

Ewloe

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Introduction

The modern settlement of Ewloe lies on level ground close to the northern edge of the Flintshire plateau before it tips down to the Dee Estuary. Ewloe Castle is more isolated on a spur carved by converging streams, though in a similar location relative to the plateau edge. The settlement lies less than 2km to the north-west of Hawarden on the B5125, with Ewloe Castle a further 1.5km on. Buckley is around 3km to the south-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Ewloe up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

No historic settlement area has been defined for Ewloe for reasons that are outlined below, so the accompanying map is provided for locational purposes only. It 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 used in the HER to provide information that is specific to individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

Ewloe is recorded as *Ewlawe* in 1281, with *Ewlowe* appearing in 1331. Combining two Old English terms *æwell* and *hlaw*, it has the meaning of 'hill at the source of a stream'.

It has never been a parish in its own right, but a township in Hawarden parish.

The main feature of interest - the castle - is a native Welsh construction, built during the 13th century. It appears to have existed in isolation.

It has been suggested that by the beginning of the 14th century, Edward I had established a small English colony here. An iron mine was already in existence by 1295 and the coal resources of the area were soon exploited. There is solid documentary evidence for coal mining during the 14th century but what influence this might have had on settlement is unclear.

In 1675 John Ogilby depicted Yowley [sic] as well as Yowley Castle on one of his road maps, but the symbol that he used – a small line of houses – cannot be taken as an indication of a nucleated settlement here. Eighteenth-century estate maps reveal no obvious focus of settlement and even now there is no church. There was a scatter of dwellings in the vicinity of what was an area of common known as Ewloe Green, with a few houses on Stamford Way (then Stand Ford Lane) near to what is now New Inn Bridge. South of Ewloe Green was Ewloe Hall with another tract of common to the east. During the 19th century there was a gradual increase in the number of houses beside various roads in the locality, particularly a ribbon-like development along the road to Hawarden.

Only during this century has Ewloe taken on the form of a settlement, consisting primarily of housing estates and an industrial park around the crossroads of the A494 and the B51525.

Historically, there is no settlement focus at Ewloe. The castle, which in other circumstances might have become a centre for an expanding community, looks to have remained an isolated defensive structure, while Ewloe Green seems to have acted as a focus but only for dwellings that were dispersed around its perimeter.

The heritage to 1750

Ewloe Castle (100050) appears to have been built early in the 13th century, although one of the leading castle authorities, Cathcart King, was inclined to put the date later, suggesting 1257. Possibly there may have been an earlier earthwork castle on the site which was then utilised by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd at that date. After 1277, there is no evidence that it was of any interest to Edward I and its military significance declined. It consists of a free-standing, D-shaped keep, a curtain wall with a round tower and earthworks. It occupies a secluded promontory and there is no evidence of settlement or other activity in its immediate vicinity.

Edward Lhuyd noted what has since been interpreted as a holy well - Ffynnon Eulo. Its site is not known.

The site of a medieval pottery kiln (102717) was uncovered to the north-west of Ewloe Hall in 1975, and there are documented references to pottery manufacture in Ewloe in 1435/36.

Ewloe Green represents an isolated block of common land beside which dwellings were established certainly by the 18th century and probably in the century before. It is possible but by no means certain that as an entity the green was in existence in the Middle Ages, although it may not have attracted settlement at such an early date. No significant features relating to the green or its cottages were noted during the field visit, although there are traces of ridge and furrow beyond its northern edge (OS plot 1864).

Some houses in the neighbourhood of the green go back to the 17th century or perhaps even earlier. Within Ewloe itself, however, there are few early structures. The Boar's Head (105925) on the crossroads is of 17th century origin though it is much altered. It appears on the earlier estate maps noted above.