

# TONY BOSTOCK'S LOCAL HISTORY NOTES: WINSFORD & WHARTON

## Winsford and Wharton in the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century

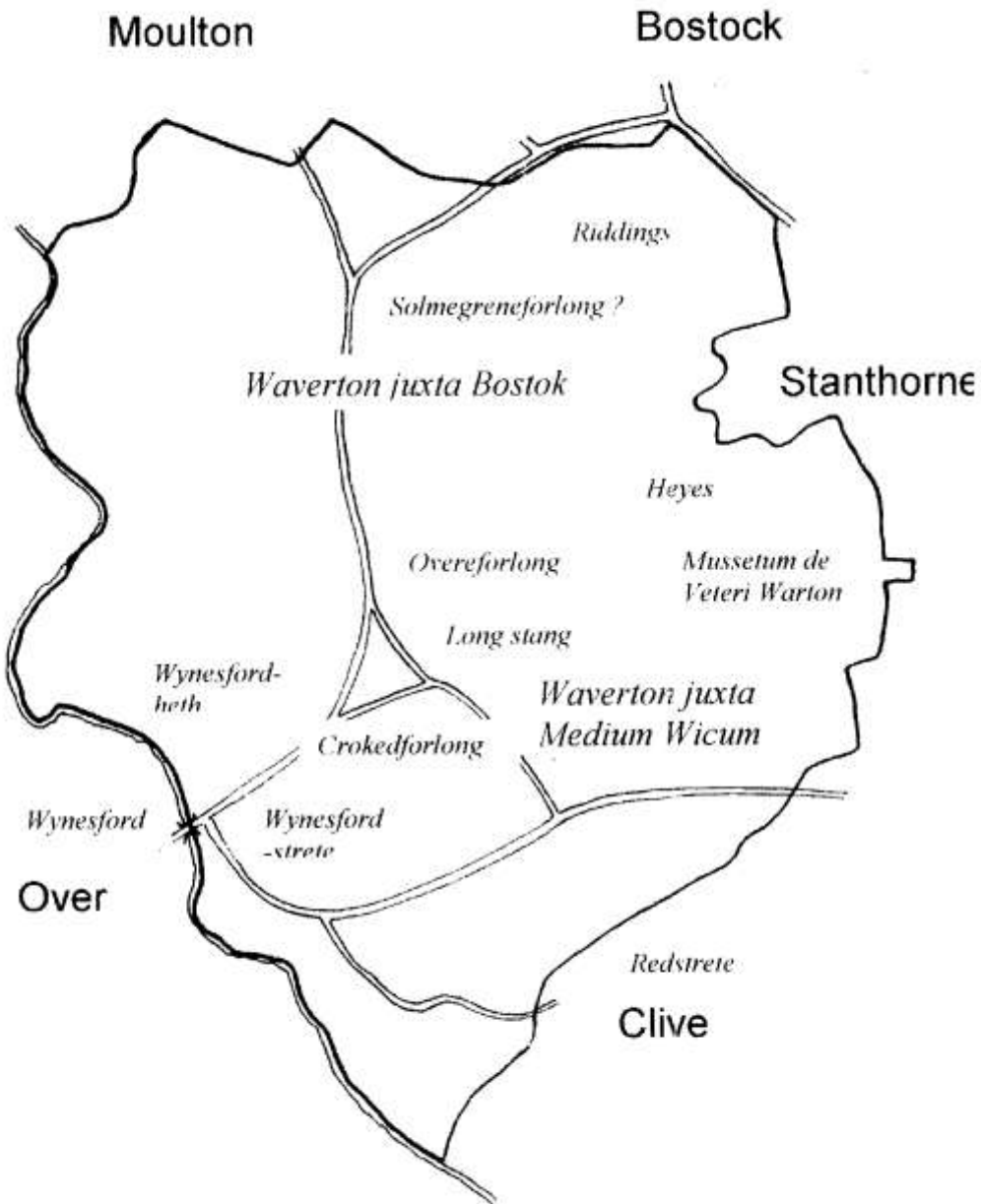
### Background

The township of Wharton, or Waverton as it used to be known, takes its name from its proximity to the river Weaver, though there are some who would dispute this. Dodgson in *Cheshire Place Names* suggests that Waverton comes from two words that mean 'farm at the waving tree' or 'farm at the quaking bog' and that the first element, *waevre*, could mean 'brushwood'. Dodgson completely dismisses the idea that the name has anything to do with the name of the river. It is my opinion, based on local dialect, that is just so - 'farm at the Weaver'. The township is first recorded back in 1086, in the pages of the Domesday Survey which records that during the reign of King Edward the Confessor *Haregrim* and *Alsi* held *Wanetune* as two manors that were worth four shillings a year. Following the Conquest the two manors, which were granted to Richard Vernon as a single parcel within his barony of Shipbrook, were assessed for taxation at half a *hide* (a unit of taxation based on land and assets on a manor: the measure varied according to region) and valued at six shillings. On the manor there were two *servi* (serfs - labourers tied to the manor) and two *bordars* (smallholders, cottagers) and contained one *carucate* (arable land that could be ploughed by a team of oxen in a year- dependant on soil type this was about 100 acres). During the Norman period a member of the Vernon family granted lands here to the convent of St. Mary, Chester, and thence, throughout the medieval period, the identities of the two Saxon manors were retained and referred to as *Waverton juxta Bostok* and *Waverton juxta Medium Wicum*. During the mediaeval period the Bostock family held the first part from the barony of Shipbrook and the nuns held the other. It seems that the nuns estate was further divided into *Waverton juxta Medium Wicum*, the area now known as the Nun House estate, and *Waverton juxta Overe*, for that area nearer to the river. Some local families, such as Merton, Clive, Weaver, Bulkeley, Venables and a family that took the name of the locality, also had interests in the township.

Some remnants of the medieval manor remain in field names. Dodgson is somewhat scant in this regard but of significance *Crokedefurlong*, *Overefurlong* and *Solme Grenefurlong*, all names from *circa* 1230, refer to the ancient strips of the communal town field. The first name is fossilised in the name of Crook Lane, and a field behind Christ Church which, in 1841, was named 'Crooked Field'. Likewise the three fields named 'Over Croft' (between Crook Lane and Bradbury Road) and the one named 'Over Field' (between School Road and Wharton Road) probably represent the medieval *Ovrefurlong*. The last named furlong is a lost name, but a 16<sup>th</sup> century rental suggests that it was close to the border with Bostock, in the area of Wharton Green. Other interesting names are *Fridaeslache* (c.1240), 'the Friday stream' where fish for the Friday diet were caught; *Mussetum de veteri warton* (c. 1233), 'the moss of old Wharton'; *Long Slang*, which seems to refer to ancient arable strips; *Ox Heyes* a hey referring to an enclosed area of waste land or wood land; and Riddings, which refers to new, improved and enclosed areas of the waste.

In 1548 it is recorded that fifteen men, aged between 16 and 60, from *Wanerton*, were available for military service. Five men were able to serve as billmen, each with a jack (a protective leather jerkin), a sallet (a helmet) and a bill (an axe with two sharp points mounted on a long pole); they also had between them two 'splints' (a pair of armour for the elbow). A further ten men were available for service but did not have sufficient armour or weapons save for one poleaxe and two jacks. Two more men were for some reason not available for service - perhaps they were too ill or infirm - but they could provide one jack and one bill. Such numbers of adult males would seem to imply a population of between 80 and 100.

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*Map One - Suggested locations of Medieval Place-names*

During the 16<sup>th</sup>. and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries there were three large estates or farms here: these were Nun House, Duttons Farm, Tomlinsons Farm and Billows Heath House. Nun House Farm, the basis of the original parcel held by the nuns of Chester, was owned by Thomas Marbury of Westminster, London, a younger son of the well-known family from Great Budworth. In 1622, his lands were described as consisting of 30 acres of arable, 10 acres of meadow, 30 acres of pasture and 10 acres of woodland, all worth £4 p.a. Later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in 1660, 35 individuals held property or had some interest in the township. Whilst many of these actually lived in Wharton, seven were landlords from neighbouring townships. The

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population then numbered around 100. Four years later, there were 34 houses in Wharton of which those of John Aderton (or Atherton) and Mr Minshull were the largest, followed those of William Buckley, John Dudlow (or Dudley), Raphe Nixon and Elizabeth Twamlow. From this fact we may estimate the population then to be around 140. During the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century most people were employed on the land and even those who had a trade would have also worked a small-holding - then there were seven weavers, two tailors and a smith. It is particularly interesting to note that some family names, such as Atherton, Burrows, Nickson, Tomlinson and Carter, continued on from then to 1841, and even persist today.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century the northern part of the township together with the 'lordship of the manor of Wharton' was vested in the Harper family of Davenham. This family, who originated in Liverpool, purchased the 'barony of Shipbrook' from the Tomkinsons family and this included a large estate in Wharton as well as the manorial rights. Major William Hosken Harper then sold his manorial rights to the Winsford Board of Health and devised his estate to the France Hayhursts of Bostock Hall, his sister's marital family who had also originated in Liverpool. The vast majority of the other part was held by the Dudley family.

### **Topography**

Wharton occupied nearly 1225 acres when surveyed in 1841. Of these acres, James France-France of Bostock Hall, lord of the manor of Bostock, held 324 acres. The other chief proprietors of the mid-nineteenth century were the Dudley family who owned about 380 acres; Josiah Perrin with 129 acres; William Court with about 90 acres and John Sumner of Wharton Hall who held about 97 acres. In all there were 55 landowners in Wharton. (*See Map Two*)

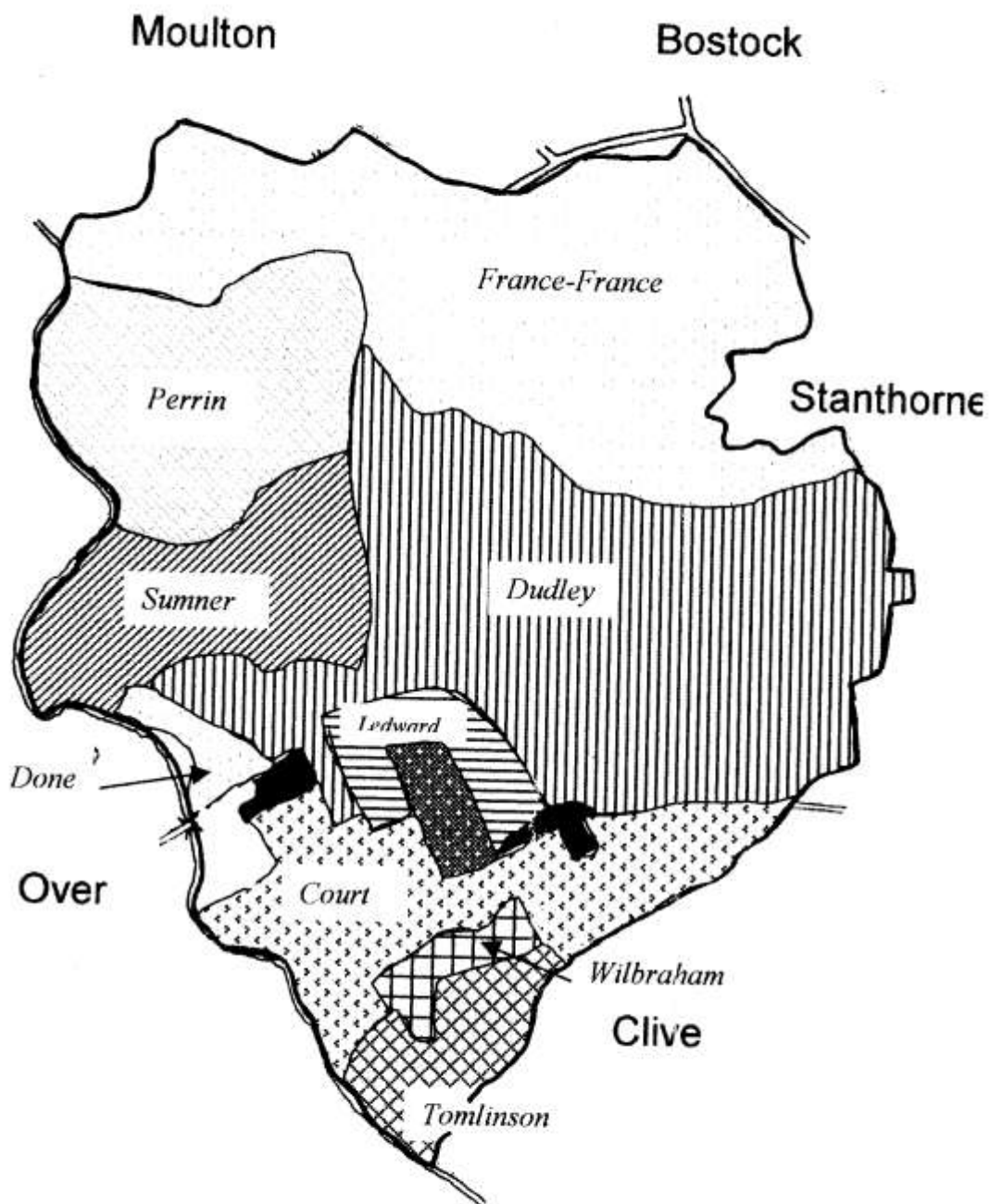
Wharton was bounded along the west by the River Weaver which, by 1841, had already started to dominate life in the town. To the south, across the Rilshaw Brook and Rilshaw Lane lay the hamlet of Clive; to the east, straddling the road to Middlewich, was Stanthorne. The north-east corner was contiguous with the village of Bostock, whilst the northern boundary separated Moulton from Wharton. There were few named roads or lanes through Wharton. Essentially the main roads were Gravel Lane, or Middlewich Road as it is sometimes referred to, and Wharton Lane. The first entered the town from Middlewich and then became Winsford Hill, as it dropped down to the river; this route is now known as Station Road. The other road was Wharton Lane, which came in from Bostock, through Wharton Green, and is now known as Wharton Road. Joining these two was Crooked Lane, now Crook Lane, that forked near to Wharton Road to form what is now School Road.

Wharton lay in the parish of Davenham, but in the mid 1830s, James France-France of established a church and vicarage, Christ's Church, for the convenience of the local people though the patronage remained with the rector of Davenham.

In 1841 the railway age had just begun. The Grand Junction Railway from Birmingham to Warrington had been opened seven years earlier and ran through Wharton, though the River Weaver was still regarded as the main means of transportation. For most people however, journeys were still made on foot or on horse transport.

Much of the landscape was agricultural and dairy farming predominated. The small amount of industry, concentrated along the banks of the river Weaver, involved the extraction of salt from brine.

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*Map Two - Land ownership in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century*

**Population Trends**

*Table One* gives a broad picture of population trends for the most part of the nineteenth century. Of the total population the numbers of males and females was roughly equal with any emphasis being on the numbers of men. In some years it is clear that some houses were home to more than one family and that the pace of house building was not keeping up with demand. In 1811, we know from the statistics that of the total number of families 144 were engaged in trade, crafts or manufacturing,

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<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Families</i>	<i>Houses</i>
1801	753		
1811	888	167	161
1821	853	152	168
1831	1060	234	202
1841	1400	271	264
1851	1775	357	364
1861	2234	536	476
1871	2597	539	550

*Table One*

with only 15 employed in agriculture, the remaining 8 were of independent means or otherwise unclassified. Ten years later there were 39 families engaged in some form of trade, 12 in agriculture and 101 in some other capacity. By 1831, when for the first time the population exceeded 1000, the occupational trend had shifted again so that now only 7 families were engaged in agriculture, 29 in trades, crafts or manufacturing and 198 other occupations. It seems clear that the 'other' classification included those involved in the salt works or shipping as well as the few who were of independent means.

The population continued to rise steadily due to the ever expanding salt industry. In the census of 1841, 1400 people were recorded, though we are informed that 74 people, 45 men and 29 women - flatmen, or watermen as they were also known, - were away from home, detained in Liverpool or on the River Mersey, due to the River Weaver being run off for repairs.

### **The Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1841**

Tithes were the render of one-tenth of the produce of land to the parish church: this form of payment had existed since mediaeval times. Payments and the amounts due became haphazard and uncertain and in order to regularize the situation the government passed the Tithe Commutation Act in 1836. This provided for the conversion of tithe payments, whether in cash or kind, to a form of rent-charge that was standardised and based on the way the land was used and the price of corn. The tithe award for Wharton was confirmed in May 1838: it consists of two parts: a written agreement commuting the tithes of the parish and establishing the total rent charge for the township and a schedule that set out details of all those parcels of land subject to the tithe. This latter part, the apportionment, was confirmed in December 1841, and to accompany it a large-scale map was drawn up. From these it is possible to identify every field and piece of property by a name and its size, ascertain who owned the land, to whom it was leased and who occupied it. The use of such maps is highly important in understanding local history as they pre-date the first Ordnance Survey maps by almost fifty years.

Of particular interest are the lists of people who lived in the town and when the reference numbers of their properties are located on the tithe map we have some knowledge of where they lived. The tithe map therefore adds a further dimension to the demographic information given in the census of 1841.

### **The Census, 1841**

On the night of Sunday, 6 June 1841 the first detailed census was made. It required each householder to complete a form listing every person resident in his house on 'census night'. The details required to be recorded on the form were: address, name, approximate age, occupation and whether or not the individual was born in Cheshire. Interestingly, as regards this latter question very few are shown as having been born outside the Cheshire. As regards the approximate ages given in this census the ages of persons over 15 were estimated within a

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five year period and their lower age recorded; thus if a person was aged between 20 and 25, their age was listed as 20. The ages of children were recorded properly in either years or months. The next census, taken in 1851, refined the information to include exact age, marital status, and relationship of each person to the head of the house and parish and county of birth. For the first time the census gives us the opportunity to present a detailed picture of Wharton and Winsford and their inhabitants.

For the purposes of the census, the township was divided into two districts, numbers 12 and 13, the dividing line for these being along the backs of the houses along the east and north sides of Station Road and Gravel Lane. District 12, to the south, included the old Market Place, the river bank, Winsford Hill and Gravel Lane, the junction with Crooked Lane and Rilshaw Lane. District 13, the northern part of the township, included areas such as Donefields, School Lane, Crooked Lane and Wharton Green.

There were 271 houses, of which 14 were uninhabited, housing a population of 1400, 732 males and 668 females. These figures do not include the 45 men and 29 women and their families away from home that night. There were 264 distinct family groups and 140 persons who might be described as lodgers or 'live-in' servants or employees, giving an average of five per family and just over that figure per household.

<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Birth to 12 months	47	3.5
1 yr - 14 yrs	615	45.1
15 yrs - 24 yrs	188	13.8
25 yrs - 39 yrs	309	22.7
40 yrs - 54 yrs	119	8.7
55 yrs - 69 yrs	62	4.5
70 yrs and over	23	1.7
Total	1363	

*Table Two*

The population of 1400 comprised of 47 children under 12 months old and a further 615 children under 15 years of age; therefore 47% of the total population were under 15 years. Only 397 people declared an occupation or some form of status and of these 29 were children under 15; the youngest being a 10 years old agricultural labourer. Of the adult population only 362 occupations are given out of a total adult population of 701. In many cases the wife's employment is not given and in some instances neither is the occupation of boys and girls in their late teens.

The occupational spread, indicated in *Table Three*, is perhaps predictable but nevertheless interesting. Of the 397 occupations listed, 13 people were described as of independent means. Of the remainder, the work force, the vast majority were engaged as salt workers (20%) with the next highest being watermen, men who shipped the salt down river in 'flats', also known as 'flatmen' (17%). When one considers the 74 people who were away from home on the night of the census, we can certainly state that the salt trade directly provided work for nearly half of the working population.

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<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>
<u>Professional</u>			
Agent	5	Plumber	1
Independent	13	Rock miner	1
Salt Proprietor	2	Rope maker	1
Schoolmaster	2	Sailmaker	1
		Saltmaker	79
		Sawyer	7
<u>Agricultural</u>			
Farmer	7	Ship builder	1
Agric. labourer	25	Ship carpenter (apprentice)	1
Gardener	1	Shipwright (1 apprentice)	13
		Shoemaker	9
		Shopkeeper	1
<u>Trades</u>			
Blockmaker	1	Size maker	2
Baker	1	Smith ( 2 apprentices)	20
Barber	2	Stone mason (apprentice)	1
Blacksmith	1	Tailor	5
Bone cutter	2	Wheelwright	1
Bricklayer	3	<u>General</u>	
Bricksetter	4	Clerk	2
Butcher	4	Publican /Innkeeper	3
Button cutter	4	Police constable	1
Carpenter	1	Marine	1
Cooper	2	Watchman	1
Corn dealer	1	Waterman	61
Engineer	2	<u>Servants</u>	
Grocer	4	Female	55
Iron founder	1	Male	8
Joiner (inc. 2 apprentices.)	5	<u>No occupation</u>	
Labourer	11	Wives	312
Labourer (highway)	1	Children	646
Labourer (railway)	3	Men	41
Moulder (an apprentice)	1		
Pansmith	6		
		Total	1390

*Table Three*

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When positions as salt proprietor, salt works agents, pansmiths and shipwrights, plus others such as labourers, smiths and joiners who may or may not have been working at the salt manufacturers, then perhaps over half the work force were connected with the salt production business.

### Some Occupations

*Independents* - There were 13 people who described themselves in this way. These derived their income from some form of inheritance or pension. Every one of them derived some income from renting out cottages, houses or fields.

*Farmers and Agricultural Labourers*- Seven men gave their occupation as 'farmer'. However, one man, Robert Carter, seems not to have been so as he lived in a rented cottage and does not seem to have been in possession of any land; he was probably an agricultural labourer. Only two men, John Sumner and John Tomlinson, owned their own farm.

<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Acreage (to nearest acre)</i>	<i>Live-in Labourers</i>
Thomas Holland	Ledward	24	1
John Thomason	Dudley	112	4 (+ 3 female servants)
John Sumner	Sumner	95	2 (+2 female servants)
Ralph Pennell	France-France	100	2 (+1 female servant)
William Tomlinson	Tomlinson	51	2
William Holland	France-France	134	2 (+1 female servant)

*Table Four*

The rural nature of much of the township is further indicated by the fact that there were 25 agricultural labourers. Some of these men lived on the farms where they worked but many lived in cottages amongst the other workers.

Further useful features of the tithe schedules are the details of land usage.

	Acres	Roods	Poles
Arable	220	1	8
Pasture / Meadow	881	0	33
Woodland	26	0	27
Total subj. to tithes	1127	2	28

*Table Five*

The remaining land was either that used for houses and cottages or else exempt from the tithe award on the grounds that it was land used for the purposes of manufacturing salt. These 60-odd acres show how little was allocated to housing and industry in comparison to agriculture.

Only two proprietors of salt works, John Dudley and Joseph Perrin, are listed in the census as the majority of salt manufacturers resided outside Wharton. According to the tithe schedule the following people occupied works in 1838:

<i>Landowner</i>	<i>Occupier</i>	<i>Factory Name</i>
John Sumner	Richard Done	
John Sumner	Messrs Legh & Brothers	
Josiah Perrin	G.D.Sloper	
Josiah Perrin	Messrs Slater & Antrobus	
Josiah Perrin	Messrs Irvine & Blackwell	



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Josiah Perrin	Henry Waterton	National Patent & New Works
James France-France	Thomas Frimstone	Bostock Works
James France-France	Messrs Fairclough & Frost	(later Wharton Works)
James France-France	James France-France	Bostock Works
John Cheshire	John Cheshire	Winsford Works

*Table Six*

Each salt works had its agent or works manager.

*Shipbuilders* - William Cross was a 'flat and boat-builder and timber merchant' and operated from yards on Winsford Wharf. He seems to have employed 13 shipwrights, a ships carpenter, a sailmaker, and perhaps the 5 joiners, 1 carpenter and 7 sawyers who are listed in the census. Of the shipwrights there were three members of the same family: Thomas, Samuel and Job Pickstock.

*Servants and Labourers* - An interesting fact is the number of females, mainly young women, who were employed as 'female servants'; they number 54 (14%). It is worth noting the three railway labourers (a sign of the new mode of transport)

Of other occupations there were: bone and button cutters (there was a button manufactory in the town), a constable, a watchman a marine and two size makers (there was also a size manufacturer in the town). One might be surprised to see only three publicans or innkeepers. These three, held the *Red Lion*, the *Royal Oak* and the *Railway Hotel* (now the *Brighton Belle*) but, as a sideline, many people made and sold beer in their own 'beer houses'- there were perhaps a dozen or so of these and quite naturally too as salt manufacture was a thirsty business!

It is now appropriate to take a trip around the township of Wharton as though it were 1841. What would we have seen? Who lived where? The best way of making the journey is in the footsteps of the census enumerators.

The enumerator of district 12, that is the area to the south and east, commenced his survey on Winsford Bridge and turned right into 'Winsford'.

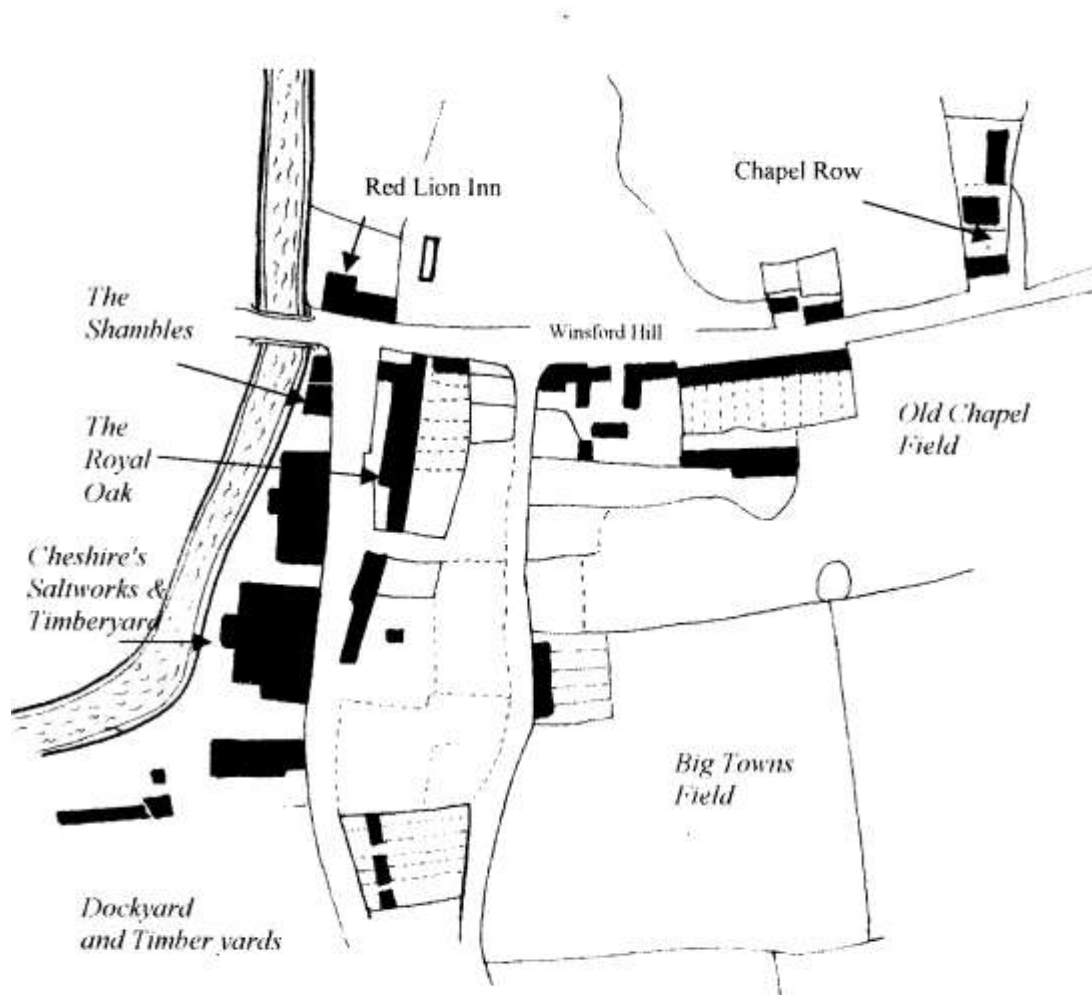
### **Winsford**

In the mid-nineteenth century and earlier Winsford is the name of a 100 yard stretch of road leading from the crossing point on the River Weaver towards Middlewich and including the banks of the river along this same stretch.

In front of the *Red Lion*, which we shall refer to later, was the Market Place. Much of the residential properties and shops were along the left hand side of Winsford when walking towards Middlewich. On the corner, opposite the *Red Lion*, was a house and shop owned by James Amson. It seems that this property was occupied by George Moseley, a grocer, his wife and their infant son, Amos Amson, a butcher, and two female servants. It is likely that the two trades were conducted from two shops within the building. Amos is probably the brother of Ralph who was still trading as a butcher in 1850. Next door there was a shop owned by James Amson, then the grocers shop owned and occupied by Richard Allert, then Thomas Atherton's, tailoring shop; his lodger, James Barton was a sailmaker. Next came the premises of Thomas Cawley, a grocer and beer house keeper, then William Percival, a shipwright, who also ran a beer house at his premises known as the *Flatman's Tavern*; William had occupied it since 1834 and after his death his wife, Mary, continued to run it until 1869. Next came the premises of Thomas Cross, a 'shopkeeper'. This row of shops ended with the inn known as the

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*Royal Oak* run by John Williams, which was known in the eighteenth century as the *Cock*. Williams and his family had held the public house since 1834; he also held a plot of wasteland on the bank behind the neighbouring block of property.

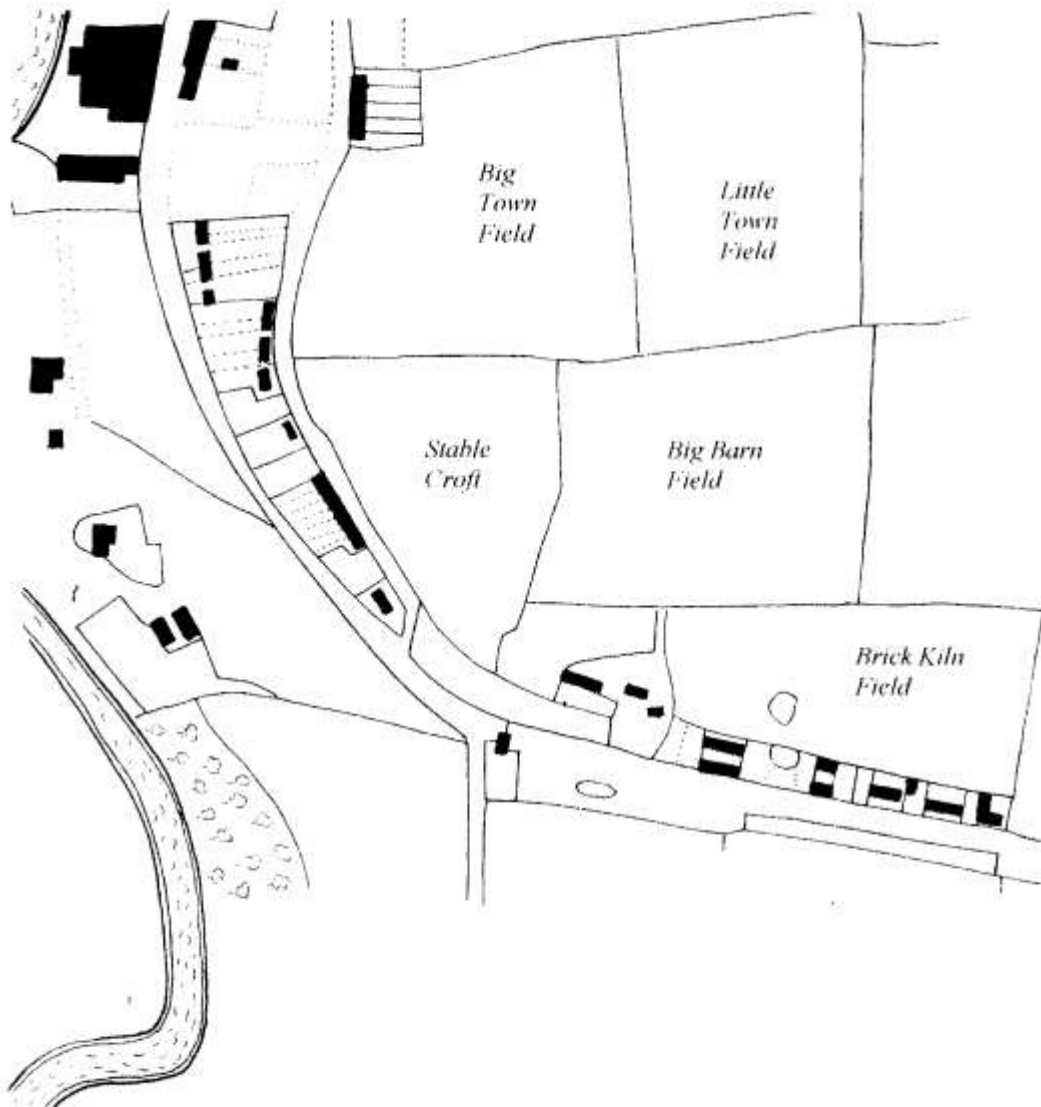


Map Three: Winsford

The first property in the next block was the smithy run by William Blackburn and George Cornes. Elderly Blackburn lived at the shop with his wife and two female servants, whereas Cornes lived up on Winsford Hill. Next came the cottage of James Yeardsley, a saltmaker and then another beer house run by Richard Tickle, an agricultural labourer. John Burrows occupied the last property in this block. At the rear of the block William Preston had a cottage. Wasteland, owned by John Cheshire who owned the old salt works opposite, separated this block from the next, a row of semi-detached cottages owned by John Beswick. These still remain and stand opposite the car park by the river. The first of these housed the family of William Such, a bricksetter, who had nine children, of whom the first two sons were also bricksetters. Next door to them lived Charles Rawcliffe's family; at the time of the census he was not listed, instead his wife Ann is shown as the head of the house with her two children and a female servant. According to the tithe map a John Muskett lived next door but he and his family must have been absent for the census. George Gilbert, a size maker, Thomas Griffith, his wife Elizabeth and their daughter Jane lived in the next house. Then came a cottage owned and occupied by the Robinson family; whilst Peter is mentioned in the tithe,

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according to the census Sarah and her four children were living here. This is the last residential property in Winsford.



*Map Four: Winsford Hill and Gravel Lane*

### **Winsford Hill**

Rising up out of Winsford the road is known as Winsford Hill. Thomas Vernon owned the first two cottages housing the families of Thomas Dutton, a joiner, and Jane Atherton who was in her 60s and seems to have been of independent means. She lived with a young family of the same name who were perhaps her grandchildren. Next door lived James Griffiths, a waterman, George Gilbert, a twenty years old sizemaker and his wife and two children Daniel Hatton and Charles. There seems to be some relationship between this household and the one down in Winsford where another George Gilbert, a size-maker, lived with a couple named Griffiths.

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There were a further twenty-two houses and cottages up Winsford Hill, along what is now Station Road, many of which, along with the fields behind them and on the other side of the road, were owned by William Court of Middlewich.

### **Gravel Lane**

Gravel Lane starts at the top of Winsford Hill. The first property, which used to be known as 'Turnpike Farm' due to the fact that the turnpike was situated here, was rented by William Preston, shipwright, from William Court. He lived here with his wife and their nine children and farmed the 23 acres of fields behind the house. A little further on there was the cottage of Thomas Pickstock, shipwright, who had nine children by his wife Maria, four of whom had some interesting names - Noah, Julius Ceaser, Samson and Solomon. Thomas farmed some lands on the junction of Rilshaw Lane that he rented from William Court. His younger brother, Job, who was also a shipwright, lived next door. (The cottages occupied by the Pickstock brothers are still to be seen on Gravel Lane at numbers 183 and 185 - Fox Cottage).

Two fields lie between the Pickstocks' cottages and the next settlement area which forms a triangle on the Crooked Lane junction. The first cottage to be encountered on approaching Crooked Lane, was owned by Sam Hulse and occupied by Samuel Newall, another shipwright. In all there were eight cottages along Gravel Lane all owned by Samuel Hulse who resided in the area. He was a man of independent means in his 60s, he was a one-time flatman or waterman, he owned at least eleven houses along Winsford Hill and Gravel Lane as well as the Shambles in Winsford. In his will dated 1854, Samuel mentions his wife Hannah and several daughters and grand-children each of whom were left the profits from the rents of his cottages. His eldest daughter, Ann, who had married her cousin Job Hulse, inherited her father's house and her children were to have the cottage occupied by Samuel Newall. Daughter Martha, wife of John Moss the rope maker, had the cottage of William Dennis, and daughter Maria had the cottage occupied by William Preston. It seems that all his daughters married local men.

Charles Lewis also owned some cottages in this area. He was a grocer and had a shop on the corner of Gravel Lane and Gredbys Lane which was the name given to the first few yards of Crooked Lane. On the left of this small lane is a row of terraced cottages that still remain today. The plots of land associated with these cottages were located in the triangle of land behind the cottages. These were owned by John Burrows who occupied one of them along with families that included a tailer, a saltmaker, a shoemaker, a sawyer and, interestingly, a marine.

On the other side of Gredby's Lane there were a few cottages owned by Charles Lewis, Elizabeth Burns and John Burows and occupied by slatmakers, a carpenter and a shipwright. In one, occupied by a Peter Buckley, a salt maker, lodged a Charles Blinkthorn, a thirty years old Police Constable. Along Gravel Lane, on the left towards the railway bridge there were a dozen or so more cottages and their gardens. Amongst them was a row of ten terraced cottages that still stand today. Just prior to the bridge there was a coal yard leased from the Dudley sisters by Messrs Turner and Evans and a few cottages housing the families of Henry Benson, George Hough and George Twist. Just over the railway bridge lay Wharton's third inn, the *Railway Hotel*, now the *Brighton Belle*, which was run by John Moore; he was probably related to James Moore of the *Red Lion*. A set of two houses and then a block of four terraced houses (just prior to the traffic lights at the entrance to the industrial estate) housed the families of Watson, Hickson, Hankinson, Bowers and Mountfield. The last property in Wharton, on this side of the road, was Gravel Farm. This, a 50 acre farm, was owned by John Dudley and in the occupation of William Latham.

Returning to Winsford on the south side of the road we next come to Winsford Lodge and its 17 acres of fields which, according to the tithe apportionment, was owned and occupied by

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Reverend John Ingham. The census records that this property was occupied by Henry Warburton; he had four female servants and one male servant. Further along, opposite Crook Lane there was a small 'cul-de-sac' of properties owned by George Bostock, each of which were occupied by saltmakers. There is then a stretch of fields until the junction with Rilshaw Lane.

### **Rilshaw Lane**

Turning now into Rilshaw Lane initially runs through fields owned by William Court: those on the left farmed by Thomas Pickstock, a shipwright and to the right and down to the river farmed by a John Williams. As the lane approaches the left-hand bend the land on the left was owned by George Wilbraham and farmed by John Beckett. Then we come to the lands of William Tomlinson who lived in the farmhouse at Rilshaw and owned the 51 acres of lands behind his house and along the left-hand side of the lane towards Clive. Living in the two cottages on his property were the families of John Williams and Samuel Kirk, saltmakers.

### **Dockyard and Market Place**

Travelling on down the hill towards Winsford Bridge we follow along the timber yards that ran down to the river that belonged to John Cheshire's salt works. Here ship building was now carried out in what was commonly called Winsford Dockyard or Winsford Wharf. William Cross was the shipbuilder who built flats and other boats and acted as a timber merchant. He lived on the site with his wife Sarah, their adult son George and three other children; they had a male servant and two female servants. It is here that the ship-wrights and ships carpenters would have worked.

Next, fronting the Market Place, came Cheshire's old saltworks now worked by William Cross. Living on this site was William Baker, a saltmaker, and his family of seven children. Next door William Norton had a cottage and barber shop. This property, owned by John Dudley and leased to John Cheshire was occupied by James Edge.

Lastly we return to the 'Shambles',- an area of small shops and the market which were owned by Samuel Hulse and leased to John Harper Hosken of Davenham and John Cheshire and occupied by Samuel Blackburn and others.

### **Winsford Hill (north)**

The district 13 enumerator also began his travels on Winsford Bridge, but instead of turning right, he carried straight on up Winsford Hill to make an anti-clockwise trip around his patch.

The first house he encountered was that of Thomas Hays, shoemaker, and his wife, Sarah; this young couple had an infant son, William, and a female servant named Jane Moss. Towards the top of the hill there were a number of other cottages housing about fifteen families of whom nearly all were directly involved in the salt industry; there were, however, two smiths, two sawyers and a shoemaker amongst them. Opposite them a foot-way led towards the several saltworks that spread northwards along the banks of the River Weaver. On the right, and near the top of the hill, a long row of terraced cottages with their long narrow garden plots at the rear, and a further row set further back. These, known as 'the cottages on the bank', were owned by William Twist and were occupied by a large number of families of whom one was that of John Clark, a shipwright, who had seven children, the eldest of whom, William aged 13 years, was an apprentice stonemason. Amongst these a cottage occupied by Robert Carter, who was described, rather surprisingly, as a 'farmer' but where he had a farm is not known. At the Winsford end of the row there were a number of other cottages owned by John Harding and occupied by the families of William Hatton, a smith, a few other families. Along a narrow lane behind these properties (where Hill Street is now) there were five cottages owned by William Court and occupied by the families of Thomas Walker, Josiah Atherton, John Atherton, Robert Barker and Thomas Weedall.

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### **Donefields**

On the other side of the hill, backing onto an area known as 'Donefields', lived James Hatton, a pansmith, and a number of other families of men who were employed as watermen.

On top of the hill, on the left there was a turning into Chapel Row along which stood the Methodist Chapel. Benjamin Beswick, a waterman, had a cottage on the corner as did George Bebbington who also had a butchers shop. The cottages in Chapel Row were occupied by Sarah Oakes, Robert Atherton, Nancy Hulse, Maria Oakes, Joseph Hulse, a waterman who had six children, and Charles Atherton. This last person is listed as 14 years old waterman and living on his own - maybe his parents were some of those away in Liverpool. Likewise it may be that the husbands of the three ladies were also away on the river.

Chapel Row led to a house and a group of cottages known as 'Donefields'. The house was occupied by James Hinde, his wife Margaret and their female servant. The cottages contained the families of Joseph Bloor, George Sandbach, John Massey, William Atherton, John Perry, John Aspey, William Perry and Samuel Ellison who were all either saltmakers or watermen: John Perry's three sons were all saltmakers. Interestingly, with the Masseys lived a four years old child named Henry Latham, who may have been the son of Hinde's servant, Mary Latham. These workers probably worked at either the Legh or Dudley saltworks.

Back on Wharton Lane, the next property, on the right, was the 'Rope Yard' where 38 year old James Moss, leased property from John Dudley, and manufactured ropes; he resided in a house on the site with his wife and family. He was in business with his brother John who lived on the south side of the town at the junction of Rilshaw Lane and Gravel Lane. The two men were sons of a Benjamin Moss, who had been a barrowmaker.

Next we come to 'Wharton Cottages'. This seems to be the name of a single house, part of the Dudley estate, tenanted by William Cockerell, a gentleman of independent means who was in his late 30s. He lived with his wife and the family of Sarah Keightle, perhaps his sister-in-law, and two female servants. Later this house was known as 'Wharton Villa'.

### **Little Donefields and Christ Church**

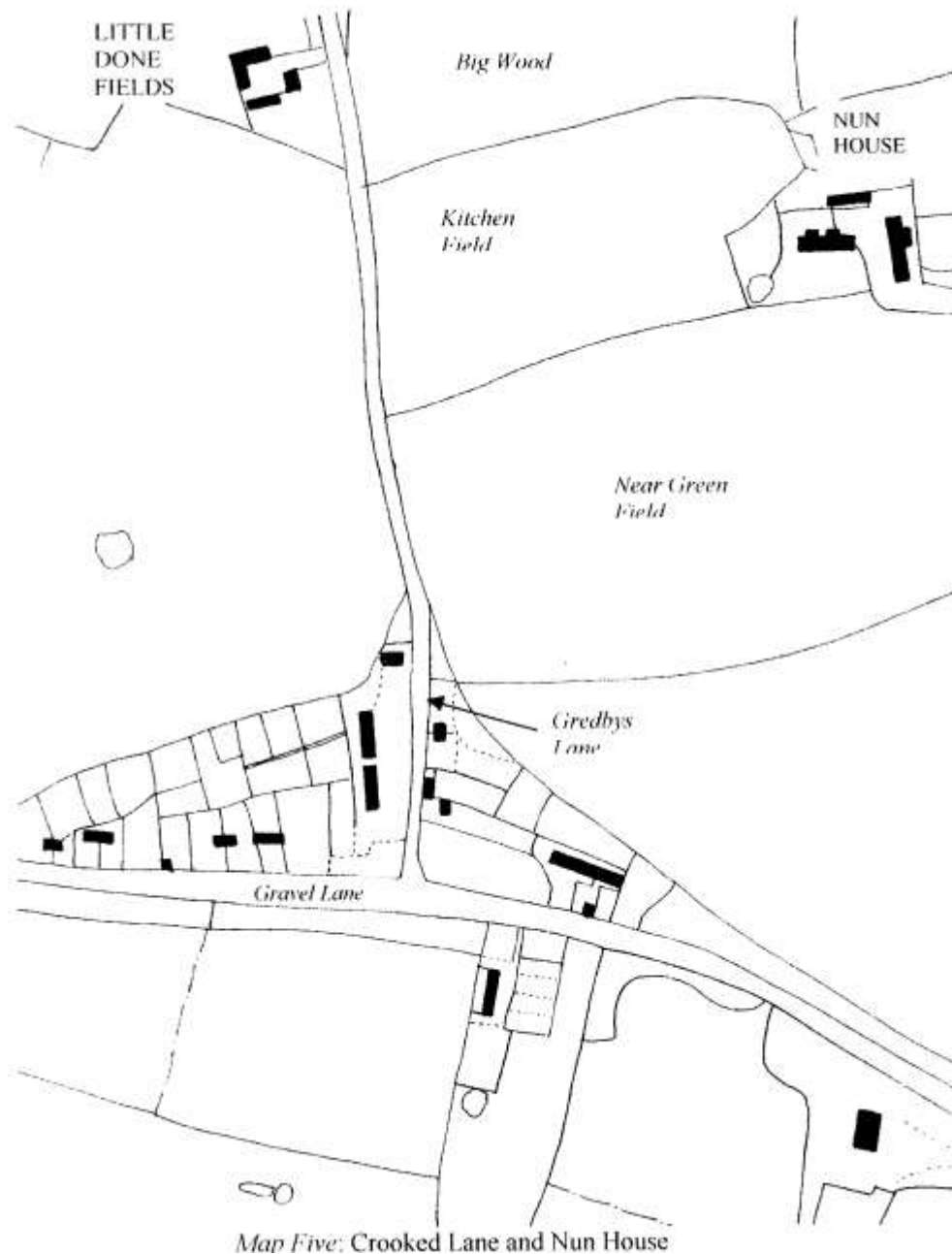
At the junction with School Lane stood the school-house, owned by the 'Township of Wharton'. The land here had once been the property of the Barony of Shipbrook but was granted to the township in 1805 by William Harper, then the principle landowner, for the purpose of establishing a school. According to the tithe, this school-house was occupied by Abraham Pennington though it seems he may have been succeeded by his son Ralph who lived on Wharton Lane. A John Bickley was also teaching in the school. A few years later a new school was erected on the same site at a cost of £500: by 1850 it provided education for 160 children. Continuing on along School Lane, we now pass through an area known as 'Little Donefields' much of which was owned by William Ledward. He had three tenants living in cottages half way down the lane. At the time of the tithe, these were occupied by John Johnson, John Robinson and Charles Hatton. However, according to the census they were occupied by John Johnson, a saltworker, John Read, an agent, and John Bickley, a sixty-year old schoolmaster, with Charles Hatton and his family living with Bickley.

On the right at the end of School Lane, is the site of Christ Church. This was parcel of land granted by James France-France for the establishment of a chapel of ease to the parish church at Davenham. Initially, in 1835, another plot of land had been offered until it was realised that it was on the route of the new railway. The chapel, dedicated in 1843, became too small for the rapidly increasing population and so a new church was built at a cost of £1400 in 1849.

### **Crooked Lane and Nun House**

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We know come to Crooked Lane. Turning right into the lane, in a house that backed on to Christ Church, lived John Read, an agent, and his seven children. This may be the same house in which John Bradbury lived. He was born in 1872, and later became Chief Cashier to the Bank of England and was responsible for the issuing of the first Treasury notes in 1914 that were known as Bradbury's from his signature on them (now 159a and 161 Crook Lane). Further on amongst the fields on the left stood 'Nun House' a 111 acre farm owned by Emily, Elizabeth and Amelia Dudley. John Thomason, aged in his late 20's was the tenant farmer and lived in 'Nun House' with his young family and his mother. In a neighbouring building there lived four agricultural labourers and three female servants. This farm and its fields form the basis of the mediaeval estate granted to the nuns at St. Mary's, Chester.



On the other side of Crooked Lane stood another farmhouse. 'Little Done Fields', was owned and occupied by William Ledward who was in his 60's; the 24 acre farm was worked by Thomas Holland who lived with Ledward.

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Returning back along Crooked Lane past School Lane, we come to Hunts House, a property owned by John Sumner. In this lived his daughter Catherine Jackson, a woman of independent means and her 35-years old son John Jackson, along with her niece, Sarah Lewis, who was also of independent means. Next door to them was a cottage occupied by an elderly saltmaker, Richard Johnson and his wife, and the family of Richard Hapsall, another saltmaker. Just on the junction with Wharton Lane we have properties known as 'Atherton House'. Those on the left and right of the junction were cottages owned by John Dudley and occupied by, on the right, Jonathan Asprey, a saltmaker, and his wife and their one-year old son, and, on the other corner, by Fanny Sergeant and her three children. According to the tithe, John Sergeant was the occupier of this other cottage and it may be that he was one of the men held up at Liverpool. This latter cottage on the left hand side of Crooked Lane backed onto a triangular croft in which lay Atherton House. This house with its stable and gardens was the home of Mary Atherton, a lady of independent means, her sister and her two children, and a 12 years old female servant. According to the tithe this was the home of Ralph Atherton. The Athertons, or Addertons, had lived in Wharton for at least two centuries and their house in 1660 was of a similar size to that of Wharton Hall. These last three properties survive today.

### **Wharton Hall**

Crossing over to the north side of Wharton Lane we face Wharton Hall the home of the Sumner family. John Sumner, born in 1784, and Mary, his wife, lived in the hall with his brother Phillip and son William. John and Phillip owned and farmed 96 acres. They were the sons of John Sumner and his wife Mary Acton; by his first wife Sarah Tomlinson, John had had three daughters - Elizabeth Lewis, Catherine Jackson and Jane Norbury. John senior died in 1809 and is known to have owned half of an estate or farm called Atherton's and half of Brook House estate in Over. His brother, another Phillip Sumner, owned the salt works then leased in 1810 to Messrs Leigh, Hewson and Thompson.

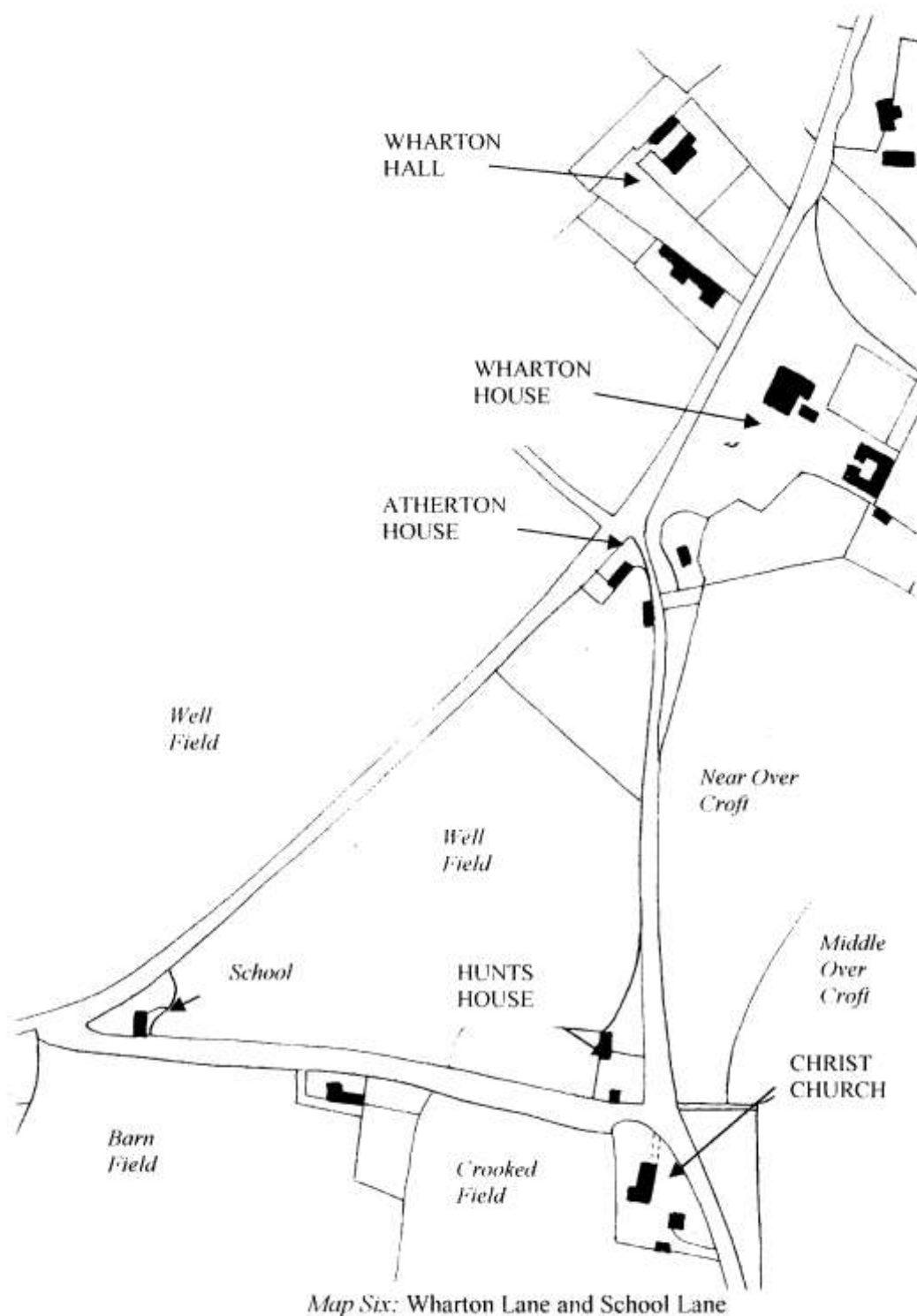
Opposite Wharton Hall, in large house in its own grounds, lived Mrs Ann Dudley; she was the widow of John Dudley who died in 1840 aged 44 years. On both sides of the road lay fields and land, amounting to 189 acres, owned by her father-in-law, John Dudley (1773-1854), a 'Salt Proprietor'. He built the first saltworks in the area in 1797 but by the time of the tithe award he is not shown as owning any salt works. His three grand-daughters, Emily, Elizabeth and Amelia, owned the 150 acres that lay over towards the road to Middlewich. John lived in the house known as Wharton Lodge a little farther down the road. The Dudleys had lived in Wharton since at least the mid-seventeenth century when John Dudley, yeoman, was one of the wealthiest residents. This nineteenth century John Dudley had inherited his property from his father John and now lived in the substantial house known as Wharton Lodge that may have been the same as that of his ancestor. He lived with his wife Elizabeth and their adult daughters and son. Also living with the family were 15 years old Mary Ann Perrin, who may have been Josiah Perrin's daughter, a male servant and three female servants.

### **Wharton Bridge**

In the census the area beyond Wharton Hall is called Wharton Bridge. The first property listed in this area was occupied by Thomas Ollier, a saltmaker, his wife, five children and a servant. Although a saltmaker he farmed nineteen acres of land that stretched from the rear of his house to the river. Continuing on, according to the tithe apportionment, lived Joseph Pennington; he also held the three fields immediately at the back of his house that comprised of almost ten acres. According to the census this property was rented from Perrin by a Ralph Pennington, a schoolmaster, and his wife Ann, who had a one-year old daughter named Mary. Next we come across a number of cottages and their gardens owned by Perrin and occupied by families engaged in the salt trade: Brooks, Atherton, Hulse, Lightfoot, Baker and Thomas. The last was John Thomas, an agent, who lived in the cottage with Mary Wells and her five years old daughter. From 1793 one of these was used as Wharton's first Primitive Methodist



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chapel until 1835 when a new chapel was established in Crooked Lane, near to the junction with Gravel Lane.

A little further along, the road crosses the 'Grand Junction' railway line at Wharton Bridge. Just below this bridge, between it and the modern bacon factory, there was a triangular shaped

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piece of land comprising of an acre that was a coal yard leased by France-France to Thomas Frimstone. He also owned a salt works on France-France's land.

### **Wharton Green**

At premises known as 'Oaklands', lived Josiah Perrin a fairly wealthy man who owned 129 acres that bordered on those of France-France, situated along the west of Wharton Lane and as far as the River Weaver. On his fields down by the river a number of salt works were established by his lessees. In the census Perrin is described as a 'Salt Proprietor', then in his late 40s. His wife was Eliza, a daughter of John Dudley, one of the major landowners. Betty Eaton a lady in her late 60s lived in the house. The couple had no children living with them at this time but did have servants: Hannah Moulton, Ann Cawley and Peter Gregory.

Down the lane, now Smokehall Lane, almost opposite Purnell's farmhouse, lived Thomas Noden. Surprisingly, for an agricultural labourer, Noden, then in his late 50s, owned both the property in which he lived with his wife Mary and their two daughters, as well as the neighbouring cottage occupied by John Dodd, a saltmaker, in his 30s who with his wife Frances had two young children. These cottages were known as 'Addershaw Cottage', possibly a corruption of Adam Shaw.

Next on the right (where the Vale Royal Training Centre is now), the farmhouse held by Ralph Purnell (or Pennall) who farmed 100 acres in this area of Wharton Green. Ralph lived with his sister and 60 years old Alice Barrett and her two children; there were also two labourers and a female servant. The next farm, of 134 acres, was occupied by William Holland. He was in his late 40s at the time of the census and lived with his wife, Elizabeth and their six children; two labourers and a female servant.

Travelling on with fields on each side of the lane we the north-eastern tip of the township. In front of us there are some cottages and further down the road to our left a few more. On the corner of the Middlewich Road are the two cottages occupied by the families of Thomas Bloor, a salt maker, and Daniel Elsbury (or Elsbey), an agricultural labourer. There may have been another two cottages along Middlewich Road as the Tithe Map shows two other properties, occupied by Jane Jervis and Randle Buckley. The two houses down the Middlewich Road were the homes of Joseph Ravenscroft, a carpenter in his late 60s, and that of Joseph Berry an agricultural labourer. Rather curiously the large, wedge shaped field off Middlewich Road that lies between the two sets of cottages was known as 'Robin Hood' - why?

The enumerator in conducting his census now returned and dropped down to the river and followed it in a southerly direction passing the salt works.

### **The Salt Works**

During the mid-nineteenth century Wharton was renowned for the production of salt from brine. According to *Bagshaw's Directory 1850* salt works were "carried on to greater extent in this township than in any other place in England". The extensive saltworks were situated along the banks of the River Weaver and opposite similar working on the other side in the township of Over. In 1850 there were 370 salt pans in the various establishments giving employment, directly or indirectly to upwards of 700 workmen. At one time 400,000 tons of salt were produced in a single year, the bulk of which would have been shipped in flats down the river to Liverpool. The brine extracted from deposits that generally lay some thirty to sixty yards below the surface, though occasionally they were only twelve yards down, was of an excellent quality producing 52 ounces from a gallon of brine.

At the northern most part of the town, alongside the railway line (behind where Fords of Winsford is now situated) the smoking chimneys of the two Bostock salt works, owned by James France- France, would have been seen belching out their smoke across the fields of

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Wharton. The furthest of these two was worked by Thomas Frimstone and the nearest by Messrs. Fairclough & Frost. Slightly to the south of these, on a loop of the river, stood the new large works owned by Josiah Perrin and leased to Henry Waterton and known as the National Patent Salt Company. Next, came two smaller works leased from Perrin by George Beaver-Sloper and Messrs. Slater & Anderton, and then the slighter larger premises of Messrs. Irvine and Blackwell. Below an area known as 'Donefields', on lands owned by John Sumner, Phillip Sumner and Jackson Lewis (in front of the Vauxhaull Dealers and 'The Wharton Park' public house) were the salt making premises of Richard Done and Leigh & Brother.

Some of these works had housing on site for their employees - the owner's agent and his salt workers. In 1841, at the National Patent Salt Works, a cottage was occupied by Harriet Bourne who lived there with her four children, including a baby boy, Frederick, and a James Hulse, a smith, and his wife. Next to them was the home of the agent, John Smith. The third home was that of John Garrett, saltmaker, his wife and their six children. At the Dudley works there were seven cottages housing the families of Samuel Oakes, George Newall, John Newall, Thomas Noden (who had two boys named Curzon lodging), John Newall, and John Oakes. Each of heads of these households were saltmakers as were some of their children. One of the sons, James Oakes was a pansmith, and another, Joseph Newall was an apprentice ships carpenter. The company clerk was William George Read who lived in a house on the site with his wife Eliza and a teenage female servant, Catherine Oakes. At the Leigh Works, where Benjamin Phillips was the agent, there were six residential properties. Phillips lived in the first with his wife and a son John who was a pansmith. The other cottages housed the employee-families of James Hulse, John Goulding, John Bennett, Peter Yeadsley, and John Stubbs. At Dones Works there were eight families: Allmark, Pool, Stubbs, Harding, Stubbs, Fisher, Beckett and finally the cottage of John Hulse , agent, and his family.

Emerging along the path from Dones works the house on the right is the *Red Lion* inn. This, the oldest public house in Wharton, is situated alongside the bridge across the Weaver - as this is an ideal site for an inn it is possible that there had been an inn here for centuries. In 1841, Joseph Moore was the publican and had been for at least the past three years and was to remain so for a further three years. Joseph's wife was Phoebe and they had two children, Mary and Daniel. Living with them were two male servants and a female servant. At the time of the census two agricultural labourers were staying at the inn. The inn and the neighbouring property, occupied by James Amson, were owned by Richard Done. Amson, a man who was in his sixties at the time of the census had a corn dealing business. He lived in this large house at the bottom of Winsford Hill on the corner of Market Place, with his wife, Jane, and family that consisted of two adult sons, Ralph, born in 1805, a butcher, and William, a plumber, as well as two young children who were probably grandchildren; there was also 15 years old Mary Amson, probably a relative, who was described as a female servant. His other son, Amos occupied the shop around the corner in Winsford, in district 12 where we began this journey round Wharton.

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