



HISTORIC LANDSCAPE REPORT / June 2011

Report BAS/2011-05.

Compiled by Karen Pepler, from a survey by Karen Pepler, Gary Marshall and Peter Marsden, with information provided by Chetwode residents.

The following is a brief outline of the historical significance of the village of Chetwode, in response to the proposed route of the new HS2 (high-speed rail line) London to Birmingham section. The purpose of this report is to highlight these historical significances so that they will be taken into account when considering this current proposed route.

1 THE SITE

1.1 Geographical location

The village of Chetwode lies approximately five miles to the south west of the town of Buckingham, within rural landscape that contains a significant amount of historical monuments and buildings which have certainly benefitted from this relatively undisturbed setting.

1.1 Historical significance

Chetwode is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

In Records of Bucks Vol. XXIV (1982), Arnold Baines writes about 'The Chetwode-Hillesden Charter of 949 and comments on the development of the local area prior to this date, suggesting varying stages of development.

"Chetwode represents the earliest phase of pioneering during the seventh century. It naturally took the name of the forest itself, and the scattered farms would hardly have needed a common organ of local government until they were grouped into a 10-hide unit and subjected to common burdens. The conjunction of Welsh and English phonology needed to produce an ultimate Chet rather than a Chid or (Anglian) Cheet suits a sixth-century date, and the name would have been borrowed, by Saxons rather than Angles, about the time of the battle of **Feathanleag** (Stoke Lyne) in 584".¹

British History Online also mentions this Charter and states "At the date of the charter the land [of Chetwode and Hillesden] appears to have been held by Eadred, King of Northumbria".²

¹ Records of Bucks, Vol. XXIV (1982), see offprint page 16

² www.british-history.ac.uk, 22/6/2011

2.0 LISTINGS

2.1 National Monuments Record

The website PastScape lists twelve monuments under Chetwode.

Monument no. 341027, Chetwode Priory, The priory was founded in 1245 but was ruinous by 1460. It was rebuilt, and from circa 1480 until its dissolution in 1535, it was a cell of Notley Priory.

Monument no. 341034, 16th–18thC Windmill mound (site)

Monument no. 909820, Cropmarks of ring ditches, possibly Bronze Age round barrows, visible on aerial photographs.

Monument no. 909837, Ring Ditch cropmark.

Monument no. 341031, St Martins Church, documented in 1223, but regarded as a chapel in 1480 when the priory was used as the parish church. It was probably destroyed in the middle of the 16th century.

Monument no. 341037, Slight earthworks (monastic associations) formerly suggested site of Chetwode DMV.

Monument no. 341065, ‘Chetwode Moats’ Fishponds, manor house C16th/E17th c.

Monument no. 341068, Chapel of St Lawrence and St Stephen, The Hermitage, or the Chapel of St Stephen and St Lawrence founded in the 12th/13th century.....

Monument no. 341147, Homestead moat supp. site of hermitage.

Monument no. 879730, Chetwode water mill, est. by 1785, abandoned by 1814.

Monument no. 879731, Sunflower Farm, C17th 2 storeyed stone farmhouse.

Monument no. 879732, Domesday water mill.³

One of these will be destroyed by the construction of the proposed HS2 route, where the new line will cut out the bend in the old railway line. This is **Monument no. 879830**, Chetwode water mill. Ordnance survey ref. SP64642840, NMR no. SP 62 NW 18. See photos.

³ www.pastscape.org.uk, 08/06/2011



The site of the water mill is situated along a bridleway that passes underneath the old disused railway track and leads to Godington. It can be seen from the old railway line, just to the north of it by about 100yds, situated in front of the evergreen trees, as can be seen in the photos. This site will be destroyed if the proposed HS2 plans go ahead, as it lies within the proposed new route of the line, where the bend in the old railway line will be straightened.

2.2 Listed Buildings

Chetwode has five listed buildings, these are:

The Church of St Mary and St Nicholas

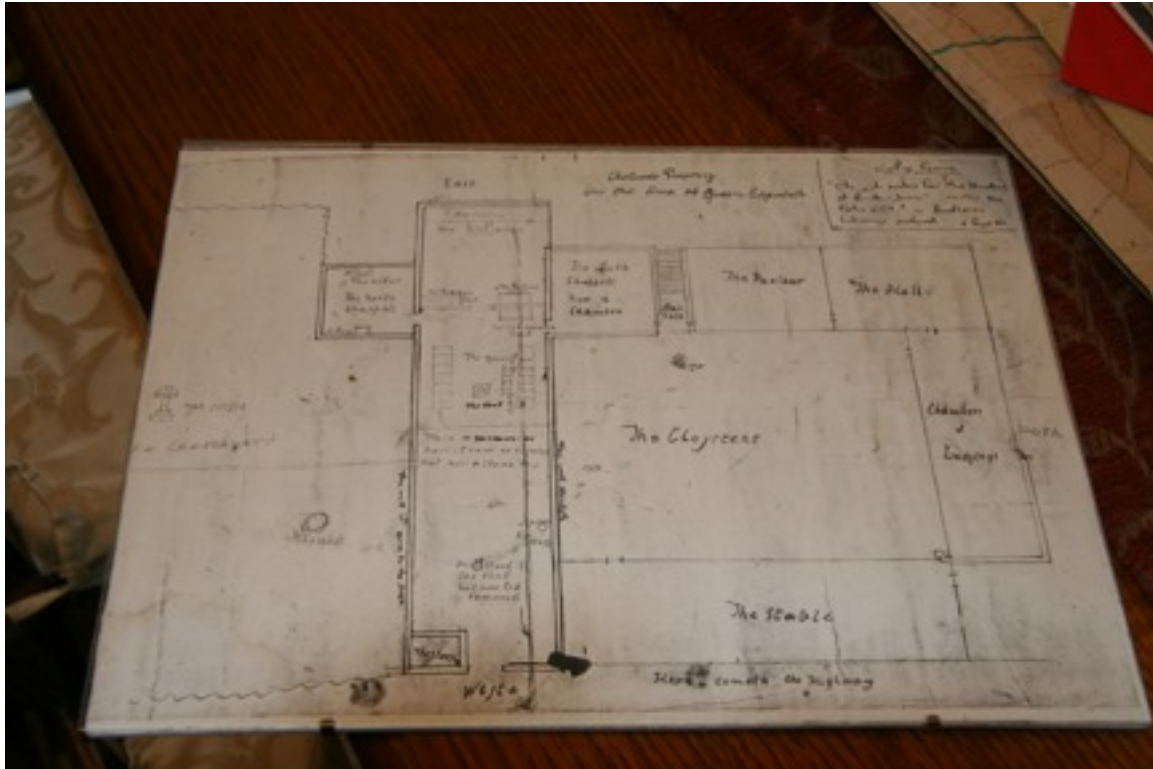


The church is a Grade I listed building. It was originally built as the chancel of the Augustinian Priory founded in 1244.⁴ It replaced the original parish church (documented in 1233)⁵ that had been located just south of the Manor house and which had become ruinous, no trace remains of that building or its churchyard today. The current church building is all that remains of the

⁴ National Monuments Record - www.imagesofengland.org.uk, 08/06/11

⁵ www.pastscape.org.uk, 08/06/11

Priory and has been subject to alterations. The following picture shows a copy of a C17th drawing of the Priory 'in the time of Queen Elizabeth'.⁶ It shows the original plan of the Priory buildings and, in doing so, shows clearly how the church has been altered.



One distinctively important feature of this church has to be its glass.

'The Glass

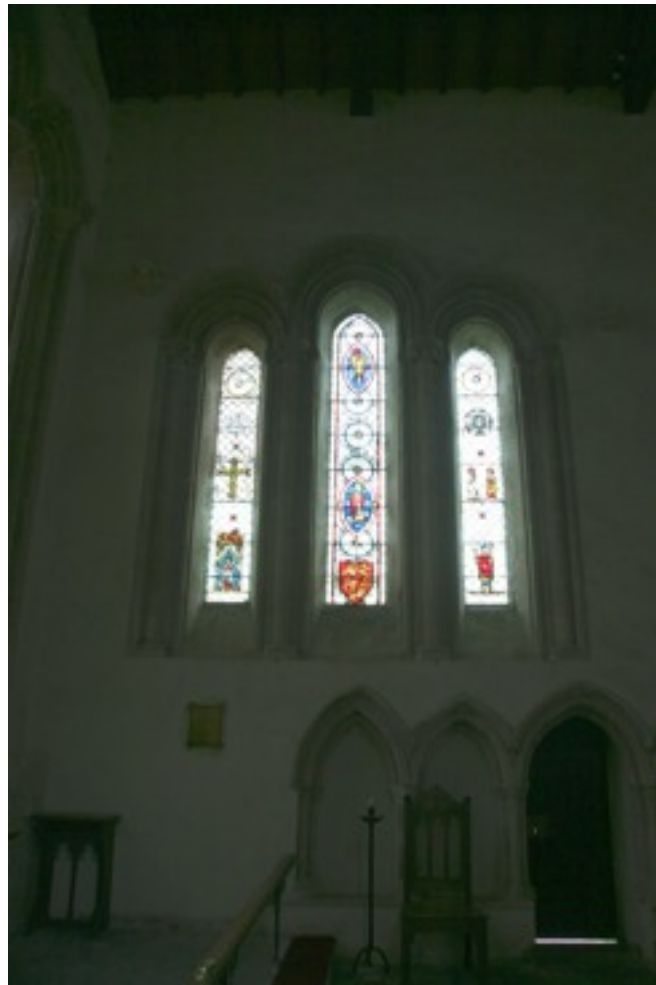
The stained glass in the south lancets is important because of its early date; the figures are described from the top of each lancet.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Left lancet | Roundel, Crucifixion, Cross, Saint under a canopy.
All 14th century. |
| Middle lancet | St John Baptist with Angnus Dei, Roundel, Bishop (or Archbishop), in Mass vestments, Royal Arms of Henry III.
All 13th century. |
| Right lancet | Roundel, part Crucifixion, 13c. The Virgin crowned and St Peter with keys, Bishop with inscription 'amicus dei Nicholaus' in Lombardic script. |

The South Window centre light – Lent to the Royal Academy 1987 for an Exhibition of English Gothic Art 1200–1400 "The Age of Chivalry." The lights were restored by Alfred Fisher of Chapel Studio.

⁶ As per detail on photo

The church is dedicated to St Mary and St Nicholas. The Royal Arms are probably their earliest representation in stained glass in England. In heraldic terms they are 'Gules, three leopards passant guardant or'; they are leopards because at that time, lions could only be depicted rampant (vertical). They face to the wrong way which must have happened after they had been removed for cleaning and were reset in reverse. All the glass in these windows was originally in the east window; the glass now there is by William Holland of Warwick in 1842; it is obviously inspired by the mediaeval glass and, as such, is successful.'⁷



South Lancets

⁷ The History of St Mary & St Nicholas, Chetwode, compiled by Elliot Viney, 2001, pg 2-3.

The Hermitage

Formerly known as Wells Farm. The Hermitage is a Grade II listed building, with a list date as C18th.



Within the grounds of The Hermitage there are two moats (see photos) and a drinking well. A path known as 'The Nut Walk' leads from the parish road up to these moats.

The proposed HS2 route will run approximately 30metres from the boundary of The Hermitage. Construction work will probably run closer still. This may have detrimental impact upon the boundary of the property and also the moats, which obviously hold historical value not only within the context of their location within the grounds of the current property, but also their relationship to Chetwode as a whole.

The building's earlier name and the significant water features and drainage systems that surround it indicate that the site performed an important role within the economy of the village, probably dating back to monastic times (C12-C16), perhaps earlier.



These photos show the moats within the grounds of The Hermitage. The moat in the bottom picture completely surrounds a square shaped island of approximately 40ft wide.

Priory House



A Grade II listed property, Priory House sits on the site of the old Augustinian Priory and adjacent to the church, on the south side. In 1654, a house was built on the site of the old Priory by Thomas Risley. This became the centre of a landed estate which took over the economic unit that had been the priory. In 1832-3, the house underwent some rebuilding and additions, the plaque on the rear of the house displays the dates as 1655 and 1833. There is a large fishpond within the grounds which is possibly medieval. The road passes by the front of Priory house, but it is said to have passed behind the house previously (local knowledge).

On the other side of this road sits a large moat, as can be seen from the aerial photograph on page 13. The area inside this moat has been used in recent centuries as a walled garden, but it may have fulfilled a different function when part of the priory.

Manor House



Grade II listed. Manor House shows a series of construction dates, 'Late C16 L-plan house with C18 infil in rear angle and c1914 large extension to E. end and additions to rear'.⁸ Wood panelling to first floor rear room in oldest part of house, which appears to have been imported and cut to fit room.



The site of the original parish church is located within the grounds of the Manor House, about 50yds from the rear of the house to the SW. There are no traces of it today.

⁸ English Heritage listing, list.english-heritage.org.uk, 08/06/11.

Sunflower Farmhouse



A Grade II listed building, Sunflower Farmhouse has been relatively unaltered since the 17th century. It has a projecting staircase on the north side, built in stone and unusual in a domestic vernacular building. A plaque which reads 1652 PH TBK, is inserted on the external wall of this staircase.



Sunflower Farmhouse is also registered as monument number **879731**. The proposed HS2 route will run approximately 25 metres from the boundary, again construction work will inevitably run closer still. This raises a great deal of concern for preserving the nature of this listed site.

3.0 OTHER PROPERTIES AT RISK

Other properties within the parish face possible demolition, currently these are Rose Cottage and Manthorne Farm. Although not listed buildings, they form part of the historical development of Chetwode.

4.0 TOPOGRAPHY

The current disused railway passes Chetwode within a deep cutting. This would imply that the new HS2 route would also require such passage. This will have two consequences, first, it may reduce the noise levels. (Residents of Chetwode have expressed a preference for 'cut and cover', whereby the proposed line would be covered over and therefore hidden). Secondly, to build the cutting will require a wide expanse of land, possibly encroaching nearer still to significant historical sites.



5.0 SUMMARY

Chetwode may be a relatively small parish, but it carries a huge wealth of historical value, dating back to medieval and even Saxon times, which will be seriously impacted upon if the proposed HS2 route goes ahead. One monument will be destroyed, two listed buildings will be subject to encroachment. The C13 glass set within the Grade I listed church is irreplaceable fragile heritage. Construction of the line will have further detrimental impact as it will inevitably require access and passage that is as yet unknown.

The uniqueness of Chetwode is its survival as an historic landscape, in which these individual buildings and sites sit. Once a Saxon estate, then a monastic establishment, then two post-dissolution properties (Manor and Priory) whose competing economies have shaped and re-shaped the village right into the 20th century. This is an invaluable historical asset that remains largely unchanged by modern intrusion and requires preserving or, failing that, resources should be made available to investigate and record it before any construction goes ahead.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the new HS2 line go ahead then, as previously noted, it is preferred by some residents, that it will be 'cut and covered'. It is imperative that construction and operation of HS2 will be sensitive to this historical parish and due consideration given to the valuable sites, monuments and buildings that make it.

Specifically, the site of Chetwode Water Mill should be the subject of an archaeological investigation, which should be completed before the start of any HS2 intrusive survey or construction works.

There should also be a detailed historical, architectural and archaeological survey of the parish, its buildings and its landscape features – particularly its moats and drainage systems – in order to establish the relationship of these elements in Chetwode today to the earlier economic units shown in the Saxon Charter, the medieval priory, and the Manor House and Priory House estates after its dissolution. This should be done to establish a narrative of historic change for Chetwode, before the intrusion of HS2.



Aerial photograph of part of Chetwode parish, with The Hermitage being the building on the far left. HS2 is being proposed to run through the field within the gap between the boundaries on the top left and will take up a great deal of this space if left as an open cutting.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the residents of Chetwode for allowing access to their properties and for providing valuable information.

All photos by Peter Marsden (2011), except aerial photograph taken by Mike Farley.

Notes

This report has been very quickly prepared to bring local knowledge and detail to the attention of the Department for Transport, for information on the proposed HS2 line, whilst it is currently in the proposal stage.

There are further supportive notes to this report held in the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society's library, located within the county museum at Aylesbury.

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