

## **Bronington**

**16384**  
**SJ 4582 3942**

### ***Introduction***

The core of the modern village of Bronington follows a minor road that lies immediately to the west of the A495 Ellesmere to Whitchurch road, with the latter approximately 6km to the south-west. The village lies on low and generally level land with the peat mosses of Fenn's and Whixall less than 2km to the south. The church and its accompanying vicarage lie detached from the village several hundred meters off to the south-east.

This brief report examines the background to Bronington up to the years around 1750. For a fuller explanation of the more recent history of the settlement, 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 for Bronington as the evidence currently available to us is too sparse to justify it. However, this decision might need to be reviewed, were a more detailed analysis of the extent and appearance of Bronington Green to be completed. The map does not show any 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](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

The earliest record of the name comes in 1284 as *Bronynton*, later forms showing only minor variations. The first element is obscure but may be a personal name, while the second is Old English *ingtun*, suggesting a meaning along the lines of the 'settlement of [Bron's] people'. Its occurrence could be taken to mean that there was some form of Anglo-Saxon settlement in the area in the pre-Conquest era, but the evidence is not conclusive for new *ton* names were still being created well after the Normans invaded.

In recent times Bronington was a township in the large ecclesiastical parish of Hanmer, and it was not until 1836 that the parish with this name (but also known as New Fenns) was created to support the new church (see below). Probably, too, it was a medieval manor, although references that support this are much more difficult to come by.

Nothing can be satisfactorily revealed of the development of a settlement at Bronington between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and it is evident that there was no church here until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The evidence at present points to a largely dispersed pattern of farms and cottages.

The 1777 enclosure map shows only nine buildings clustered around the edges of what was a long central green or common lying to the south of the present School Lane (and termed Brannington [sic] Green by Edward Lhuyd in c.1698). The period when the green began to attract settlement cannot be gauged. This area has now been infilled with modern dwellings.

Bronington did not appear as a named settlement on John Evans' map of north Wales in 1795, but coincides to some extent with what he termed Fenns Heath, where housing was spread out along the edge of the mosses.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings were springing up along both sides of School Lane with two large outlying farms at New Hall Farm and Bay Tree Farm. Crofts are indicated on the southern side of Maesllwyn Lane and in the fields adjacent to the A495 opposite Moss Lane. The Ordnance Survey surveyors in 1829 termed the area Bronington, implying that the number of dwellings had become sufficient for the authorities to recognise the emergence of a distinct settlement focus, but it could be argued that it was only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Bronington took on the form of a nucleated village.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

A church (105314) dedicated to the Holy Trinity was provided in 1836 by converting a former barn lying beyond the east periphery of the village, by the addition of two transepts. A small tower was appended in 1864.

The oldest buildings in the present village are believed to be Glenmoor and Breen Cottages (105356 & 105357), both of 18<sup>th</sup>-century brick construction, a timber-framed barn of the same date at Pear Tree House and one possibly older timber-framed house at the eastern extreme of the village which is now a part of Post Office Farm (105358). Outlying from the main settlement core are Maesllwyn House where both the brick house and the barn are considered to be of 17<sup>th</sup>-century origin, New Hall Farm where a 17<sup>th</sup>-century building was partially rebuilt in the following century, and Malt Kiln farmhouse from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The remaining buildings are of 19<sup>th</sup>-and 20<sup>th</sup>-century construction.



*Bronington, photo 03-c-0119 © CPAT, 2013*

Rapid field survey in 1992 identified several earthworks that might indicate the position of earlier buildings, possibly dwellings around the edge of the former green. The field (OS no.7970) to the rear of Church View displayed a number of undulations close to the southern boundary which do not appear to be either naturally derived or caused by recent dumping and

may therefore represent the remains of earlier settlement. A large 'platform' earthwork could be seen against the western boundary of the field, and another large, possible building platform (105316) could be seen in the field (OS no.6048) north-east of Breen Cottage. South of The Cottage (OS no.3837) a shed was built on top of an earthwork platform (105317) that was clearly earlier and unrelated to the shed. And in addition the large field (OS no. 1934) opposite The Cottage on the west side of Grange Road displayed a short stretch of a possible holloway follows the present road. As far as can be established there has been no further examination of these features since 1992.

Though the evidence presented here is not sufficient to argue for a strong medieval presence at Bronington, metal detecting has produced a string of medieval and early post-medieval finds that indicate some activity in the centuries before the emergence of Bronington as a recognisable settlement.



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