

# TONY BOSTOCK'S HISTORY NOTES: RUDHEATH

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### MEDIEVAL RUDHEATH

In the very heart of Cheshire, to the south-east of Northwich lies Rudheath, a mainly residential area with a number of industrial and commercial properties. The place name occurs in the name of an electoral ward of the Vale Royal Borough – Rudheath and South Witton – which covers the residential area and farm land stretching south down the A530, King Street, the line of the Roman Road. Historically, however, the name was applied to the whole of an extensive tract of land stretching across five miles to Cranage in the south-east and encompassing perhaps at its greatest extent nearly 10,000 acres.<sup>1</sup> This is an area with its own particular history and legend: an area of wasteland haunted by highwaymen and salt smugglers; a district once inhabited by those ‘whose objects are not very dissimilar from those of the lawless race’ according to the nineteenth century historian George Ormerod.<sup>2</sup>

Rudheath is first mentioned in documents during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries as *Rudehez*, *Ruddeheth*, and *Roddeheth* a name suggesting an area of heath dominated by the shrub ‘rue’, plants of the genus *Ruta* - an aromatic shrub with small yellow flowers and evergreen leaves that grows well in poor soils. Equally the name might suggest the colour of the poor soils that covered the area - reddish brown looking sandy gravel. It has also been suggested, though perhaps less convincingly, that the first element might stem from the Old English personal name *Rudda*. A further meaning stems from *rode* or *rodding* meaning a clearing or cleared lands as in the case of ‘North Rode’, ‘Odd Rode and ‘Rode Heath’ in the south-eastern parts of Cheshire.<sup>3</sup> Whichever is correct it hardly likely to represent the topography of the whole area, rather a significant part, the name of which was adopted for the whole. A ‘heath’ is generally regarded as being an open area of dry sandy soils and scrubby vegetation. The place name Goostrey seems to indicate such plant growth for *gorst* is Old English for gorse or broom. Yet here there were many areas of a boggy nature as suggested by the Old English word *læcc* which occurs in Lach Dennis, Stublach and Shurlach; it is also an element in the old name for Cranage - *Croeneche*, a boggy place frequented by crows. We know that there were extensive woods on Rudheath in the medieval period.<sup>4</sup> The place-name element *shagh* from the Old English *sceaga* ‘a small wood’, occurs quite frequently especially to the north-east of the area and the place name ‘Birches’ is certainly indicative of one form of tree and the place-name element *leah* meaning a clearing occurs in Lees and Byley. At neighbouring Plumley and Holford we find ‘moor’ and ‘moss’ which rather than being technically descriptive are more likely to mean areas of waste ground of whatever description. For how long Rudheath had been heathland, or how it came to be so, cannot now be ascertained. It may be that this was originally a wooded area that had been overgrazed and cleared by the people of neighbouring villages and hamlets. Some parts which had been previously cleared of wild vegetation, cultivated had then been allowed to return to waste.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the boundaries recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Rudheath covered an area of about 6,800 acres or 10½ square miles.

<sup>2</sup> Ormerod

<sup>3</sup> Dodgson

<sup>4</sup> *DKR*, xxviii, p.61

## DOMESDAY PERIOD

There is no mention of Rudheath in the Domesday Book, but then that need not surprise us as many places we know of today are omitted, in fact Domesday is notorious for what it does not tell us. Of course, there may be a very good reason for the Survey of 1086 being silent as to Rudheath. It may well have already have been what it was for much of the medieval period - an unproductive area of wasteland. A 'no-man's land', a land on which no tax was levied and so of no interest to the Conqueror's commissioners. However the Survey of 1086 is useful in indicating its overall extent by describing the manors which lay along its periphery: *Witune* (Witton), *Wimundisham* (Wincham), *Stabelei* (Tabley), *Pevre* (Lower and Over Peover), *Gostrel* (Goostrey), *Croeneche* (Cranage), *Lece* (Lees) *Bevelei* (Byley), *Crostune* (Croxton), *Sibroch* (Shipbrook) and *Survelec* (Shurlach). It is usual to equate the Domesday manor of *Lece* with Lach Dennis in the very heart of Rudheath, however for reasons which will become clear later I believe that this is not so - for the time being its geographical position along the banks of the River Dane along the southern boundary of Rudheath will suffice. Lostock Gralam does not appear in Domesday and may have been within the area of Rudheath at this time, and whilst Nether Peover might well be one of the parts of the four manors named as *Pevre* it is more likely considering the first name element meaning 'near' to have been a later addition to the manors of Peover Inferior and Peover Superior. It is for these reasons that I venture to suggest a more northerly boundary in the immediate post Conquest period, thus taking in Lostock Gralam, Nether Peover and Allostock, which were later excluded from the boundaries, as well as the townships of Lach Dennis, Hulse, Birches, Newhall, and Stublach, which were always described as being on Rudheath.

The manors which surrounded the fifteen square miles of open countryside was each had its arable lands and small areas of wood. To the north, across the other side of the Wade Brook lies Wincham. In 1086 this manor was described as having about 168 acres of arable land, of which about half was cultivated, and an acre of woodland.<sup>5</sup> Adjoining this lies the southern part of the manor of Tabley, and that part which had about eighty acres under the plough and a long narrow stretch of woodland. Next Peover, which consisted of four units, where first there was a manor with a similar amount of plough land and another narrow, yet longer, stretch of woodland; a parcel of about 40 acres; another manor with about eighty acres and a narrow piece of woodland, and then another small parcel of some forty acres. Goostrey with a total of about 140 acres of arable land was divided into two manors. At Cranage there were about 120 acres and a small wood, with an enclosure for keeping wild animals such as deer. At Lees there were about 160 acres arable land available in the two manors with half an acre of meadow. At Byley there were three manors with a total of about 160 acres, of which about half seems to have been worked, a small meadow and a wood. At neighbouring Croxton there were just about 80 acres of arable. Shipbrook was perhaps the largest manor in terms of area for here there were about 400 acres of available arable, of which less than half was under the plough, three acres of meadow and two acres of woodland. This manor probably stretched south alongside the river Dane to include what later became Whatcroft. At Shurlach there were 160 acres of arable, a small meadow and a fishery. Lastly, at Witton there were about 160 acres and a mill, which was probably located on the Wade Brook.

An examination of the Domesday entries for these manors bordering onto Rudheath is interesting and revealing. The Saxon ownership of the surrounding manors seem to be grouped so that in the north Dot holds three manors, Colben and Godric hold lands to the east and Godric and Godwin to the south. Then to the west Osmer held Shipbrook and a compact block of the lands on the other side of the River Dane.

Of the 10 Norman manors 6 of them have individuals known as *bordarii* ('bordars') whose name implies that they lived on the border of the manor. These were at Witton, Wincham,

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<sup>5</sup> I am here assuming a Domesday carucate (ploughland) as being equivalent to 80 statute acres in round figures, or the equivalent of 40 Cheshire acres.

Lees, Byley, Croxton and Shurlach. Higham has suggested that this particular group of people, who are prevalent in woodland areas, may have been responsible for assarting and improving the wastelands on the edges of the manors.<sup>6</sup> If this is so they may have been doing just that by the creation of smallholdings that encroached upon Rudheath. It is noticeable that at Byley there were two such individuals.

More revealing however is the pattern of Norman ownership. The contiguous manors of Witton and Wincham and one of the four named Peover, each previously held by Dot, were held by Gilbert, baron of Kinderton, a local lord whose seat of power was at Kinderton near Middlewich on the south-western edge of Rudheath. William fitzNigel, baron of Halton, held Tabley, another of the Peovers which was most probably Lower Peover, one of the two manors at Goostrey, and one of two manors named Lees. Ranulph Mainwaring held the other two Peovers, one of which relates to Over Peover the family home for many centuries. Richard Vernon held both Shipbrook, the seat of his barony, and Shurlach, as well as a compact block of territory to the west of the river Dane. A man named Joscelin held the manor of Croxton and a small manor at Tabley. Hugh fitz Norman held the whole of Byley and the other manor at Goostrey. Robert baron of Malpas held Cranage.

The presence of four of the eight Norman barons of the earldom may be significant.

## A PLACE OF REFUGE

Throughout the medieval period Rudheath was recognised as an area of poor soils and sparse population. Under the Norman earls of Chester this was one of three areas designated as 'secular sanctuaries', the others being Hoole Heath, near Chester, and Overmarsh (or King's Marsh), near Farndon. These areas provided refuge and protection for anyone from England who had offended against the laws of the land or were debtors, in exchange for service to the earl. The protection of this area also gave the earl a 'land-bank' from which grants could be made to those who came to serve him. The earliest reference to such arrangements, known as 'advowry', is contained in Earl Ranulf's charter of 1215:

*'If any stranger who is faithful shall come into their domain and choose to dwell there, it shall be lawful for the baron of that fee to have and retain him, saving to the earl the advowries who shall come to me of their own accord, and others who for any trespass shall come into my dignity.'*

We are informed by an inquisition from the time of Edward II that one of these places, Overmarsh, was a waste place surrounded by a ditch which formed the boundary of various neighbouring townships. Here 'foreigners' might come to serve the earl in time of war or simply seek his protection from any who might pursue them from elsewhere in England, and remain for a year and a day. The homes of these individuals had to be temporary - booths or tents - and not houses fixed with nails and pins or bolts. It was also ordained that no neighbouring farmer could approve the wastes by cultivating or building on the land: to do so was an offence punishable with a heavy financial penalty to the earl and an ox to the Sheriff for every instance.<sup>7</sup> A similar commentary was given at an inquiry concerning Hoole Heath in 1339 which states that 'in time of war in Wales, all lawful men of the Earl of Chester and all other men living in peace of our Sovereign Lord the King of England and the said Earl of Chester, were wont to have refuge and receipt on Hoole Heath with their goods, necessities and beasts for a year and one day'. Whilst the people of Chester had the right to pasture their beasts on the heath, by the time of this inquiry a number of lords from neighbouring

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<sup>6</sup> *The Origins of Cheshire*, p.206

<sup>7</sup> *Cal. Plea Rolls*, 6&7, 8&9 Edw. II; Orm, ii, 753

townships had enclosed and appropriated parts of the wastes here.<sup>8</sup> Lucian says that Hoole Heath was haunted by thieves a reputation which Rudheath also acquired.<sup>9</sup>

This system of social and military patronage helped the Earl of Chester to strengthen his army and body of retainers as well as encourage people from outside the county to dwell here all be it on the poorer lands. It has been suggested that the avowry system encouraged hardened criminals from England to settle within the county and fostered a general spirit of disorder, and added to the bad reputation the county already had for lawlessness and violence.<sup>10</sup>

I mentioned earlier that it may be significant that four of the Norman barons held property here. Do we have a system whereby it was the barons who actually recruited on behalf of the earl? Were they deliberately given manors around the edge of Rudheath to oversee the advowry system? It does seem probable as it was the barons and their subordinates on and around Rudheath who subsequently had the right to grant small parcels of land to newcomers who then brought these areas under cultivation. Later, in the post Norman earldom, when the need for advowry subsided, these local subordinate lords and their tenants continued to use the land in this traditional fashion bringing them into conflict with the Earl and his officials.

## **THE MEDIEVAL BOUNDS OF RUDHEATH**

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Rudheath was bounded on the north by the Wade Brook and then, as its course is traced eastwards an up stream, by the other names of Cow Brook and Bradshaw Brook. The eastern boundary was formed by a tributary of Bradshaw Brook and the townships of Goostrey, Twemlow and Cranage. The southern and western boundary ran along the River Dane with the exclusion of the townships of Lees, Byley, Croxton, Whatcroft, Shipbrook and Shurlach. Finally the boundary with Witton completed the circuit. As already said there are reasons to suggest that the area may have been somewhat larger in the Norman period to include the townships of Lostock Gramam and Nether Peover together with the whole of Allostock, the boundary thuds following then the Wincham Brook and the Peover Eye before turning south to follow the township boundary of Goostrey. Also the western boundary may have been formed by the stretch of the River Dane between Croxton and Shipbrook, with Whatcroft being then a part of Rudheath.

There are three sources for the ancient bounds of Rudheath. The first is a seventeenth century copy of a document dated February 1291/2, which contains much the same as the first document.<sup>11</sup> The jury of 25 men was headed by Sir Hamon de Massey, Sir Hugh Venables, Sir Brian de St. Pierre, Sir Peter Dutton, Sir Roger Cheadle, Sir Hugh Dutton and Sir Robert Pulford, and of the others there were a few local people such as Richard Cranage, Henry Lache and Hamon Lether. The next is from a copy of a document said to be dated circa 1310, in which is recorded the sworn testimony of a jury as to the bounds and divisions of the wasteland.<sup>12</sup> The third source is perhaps the most well-known and often recited version which is a recital of an inquisition heard at the County Court in Chester as printed in the *Vale Royal Ledger Book*.<sup>13</sup> The verdict of the jury of 12 men, headed by Sir Hugh Venables, Sir John Arderne and Sir Geoffrey Warburton, was that Rudheath was the 'soil of the lord the Earl of Chester' and outside any township. The bounds as perambulated by the jury in February 1345/6 omits some of the detail given in the other two versions and seems to repeat verbatim a complete section.

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<sup>8</sup> *Cal. Close Rolls*, (1330-1333), 486-487, and (1339-1341), 194.

<sup>9</sup> *Liber Luciani*, 64

<sup>10</sup> Hussain, p.107

<sup>11</sup> DSS 3991/183/2

<sup>12</sup> CRO: DLT/A/30/10

<sup>13</sup> *VRLB*

The limits of Rudheath follow both natural features in the form of water-courses and trees, and man-made features such as ditches (*fossatum*). In some instances it seems that small streams (*siches*) were enlarged into more substantial ditches.

These bounds which have remained intact for many hundreds of years and may have persisted for as many years before the survey of 1291/2, may be followed today with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

They begin at a point on the present Middlewich Road, Northwich at a point opposite the junction with Agecroft Road (MR: 675735). This was *Holden juxta Shurlach*, a point where the boundaries of Witton, Shurlach and Rudheath met. According to the nineteenth century tithe map a number of fields on either side of this boundary were known as 'Holdings'. The line then follows *Holden*, a name which suggests a narrow and shallow valley, which lies along the ends of Edward Street, Liverpool Street and Birkenhead Street. The line then meets the Wade Brook, known in medieval times as *Lostokebroke*, at the end of James Street in Northwich. From here the boundary turns east to follow the brook on its winding course. The next point is *Loweforth*, the lowest crossing point on the watercourse. Here, at a point now lost under the chemical works, and near to a farm once known as Over Street Farm, where the brook will have crossed the Roman road of King Street near to its junction with Watling Street (MR: 680741). From here the brook forms the southern boundary of Lostock Gramam. As it continues east, the modern name changes to Crow Brook (and also known as Cow Brook in the nineteenth century) before it comes to the next location. *Portforth* (MR: 716731) is where the road from Northwich to Peover, which at one time continued on as the main road to Macclesfield, crosses the brook; nearby lies Portford Farm. The name of this crossing place derives from 'port' meaning market and is indicative of an old trading route. There the brook forms the southern boundary of Nether Peover and divides that township from Hulme and Hulme.

The next crossing point referred to is *Rysneforth* which is where the modern footpath crosses the brook near Hulme Farm (MR:731729). The meaning of this location is difficult to comprehend though Dodgson suggests that it means 'the ford at the brushwood'. The alignment of the footpath may indicate the route of a lost Roman road from Middlewich which passed through Byley and across Street Field (MR 721701) in Stublach. The next crossing point on the *Lostokebroke* is *Bradeshagheforth*<sup>14</sup> at a point where the road from Peover to Byley crosses the brook and close to Bradshaw Brook Farm (MR 738724). The next point is given as *Ornesq'th* which may be an abbreviation and mis-spelling for *Ornesshagheforth*. This is usually given as *Ormesforth* at a point where the modern A50 London Road, crosses the brook (MR:751719). If this latter reading of the location is correct it may derive from the personal name 'Orme' and therefore refer to Orme the Harper, ancestor of the Croxton family who held lands hereabouts in the eleventh century. However, my belief is that the correct location ought to be further west at a point where another brook joins the *Lostokebroke* (MR:741721). From hereabouts the brook is now known as the Bradshaw Brook and the boundary continues a short distance rising up to meet with *Rogereswey* which is I believe to be the crossing point for the London Road, rather than Booth Bed Lane (MR: 756718) as suggested by some. A little further east the brook turns south to form the eastern edge of Rudheath, and is joined, near to the village of Goostrey, by the Shear Brook (MR: 767708) and where the boundary leaves the brook that it has followed from the start to ascend the *Shaghesiche* – the Shear Brook.

This little brook continues due south to the next location mentioned in the bounds - *Sandyford* (MR:769701) where the main road through Goostrey crosses the Shear Brook. Half a mile further south the boundary leaves the water course and follows what were recognized as the

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<sup>14</sup> VRLB gives *Hardeshagheforth*

bounds between the township of Rudheath and Twemlow, which were probably then further east than the modern boundary, and passing a small piece of woodland called *Chikenshaghe* on the Rudheath side. From here the boundary is somewhat obscure. The next point mentioned is *Gledewey*,<sup>15</sup> which seems to refer to Twemlow Lane, from whence an old ditch is followed up to the home of Richard son of Hugh on *Fernyhull* - 'the ferny hill'.<sup>16</sup> Using the same ditch the boundary rises up to *Sagemere* before turning back alongside the house of Thomas Hardy which stood in Rudheath and has been tentatively identified as 'No Town Farm', now 'The Orchards' (MR: 771687), until it reaches Twemlow Wood. It seems that the area to the west and north-west of Twemlow Green was *Sagemere*, hence the name of the stream which ran down from here - *Shagesiche*. The edge of Twemlow Wood is followed until it meets Cranage Wood which is then also followed to its end. This section of the boundary, along the edge of the woods, may be marked today by the route of Twemlow Lane, as far as its junction with the A50, London Road. At this junction will have been the 'alder grove' at the *head of the vill of Craunache*. Crossing London Road, the boundary seems to follow Byley Lane and then crosses a stream called *Redlache* near to Cranage Cottage and Keepers Cottage (MR:684745).

An old ditch continues the westerly route along Byley Lane and brings the boundary to *Whystillshaghe* in Lees. This location (MR: 686738) was known in the nineteenth century as Whishaw. From here a stream runs south-west which may be the *siche* 'referred to which led on to *Jurdanesruddinge* - 'Jordan's clearing'. The nineteenth century tithe map shows a field to the north of this stream as 'Ridding'. The boundary follows the edge of the clearing along an old ditch as far as *Legheslone*, and beyond that lane ascends to *Leghelidiate*<sup>17</sup> and then on to *Synelidiate*. These curious names comprise of what seems to be modern Lilly Lane, i.e 'lyde' and 'yate'. The first element of the first place may refer to Lees or Byley; in the other case *Syne* may refer to the left side of the road when travelling north or else meaning 'without' or 'outside'. Interestingly in the nineteenth century there was field called 'Sink Croft' which may be a corruption of 'sine'. Whatever it seems that these two locations are close by one another at the modern Byley Green (MR:687716) and the site of the Dog and Partridge House. The boundary went along a ditch to the *Cowhouse*, probably in the vicinity of Yatehouse Green (MR: 688706), and thence to *Ravanescrofslache* - the stream at Ravenscroft which can be identified as a tributary of the River Dane to the east of Ravenscroft Hall which starts its flow from a point near to Kings Street (A532) The ditch is then followed until it meets *Lynstreet* - presumably King Street. Beyond the ancient highway another ditch is followed through or by *Hethlache* to a brook called *Alstan Thornsych*, meaning 'the stream towards Stanthorne', or the stream at 'Alstan's thorn bush', whatever this watercourse then marked the northern boundary of Croxton. The stream, which eventually empties out into the River Dane, is now followed as far as the head of the *lane of Wodehouses*. 'Woodhouses' is an area of Croxton This is probably near to the junction of King Street and Croxton Lane (MR:687698). Beyond which an old ditch is followed to reach *Petreeleghes*, the 'pear tree clearing', which is in the area of a point just north of the lane and due west of King Street Farm (MR: 699695). This clearing is interesting as it is referred to in other medieval deeds to mark the boundary between the lordships of Rudheath and Croxton.<sup>18</sup> The same ditch runs on to *Whytesych*, 'the white stream' which then leads to Hulkok Vernon's garden. All that may be said about Hulkok is that he was a member of the Vernon family who settled at Whatcroft, the township immediately south of Shipbrook, the ancient home of the main line of the family. This garden may refer to Brook House Farm (MR: 691697) Here the boundary turns out of the brook to follow a ditch through the middle of the garden, leaving half of the property in Rudheath, and

<sup>15</sup> VRLB gives *Goldewey*

<sup>16</sup> This location does not appear in VLRB

<sup>17</sup> VRLB has *Bynelegh-lydeyate*

<sup>18</sup> DSS 3991/179/8 & 9. Sir Ralph Vernon agreed with the Abbot of Dieulacres as to the following bounds: 'from *Cromarsh* to a certain hill which is called the *Brownlowe* and so from the *Brownlowe* by the limits and bounds by me and the foresaid Abbot made upon Wednesday next after the Feast of St Ambrose the Bishop, Ano. Dni. 1308, to the *Petreeleghe* which is the division between the barony of Shipbrook and the town of Croxton'.

on by way of two oak trees, the second of which stood in a ditch between two fields, of which one lay on Rudheath.<sup>19</sup> It is interesting to note that the line of this ditch might well follow a straight line which forms the western edge of several fields known as 'Stander' - does this field name derive from the two 'standing oaks'? The boundary then meets *Shipbrokesmos*, represented on the Tithe Map by the field names Nearer Moss and Further Moss. At this point the Trent & Mersey Canal follows the boundary line and the edge of *Shipbrokesmos*, represented on the Tithe Map by the field names Nearer Moss and Further Moss. The next reference is *Polsysch in Shebrokeslone*, literally the 'pool brook', which presumably refers to a stream running out of the pool to alongside the railway line and Davenham Road, near Billinge Green Farm (MR:680713). There are a number of pools hereabouts in a generally boggy terrain. From here the boundary continues along the brook across the road as far as an old ditch which stretches across to Walter Page's house, and on 'beyond another road' - which road? Probably Shurlach Road which runs north out of Shipbrook as the nineteenth century boundary of Shipbrook cuts across the fields from Davenham Road to Shurlach Road. The boundary now progresses towards Reginald Legg's house and a cottage built on Rudheath, before descending to the head of Reginald's grange. Then by way of a ditch round a croft called the *Morstall*, along the head of the 'old field' and along *Symmesfyld* to a marl pit and *Bradefordwey*, which is probably the continuation of what we now know to be Shurlach Lane, which runs alongside *Lanedysfyld*<sup>20</sup>. It seems that this stretch between *Shipbrokeslone* and *Bradefordeswey* is of a relatively short distance but one involving a number of turns around a number of enclosed fields and crofts. *Lanedysfyld* is divided by the boundary and passes a marl pit in Rudheath before reaching the field's boundary ditch.<sup>21</sup> The ditch around the field is followed as far as Walter Page's marl pit and descends the *Old fyld syche* to *Bradforthbroke*, which we now call the Gad Brook near to a point north of Park Farm (MR:678721), where the boundary crosses the brook (MR: 683720). On the other side of the brook the boundary now ascends along the left-side of *Sherlache dyche* as far as Bradford Moor the area now taken up by the Morrisons Distribution Depot. Leaving the moor in Rudheath the route now takes us to the township of Bradford and across 'the way', between the houses of William Fox and Ranulph Winnington, the latter being on Rudheath, These houses might have stood on School Road where the A556 cuts across it (MR: 682727). This road will have gone alongside the Bradford town field and the route is followed as far as the headland of the field before cutting across to meet a stream called *Goslache*, the goose stream, which ran a few yards east of, and parallel to, Shipbrook Road. This was followed as far as *the lane of Stephen le Hunt* - Gadbrook Road. Here at one time there was a minor crossroads and the boundary crossed Shipbrook Road alongside the Shurlach Methodist Chapel (MR:675730) and continued on to Alice Hunt's house.<sup>22</sup> Lastly the route follows a ditch to meet the boundary with Witton which is followed north past the *Longacre*, a field in Rudheath, to a point on the road to Witton Church (MR:674735) and then across to *Holdene*, where the route began.

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<sup>19</sup> According to the other versions the ditch is owned by either Richard or Nicholas Vernon: both names are often found in the Vernons family of Whatcroft. In the 1346 version, Vernon's ditch is followed as far as Whatcrofteslone (MR: 688704) which is presumably the same as the modern lane of the same name. Across this lane the boundary then runs between two fields as far as *Shipbrokesmos*.

<sup>20</sup> VRLB has *Levediesfeld* and in DSS3991/183/2 it is *Langedefeld*.

<sup>21</sup> The section from *Lanedysfyld* to the marl pit is erroneously repeated in VRBC.

<sup>22</sup> Alice's house does not appear in VRLB





## COLONISING THE WASTES

The division of Rudheath into discreet estates and tenements may have been a common practice for many years before the Norman arrival. But at sometime during the rule of the Norman earls this practice was curtailed for the purpose of advowry, something which probably caused some aggravation to those who lived and worked on its bounds.

As a secular sanctuary of the Norman Earls of Chester further assarting and reclamation of Rudheath was prohibited without licence. During the reigns of the three Edwards, as the necessity of having recruiting sanctuaries had receded, this policy was continued for financial reasons and as a result there were constant battles over rights to the soils of Rudheath and the legality of improving the wastes. This then was a land which during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries became populated by ‘squatters’.

It would seem that there was a not inconsiderable number of such people judging by the value of the *advowry*. The annual fee was usually 4d a Cheshire acre, but in 1309 the total value of *advowry* was £40, representing 2400 acres (equivalent to 5000 statute acres), and over the next half century averaged out at around £17, equating to about 1020 (2142) acres.<sup>23</sup> When in 1347/8 there was an investigation into the legality of the encroachments it was found that 2723 (5718) acres had been cultivated from the waste.

Local lords had certainly been active in extending their manors and townships that bounded Rudheath and, with the inhabitants of the neighbouring townships, it seems they had ploughed up over 1500 (3150) acres before 1300.<sup>24</sup> In 1270 the Lord Edward, as Earl of Chester, the later Edward I, granted the Abbey of Chester licence to extend their cultivation of Rudheath.<sup>25</sup> During his earldom the abbot and convent of Dieulacres also approved 240 (500) acres of waste.<sup>26</sup> The Abbot of Chester had licence from Thomas de Vernon to enclose and cultivate all the wastes of Hulse on Rudheath<sup>27</sup> and also cultivated areas of waste elsewhere on Rudheath and, circa 1290, licensed Richard and Henry Cranage to cultivate 270 (567) acres of land near Lees. The Abbot of Dieulacres had approved 1240 acres (2600).<sup>28</sup>

A commission of 1304/5 re-affirmed the ancient custom of reclaiming land on Rudheath.<sup>29</sup> Sir Ralph Vernon of Shipbrook having taken possession of a piece of land on Rudheath and within the township of Byley then granted it to the Abbey of Dieulacres and renounced all further claims. This land was described as being “from Cromarsh to a certain hill which is called Brownlowe and so from Brownlowe by the limits and bounds by me and the foresaid Abbot made upon Wednesday next after the feast of St. Ambrose the Bishop, Anno Domini 1308, to the Pertrelegh which is the division between the barony of Shipbrook and the town of Croxton”.<sup>30</sup> Similarly in 1311, Urian de St Pierre, who had inherited parts of the barony of

<sup>23</sup> Hewitt, p.156. citing Stewart-Brown, *EHR.*, xxix, and *Recog Rolls*

<sup>24</sup> Booth, p.127

<sup>25</sup> *Cal. Ch. Rolls.* (1327 – 41). p.1 55: inspeximus and confirmation by Edw III dated January 1330.

<sup>26</sup> Hewitt, p.12. citing CPR (1330-1334), p.191

<sup>27</sup> *CPR.* (1324-49)

<sup>28</sup> *CPR* (1330 -34). p.191

<sup>29</sup> Hewitt, p.15

<sup>30</sup> CRO: DSS 3991/1798 & 9

Shipbrook, granted to Phillip Lether a lease for thirty-nine years of forty acres (eighty-four statute acres) of Shipbrook land which lay on Rudheath between the road to Middlewich and the field of Richard Vernon and between 'Elinarysbach' brook to the moors of the Abbot of Dieulacres. This grant had the usual clause that the grantor would defend the grantee's rights against claims from any men and women but 'chiefly against our lard the King of England and all his bailiffs'.<sup>31</sup> In March 1332, Urian's son Sir John granted and quit claimed rights to all his messuages and lands in Shipbrook and Rudheath to Philip Egerton.<sup>32</sup>

During the second decade of the fourteenth century there seems to have been a change of policy as regards the improvement of Rudheath. In 1311 the bounds of Rudheath were perambulated and recorded,<sup>33</sup> following which orders were issued to seize the lands of Richard Vernon, Ralph Vernon and his son Ralph, and Robert Grosvenor as having been cultivated without licence. At the Christmas Parliament of 1312 orders were issued to Hugh Audley, justiciar of Chester, to have measurements of all tenants' lands certified. On 30 January 1312/13 orders were issued to destroy all houses on Rudheath and to seize the lands of the Vernons and the Grosvenors. At Easter 1314 Ralph Vernon declared his lands to contain 79 acres (168) and Robert Grosvenor declared his to be 184 acres (386). Both men sought leave to appropriate these lands and permission was granted at a cost of five shillings an acre.<sup>34</sup> In fact, the Vernons and Grosvenor together appropriated 453 acres (950) paying a total of £1136s 8d in installments for the privilege in 1315/16 at a rate of 20 marks a year.<sup>35</sup>

A subsequent enquiry into the ownership of the wastes of Rudheath was something of a victory for the local lords as it found that Rudheath was not the soil of the King or of the Earl of Chester, but of the lords of the neighbouring manors and townships.<sup>36</sup> Despite that, about 1330, the Escheator of Chester on behalf of the Earl seized 240 acres (500) of approved land held by the Abbot of Dieulacres as being the king's soil and having been cultivated without licence. A subsequent enquiry in May and mandate dated 16 October 1331 ordered the succeeding escheator to remove the king's hands from the land as it was entirely within the abbot's manor of Byley.<sup>37</sup>

An inquest at Chester dated 3 February 1331 found that the following people had approved the waste lands of Rudheath (acreages are as given in Cheshire acres):

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31 CRO: DSS 3991181/23

32 CRO: DSS 3991181/23

33 CRO: DLT A30/10

34 *Ibid*

35 *Cheshire Chamberlains Accounts, 1301-1360*, pp. 86, 92

36 *Cal. Fine Rolls (1307-19)*, p. 131; *Cal. Inq. Misc. (1308 – 1348)*, p.31

37 *Cal. Inq. Misc. 1308-48*, p.296; *BPR 1330 – 34*, p 191

The Abbot of Dieulacres	100a	Richard de Vernon	60a
Henry de Cranage	3a	Agnes de Lostock	5a
Henry s. of Henry de Cranage	6a	Margery w. of William de Croxton	8a
Thomas de Cranage	5a	John de St Pierre	40a
Roger s. of Roger de Cranage	8a	Richard de Vernon of Whatcroft	8a
Margaret de Moutlovre	8a	Richard de Lostwych	30a
Warin s. of Hugh Vernon	12a	Thomas Vernon of Werford	12a
Hugh de Ordeswyke	60a	Hugh, chaplain of Winnington	5a
The Abbot of Chester	20a	Richard de Vernon for the manor of Haslington	
Peter de Leghes	2a	The Abbot of Chester	A mess- -uage & 18 selions in Hulse

It would seem that over many years the rights of the earl of Chester had been overlooked and there was thus a need by the middle years of the fourteenth century to enquire into the improvements on Rudheath and to ensure that the earl was receiving his dues. This recovery was set in motion in February 1346 with a perambulation of the bounds and measuring of the various tenements.

In 1347/8 enquiries were launched into the state of Rudheath and Overmarsh near Chester. Sir William de Sharesull, judge of the King's Bench, and later Chief Justice, held sessions at Chester which started in December 1347 to bring about the recovery of Rudheath and Kingsmarsh or Overmarsh.<sup>38</sup> Payments were made by the Chamberlain to the Justice and his men who had ridden the bounds and taken formal possession of the lands there in the autumn of 1348, to those who had been employed in measuring the land - a task that took 30 days, and to others who levied rents. The end result of the enquiry was that the original lay landlords were allowed to retain those lands on the heath which they held in demesne, whilst the lands of their tenants lands and their rents were transferred to the earl. Ecclesiastical lords were allowed to retain both their demesne lands and those of their tenants in exchange for paying rent to the earl for the privilege.<sup>39</sup> The majority of the earl's tenants were for a term of years with only a few at fee.

From 1347/8 regular collection of rents from the many tenants was commenced with £26 5s 1d accounted for in the first year from which was deducted a total of £16 8s. 8d for those who made the inspections and measurements.<sup>40</sup> The Chamberlain would have accounted for more had it not been for an instruction from the Justice of Chester not to take payments from those who had held their tenements in fee prior to the recovery.<sup>41</sup> A rental and an extent of the 1350s reveals that about 1287 acres (2723) were recovered buy the Prince's officials which were made up of 185 tenancies yielding rents amounting to about £50 a year.<sup>42</sup>

From the recovered lands, 150 acres (310) were set aside for the new demesne lands of the manor of Drakelow which were worked on a three-field system. The first detailed account

38 *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1308-48) p.296: *BPR* 1330 - 34. p 191

39 *BPR*. iii. p.16.19

40 *Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts*. pp.122. 125. 126

41 *Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts*, 1301-1360. p. 122

42 Booth. p.128

appears for the year 1350/51 by Thomas de Wilton, the bailiff.<sup>43</sup> What part of this account which survives is quite revealing. The first item in the account is Thomas' farm amounting to £51 4s 0½d with a note to the effect that Adam the Tailor of Lees had an increase of 4d in his rent. Income was also derived from sale of stock, geese, capons, and crops such as corn, rye and oats, from garden produce, herbage and turbary. The newly established court met twice a year and produced the usual 'perquisites'. In total over £80 was received. Off-setting the income were many expenses mainly due to the 'pestilence' and the consequent death of many tenants: fifty-seven are listed with unpaid rents amounting to £12 17s 3d. The Earl also remitted £12 16s 7d in rents owed by other tenants 'until the soil becomes better', a third reduction in the usual two shillings an acre rent in order to retain them on their holdings.<sup>44</sup> Other expenses included making and repairing ploughs and carts and paying the wages of carpenters and smiths. The manor house at Drakelowe and other houses also had running costs with repairs to roofs, walls, doors and door locks and windows. Ditches were dug around parts of the manor and the granges. Purchases were made: stock was bought at a cost of 39s, wheat seed was bought at Chester market and also from two local men - Roger de Ravenscroft and John de Cranage. With other seeds of barley, beans and peas, the cost was £15 13s 5½d. An inventory of live-stock included nine horses of which one died in the winter; three colts; twenty-four oxen; five cows; four calves; thirty geese of which two were eaten by dogs, two destroyed and twenty sold, leaving six; forty-six hens of which all but a cock and five hens were sold; and twenty-four capons of which sixteen were sold. A total of 300 eggs were sold throughout the year.

From this time on there are many references to the manor of Drakelowe and Rudheath in contemporary documents. All the acreages that follow are Cheshire acres.

*On 3 February 1351 the Earl allowed the Abbot of Dieulacres all his approved lands on Rudheath near to Byley at 6d an acre.<sup>45</sup> Then three weeks later he granted the Abbott of Chester lands at 4d an acre.<sup>46</sup> That same month Thomas, son of Hugh de Drakelowe, was granted thirty-five acres which Hugh had previously held on Rudheath near Cranage, at the rate of 4d an acre for ten years, thereafter at 6d an acre.<sup>47</sup> In May that year Thomas Daniers, lord of Lostock Gralam, received a grant of all lands which Richard Vernon, the previous lord had held in demesne on Rudheath, rendering the previous amount for the lands.<sup>48</sup> About the same time the Abbot of Chester petitioned the Earl for his lands on Rudheath following the recovery of the wastes against various people and his promises to allow return so long as the abbot put up no defence against the Earl's action as an example to others.<sup>49</sup> In June the Justiciar and Chamberlain of Chester, having spoken to the Abbot about the making of a sluice called 'Hopogate' on Rudheath and his wishing to make a payment from the same privilege, sought instructions.*

*In January 1353 the Earl suspended the rent due on a parcel of land on Rudheath which Stephen de Merton claimed to be a part of his own manor of Lache until his right could be decided, and a further order followed in July.<sup>50</sup> He died in 1361 leaving a 12-year old daughter, Joan as heir.*

*In February 1353, Thomas Daniers petitioned for a plot of land called 'Holesheth' (Hulse Heath) which lay unapproved near to his manor of Lostock: this was granted at the usual rate of 6d an acre.<sup>51</sup> In September Richard de Leftwich was granted discharge of a moiety of a rent of fifty shillings due from lands on Rudheath.<sup>52</sup> Concerns over the*

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43 Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts 1301-1360. pp. 193-99

44 Booth says that nearly seventy-five tenants died in the summer of 1349 as a result of the Black Death

45 BPR, p. 1

46 BPR. p.4

47 BPR. p.2

48 BPR. p.19

49 BPR. p. 21

50 BPR. iii. pp.86. 229

51 BPR. p.90

52 BPR . p.121

*Abbot of Chester's holding of the manor of Cranage were raised in November 1353, when an inquiry was ordered to consider whether the manor had ever been hidated and what rights of common he had on Rudheath.*<sup>53</sup>

*On 28 November 1353 Richard de Leftwich and his wife, Agnes. received lands previously seized from them by the Earl. Their holding for life was to be at the usual rent and two annual appearances at Drake/owe Court. Richard died shortly after and the grant was made out in favour of his widow.*<sup>54</sup>

*On 14 February 1355, William de Holford petitioned for nine acres of land. These lands were those which his grandfather Roger de Hoford had granted to Walter de Holford, his father and which he had held ever since his father's death: he was granted his lands at 6d an acre.<sup>55</sup> In June 1355 an enquiry was ordered into how much land Philip Egerton had on Rudheath and how much he paid.*<sup>56</sup>

*On 16 November 1356 the Earl's companion at arms. Sir John Chandos was granted for his services at the Battle of Poitiers. the manor of Drake/owe with £40 per annum from those tenants nearest to the manor.<sup>57</sup> A few days later William de Holford, for services at the same battle, was granted the two messuages and 20 (42) acres then occupied by William and Adam the Shepherd, at a rent of 6s 8d a year.<sup>58</sup> The Chamberlain accounted for 16s 4d received from William for drawing up the charter.<sup>59</sup>*

*In July 1357 Philip Egerton (who may be the same as Philip le Mou) received return of his messuage, cottage and 57½ acres and one perch that lay between Darkelowe and King Street, at 26s 8d a year.<sup>60</sup> Two days later this grant was amended to include service at Drakelowe court twice a year and that he pay twice the rent on the death of each of his tenants<sup>61</sup> Philip then paid the Chamberlain of Chester 6s 8d for his charter.<sup>62</sup>*

*In August 1357 the Earl ordered his Chamberlain to lease his lands on Rudheath to tenants for life or for periods of years and to allow his tenants freedom for attending the Hundred Courts instead to appear at Drakelowe.<sup>63</sup> Hugh de Millington was assigned a plot of land on Rudheath from which to take turves.<sup>64</sup>*

*For his services in Gascony. William and Nicholas Winnington received a pardon for any misdemeanours, and William also received sixteen acres on Rudheath at the high rate of 9d an acre. In May 1358 Philip le Mou was allowed to hold his lands in Shipbrook at 16 shillings a year and his 3½ acres on Rudheath at 4s 7½d a year.<sup>65</sup> Likewise for his services, William de Rosmegreve was granted twenty acres and a messuage which had lately been held by a Hugh de Crombwe// at 2d an acre.<sup>66</sup> On 1 October 1358 Philip le Mou had a lease of 37½ acres and a moiety of one rood and 17½ perches contained in two separate parcels on Rudheath. These it was said had once been held by Sir Roger Trumpington for twenty years at an annual rent of forty-four shillings.<sup>67</sup>*

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53 BPR. p.132

54 BPR. pp.135 and 216

55 BPR. p.191

56 BPR. p.205

57 BPR . p.231

58 BPR, p.23 I

59 Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts, 1301-1360 p. 240

60 BPR. pp.266, 268

61 Ibid

62 Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts, 1301-1360. p. 240

63 BPR. iii. p.274

64 BPR. iii. p.240

65 BPR. p.242

66 BPR. p.250

67 Cheshire Sheaf, First series (1880), p. 44

*During 1358/59 a William de Ayleworth was bailiff of Rudheath and he was succeeded by William de Diseworth.<sup>68</sup> Diseworth had a ten year lease of the manor- house and demesne lands from 1355/56 and in his first year he was ordered to provided the auditors with a list of those who had bought turves from the manor presumably because it was suspected that there had been concealment of revenue.<sup>69</sup>*

*In August 1359 the Earl instructed that although six years earlier, he had pardoned the Abbot of Chester for the rent on 7 acres 18 perches and on 6 acres and ½ rood, he was henceforth to pay the same.<sup>70</sup>*

*The grant of the demesne lands was superseded by a lifetime grant of the same to Sir John Chandos in November 1357. In the County Court on 6 August 1359 Diseworth was accused of false accounting over a three year period in not recording twenty bushels of wheat, twenty bushels of barley, eighty bushels of oats and the turbary and herbage of the heath. In 1360/1 he took a lease of the turbary and pasture of Rudheath at £2 a year, and when he died the following year this was continued by his widow. He seems to have been followed by John Peterson who remained as bailiff until 1365, though on 4 February 1364. Roger Page, one of the Earl's archers, was appointed bailiff of Rudheath for life in the place of William de Diseworth, taking 2d a day in wages.<sup>71</sup> Peterson took the lease of the turbary and pasture of Rudheath at £2 a year after Diseworth's widow.*

*On 30 November 1364. John Eton, an archer, was allowed a plot of land on Rudheath near Twemlow. at 20 shillings a year.<sup>72</sup>*

*In 1377 Hugh Holme held lands and tenements on Rudheath.<sup>73</sup>*

*In February 1380 John Rose was appointed bailiff for life with the same remuneration Page had received. He was succeeded by Hugh Page towards the end of the century.*

*In 1386, Richard Longe and his wife Margaret, one of the Queens maids, received a grant of £12 a year during Margaret's life from the profits of the manor of Drakelowe and the rents of the tenants.<sup>74</sup>*

*In 1387 Adam of Chester received a grant of turbary and herbage for life.<sup>75</sup> In the same year John de Littleover received a grant on account of his service abroad to the Black Prince. This amounted to twenty acres on Rudheath within the lordship of Drakelowe and lands called Hobbe field and a parcel of waste land, all to be held at 6d a year whereas he had previously paid 8s 4d.<sup>76</sup> An Inquisition post mortem of Hugh Coton held in 1419 determined that he had held his lands on Rudheath, valued at four shillings, at 6d rent.<sup>77</sup>*

*John Fourbour of Yatehouse (Byley) secured a lease of 8 acres at 6s 8d a year for twenty years.<sup>78</sup>*

From the foregoing list it is quite apparent that Rudheath was well colonised by the end of the fourteenth century. The land had been parcelled up and enclosed to form numerous tenements. Beyond this evidence for people living and working in the area during the remainder of the medieval period there is nothing to add.

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68 *Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts. 1301-1361*), p. 215, 259

69 *Account of Master John de Burnham, Chamberlain of Chester, 1361 -62.* p. 138

70 *BPR.* P.360

71 *Account of Master John de Burnham, Chamberlain of Chester 1361 -62.* p.166. *BPR.* p.473

72 *BPR.* p. 472

73 *Orm.* iii. 169

74 *Ibid*

75 *Ibid*

76 *Ibid*

77 *Orm.* iii. p. 169

78 *Ibid*

### 3

## FORMATION OF THE TOWNSHIPS ON RUDHEATH

The colonisation of the waste led to new areas of improved land becoming indistinct parts of some of the township bordering Rudheath as at Byley and Cranage. Others became detached extensions of the original townships as at Lees and Shurlach. In both cases there was no new settlement core. However in several cases discrete townships on Rudheath which did have such a settlement at their heart were formed and are mentioned for the first time during the thirteenth century. But how did the process come about? What were the mechanics of the process?

Basically it seems that there were two significant frontal attacks on the waste. The first of these was from the north with the development of the manor of Lostock, eastwards along the Peover Eye, taking in Birches, Hulse and Hulme (Allostock). The second advance was three-fold: from the south with the development of the manor of Byley northwards with the creation of Yatehouse; the development of the manor of Lees north to Shublach and Earnshaw; and lastly the extension of the manor of Cranage in a north-westerly direction.

When the earl authorised development of the waste it was done for his own benefit in adding extra profitable land to his demesne or to establish additional tenants for extra income. This process of sub-infeudation is evidence of increasing cultivation and a progressive policy of land development.

### Lostock

Lostock was probably the first township to be formed on Rudheath. Somewhat confusingly the place-name 'Lostock' occurs in relation to three contiguous townships to the east of Northwich – Lostock Gram, Lostock Green and Allostock. But which of these, if any, is the original Lostock? The Lostock which is referred to in a grant to Chester Abbey in the 1090s?

As already said the medieval Lostock seems to have contained a number of separate estates which eventually became townships in their own right. These were Birches, Hulse, and Lach Dennis which lie between Lostock Gram and Allostock, and within the ancient bounds of Rudheath.

Both McNeil Dodgson<sup>79</sup> and Eilert Ekwall<sup>80</sup> suggest that Lostock derives from OE *hlose* meaning 'pig-sty' and *stoc* meaning 'secondary settlement of farm', hence we have something like 'pig-farm', or a hamlet associated with the pasturage of swine on the wastes of Rudheath. Alternatively the first element of this place-name might derive from *loose* meaning 'small', thus a small settlement or farm. 'Allostock', according to the same authorities, might mean 'Over Lostock', 'Old Lostock' or the 'the hall of Lostock'.<sup>81</sup> Spellings have resulted in *Lostoche* (late 11<sup>th</sup> c.), *Lostocke* (mid 12<sup>th</sup> c.), *Lostoc* (1212), *Lastok* (1279), and *Lostoke* (1301). Similarly *Allostocke* (1234), *Allelostocke* (1310) and *Alstoke* (1312). There are also references to *Parva Lostoc* in the early thirteenth century.

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<sup>79</sup> *Place-names of Cheshire*

<sup>80</sup> *Place-names of Lancashire*, Manchester 1922

<sup>81</sup> Dodgson, pp.189, 217

The place-name Lostock is not referred to in the Domesday Survey but first occurs in documentary sources from the last decade of the eleventh century: occasionally we find Lostock described as being 'upon Rudheath'. Allostock first appears during the mid-thirteenth century. From the late thirteenth century the place-name Lostock Gralam also appears in the records. 'Gralam' was affixed to the name to refer to Gralam de Lostock, who held the manor, or a part of it, in the mid-thirteenth century. Similarly, I would suggest that Allostock refers to the other Lostock held by Alan de Lostock who held that part in the mid-thirteenth century, rather than the suggestions made above.

The early history of the manor of Lostock is difficult to determine and one reason for this is that prior to the fourteenth century the name 'Lostock' can mean either Lostock Gralam or Allostock. The chronology of the first appearance of the various place-names seems to suggest that there was an original Lostock which was subsequently divided up between younger sons. This division may have occurred at an early date in view of the fact that Hugh 'fitz Norman' and his brother Ralph gave their part of Lostock to the Abbey of Saint Werburgh in the 1090s.

A tradition dating from 1386 suggests that the whole of Lostock was once held by a Saxon thane. Evidence submitted by John Holford during the course of the armorial dispute between the families of Grosvenor and Scrope in 1386, stated that the manor of Lostock originally belonged to *Hame*. Following this man's death at the Battle of Nantwich his lands were seized by Hugh, Earl of Chester, and granted to Hugh Runchamp, who had Nether (Lower) Lostock and Gilbert Grosvenor who had Over Lostock.<sup>82</sup> This seems to support the suggestion that the division of Lostock was as early as the 1070s following an otherwise unknown battle which was presumably a part of the Cheshire rebellion of 1069/70. If this were true one might expect one or the other, or both, to have been mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086.<sup>83</sup> What is more likely is that for some reason, and as a reward is perfectly plausible, the manors were created from the wastes of Rudheath sometime in the twelfth century.<sup>84</sup> Whatever the truth there can be little doubt that post Conquest the family of Runchamp held Lostock and Hugh's son Gralam became known as 'de Lostock'.

One of the earls, perhaps Earl Rannulph II (1129-53) and not Hugh, granted to Hugh de Runchamp, a man with much property in Lincolnshire, an estate or manor based on the township of Lostock. According to Ormerod, this Hugh has a son named Richard who then had a son named Gralam.<sup>85</sup> It would seem that this Norman family who took the name Lostock eventually had extensive land holdings with rights stretching along between what is now known as the Wade (or Bradshaw) Brook and the Peover Eye, for as we shall learn the townships of Birches, Hulse, Hulme and Allostock were all under the lordship of the Lostock family. The family also held the manor of Lees (a manor on the other side of Allostock between Byley and Cranage) which this Gralam, about the time of King John, gave to Liulph de Twemlow in return for five shillings a year and a hawk. A little later, in 1234, this same Gralam, or his son of the same name, gave an estate at Hulme in Allostock to Ralph Grosvenor.

The younger Gralam had three sons. Richard continued to live at Lostock and took that name; Geoffrey was given the manor of Rode and settled at Little Moreton and took the name Moreton or Morton; and Robert of whom nothing else is known. It is just possible that this last named man, or some other close relation may have resided at Church Lawton and was the

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<sup>82</sup> Ormerod, iii, pp.144, 163

<sup>83</sup> Lack of mention in the Survey does not of course infer that a manor or township did not then exist.

<sup>84</sup> The division of Rudheath into discreet estates seems to have begun in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, during the time of Earl Rannulph, if not earlier.

<sup>85</sup> Orm, I, p. 670



ancestor of the Lawton family. The Lawtons held property in Hulse, originally a part of the manor of Lostock and seem to have had close links with the Lostock family

A question that needs to be asked is what connection was there between Hugh 'fitz Norman' who granted part of Lostock to Chester Abbey and the Runchamp family? In Domesday, Hugh is mentioned as being lord of the two contiguous manors named Lawton, a part of Goostrey and Byley all of which had been the property of a Saxon named Godric. In addition to part of Lostock, Hugh also granted one of the Lawton manors and part of Goostrey to Chester Abbey.

Richard Lostock, son of Gralam of Lostock, had two sons who both died without issue, leaving their sister, Joan to inherit the family's manor of Lostock and pass it on to her husbands.

About 1240 Gralam granted to Bertram one of his sons land from his demesne called 'Whitfield' with three butts towards the west and the land of 'Mossefield', reserving the field and wood of Plumley and Lostock, for a pair of gloves. He also gave Bertram, with consent of Richard, his eldest son and heir, another 4 butts of land. Witnesses to these grants included Geoffrey de Runchamp, Adam his brother and Ralph 'Turneveglyn', a person who figures frequently in property deeds of the time.<sup>86</sup> 'Turneveglyn' is probably from the Norman family name 'Tourneville' from the place of the name.

During the reign of King Henry III, Gralam de Lostock, son of Hugh de Runchamp, granted the Premonstratensian canons of Warburton land in Lostock that had apparently been marked out by them with a series of crosses in the ground. The area named 'Caldecote' was described as starting at 'Livildesforde' and then following a ditch as far as the lands of a *Ralph T.....e*, perhaps Ralph Turnevilleyn who held lands in Hulse, following his lands as far as a stream which was then followed up back to the starting point.<sup>87</sup>

The main line of the Lostock family terminated in the first decade of the fourteenth century. Richard de Lostock had a daughter Joan who became heir to her father and brothers, Richard and Thomas. In 1307, the elder Richard sold lordship of the manor of Lostock to Ralph Vernon of Shipbrook, with the proviso that Joan's descendents continued to use the estate. She married firstly William Toft from whom are descended the Holford family who held lands in Holford, Lostock Gralam, Lache Dennis and Stubbs Lache. Joan next married Ralph Vernon's second son, Thomas, from whom are descended the Vernons of Lostock Gralam and Haslington; during the reign of Edward II Thomas held the 'vill' of Lostock and lands in Parva Lostock and Plumley.

Richard de Lostock, Gralam's grandson, died about 1315 when his widow sued certain individuals for dower of messuages and lands in Lostock which amounted to some seventy acres, (about 150 statute acres), five messuages and half of the mill there.<sup>88</sup>

As the Vernons were now lords of the manor it is not surprising to find Ralph Vernon's widow suing for dower of property in Lostock. In 1320 Margaret Vernon sued her son Thomas for twelve messuages, 160 acres of land, five acres of meadow, ten of wood 100 of pasture (about 580 statute acres) and two parts of the two mills in Lostock Gralam.

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<sup>86</sup> *Ch. Sheaf*, vol xvii

<sup>87</sup> Ormerod, iii, p.163. This parcel of land probably bordered Hulse. A Simon Caldecote had lands in Hulse in the late 13<sup>th</sup> c. and the ford may have been over a stream known as the 'Leveth' which flowed through Hulse.

<sup>88</sup> Ormerod, iii, p.164. *Ch. Sheaf*, vol xx. Refers to a charter of Ralph de Vernon to Ric. de Lostock and Agnes his wife. (See also *Journal Chester Arch Soc.*, 2 N.S., and 4 N.S.)

From this time on it seems that the lordship passed to Joan's other family the Holfords who were descended from her first husband William de Toft. In 1359/60 John Holford successfully recovered from Richard Vernon of Lostock Gralam the manor of Holford and in 1372 John, son of William Holford, is described as 'lord of Lostock' when he granted lands here. However some lands did remain with the Vernons of Lostock.

Other proprietors of lands in Lostock are the Grosvenors of Hulme; the Lache family who had two messuages and twenty-six acres of land in 1315; the Winningtons who had two messuages and thirty-four acres in 1335; the Fittons of Gawsworth and then the Davenports of Henbury, who, during the fourteenth century, held property known as 'Bancroft' which consisted of two messuages and twenty acres; and a younger branch of the Lostock family. It seems that all these properties were held from the Holfords as heirs of Richard de Lostock.

## Lach Dennis

Lach Dennis seems to have been a part of Lostock and not a separate manor as is suggested by those who identify Domesday 'Lece' with Lach Dennis.<sup>89</sup> The lordship of the township was divided between the abbeys of Chester and Vale Royal. Each would seem to have been the name of a parcel of lands or tenements on Rudheath and perhaps one of the many 'squats' which were established here during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In the late 1240s Richard son of Gralam de Lostock granted the Abbot of Chester his lordships of 'Crooked Lache' and 'Wingates'.

In the late thirteenth century John de Cotton, son of Matilda de Lache, daughter of Gralam de Lostock, granted property in what was then known as 'Lache Maubank' to the new abbey of Vale Royal: this consisted on a messuage and two carucates of land and an acre of meadow worth £4 a year.<sup>90</sup> About the same time Henry, son of Hugh Cotton granted his rights to the wastes of 'Lache Maubank' to Chester Abbey.<sup>91</sup> As a consequence, in 1288, an agreement was drawn up between the two abbeys to define their respective right in tenements known as 'Lache Maubank' and 'Crokede Lache' and the fields of 'Wingates'.<sup>92</sup> The word 'Maubank' is interesting as it may refer to the Malbank family who were barons of Nantwich and had a connection by marriage to the Vernon family who held the barony of Shipbrook.

## Hulse

The name of this township first occurs in the mid- thirteenth century when, between 1249 and 1265, Richard of Lostock granted to his lord, Abbot Thomas of St Werburghs, Chester, the homage and service which Ralph Turnevileyn had owed him for a holding in Hulse.<sup>93</sup> At some time between 1265 and 1291, Jonas of Hulse granted his property to Robert the clerk, eldest son of Richard Grosvenor, who then granted the same to the Abbey.<sup>94</sup> William of Lawton also granted a selion in Hulse to his lord, Abbot Simon.<sup>95</sup> This strip of land is described as lying in a field known as 'Pilotscroft', between the selions of Robert son of Herbert and extending from 'Backfurlong' as far as the 'Leveth'. Ralph Turnevileyn of Hulse gave the abbot all his lands held from him by his brother Jonas at an annual rent of 12d paid on St Andrews Day.<sup>96</sup> This Ralph also granted, before 1270, his half of the field known as

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<sup>89</sup> Dodgson, *et al.*

<sup>90</sup> *VRLB*, pp. vii, 63, 130, 131; *Cat. Anc. Deeds* B1843, 1845

<sup>91</sup> CCA, No. 749

<sup>92</sup> CCA, No 737

<sup>93</sup> 730 (dated 1249-65)

<sup>94</sup> 723 (dated 1265-91)

<sup>95</sup> 724 (dated 1269-91)

<sup>96</sup> 725 (dated 1265-91)

'Sulinesfield' in Hulse, the other half which William, his sister Eve's son held, William's services and his rent of 12d a year paid on St Andrews Day.<sup>97</sup>

Others with interests here also released their right in favour of Chester Abbey. In 1269/70 William son of Richard Pulford gave lands in Hulse which Ralph Turnevileyn had purchased from his uncle Ralph and given to him. William son of William of Birches gave his land, which he had in Hulse by gift of Ralph Turnevilyn, to his chief lord, the Abbot of Chester.<sup>98</sup> This same plot of land was then granted by the Abbot to William de Lawton.<sup>99</sup>

Robert son of Herbert Hulse granted the abbot 8 butts of land in Hulse field lying between that which William of Birches had in 'Sulinfield'..... He also quit claims rights to lands previously granted by Ralph Turnevileyn and Ivan his uncle, William Pulford, and William Birches.<sup>100</sup>

In the 1270s and 80s, William son of William Lawton granted 7 selions in Hulse Field and partly in 'Hewesfield' and his claim to 3d rent from the same selions.<sup>101</sup>

Adam son of Havice of Hulse quit his claim to a half a headland in Hulse.<sup>102</sup>

Ralph Holys (Hulse) and William Birches with the consent of their lord, Richard Lostock, granted their lands in Hulse to Chester Abbey.

During the 1270s and 80s, Richard son of Richard Lostock acknowledged that a plot of land, described as a 'new assart', beyond the ancient dyke of Hulse field, to the south and between the dyke and the 'Wyteweye' and enclosed by a new dyke, was the property of Robert son of Herbert Hulse who quit claimed it to the Abbot.<sup>103</sup>

At some time in the 1280s, Robert son of Herbert of Hulse quit his claim to land in Hulse to his lord, Abbot Simon of St Werburgh's. This piece of land was described as being between that held by Simon Caldecote and that of the Abbot himself: incidently the chief witness to the deed was his neighbour Robert Grosvenor, then sheriff of Cheshire.<sup>104</sup> This same Robert also gave to Wladus Wala piece of land called 'the Halland', previously held by a Hugh de Hasthelegh, to build a house upon; for this Wladus gave Robert ten shillings in silver.<sup>105</sup>

During the last decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century or the first decade of the next century, Richard Lostock quit-claimed to the Abbot of Chester any rights to the wastes of Hulse along with licence to cultivate and any other lands enclosed by hedge or ditch. This grant gives the boundaries as follows: 'from the town of Holys down by the high road towards Macclesfield as far as Portford, and then returning towards the south by the road known as the Whiteway as far as the bounds of Birches, and then in a straight line as far as the hedge made to divide Holys and Birches.'<sup>106</sup>

Later, in the time of king Edward III, these same bounds are subject of a licence granted by Thomas Vernon, husband of Joan Lostock (heiress of Richard Lostock), in favour of the abbot to enclose and cultivate the waste lands of Hulse. The bounds begin at Portford and

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<sup>97</sup> 726 & 7 (dated 1269-71)

<sup>98</sup> 728 (dated 1269/70)

<sup>99</sup> 831 (dated 1267-70)

<sup>100</sup> 732 (dated 1269-91)

<sup>101</sup> 733 & 4 (dated 1269-91)

<sup>102</sup> 735 (dated 1265-91)

<sup>103</sup> 736 (dated 1265-91)

<sup>104</sup> 722 (dated 1283-91)

<sup>105</sup> Hand List of Legh Charters, John Rylands Library, p.280. Orm, iii, p.167

<sup>106</sup> 731 (dated 1291-1316)

follow southwards alongside the close held by Robert Grosvenor until a point near the house of Robert Idinghale on the road from Chester to Macclesfield. The road is then followed along the 'Lachebothe' to 'Lachebothditch', which is crossed to reach the 'Quikeditch' which formed the boundary between Hulse and Birches. This ditch is followed until it reaches a street called the 'Lomylathe' which is followed as far as a ford called Platford. Then through the water to another ditch which marked the boundary of Peter Warburton's lands and following on to a street which ran through the centre of Hulse village and on to Portford.

In February 1353, Thomas Daniers petitioned for a plot of land called 'Holesheth' (Hulse Heath) which lay unapproved near to his manor of Lostock: this was granted at the usual rate of 6d an acre.<sup>107</sup>

The Abbot of Chester had licence from Thomas de Vernon to enclose and cultivate all the wastes of Hulse on Rudheath. [1324-49]

A William Hichsone de Holes held a small estate here, of which a messuage and nine acres passed to John Hichsone de Holes who was sued in 1375 for dower by William's widow.

In 1527/8 William Egerton suffered a recovery of three messuages and seventy-five acres in Hulse, Rudheath and Stublach in favour of Ranle Pole, Richard Sneyde and William Plumtre. (Orm.)

## **Newall**

During the medieval period Newhall was a part of the barony of Shipbrook and held by the Vernon family.

A family bearing the name of this township existed throughout the middle ages.

Thomas Venable of Antrobus held an estate here in 1579 which was described as containing forty acres (84 statute) held from John Savage and worth twenty shillings a year.

## **Stublach**

The place-name first occurs in the mid thirteenth century. There are many variations including 'Stubbes', 'Stubbes super Rudhet' and 'Stubbes et Lach'. The first element literally means 'the place of tree stumps' suggesting an area cleared from woodland. The 'lache' element refers to a boggy stream or streams and is that part of the township which borders with Lache Dennis. There was also an area here known as 'Stubbes Green'.

Anciently this township was divided between two separate hamlets of 'Stubbs' and 'Lache'. The former gave name to a family settled here and they seem to have held lands also in Leese. A Henry, son of William, son of Jordan de Stubbs occurs as a grantor in the late 1280s. In 1299 Philip, son of David de Stubbs granted to Nicholas, his brother, all the lands in the township given to him by his mother. In 1311 fourteen acres here were sold by Ralph King and his wife Margery (who may have been originally married to a Stubbs) to Roger son of William de Toft. This parcel of lands eventually passed to the Holfords and thence to the Cholmondeleys.

Chester Abbey had an interest in lands here. In 1403 an annuity was paid to Charles de Holland out of rents due to the king from the abbey's lands in Stubbs and Rudheath.

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<sup>107</sup> *BPR*, p.90

## Earnshaw

Eardshaw (or Earnshaw) lies partly in the township of Stublach, partly in Rudheath and partly in Leese, and contains 139 acres of land. It lies wholly in Sandbach parish.

The place-name first occurs in the mid fourteenth century and may mean the 'herdsman's hut'. It is sometimes spelt 'Yardshaw'.

Eardshaw seems to have been the home of the Page family perhaps from as early as the time of king Edward III. Successive generations of the family were in royal service under that king and Richard II. Roger Page was bailiff of Rudheath and Drakelow from 1365 until his death in 1379/80. His son Hugh was also bailiff during Richard II's reign. From the time of the reign of Henry VI the Page family were certainly styled as lords of this place. Subsequently in 1666 John Page sold Eardshaw to Sir Henry Delves of Doddington and thence to the Prescotts. Sir Charles Prescott then sold his estates to Charles Shakerley, esquire, who in 1833 sold them to the France family.

## Drakelow

Drakelow is a separate manor within the lordship of Rudheath. It lies within the parish of Davenham.

The origin of the name which is first recorded in the early fourteenth century is the 'dragon's mound'. A rather fanciful meaning perhaps based on some ancient tradition that a dragon guarded a burial mound containing treasure hereabouts.

As a medieval manor it was frequently leased along with Rudheath. One of the most famous lessee was Sir John Chandos who had a grant of the manor and £40 or rents from Rudheath in 1357 for life. Following him members of the families of Moreton, Mainwaring, Legh, Bulkeley and Holford were tenants. For much of the sixteenth century it was the family of Bulkeley of Cheadle who seem to have been regular lessees.

A family bearing the local name emerges in the medieval period. A Thomas son of Hugh de Drakelowe occurs in the 1350s.

## Allostock

This manor became the possession of the Grosvenors who settled at Hulme, within the township. Richard son of Randle Grosvenor was the grantee of this property from Gram de Lostock in 1234.<sup>108</sup>

*....I Gram de Lostock give and concede and by this my present charter confirm [to] Richard son of Ranulph Grossovenatoris all lands in Hulme within [the] hedge, which Richard son of Maurice son of Adam held, with common of pasture, for his homage and service, to have and to hold of me and my heirs.....*

This same Richard also received a grant of two bovates of land from a Richard de Chornoc in 1247.

Following the Lord Edward's foundation of Vale Royal Abbey in or sometime before 1270, one of major bequests was his own manor of Weaverham to which was appended the manor

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<sup>108</sup> Ormerod, iii, p. 145

of Lostock, (Allostock), so that from 1275 the Grosvenors of Lostock and Rudheath did homage to the Abbot for their lands in this area.

Robert Grosvenor occurs in a grant of lands from Richard son of Richard de Lostock and also, about 1284, in a grant from John son of Alan de Lostock of all his lands and rights in Allostock in exchange for lands in Bexton.<sup>109</sup>

Robert, and his wife Margery, next occurs in an exchange of properties with Adam de Merton.<sup>110</sup>

The next Robert Grosvenor was under age when his father died in 1292 so the Abbot of Vale Royal as overlord of Allostock claimed wardship in opposition to Richard de Lostock who believed he had a right as overlord of Hulme and in view of the original grant by Gramam.<sup>111</sup> The matter seems to have been resolved as the family's estates in Hulme were held of the Lostocks and their heirs, the Holfords, whilst the lands in Allostock were held from the Abbey.

A later Robert died in 1397 and an inquisition post mortem ascertained that he died in possession of the manor of Allostock worth £20 p.a. and held from the abbot of Vale Royal, as well as the manor of Hulm held from John de Holford and worth ten marks. The Grosvenor line died out in 1465 when Robert Grosvenor died leaving six daughters: Elizabeth, wife of Peter Dutton; Emma, wife of John Legh of Booths; Agnes, wife of William Stanley of Hooton; Margery who remained unmarried; Katherine, wife of Richard Winnington; and Margaret, wife of Thomas Leycester. All Robert's lands were divided up amongst these daughters of which Hulme, except Pygreve Wood, went to Emma Legh, Margery had the manor of Allostock, and two-thirds of Pygreve, and Margaret Leycester had estates in Nether Peover and a third of the wood. When Margery died her estates were divided between her sisters. The Legh share eventually passed through an heiress to the Shakerley family from Lancashire who then made Hulme their residence and continued to do so for many generations.<sup>112</sup>

The Shakerleys as a result of this marriage to a Legh and Grosvenor heiress obtained not only Hulme manor but also lands elsewhere in Allostock, Lostock Gramam, Nether Peover and Lach Dennis all held from the heirs of Richard de Lostock in *socage* (by service, normally paying rent) and *fealty* (loyalty by adhering to customary services, e.g. attendance at the manorial court). The Leycester share of lands in Allostock were held from the crown as of the dissolved abbey of Vale Royal by paying an annual rent of 4s 5d and attendance at Weaverham court.<sup>113</sup>

In Allostock there was a family named Nightingale who seem to have been joint owners of the township about 1270. Stephen 'ni the Gale' and Robert his brother. Stephen had a son Richard, and a later descendant was Hugh of Lostock, his wife Alice, and their sons, William, John the chaplain, and Hugh. Their surnames occur as Nittegale, Nythegale, Nithgale, Neythe-gale and Nichtingale, from which the ordinary form Nightingale gradually emerged. The family held, their lands in Lostock under the Grosvenors.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *Cheshire Sheaf*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol xx

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<sup>111</sup> Orm, 111, 146.

<sup>112</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Ormerod, iii, p. 150

<sup>114</sup> *Cheshire Sheaf*, vol xxxi, item 6851. See also the Ancestor, vol 2 (from the Shakerley coll.)

## Hulme Hall

Hulme Hall lies in an extremely flat and secluded situation, which at a distant period probably added to its strength by swamps and natural thickets. The site of the hall itself is a parallelogram, containing about a statute acre, and defended by a moat averaging twenty yards in width. The water is crossed by a stone bridge of two arches, the projecting piers of which have been filled up with stone seats, placed in a point .... As this side of the moat fronts a large range of ancient barns and stables, forming agreeably to old custom, the principle avenue to the house.<sup>115</sup>

The mansion itself is said to have occupied, with its quadrangular court, nearly the entire space within the moat. The kitchen part alone is remaining, which is composed of timber and plaster; the basement storey extremely low, and supported by a huge obtuse arch of carved oak.

Some of the original rooms are referred to in an award of dower granted to Joan wife of Sir Thomas Grosvenor in the mid-fifteenth century. The escheator assigned her 'the lesser chamber of the manor of Hulme', with 'le Pantre, and Buttre under the same chamber'; 'the Larder, le Deyhouse, le Malthous, le ..... berne, le Hayberne, le Vyne Yorde, le Night gale Erber, with le Lytell Erber, with free entry and exit across the bridge'.<sup>116</sup>

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### 3

## **RUDHEATH UNDER THE TUDORS AND STUARTS**

Identifying people who lived and worked on Rudheath during the medieval period is extremely difficult if not impossible. However by the time of the Tudor reign it is possible to identify individuals. The first source is a muster roll of 1548 the details of which are summarised in the table in an Appendix. In all ninety men aged between sixteen and sixty many of whom will have had families. If we estimate that two-thirds were men with a wife and an average of three children we have a figure of 240 with the remaining third gives 270.

*To follow*



<i>Manor</i>	<i>Saxon Owner</i>	<i>Norman Lord</i>	<i>Hides</i>	<i>Plough-lands available</i>	<i>Plough-lands in use</i>	<i>People</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Value TRE</i>	<i>Found to be..</i>	<i>Value 1086</i>
Witton	Dot	Gilbert	1.5	2	1	4 *	Mill		Waste	7s
Wincham	Dot	Gilbert	1.5	2	1	2 *	Wood, eyrie, wich-house	Waste	Waste	10s
Peover	Dot	Gilbert	1/12						Waste	Waste
Peover	Edward	William	2/3	1			Wood	5s	Waste	12d
Peover	Godgyth ?	Ranulph	1/12	1/2						
Peover	Erngeat	Ranulph	1/2	1	For 2 oxen	5	Wood, eyrie	15s		4s
Goostrey	Colben	William	1/4	For 2 oxen					Waste	Waste
Goostrey	Godric	Hugh	3/4	1.5				Waste	Waste	Waste
Cranage	Godric	Robert	1	1.5	1	2	Wood, hay		Waste	3s
Lees	Hasten	William	1/2	1					Waste	Waste
Lees	Colben	Moran	1/2	1	1	3 *	Meadow	Waste		8s
Byley	Godric	Hugh	1	2	1	4 * (2)	Meadow, wood	10s		10s
Byley	Archil									
Byley	Godwin									
Croxton	Godwin	Joscelin	1	1	1	5 *		4s		10s
Shipbrook	Osmer	Richard	2	5	2	4	Wood, meadow	20s	Waste	10s
Shurlach	Alweard	Richard	1	2	1.5	5 *	Fishery, meadow	8s	Waste	7s
Shurlach	Bers									



## APPENDIX TWO

### THE BOUNDS OF RUDHEATH

The boundaries from the first decade or so of the fourteenth century are as follows:

'..... Rudheth begins at Holdene next Shorlache, following Holdene as far as Lostokebroke, and so following Lostokebroke as far as Loweforth, and thence as far as Portforth, and from Portforth following the said way as far as Rysneforth; and from Rysneforth as far as to Bradshagheforth<sup>117</sup>, and from Bradshagheforth as far as *Ornesq'th*<sup>118</sup>, following up Lostokebroke, and from Lostokebroke to Rogereswey, and from Rogereswey as far as the Shaghesiche, and then following that siche as far as the Sandyford, and thence following that siche leaving Chikenshaghe in Rudheth, as far as to the bounds between Twemlocke<sup>119</sup> and Rudheth, following those bounds as far as Gledeway<sup>120</sup>, and from Gledeway following a certain old fosse up as far as [*alind*] next to the house of Richard son of Hugh on Fernyhull<sup>121</sup> and thence up by the same old fosse as far as the Sagemere, and thence back by that old fosse by the house of Thomas Hardy, which is within Rudheth, as far as the wood of Twamlowe, and then following the end of the wood of Twemlowe and so following the outside of the wood of Twemlowe as far as the wood of Cranage and following the end of that wood as far as a certain [*alder*] [*grove*] at the head of the township of Craunache, and thence as far as Redlache, and from Redlache following the old dyche as far as Whystillshaghe, and thence following a certain siche as far as a certain marl-pit next Jurdanesruddinge, and so following that ruddyng along a certain old fosse as far as Legheslone, and beyond Legheslone ascending by a certain fosse to Leghelidiate<sup>122</sup>, and thence following a certain fosse as far as Synelidiate and beyond following a certain old fosse the Cowhouse, and following old fosse as far as Ravenes croftlache, and descending the same fosse (as far as) Lynestrete, and beyond Lynestrete following a certain old fosse as far as (and) into the Hethlache, and thence following a certain old fosse as far as Alstanethorne siche, following that siche as far as the head of the lane of Wodehouses, and beyond that lane following a certain old fosse as far as Pertreleghe, and thence as far as to le Wytesiche, following that siche as far as the garden of Hulcok de Vernoun, and so following a certain old fosse by (the) road through the middle of the garden of the aforesaid Hulkok, leaving half of that garden and house thereof within Rudheth, as far as a certain dividing oak, and from that oak as far as another oak standing in a certain fosse [of Richard Vernon following that ditch unto Whatcroftlone and so beyond Whatcroftlone following a certain old ditch]<sup>123</sup> between two fields one of which is within the bounds of Rudheth as far as Shebrokemosse and following that within the boundary of Rudheth as far as Pulsiche in Shebrokelone and following the same siche as far as a certain old fosse which extends as far as the house of William Page in Shebroke, and thence beyond another road as far as the house of Reginald Legge, where a certain old cottage is raised in Rudheth, and so descending by the head of the grange of the said Reginald, following a certain fosse as far as the Morstall, and thence following a certain old fosse round a certain croft as far as the head of the old field, and so along the head of that field following a certain old fosse as far as another fosse between Symmesfyld and

<sup>117</sup> The Ledger Book version gives 'Hardeshagheforth'.

<sup>118</sup> Both the *Ledger Book* and DSS 3991/183/2 give Ormesforth, but this is not the spelling in DLT/A/30/10.

<sup>119</sup> 'Twemlowe' in other versions

<sup>120</sup> 'Goldewey' in other versions.

<sup>121</sup> This house on 'Fernyhull' is not mentioned in the *Ledger Book* version.

<sup>122</sup> The Ledger Book has Bynelegh-lydeyate'.

<sup>123</sup> This line appears in DSS 3991/183/2 and in the Ledger Book where it is 'Nicholas de Vernon' and not Richard.

Rudheth and so following the bounds along Symmesfyld as far as a certain marlpit, and thence as far as Bradfordwey next "le Lanedyfyld<sup>124</sup>," and thence extending through the middle of the head of the same field as far as a certain marl-pit<sup>125</sup> within Rudheth, and from that marl-pit following old fosse round "le Lanedyfyld," as far as Walter Page's marl-pit, and thence descending as far as (and) into Old fyld syche, following that fosse as far as Bradforthebroke, and so across Bradforthebroke ascending along Sherlache dyche, following that fosse on the left-hand side as far as Bradforde moor, and thence leaving that moor in Rudheth, following a certain old fosse as far as the township of Bradford, and so across the way between the house of William Fox on the one side and Ranulph de Wynyngton on the other as far as another way, leaving the house of the aforesaid Ranulph within Rudheth, and so from that way extending beyond the field of Bradforth along a certain old fosse by the road as far as the headland and from thence straight as far as Goselache, following Goselache as far as the lane of Stephen le Hunt, ascending this lane as far as the house of Alice who was wife of Stephen le Hunt<sup>126</sup> and thence following a certain old fosse as far as the bounds of Witton, following those bounds as far as the Longe acre, which is within Rudheth, and so straight between the bounds of Witton and Rudheth as far as the road which leads to the Chapel of Witton, and across that road straight to Holdene, where the first bound begins.'

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<sup>124</sup> In DSS 3991/183/2 this is either 'Landfield' or 'Langdefield' and in the *Ledger Book* as 'Levediesfeld'.

<sup>125</sup> The underlined section is repeated in the *Ledger Book* - probably a copying error.

<sup>126</sup> The house of Alice does not occur in the *Ledger Book* version.

## APPENDIX THREE

### THE REASONS WHY DOMESDAY 'LECE' IS NOT LACH DENNIS

*Lece* is the name given to two manors, one held before the Conquest by Hasten and the other by Colben. By the time of the Domesday Survey these were held by William fitz Nigel, baron of Halton, and Moran, one of a number of the Earl of Chester's minor tenants. Tait, following a suggestion made by Brownbill (*Ch. Sheaf*, iv, 61) tentatively identifies *Lece* with Lach Dennis and even suggests that Colben's part can be identified with Stublach (*Ch. Sheaf*, iv, 96). In doing so Tait rejects Ormerod's identification with Lees (Ormerod, iii, 139) Dodgson (p.187), whilst agreeing that there are problems with the identification of the manor, follows Tait's opinion, and, more recently, Thacker identifies *Lece* with Lach Dennis. Interestingly Dodgson concedes that Lach Dennis does not appear in the records of the Halton barony and that this is an obstacle to such an identification; likewise Lees does not. However, that fact alone cannot be used as an argument as the manor or manors might well have been subject to some unrecorded grant and Dodgson goes on to mention that Norton Priory, founded by fitz Nigel, had an interest in Lach Dennis, but then that house also had interests in nearby Nether Peover and in Shurlach. An intriguing possibility is that Colben, one of the pre-Conquest lords of *Lece*, has a Scandinavian name and that the suffix Dennis might refer to someone of Danish stock and was added to distinguish that part from that held by William fitz Nigel.

Lach Dennis would seem to have been the name of a parcel of lands or a tenement on Rudheath, perhaps one of the many 'squats' which were established here during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. In fact it seems to have been a part of the manor of Lostock, which although unnoticed in Domesday may have existed prior to that time. This manor extends along the length of the southern bank of the Cow Brook and Bradshaw Brook. Tradition suggests that a Saxon name Hame held Lostock and that following his demise at the battle of Nantwich (circa 1070) Earl Hugh of Chester divided the manor into two giving one half to Hugh de Runchamp, whose son Gram settled there and hence the name Lostock Gram, and the other, Allostock, to Robert Grosvenor. Whatever the truth of the legend there can be little doubt that post Conquest the family of Runchamp held Lostock Gram and took the surname Lostock. In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century John de Cotton, son of Matilda de Lache, daughter of Gram de Lostock, granted property in what was then known as 'Lache Maubank' to the new abbey of Vale Royal: this consisted on a messuage and 2 carucates of land and an acre of meadow worth £4 a year, (*VRLB*, pp. vii, 63, 130, 131; *Cat. Anc. Deeds* B1843, 1845) suggesting that the area was part of the Lostock manor.

The manor of Lostock Gram was given to the Abbey of St. Werburgh's by Hugh Fitz Norman, the lord of Byley and Goostrey, and his brother Ralph, in ..... As a consequence, in 1288, an agreement was drawn up between the two abbeys to define their respective right in tenements known as 'Lache Maubank' and 'Crokede Lache' and the fields of 'Wingates'.

Following the Lord Edward's foundation of Vale Royal Abbey in or sometime before 1270, one of major bequests was his own manor of Weaverham to which was appended the manor of Lostock, so that from 1275 the Grosvenor's of Lostock and Rudheath did homage to the Abbot for their lands in this area.

From these pieces of evidence it seems that Lache Maubank, later known as Lach Dennis, was a subordinate part of Lostock Gram and not a separate manor. For that reason I would suggest it cannot be identified with Domesday's *Lece*.





APPENDIX FOUR

**THE MEN OF THE 1548 MUSTER**

Township	Equipment	Status
<b>Rudheath</b>		
Edward Cook	a jack, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Peter Sutton	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Arthur Symcock		Able but lacking harness
John Higginson		Able but lacking harness
Arthur Bulkley		Able but lacking harness
Richard Yett		Able but lacking harness
Thomas Newall		Able but lacking harness
Roger Deane		Able but lacking harness
Randal Eaton		Able but lacking harness
Thomas Bulkley	a jack & a bill	Able but lacking harness
James Vernon	a jack	Able but lacking harness
William Newhall	a jack	Unable to serve
Thomas Bradford	a sallet	Unable to serve
Arthur Wrench	a jack	Unable to serve
John Goodier	a steel cap	Unable to serve
<b>Lostock Gramam</b>		
Edward Sudlowe	Jointly jacks, sallets, bows & arrows	Archer
Robert Robynson		Archer
Robert Cotton	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
William Wrench	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
James Ward	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Peter Venables	a jack, sallet, & bill	Billman with harness
William Tew	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
John Grange	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Anthony Widder	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
John Wood	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
John Legh	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Edward Blease	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Richard Widder	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
John Jackson	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
John Foxley	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Robert Carter	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Hugh Jackson		Unable to serve
Edward Broome		Unable to serve
Randle Stakey		Unable to serve
Geffrey Hey		Unable to serve
Robert Hey		Unable to serve
John Holford		Unable to serve
<b>Lees</b>		
Humphrey Boyle	a jack, sallet, bow & arrows.	Archer
Richard Carter	a jack & a bill	Able but lacking harness
William Whishaw	a bill	Able but lacking harness
Thomas Yate	a sallet	Able but lacking harness
Edward Carter	a jack & a bill	Able but lacking harness
Roger Ameson	a jack & a bill	Able but lacking harness
John Mather	a bill	Able but lacking harness
John Whistay		Able but lacking harness
<b>Hulse</b>		
John Hulse	a jack, sallet, bill & splints	Billman with harness
Edward Deyne		Able but lacking harness
William Chedle		Able but lacking harness
Edward Bolte		Able but lacking harness
John Ayton	a jack & sallet	Unable to serve



		Able but lacking harness Able but lacking harness Able but lacking harness Able but lacking harness Able but lacking harness Able but lacking harness Able but lacking harness
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