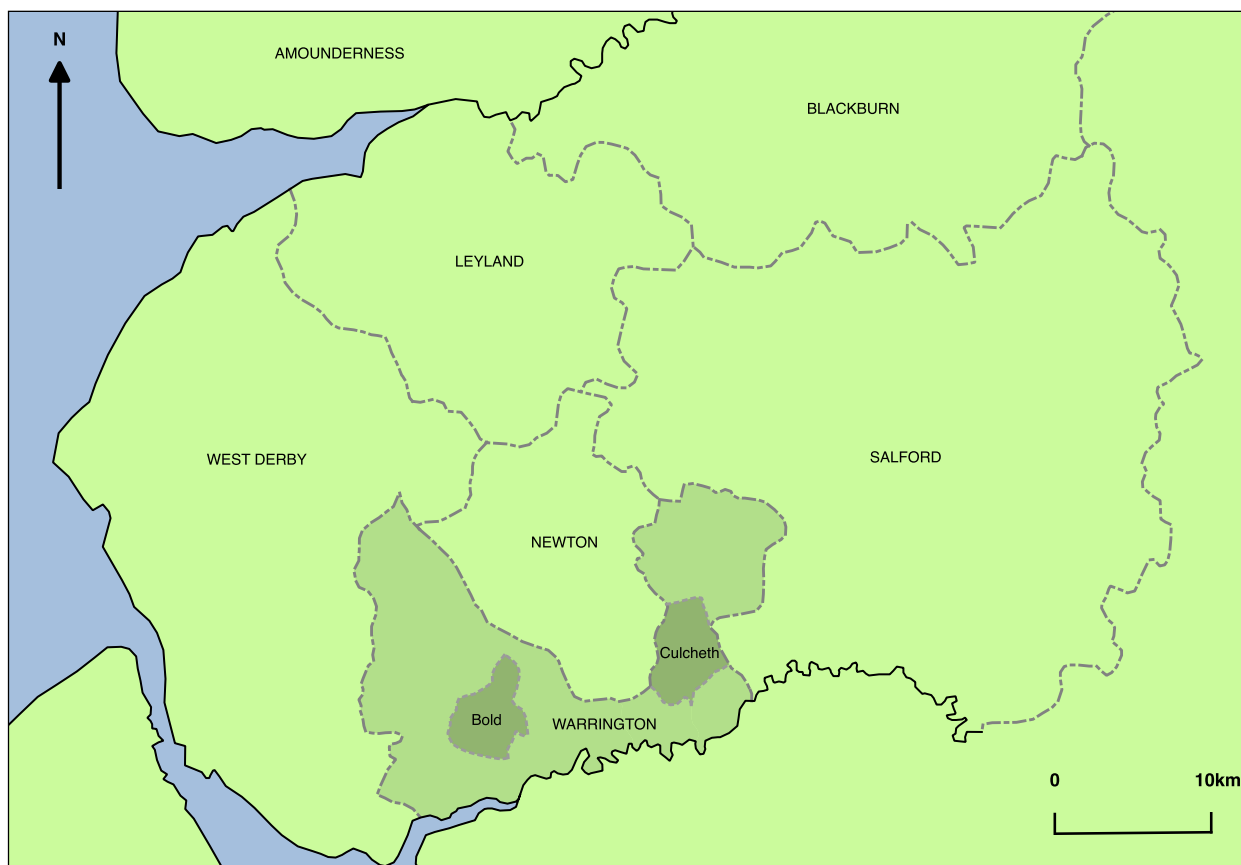


FIGURE 2 THE HUNDRED OF WARRINGTON C.1086

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.