

Whitewell

**15701
SJ 4967 4108**

Introduction

The settlement of Whitewell as shown on modern Ordnance Survey maps is positioned along a lane known as the Whitewell Road that converges on and is just to the north of the A525, Wrexham to Whitchurch road. Wrexham is 19km away to the north-west and Whitewell itself is close to the Shropshire border. In this gently undulating agrarian landscape, the church lies near the base of a long low slope with the Iscoyd Brook running along the bottom, and the previously mentioned lane on higher ground further to the south.

This brief report examines the background to Whitewell up to second half of the 18th century and is included here primarily to provide continuity with the original Wrexham Maelor survey rather than because of its inherent settlement characteristics. For the more recent history of the village, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the modern settlement. No historic core has been defined as the evidence currently available to us is too sparse to justify it. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers adopted in the HER to provide researchers with information that is specific to the individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

Whitewell refers to a well situated a few metres to the south of the present church, and it is from this that the modern settlement name has been adopted.

A chapel of ease, its mother church at Malpas in Cheshire, was provided for the surrounding community sometime before 1570 and is depicted on Christopher Saxton's county map published in 1577. This timber-framed building collapsed during restoration works in 1829 and was replaced in brick, though whether on precisely the same site as its predecessor is not known. It was given the status of a parish church in 1885.

There is no recognisable historic core to Whitewell and no convincing evidence of a former nucleated settlement. John Evans failed to show Whitewell on his map of 1795, in 1830 the Ordnance Survey surveyors seem to have been ignorant of the name, and as late as 1873 the settlement name had not been registered on the largest scale Ordnance Survey mapping. Whitewell as a settlement name is thus a modern creation.

The heritage to 1750

The present whitewashed brick church of St Mary (105343) is situated on level ground. The graveyard is broadly rectilinear in shape and its earliest recorded burials date to the beginning of the 19th century. No features associated with the earlier chapel have been discerned in

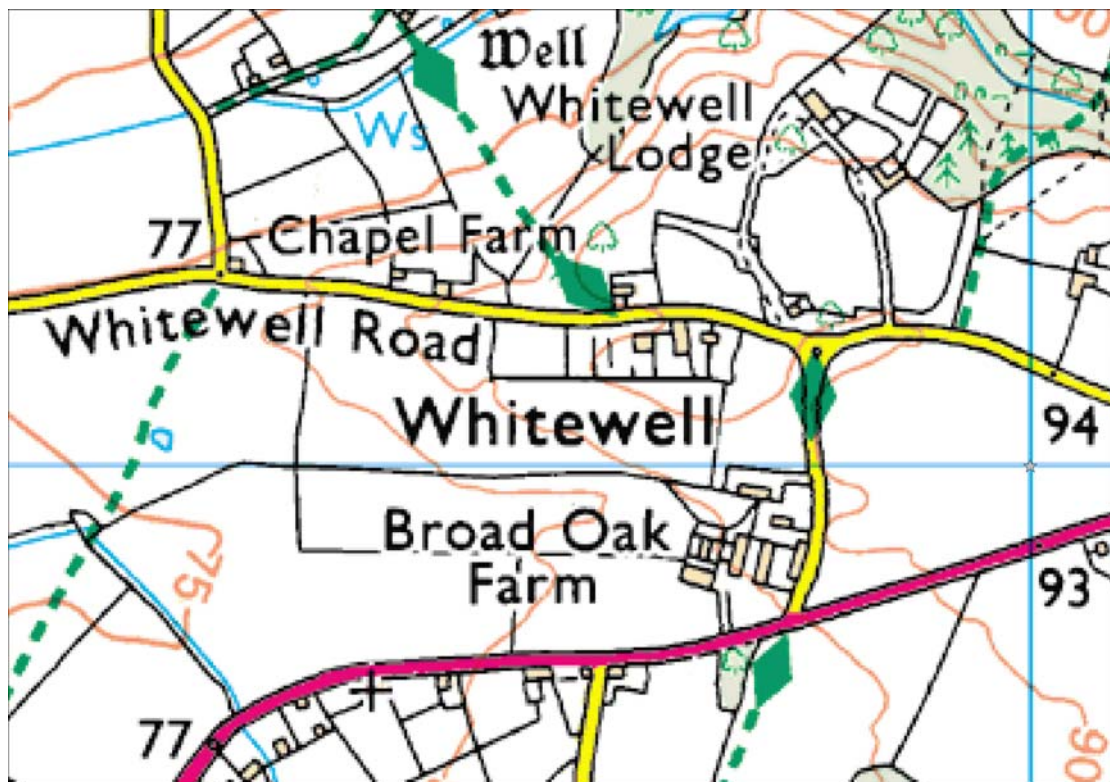
modern times, though there is some re-use of earlier panelling in the gallery. It is the only church in Wales in the diocese of Chester.

A carriage shelter close to the church is believed to have been erected in the 17th or 18th century, and is listed.

The White Well (100215), its stonework capped by a metal plate, is some 20m south of the church. In the early 20th century the Royal Commission claimed that this was a sacred well related to the old chapel at Whitewell but there is nothing specific to support the assertion. A second well, 40m to the south-west of the White Well, similarly has no known historical significance.

The majority of the dispersed buildings around Whitewell are of 19th-century brick construction except for Chapel Farm (105344) which is timber-framed and possibly of 17th-century or even earlier date.

Whitewell Lodge (42808) is a large, 19th-century, brick hunting lodge with guests' lodgings, and was probably associated with Iscoyd Park.



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