# NOTES ON THE PARISH OF BURTON IN WIRRAL

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Notes on the Parish of Burton in Wirral by F. C. Beazley

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BURTON VILLAGE

# NOTES
## ON THE PARISH OF
# BURTON IN WIRRAL

BY

F. C. BEAZLEY, F.S.A.

ILLUSTRATED WITH SEVEN PLATES
AND NUMEROUS COATS OF ARMS
DRAWN BY GRAHAM JOHNSTON
HERALD PAINTER TO THE LYON COURT

LIVERPOOL
HENRY YOUNG & SONS
1908

# LIST OF PLATES


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*** *The Coats of Arms are reproduced from Drawings by* Graham Johnston.

# NOTES ON THE PARISH OF BURTON IN WIRRAL

FROM field names, old maps, notices in county histories, and the occurrence of patches of heather, and even little roots in pastures in different parts of the Hundred, one is led to the conclusion that the villages of Wirral were anciently small and more or less isolated communities, or little green cultivated oases in a setting of russet moorland and purple heather, backed in places by woods of firs or other trees, according to the nature of the soil.

In these days, when the problem of rapid and cheap transit is already partly solved, it is difficult for us to realise the isolation of village folk in very early times. In mediæval days road making and repairing fell upon the landowners and their tenants, and was looked upon as a pious and meritorious work before God: men saw in them a true charity for certain unfortunate people, namely, travellers. Indulgences were granted by the Church to road makers and bridge builders. The roads were mere tracks leading over the higher ground to avoid bogs.[1] As for the means of locomotion, though horse litters and covered waggons were sometimes used by royalty and the great nobles in very early times, and though a coach was built as early as 1555 for the Earl of Rutland, and Queen Elizabeth showed herself to her loving subjects through the

[1] "English Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century," by J. J. Jusserand, 1901.

sliding panels of her royal coach, these clumsy vehicles did not come into general use until the early part of the seventeenth century, and travelling before and for long after that period must chiefly have been undertaken on horseback.

The squire of the time of William III. kept a family coach drawn by four or even six of his cart-horses, and the modern staves carried by footmen are the survival of the stout levers used by their rustic antecessors to hoist the wheels out of the quagmire.[1] The roads were execrable, even in the neighbourhood of London, well into the eighteenth century. Village folk, we may be sure, did not travel very far unless compelled.

It is in isolation such as this that we must think of the early days of Burton in Wirral. Lying as it did over a mile from the main road running between Chester and the northerly villages of Neston, Heswall, and West Kirby, it must have been secluded, and have come but little in contact with the stream of life constantly coming and going between Ireland and Chester, except for the period when it was itself a port and market or the occasional arrival of a vessel.

The parish of Burton, in the Hundred of Wirral, comprises the townships of Burton and Puddington, and the tithe map of 1843 gives the former as consisting of—

| | |
|---|---|
| Arable land . . . . | 448 acres |
| Meadows and pastures . . | 868 „ |
| Woodland . . . . | 136 „ |
| Marshland . . . . | 400 „ |

making a total of 1852 acres for the township. The large acreage of marshland is accounted for by the fact that the parish boundary runs out into lands reclaimed from the estuary of the Dee.

[1] "Old Times Re-visited," by Charles T. King, 1900, p. 96.