

Archaeological Assessment

Warburton Archaeological & Historic Buildings Assessment Overview

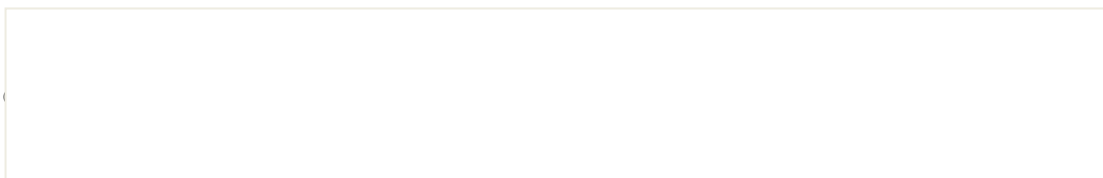
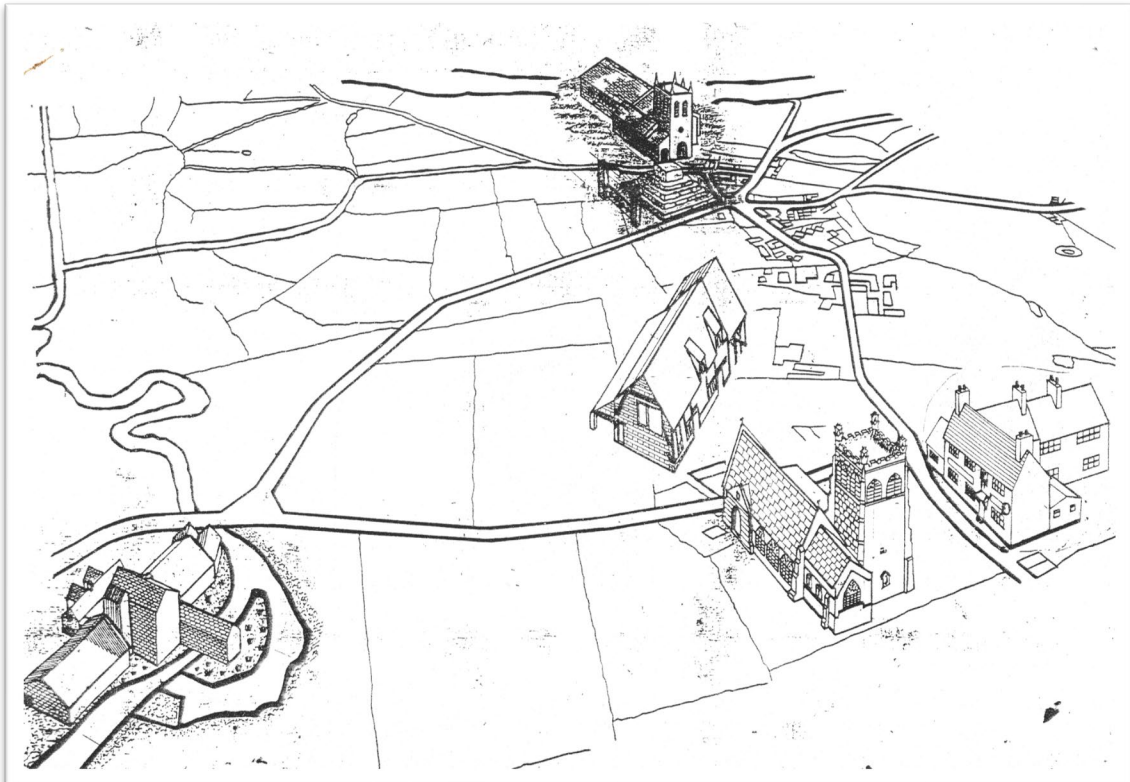
Client:

Warburton Parish Council

Technical Report by:

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Contents

Summary	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Warburton Archaeological & Historical Development	4
3. Archaeological Survey & Excavations within Warburton, 1981 to 2023	30
4. Historic Building Recording Within Warburton	81
5. Designated and Locally Listed Non-Designated Sites	154
6. Lithic & Metal Detecting Finds From Warburton	155
7. Discussion	201
8. Sources	203
9. Acknowledgements	209
Appendix 1: HER List for Warburton	210
Appendix 2: Trafford Provisional Local Heritage List for Warburton	222

Summary

In 2022 Dr Michael Nevell, archaeology consultant, was commissioned by Warburton Parish Council to produce an Archaeological Assessment overview of Warburton in support of the proposed Warburton Neighbourhood Plan.

The aim of the current report is to provide an up-to-date overview of the archaeological and historical knowledge base for the area that can aid local and strategic planning by Warburton Parish Council and the Borough of Trafford over the next few years.

Therefore, this report sets out to:

- Reviews the historical development of Warburton;
- Describes briefly the archaeological investigations undertaken within Warburton between 1981 and 2024;
- Describes the surveyed historic buildings and the context of the surviving designated and non-designated assets within the parish and township.
- Reviews the evidence for lithic and metal finds recovered from fieldwalking and metal detecting.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background: Studying Warburton

This document provides an overview of the historic environment of the township and parish of Warburton, Trafford, Greater Manchester (Fig 1). Warburton is a small rural township of nearly 4km² (c. 1750 acres) that is situated in the south-western corner of the Borough of Trafford, Greater Manchester. It lies in the centre of the Mersey Basin at the confluence of the Rivers Mersey and Bollin and historically, before 1974, formed part of the ancient county of Cheshire.

The first studies of the history of the Warburton-Egerton family and their relationship with Warburton can be found in Sir Peter Leycester's 17th century genealogical study of Cheshire families. This is reprinted in Ormerod's history of Cheshire published in 1819 revised by Helsby in 1882 (Ormerod 1882).

Warburton has been studied archaeologically and historically since the late 19th century, and intensively since the 1980s. The historic importance of Warburton's buildings was firstly realised in the early 1880s, when the old timber-framed St Werburgh's church was threatened with demolition due to decay. Further historical interest in Warburton begins in the early 1880s when the old timber-framed church of St Werburgh (Fig 3) was threatened with demolition in favour of a new church (opened in 1885) (Nevell *et al* 2015, 75-76). At the insistence of the then incumbent, the Reverend G Egerton-Warburton, and despite its dilapidated condition, the ancient church was preserved giving Warburton one of its more unusual features: two parish churches. This restoration work probably prompted the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society to visit the old 'black and white' church in May 1886 (TLCAS 1886, 132-7). Unfortunately, in 1894 dry rot was discovered and an appeal was launched to save the old church. It was restored in 1895 and the historic church was the subject of a short article in 1907 (TLCAS vol 25, 1907, 177-80).

Several local newspapers, in the early years of the 20th century, presented sympathetic and warm descriptions of the 'patchwork church' in Warburton. Sometimes the reason for these vivid tableaux was to promote the various appeals to raise money for continuing repairs to the building. On other occasions there appears to have been no purpose other than to communicate an appreciation of this 'prime curiosity among Cheshire village churches' (*Manchester Guardian* 26/10/1928 & 18/12/1928). Death-watch beetle was discovered in 1926 leading to restoration work in 1930, overseen by John Swarbrick, Honorary Reporting Architect of the Ancient Monuments Society, and cost £750. These waves of restoration led to the writing of the first academic history of the church and the village by Thomas Newton in 1939 (Newton 1939).

By the 1940s the old timber-framed church had come to the attention of a wider circle of scholars. Its history was described by Raymond Richards in his monumental overview of Cheshire parish churches, published in 1947 (Richards 1947, 339-341). The national profile of the church was raised further by the architectural historian Nikolaus

Pevsner when he included the old church in his *The Buildings of England: Cheshire* volume, published in 1971. (Pevsner & Hubbard 1971, 375-6). Pevsner described the old church at Warburton as 'a lovable muddle'. This volume was significant in highlighting the importance of other historic buildings within the parish: the New Church, the Church House, Bent Farm, the Victorian School, and the Victorian Post Office. All of these buildings were designed by the Chester architect John Douglas, a well-known practitioner of the vernacular revival style of architecture in the later Victorian period (LCAS 1886, 232; Hubbard 1991, 110, 243, 250, 258, 263).

The Old Church became a listed building in 1959 (Grade 1), along with the cross base and stocks (both Grade 2). 15 buildings were listed in 1985, with three later listings: Wigsey Farmhouse in 1989, Heathlands cruck barn in 2008, and the War Memorial by the New Church in 2016. Made redundant in 1970 it became part of the Churches Conservation Trust (then the Redundant Churches Fund) in 1971, with the first guide published in 1987.

The 1960s saw a broadening of interest in Warburton's landscape and buildings, as part of the wider growth in local history studies seen across Britain after the Second World War. Not only was fieldwork undertaken in the parish by the noted 20th-century architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner's study of Cheshire buildings, but also a study of the place-names of Cheshire, which included Warburton as part of the historic county, and which was published by John Dodgson in 1970. Harold Norris included the buildings at Warburton corn mill in his pioneering industrial archaeology gazetteer of Cheshire corn mills in 1968 (Norris 1968, 60). Norman Warburton published a study of the Warburton family and their relationship with the parish in 1970. In 1971 Pevsner and his co-researcher Edward Hubbard published their volume on the buildings of Cheshire. This included the first overview of some of Warburton's other historic buildings, describing old St Werburgh's church as a 'lovable muddle'. A brief history of the Premonstratensian priory of St Werburgh's in Warburton appeared in volume three of the Victoria County History of Cheshire in 1980 (Harris 1980, 171).

During the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s the newly established Lymm History Society, founded in 1967, undertook historical research on and within Warburton. Society members explored a variety of subjects from the Domesday entry for Warburton and the pillow mound at Warburton Park Farm, to salt exploration within the parish. One member, K M Hughes, studied the field systems of Warburton as the subject of their undergraduate thesis (Hughes 1981).

In 1981 the newly formed Greater Manchester archaeological Unit (GMAU), undertook the first archaeological survey within the parish: a fieldwalking and geophysical survey of the Abbey Fields adjacent to the old church (Tindall 1981). This work was intended to study the location of the lost priory of Warburton and the potential location of an Anglo-Saxon burgh. Further archaeological work from 1985 to 1989 was undertaken by GMAU as part of the Trafford Archaeological Project, a Manpower Service Commission funded scheme. That work focused on recording the fabric of the old church and its graveyard, as well as studying some of the historic buildings within the township, such as Onion Farm and its wall painting. It was summarised in a booklet on the village (Hartwell 1991). Harold Faulkner, a member of

the South Trafford Archaeological Group, wrote a report on the history of Warburton village in 1989 as part of his coursework for the Extramural Department at the university of Manchester (Faulkner 1989).

In the mid-1990s the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit and the South Trafford Archaeological Group (STAG) established a joint project to look at the archaeology of the parish. The Warburton Archaeological Survey ran from 1995 to 2015, with the University of Salford taking over from the University of Manchester as a joint partner in the project from 2009 onwards. These two decades saw a huge amount of research, with more than 35 trenches dug as part of the project across the village and around Moss Brow, including work done of Channel 4's TV programme Time Team in 2006, as well as the recording of more than 40 historic buildings and extensive fieldwalking (Nevell 2015). A summary of this work can be found elsewhere in this report. The archive for the project is held by STAG at their headquarters and display centre in Timperley.

In addition to the work of the Warburton Archaeological Survey, there was research for the North West Wetlands Survey project with extensive fieldwalking across Warburton Moss in 1993-4 (Hall, Wells & Huckerby 1995) and for the Archaeology of Trafford Book (Nevell 1997). For the latter the Geography Department at the University of Manchester undertook in 1996 the first detailed palaeo-environmental study of the Warburton (Beenham, Hradil & Shimwell 1996). UMAU with the South Trafford Archaeological Group also undertook a historic hedgerow survey of the parish in 1995-96 for GMAU, as part of a Greater Manchester pilot study ahead of the introduction of The Hedgerows Regulations in 1997. A completely new guidebook was also published for old St Werburgh's Church by the Churches Conservation Trust in 2001 (Nevell 2001).

The rise during the 1990s of commercial archaeology undertaken through the planning process also had an impact on the recording of archaeology and historic buildings within the parish. The earliest example of this was archaeological recording undertaken during the construction of a gas pipeline through Warburton in the early 1990s. The historic fabric of many renovated farm houses was recorded in this way during the 1990s and 2000s as the CWS sold off large parts of their Warburton estate.

This period also saw the rise of metal detecting as a hobby, the Portable Antiquities Act of 1996 leading to the establishment in 1997 of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, run by the British Museum, whereby metal detectorists are obliged to record their discoveries with a regional museum. In Warburton this has led to the discovery of hundreds of metal and lithic objects in those fields available for study, providing a detailed look at some of the earlier periods in the parish's history. These objects are described later in this report, highlights including a Roman coinhoard, and a medieval pilgrim badge perhaps associated with St Werburgh.

Since the publication in 2015 of the book on Warburton that marked the end of the Warburton Archaeological Survey project (Nevell 2025), buildings and fields have continued to be recorded archaeologically through the planning process in the parish,

further archaeological research has been undertaken on the graveyard at the old church, and the site of Wigsey Farm Cottage excavated by STAG.

The unsuccessful application to build houses on land north of Moss Lane in 2020 saw the largest area of geophysical survey yet undertaken in the parish, revealing several new sites. It also prompted a further review of the historical and physical evidence for the medieval deer park that surrounded Warburton Park Farm. A sign of the parish's continuing national prominence was a tour of key buildings in April 2023 by the Vernacular Architecture Group, an international society dedicated to exploring and recording vernacular buildings in Britain and Europe, during their spring conference in Manchester.

1.2 Aims of the Report

The aim of the current report is to provide an up-to-date overview of this knowledge base that can aid local and strategic planning by Warburton Parish Council and the Borough of Trafford over the next few years. Therefore, this report sets out to:

- Review the historical development of Warburton;
- Describe briefly the archaeological investigations undertaken within Warburton between 1981 and 2024;
- Describe the surveyed historic buildings and the context of the surviving designated and non-designated assets within the parish and township.
- And review the evidence for lithic and metal finds recovered from fieldwalking and metal detecting.

The Location of Warburton

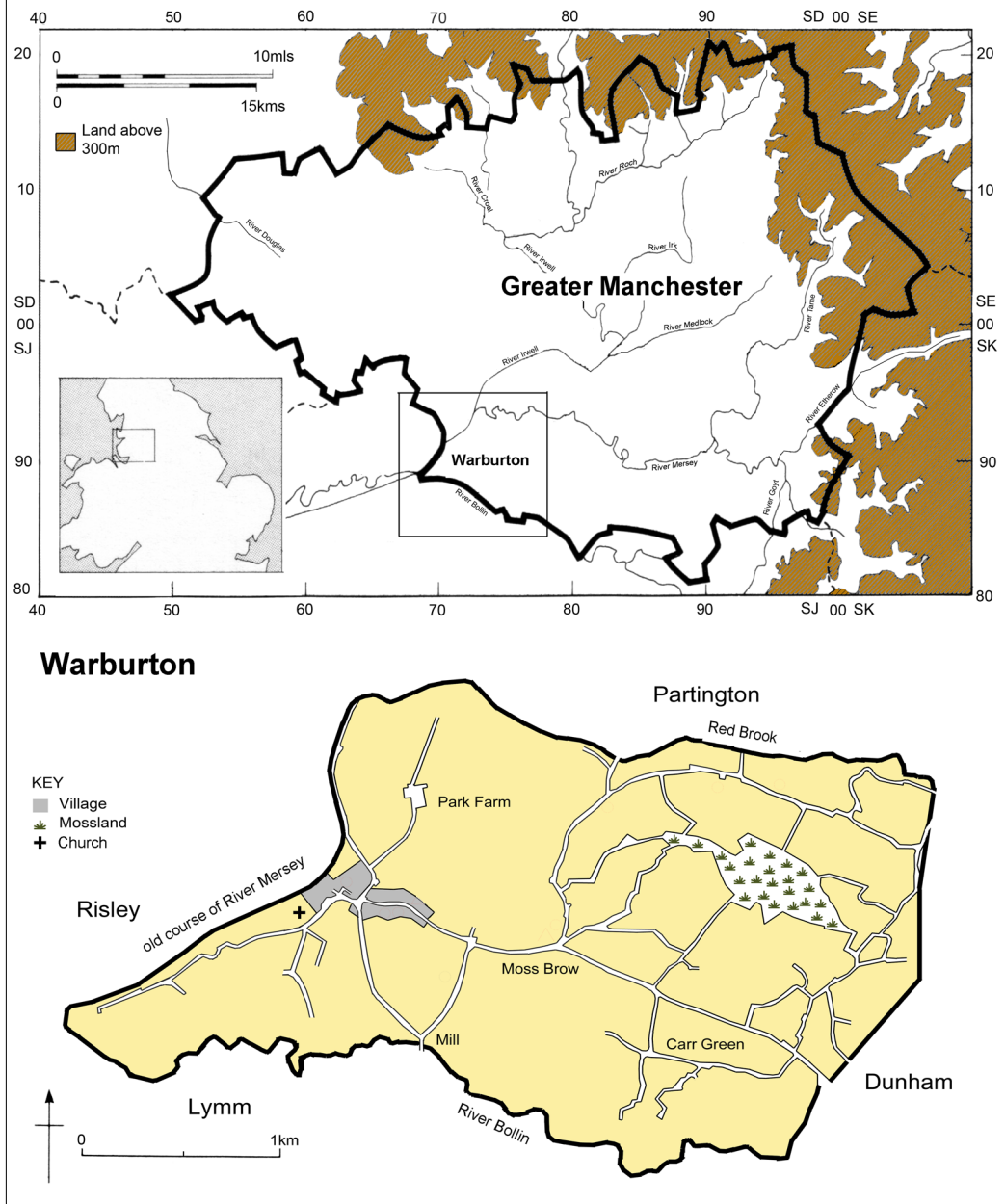


Figure 1: The location of the parish of Warburton.

2. Warburton Archaeology & Historical Development

2.1 Introduction

Warburton, a small rural parish of nearly 4km², lies in the centre of the Mersey Basin at the confluence of the Rivers Mersey and Bollin (Fig 1). The towns of Lymm and Altrincham lie to the south-west and east respectively, and today the parish sits on the border between modern Greater Manchester and Cheshire in south-western Trafford (Figs 2-3). First recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, this long-lived lowland landscape unit has been a manor and chapelry/parish since at least the 13th century. The 21st century landscape echoes that recorded on the 1839 tithe map and the major features (routeways, buildings, and larger fields) can also be seen on an estate map of 1757. Furthermore, it remained in the hands of one family for over 800 years, until 1918, and consequently a large body of documentary evidence has survived. Warburton has been identified as a well-preserved later medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape, with a large estate archive, in the North West England regional research framework volumes for the archaeology and historic environment of the region (Brennand 2006, 129, 132; Nevell & Redhead 2023, 134-5). The following overview of Warburton's archaeology and history uses research and published material undertaken since the 19th century but especially between the 1981 and 2025.

The following sub-sections draw upon this research, especially the 2015 volume which was co-authored and edited by the current writer. Our current understanding the archaeology and history of Warburton is summarised by period in order to give an overview of the development of the landscape and community of Warburton. A detailed record of the excavations undertaken within the village and the survey of many historic standing buildings, can be found in Sections 3 and 4 of this report.

2.2 Prehistoric, Roman & Early Medieval Warburton

The earliest evidence for human activity within the township is a scatter of more than 50 stone tools and manufacturing waste between Warburton village and the hamlet at Moss Brow. This part of the parish is dominated by a west-to-east sand-and-gravel ridge. This ridge is bordered to the north-east by the site of Warburton Moss, and to the west and south by the rivers Mersey and Bollin.

This scatter is in two areas, although this might be biased by the fields available for fieldwalking. Firstly, there is a smaller grouping of eight flints, including three retouched flakes (Section 6.2) a broken blade, and a barbed and tanged arrowhead, and three debitage pieces. The date of this material appears to be late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age.

The second group of flints is much larger. At least 81 worked flints dating from the late Neolithic and early Bronze Ages have come from the fields to the south of Moss Brow Farm

(see Section 6.3). These items include a barbed and tanged arrowhead, a leaf-shaped arrow head, and blades and waste flakes in chert and flint, mainly found in the area between The Bent and Moss Brow. Herepath noted that the presence of two retouched flakes and a scraper in this groups suggested that finishing occurred on this site. The lack of any blade flakes or blade fragments and the flake scars on the core suggests that the assemblage could be of Bronze Age date (Herepath 2000). The finding of an early Bronze Age diminutive chisel/axe in this area also suggests activity from this period in this part of Warburton.

The first evidence for permanent settlement is implied by the fragments of three grinding or quern stones used to process grain by hand. These were found in the fields west of Onion Farm and south of Moss Brow and are from the late Iron Age or Roman periods (see Section 6.4). In addition, an Iron Age gold Sater coin and a bronze terret fitting (horse gear) also points to more permanent late prehistoric activity south of the Moss Brow hamlet.

Excavations by Channel 4's Time Team television programme to the south at Moss Brow Farm in 2006 revealed the presence of a set of late prehistoric or Roman fields terraced into the southern side of the ridge. This was probably where the grain was grown used by the quern stones. However, the homes of these first farmers have yet to be located, although a curvilinear soil mark east of St Werburgh's Old Church might be an early feature.

Roman activity in the township is also known from a scatter of metalwork of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, and Roman pottery from the ridge between The Bent and Moss Brow (section 6.5). More than 30 items have been recovered, and this material includes several pieces of bronze horse gear, at least six brooches, five lead spindle whorls used in domestic textile production, and two bronze terrets (horse gear). There is also a small coin hoard comprising nine coins (all dating from the Late Roman Republic so presumably lost in the mid-1st century AD, now held by Manchester Museum), which was dispersed across the field east of the new church and a silver bracelet with a serpent's head at one end, which might be part of this hoard. There was also an ovoid lead steelyard weight from a field to the north-east of Paddock Lane Farm (Nevell *et al* 2015, 2-3).

A Saxon reference to a fortification in Cheshire at a place called *Waerd byrig* in AD 915 has led to the suggestion that Warburton was this fortified place. However, there is no archaeological evidence for such a defended site within the parish, and it has been proposed that *Waerd byrig* was on the Wales/Cheshire border and not at Warburton (Higham 1988). The 'ton' element of the place-name suggests that a farm was established in the late Saxon period. Yet, so far the only archaeological evidence for Early Medieval occupation within the township comes from the fields south of Moss Brow hamlet where is a bronze strap mount, which would have had inlaid decoration, an early Saxon silver sceat coin, and a late 9th/10th century Byzantine coin have been found (Nevell *et al* 2015, 3-5) (see section 6.6 of this report).

2.3 Medieval Warburton (Figs 4 -9)

The Domesday Survey records that in 1066 Warburton comprised two manors held by two Saxon freemen, Earnwig and Raven. By 1086 Earnwig's manor, which contained 'half a hide, land for one plough, one radman and two oxen', had been given to the Norman Earl, William Fitz Nigell, Baron of Halton. The other manor, held by Raven in 1066, comprising 'half a hide,

land for one plough, one radman, two villeins and one bordar with half a plough', was by 1086 in the hands of Osberne Fitz Tezzon, who also held the neighbouring manor of Lymm. Each half had been worth five shillings in 1066, but by 1086 they were valued at only two shillings each. The manor belonging to Raven was described as having been waste. Osbern FitzTesson, was the founder of the de Dutton family (Harris 1987, 357 no 190; 361, no 254; 363 nos 292, 293). The de Dutton's Warburton moiety was confirmed in a charter of c 1170 (JRULM Arley Muniments Box 1, no 68). In 1187 the second half, or moiety, of Warburton came into possession of Adam de Dutton (d. c 1205) from the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. (Ormerod 1882, 567; Barraclough 1957, 22; JRULM Arley Muniments Box 4, no 1)

In the years 1187 to 1190 Adam de Dutton granted one of these moieties to the Praemonstratensian abbey of Cockersand in north Lancashire, which established a short-lived priory at Warburton, and increased its holdings further in the 1190s and 1200s (Harris 1980, 171; Hughes 1974, 3-4). A grant of 1216 would appear to indicate that Cockersand returned its Warburton possessions to Adam's son Geoffrey, apart from 8 oxgangs of land, in return for which the abbey undertook to maintain a chaplain at Warburton to pray for Adam's soul. However, lands continued to be gifted to the priory at Warburton in the 1220s, 1230s, and 1240s making the interpretation of this grant of 1216 unclear. Whatever the status of the priory, in 1271 Cockersand sold its remaining land in Warburton to the second Geoffrey de Dutton (Harris 1980, 171). In the early 14th century, the de Dutton family changed their name to Warburton, probably after Warburton became the chief family seat rather than Dutton (Hughes 1974, 4), which continued to descend through this family into the modern period (Ormerod 1882, 569).

Adam de Dutton also received half of the manor of Lymm from Eda, daughter of Adam de Limme (Ormerod 1882, 578). This moiety of Lymm also descended through the Warburton family.

During the medieval period a deer park covered much of the north-western quarter of the township. First referenced in 1469, the earliest illustration of the Park at Warburton is the depiction on Saxton's 1577 map of Cheshire. The Park is also illustrated in John Speed's map of Cheshire of c. 1610. Both maps show quite clearly a fenced park similar to estate parks in the rest of the North West (GMAU 1994). The boundaries of the medieval Park have been fossilised by the Red Brook and River Mersey to the north and west, where there is a substantial earthwork embankment which probably represents the park pale, by Paddock Lane to the south, and by the curved sweep of Warburton road along its eastern edge. This latter road, according to the court leet records, was only laid in the seventeenth century, possibly marking the boundary between Warburton Moss and the parkland (JRL, Warburton Muniments) (Nevell *et al* 2015, 19). Within the park and east of Warburton Park Farm there is a pillow mound, surrounded by a shallow ditch, which was almost certainly a rabbit warren. There are also numerous artificial small ponds surrounded by small copses providing fisheries, game coverts and waterfowl breeding areas.

By the 12th and 13th centuries Warburton had a mixed farming economy with field-names indicating open-field agriculture to the south and south-west of the village (Nevell 2015, *et al* 5-13). The c 1757 township map shows a group of strip fields to the south of the village called Big Town Fields and Long Loont, which presumably gave their name to Townfield Lane, which

they front. Further field-names of this type in this area are Ackers, Broad Acre, Crooked Acre, Megshut, and Nick Acre. Woodland clearance field-names can be found along the northern bank of the river Bollin and the southern bank of Red Brook, as well as in the area to the east of Moss Brow, along either side of the modern Dunham Road. The most prominent of these is Carr Green, a small hamlet recorded from the early 17th century onwards, but others include Bows Ridding, Odds Riding Meadow, Pingott and Swine Hay.

2.4 Tudor to Georgian Era (Figs 10-19)

From the 16th century onwards the evidence for life in Warburton, both archaeologically and historically, greatly increases with many buildings and documents surviving from this period. The settlement pattern was a mixture of nucleated and dispersed settlement. The linear settlement of the village ran eastwards from the church along Wigsey Lane and Paddock Lane. From the early 17th century a hamlet at the cross-roads of Warburton Lane and Dunham Road developed at Moss Brow, with a further hamlet at Carr Green. Outside these settlements to the north and east the landscape was dotted with dispersed farmsteads (Nevell *et al* 2015, 14-15). The distribution of the farmstead sites, along Moss Lane, Gorse Lane, and Dunham Road was created by the piecemeal enclosure of Warburton Moss. This mossland divided the manor of Warburton from Dunham Massey Park, and was enclosed progressively from 1700, the fixture of the eastern boundary being a source of much contention between the Booths of Dunham and the Warburtons. The Warburton manorial court rolls show that during the 17th century there were many encroachments onto waste land by cultivation or taking of turves or, more particularly, by extending dwelling houses and farm buildings onto such land (Nevell *et al* 2015, 15-17). A roadside encroachment house which has been investigated is Onion Farm Cottage, excavated in 1999 and 2022. This was a two-roomed timber-framed cottage of the early 17th century built on the western side of Warburton Lane next to Onion Farm (Nevell 2022). One such area where this was particularly noticeable was north-eastwards of Mossbrow, a small hamlet which grew up at the junction of Dunham Road, Paddock Lane and Warburton Lane from the 17th century.

The road system through the township also saw development in this period. Dunham Road remained the main route eastwards into Dunham Massey and on into the market town of Altrincham and the village of Bowdon. Hollins Ferry remained the main route across the River Mersey. However in the mid-seventeenth century the main north-south route through the township appears to have shifted eastwards. Bent Lane and Townfield Lane were extended to their present junction at Warburton Bridge on the River Bollin, and thus superseded the old route of Wigsey Lane through the south-western part of the township. Although Bent Lane was opened around 1637 it remained the private property of the Drinkwater family, with gates at its junction with Paddock Lane to the north and outside the farmhouse itself. A lawsuit was brought against Arnold Drinkwater in 1735 arguing that Bent Lane was a public highway but the case appears to have failed (Warburton 1970, 47-8). The old wooden bridge over the River Bollin was rebuilt in stone about 1664 (Warburton 1970, 23). To the north the old access road to Partington, which followed the eastern bank of the River Mersey north of the village, was abandoned in favour of a new line following the present course of Warburton Lane, between the old parkland to the west and Warburton Moss to the east.

The extent of settlement in the eighteenth century is indicated by the estate map of c 1757, which records 24 farmsteads. This indicates that the established of farmsteads had largely finished by this date and that the field pattern that survived until the middle of the 20th century was largely 16th to 18th century in origin. Two new areas had been brought into cultivation by the middle of the 18th century; Warburton Park, which was turned over to cultivation some time in the seventeenth century, and Warburton Moss, most of which had been reclaimed for agriculture by c 1757.

The life of the rural community in the 18th century is recorded in Arnold Drinkwater's diary, which is stored in the new St Werburgh's church. Although written without regard to continuity and more in the nature of jottings it contains many details about the daily life of eighteenth century Warburton and its church. For instance it contains references to the rebuilding of the southern wall of the nave of the church in 1645, the steeple in 1711, and the erection of the gallery within the church in 1722. Amongst the many local characters mentioned are Peter Rowlinson in 1680, John Okell in 1726, Thomas Chantler in 1731, Mr Featherstonehaugh and John Hayes in 1734 and Richard Pickering in 1754 (Warburton 1970, 44).

Further details of the rural landscape can be gleaned from a series of rentals now at Arley Hall. The earliest of these rentals dates from 1520, when 24 tenants are listed, although since the document is described as an 'Inspeximus of the Charter of St John of Jerusalem' it may cover only half of the manor (Warburton 1970, 61; the original is held at Arley Hall). The rental from 1572 lists 24 leaseholders or lifeholders, and 15 tenants at will in the parish in addition to six free holders (four, including three members of a junior branch of the Warburton family, who held their land from Sir John Warburton of Arley and two from the Booths of Dunham Massey; The three Warburtons were Peter Warburton with 49 acres, his father Peter senior with 39 acres and Peter Warburton, gentleman, of Hefferston Grange, who held 16.5 acres. It seems likely that these lands comprised part of the Warburton Park Farm estate) (Nevell et al 2015, 128-133).

This rental is enormously helpful in establishing the character of the Warburton lands in the immediate post-medieval period. In 1572 Warburton comprised 1747 acres, of which 1120 were tenanted. The leasehold estates varied in size from c 90 acres for Richard Drinkwater of The Bent to c 14.5 held by Robert Newall, but only four leaseholders farmed more than 56 acres. The average size of holding for the tenants at will was 2.5 acres each. It is interesting to note that the 1839 tithe award records 26 leaseholders, a figure little changed from that recorded in 1572 (Warburton 1970, 63-4; the original is held at Arley Hall). However, the overall population levels were somewhat different. Estimates taken from the 1666 hearth tax returns, which give 28 heads of households for Warburton, suggest an approximate population of 133 (using a 4.75 multiplier) in the mid-17th century. The 1841 census listed 509 people in the township. This growth is perhaps reflected in the rentals of the period. A 1648 rental lists 43 tenants, another of 1752 names 51 tenants, and the 1778 rental listed 60 tenants (Nevell et al 2015, 20-21).

This latter rental indicates that by the late eighteenth century the farm holdings fell into roughly three sizes. At the top end were five large farms with concentrated holdings. Park Farm, with c 323 acres occupied the former deer park; Birch Farm at c 92 acres occupied a

narrow strip of land between the moss and Red Brook. The Bent, with c 108 acres, and Moss Brow, with c 143 acres, both lay on a shallow sand and gravel ridge that runs eastwards from the village either side of Paddock Lane and Dunham Road; whilst Lower Carr Green, with c 92 acres, lay in the south-eastern part of the township. Three of these five farm sites have extensive timber-framed buildings still standing, whilst two have cruck buildings, suggesting that these large holdings owe their origins to the 15th or 16th centuries.

There was a middle group of medium-sized farm holdings, between roughly 27 and 65 acres. These included sites such as Paddock Lane Farm. These had holdings which were split into three or four groups of fields around the farm, and a few elsewhere in the township.

The largest group of farm sites contained the smallest holdings, ranging in size from a few acres to c 20 acres. The fields attached to these sites were scattered across the township. Typical of these was Wigsey Farm, which in the 18th century had fields to the south of the village, in the former area of open field agriculture, around the farm itself, north of Paddock Lane, and on the site of the reclaimed Warburton Moss. The fragmented nature of these land holdings in the 18th century may in part reflected the late medieval and early modern land holding pattern, with fields in the arable, pasture and mossland areas of the township.

2.5 The 19th & 20th Centuries (Figs 20-25)

Agriculture remained the chief occupation of the township until the mid-20th century, when the advent of the car allowed a commuter population to develop (Nevell *et al* 2015, 24-25). The biggest change was a shift away from arable farming towards dairying and market gardening which is reflected in the conversion of many of the barns of the township into shippens in the latter half of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the population of the township changed little during the 19th century; it was 466 in 1801, peaked at 510 in 1831 and then steadily fell to reach 403 by 1901. This may reflect the isolation of this community from the main-stream consequences of the Industrial Revolution, or perhaps the 'sponge' effect of the industrial city of Manchester which saw a great influx of population from rural areas such as Warburton. The decline in the population of the township continued throughout most of the twentieth century and by 1971 the population of Warburton was just 287 (Harris 1979, 236).

The static nature of the local population is reflected in the buildings of the township with few totally new properties built during the 19th century. Although few new farms were established in this period (and most that were appeared around the fringes of the moss), many farmstead sites, however, saw extensive rebuilding during this period with older timber-framed threshing barns and even newer brick barns being converted to shippens in the mid to late nineteenth century. This reflected the impact of the new industrial urban areas such as Manchester. For instance at Wigsey Farm in Warburton the cruck barn and an adjacent 18th century brick stable block was converted in the mid-19th century into a cow shippon. This was done by the rebuilding of bay three of the northern wing as two bays, a staircase being inserted in the new bay three. This new part of the structure linked both wings of the barn complex to form a single complex. In the eastern wing this involved the subdivision of the western half of the structure into two rooms, the southern one for storage and the

northern one being a cow parlour. Similar conversions of former threshing barns to cow shippens can be seen at The Bent and Birch Farm. Such developments must have been common across the region in this period.

In the late 19th century there was another period of rebuilding, this time associated with investment by the Warburton estate. Much of this rebuilding was to a set style designed by the noted Victorian architect John Douglas (Hartwell, Hyde, Hubbard & Pevsner 2011, 655-6; Hubbard 1991). The most significant of these new buildings were the new church and church house, a post office, and a school. However, many of the farm buildings on the estate also reflect the Douglas influence. This style emphasised the traditions of vernacular architecture, in particular brick and tile mullioned windows, terracotta detailing such as finials and dog-tooth work, and projecting shaped purlins to the roof.

Nevertheless, the 19th century witnessed a number of non-agricultural developments. The village had long been important as a crossing-point on the Mersey, with Hollins Ferry running between Warburton and Rixton since the 14th century. In 1836 this ferry was complemented by a toll bridge, although eventually the ferry was bought by the bridge owners (Faulkner 1989, 37; Rixton and Warburton Bridge Act 1863). A more fundamental change to the life and appearance of the village was the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, completed in 1894. In Warburton the curve of the Mersey around the village was by-passed, and the old course of the river can still be seen at the back of the Old Church and Rectory. Until this time the main means of transport to the village had been via the river and the nearby Bridgewater Canal. By comparison the journey to Lymm and Warburton by road was difficult and tortuous, especially since Bent Lane, which was constructed in the seventeenth century, was not a public highway. Originally it was a private road owned by the Drinkwater family, who retained control of it throughout the eighteenth century despite a lawsuit of 1736 which sought to establish it as a free highway (Hartwell 1991, 14-5).

Perhaps the most significant change in this period was the sale of the village by the Warburton family, in June 1918, to the Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited (Nevell *et al* 2015, 30). Since then much of the CWS estate has been sold off, in particular the largest farms, (Bent Farm, Birch Farm, Moss Brow Farm and Warburton Park Farm). The CWS retained this estate intact until after 1945 when it sold the largest farms (Bent Farm, Birch Farm, Moss Brow Farm and Warburton Park Farm). In the 1980s and 1990s it sold the cottages on the estate, and the last farmland owned by the CWS was finally sold in 2008.

Other 20th century developments included the building of council houses by Bucklow Rural District Council in the 1920s and 1930s on the northern side of Wigsey Lane. The threat of large-scale industrial salt working in Warburton was avoided in the 1900s due to the uneconomic nature of the deposits located (Nevell *et al* 2015, 163-66). However, the Cheshire Lines railway closed in 1965. The amalgamation of many fields and the consequent removal of field boundaries in the middle decades of the century marked a change in agricultural practice in the area. From the late 1960s onwards there was a shift away from dairy farming back towards arable production. This is reflected in the abandonment of many of the shippens on the farms of the township, in particular those units which had been converted from old threshing barns or stables, as at Paddock Lane Farm and Wigsey Farm. New houses were built north of Wigsey Farm in 2007.

The number of working farms in early 21st century Warburton is now restricted to the largest landholdings (Birch, Higher Carr Green, Moss Brow, The Bent, and Warburton Park) and a few of the smaller tenancies such as Midlands Farm, Lower Carr Green, and Townfield. Small farms such as Moss, Paddock Lake, Paddock Lane, and Wigsey closed during the 1990s and their farm houses and buildings were converted into private residences. A number of farmsteads and cottages, Middle Carr Green, Onion Farm Cottage, Whitelake Farm, have been lost altogether since the mid-19th century and their sites are now just fields.



Figure 2: The location of the parish of Warburton from the air, 1996. Copyright Dr Michael Nevell.



Figure 3: Old St Werburgh's Church and Warburton Village from the air, 1996. Copyright Dr Michael Nevell.



Figure 4: Warburton Village from the air, 1996. Copyright Dr Michael Nevell.



Figure 5: Aerial views of Warburton Village (top) and Moss Brow hamlet (bottom), 1999. Copyright Dr Michael Nevell.

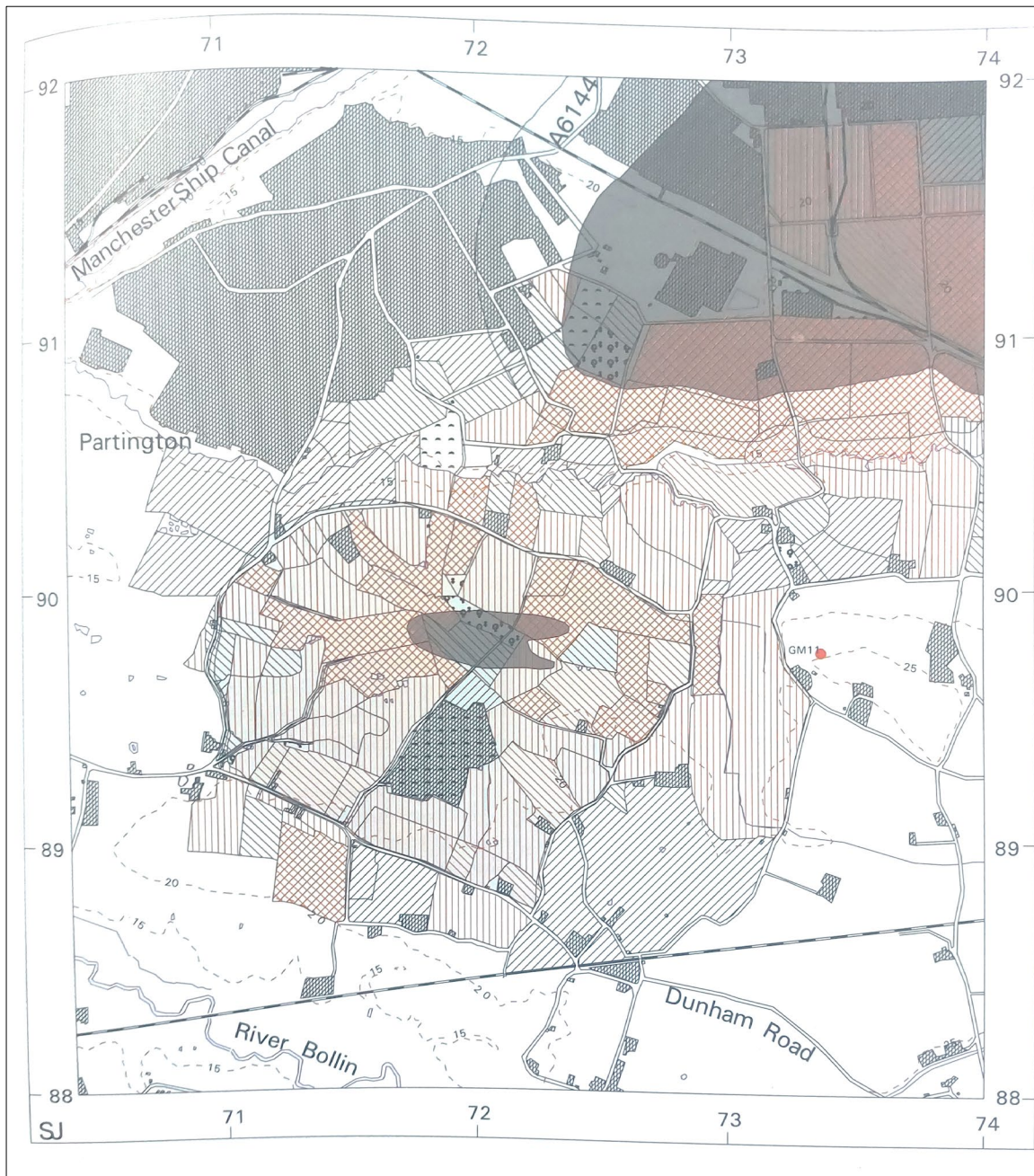


Figure 6: Fieldwalking undertaken across Warburton Moss and northern Warburton by the North west Wetlands Project, 1993 to 94 (Hall, Huckerby & Wells 1995).

Figure 7: A pollen diagram taken from a peat core from the middle of Warburton Moss, 1996. After Beenham, Hradil & Shimwell 1996.

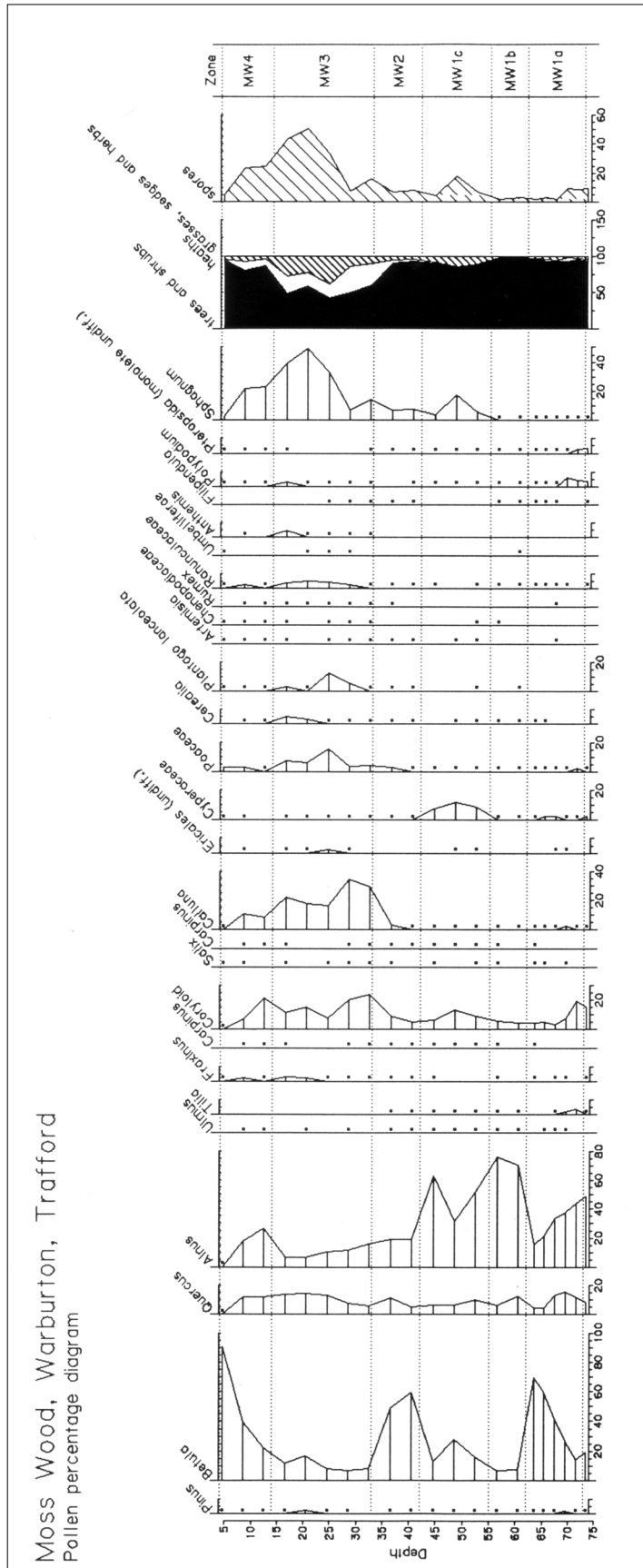
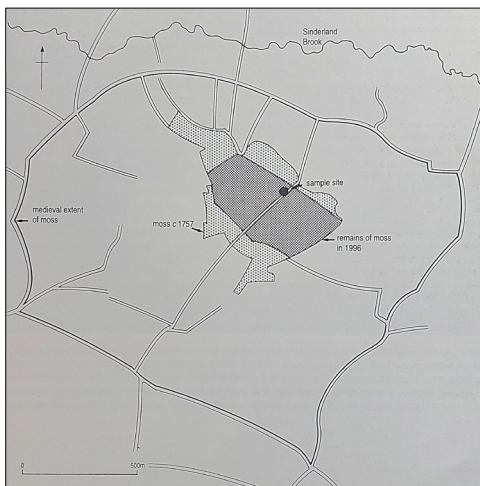




Figure 8: Aerial views of the line of the early 1990s gas pipeline (arrowed) through Moss Brow hamlet, 1999. Copyright Dr Michael Nevell.

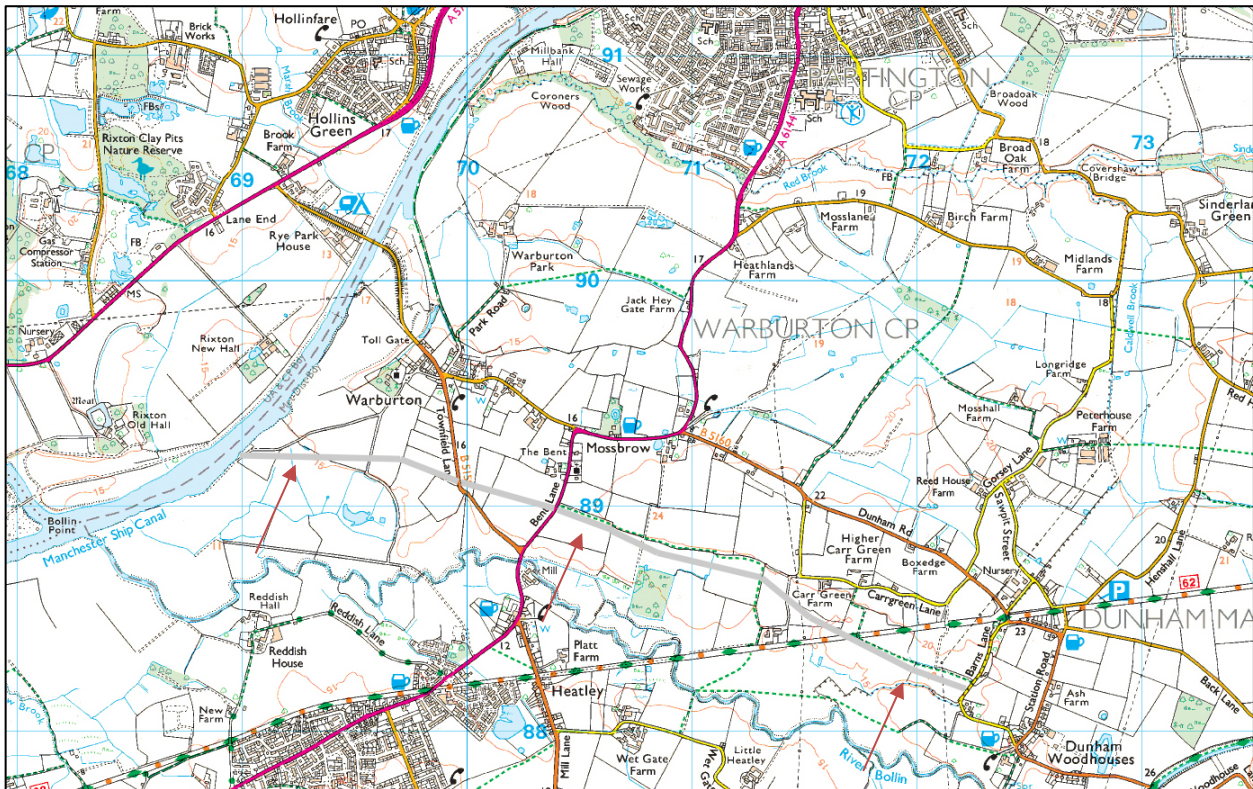


Figure 9: The line of the early 1990s gas pipeline (arrowed) through Warburton.



Figure 10: St Werburgh's Old Church as shown on the Warburton estate map of 1757. The tower is in the wrong location.



Figure 11: An 18th century watercolour painting of St Werburgh's Old Church.

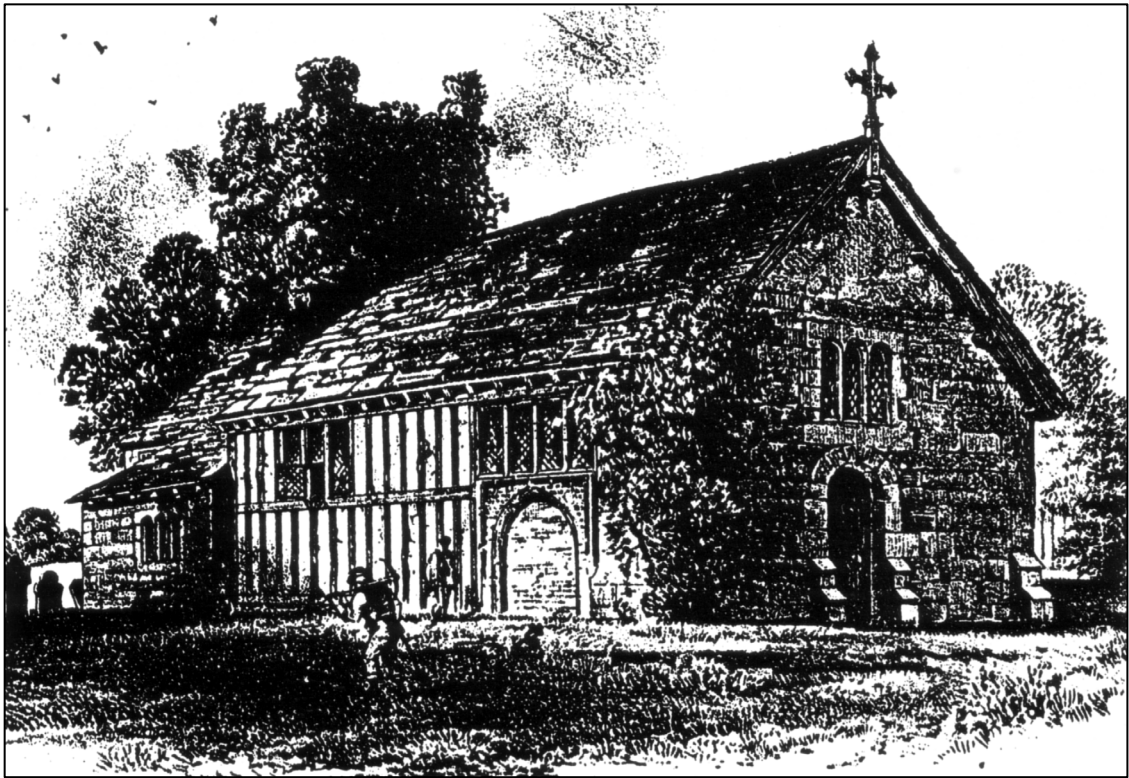


Figure 12: An 1866 sketch painting of St Werburgh's Old Church.



Figure 13: A 1951 watercolour painting of St Werburgh's Old Church.

Figure 14 (right): A drawing of the late medieval stone coffin in St Werburgh's Old Church.

Figure 15 (below): The late medieval stone coffin and font of 1605 in St Werburgh's Old Church.

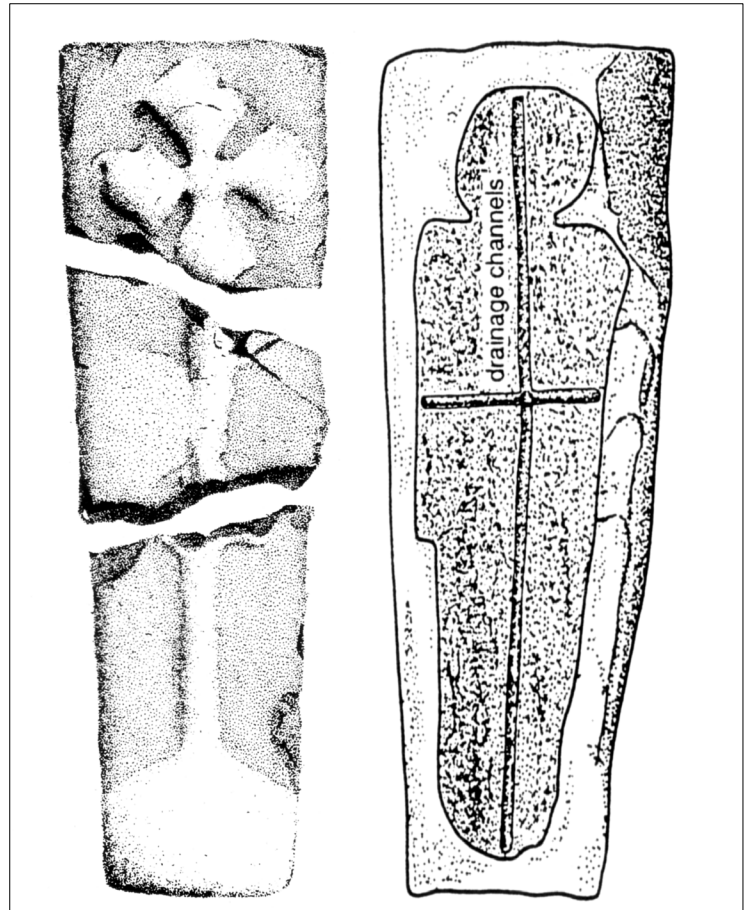




Figure 16: Warburton as shown on Saxton's map of Cheshire, 1579.



Figure 17: Warburton as shown on Speed's map of Cheshire, 1610.



Figure 18: Then mid-16th century wall painting at Onion Farmhouse referencing the legend of St Werburgh.

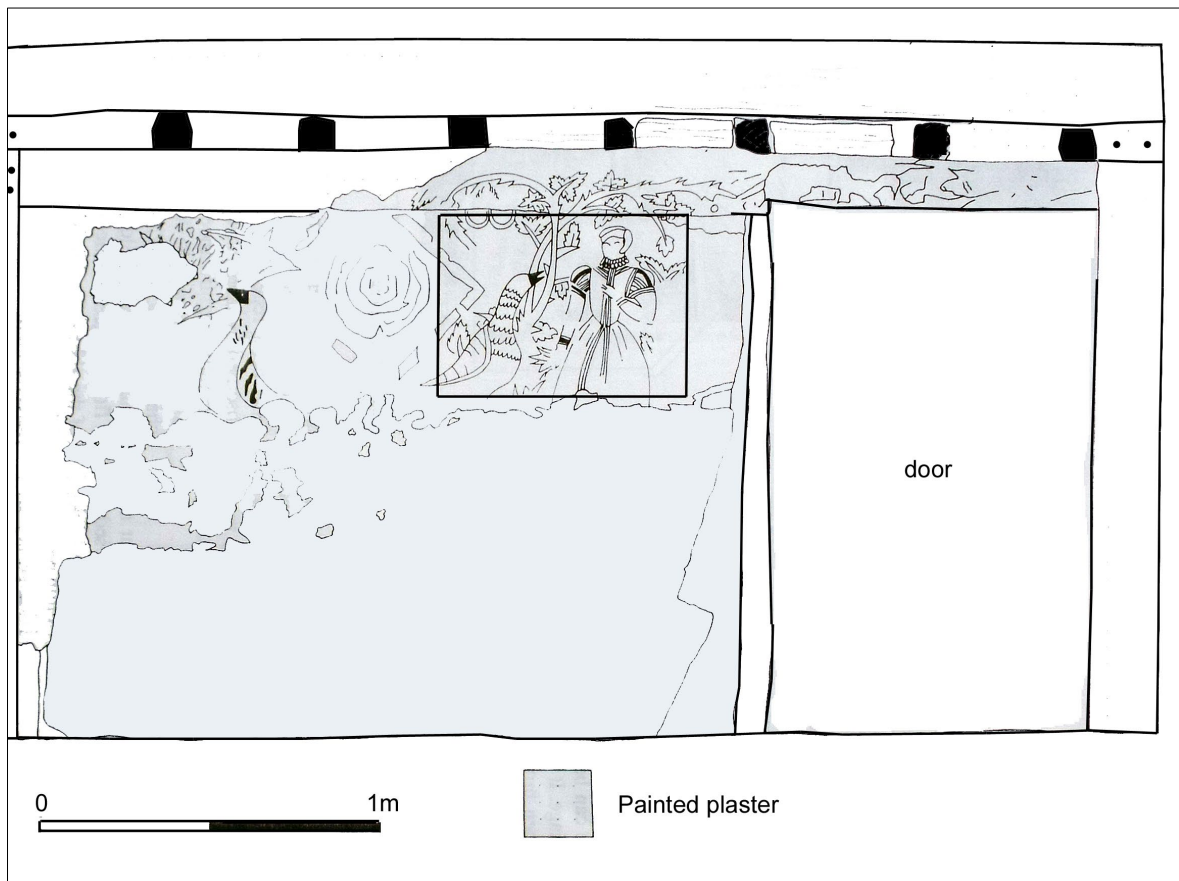


Figure 18: A drawing of the mid-16th century wall painting at Onion Farm.

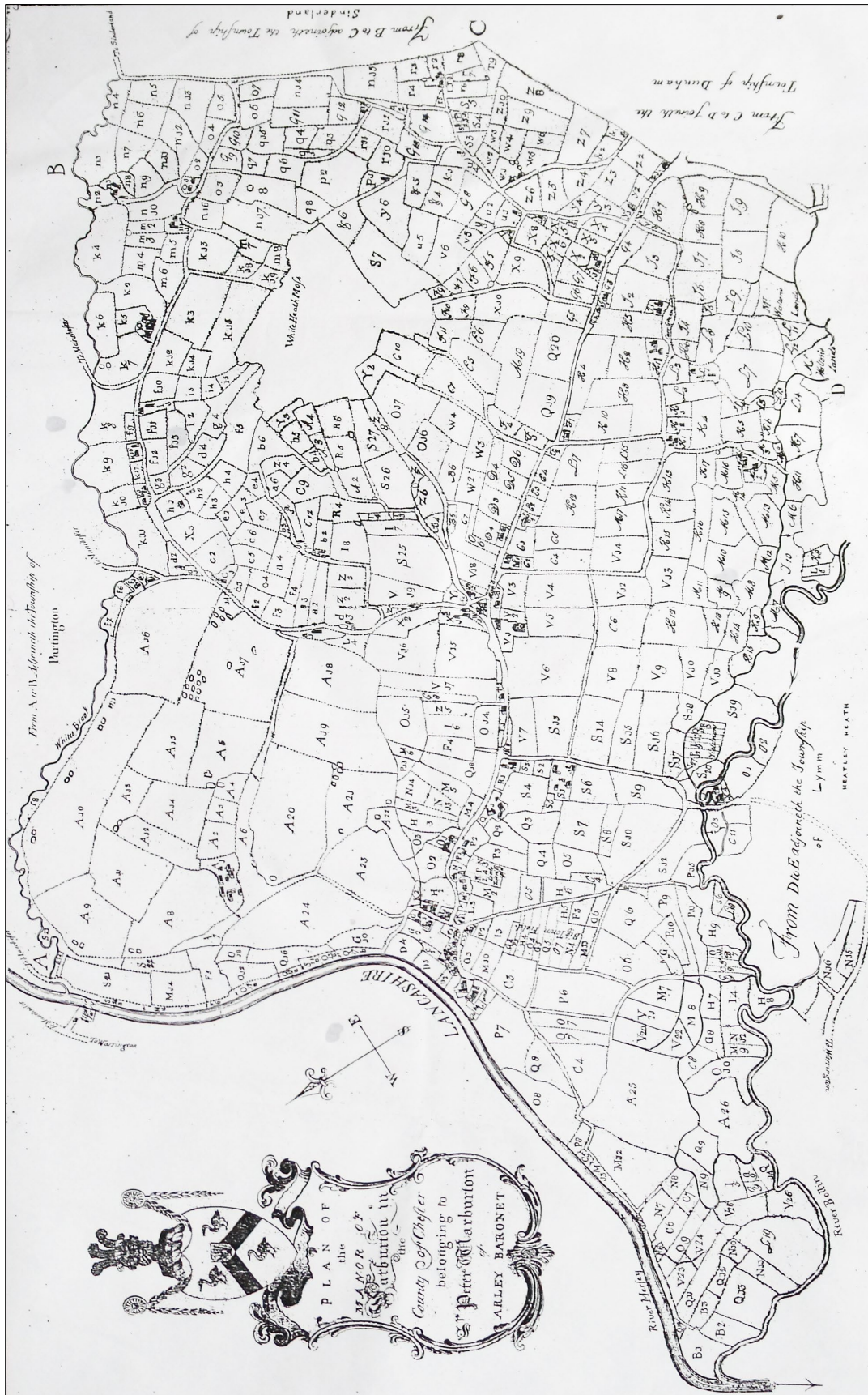


Figure 19: The 1757 estate map of Warburton.



Figure 20: St Werburgh's Old Church and the River Mersey from a sketch of 1830

To Corn Dealers,
MILLERS, AND OTHERS.

TO BE LET BY TICKET,
AT THE
Crown Inn, in Northwich,
IN THE COUNTY OF CHESTER.

On SATURDAY, the 28th of December, 1833.
At the Hour of Four in the Afternoon; subject to certain Conditions, and for a Term of Years, if required;

ALL THAT VALUABLE AND DESIRABLE

Water Corn Mill,
CALLED
WARBURTON MILL,

Situate in WARBURTON, in the said County of Chester, with the House, Outbuildings, and Appurtenances thereunto belonging; as the same are now occupied by Messrs. LEIGH and HARDY.

The above Mill is situate on the River Bollin, close to the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal, and the Mersey and Irwell Navigation, and within the distance of twelve miles from Manchester, on excellent Hands. It is worked by two Undershot Wheels, and contains five pair of Stones, with all usual and necessary Utensils, Machinery, and Tackling.

To view the same apply at the Mill, or to Mr. GRACE, Arley Hall, near Northwich; and for further particulars, at the Office of Mr. HOSTAGE, Solicitor, Castle-Northwich.

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF F. CARNES, NORTHWICH.

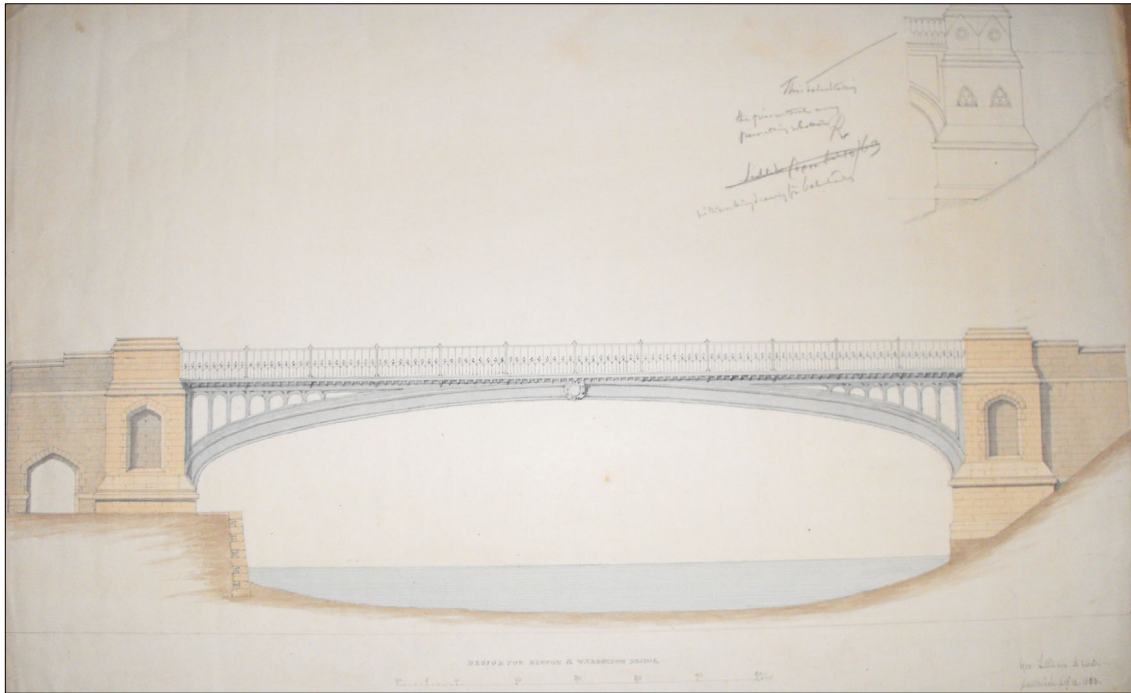


Figure 22: Architect's drawing of the Warburton tollbridge, 1861. Courtesy of the Arley Archive



Figure 23: Late 19th century photograph of Cross Cottage and the village pump on Wigsey Lane, Trafford Local Studies Image Archive.

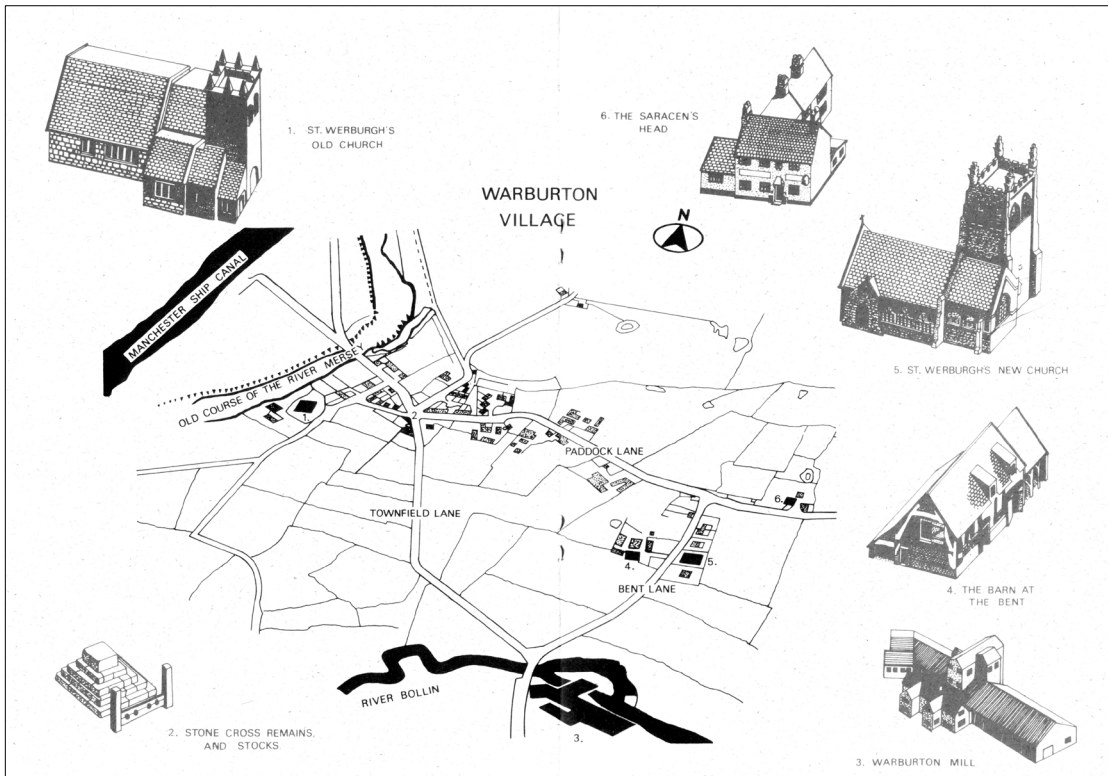


Figure 24: A 1991 sketch of the key buildings of Warburton Village after Hartwell 1991.



Figure 25: A 1991 sketch of the churches, cross, pub and mill. STAG archive..