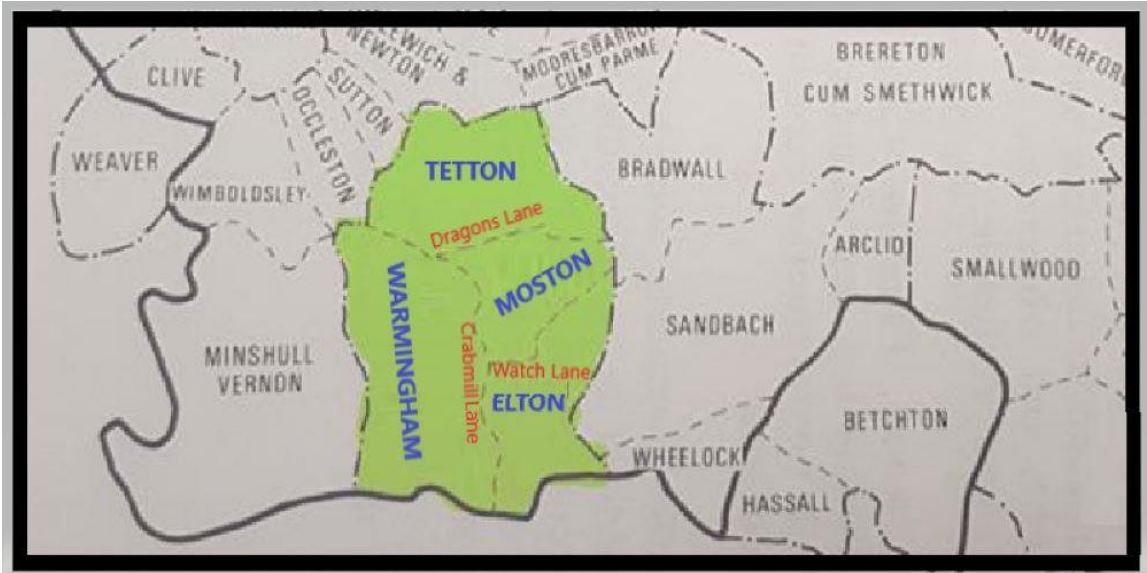


Sandbach History Society: Report of the April 2024 meeting

Speaker: John Pemberton

At the April meeting of Sandbach History Society, John Pemberton, a member of the Society, gave a fascinating talk about the history of Moston in Victorian times.

Mr Pemberton said that he had lived in the township of Moston, just outside Sandbach, for twenty-five years. When he took early retirement recently he decided to research the owners and occupiers of the houses in the township in the nineteenth century. Moston was then one of four historic townships in the Warmingham parish, the others being Elton, Tetton and Warmingham.



The Northwich Hundred (1840)

He described the various resources that he has used for his research. These includes digitised records of old newspapers, estate records, land tax records, sales brochures and the contents of the parish chest that is held at Warmingham Church. Most of these documents are now held at Cheshire Archives in Chester. Another very useful resource was the tithe map for Cheshire from 1840 which is available online at the Cheshire Archives website. The map shows the owners and occupiers of all the land and properties in the county at that time. Research is made easier with a split screen showing the tithe map and the corresponding current map side by side.

There are twenty-four properties in Moston shown on the tithe map and most are still standing today. Moston Manor and Greenbank Farm were two large properties which were part of the Moston Manor Estate. Unlike the neighbouring townships none of the land in Moston was owned by Lord Crewe. Instead about half of the area, about 330 acres, belonged to the Moston Manor Estate and the other half was divided between other owners.

RESOURCES - THE TITHE MAP

Township	Parish	Plot	Landowner(s)	Occupier(s)	Plot Name	Land Use	Acres	Roods	Perches
Moston	Warrington	154	Laurence Armitstead	Henry Arden	House and Garden		1	0	0
Moston	Warrington	140	Laurence Armitstead	James Buckley	House Garden and Orchard		2	1	19

Cheshire Tithe Map 1840 Source: Cheshire Archives

WARRINGTON - AS QUEEN VICTORIA TOOK THE THRONE

	Laurence Armitstead	Lord Crewe	Other	Total
Warrington		1,867	163	2,030
Elton		998	30	1,028
Tetton		780	208	988
Moston	336		342	678
Total	336	3,645	742	4,724
% of Total	7%	77%	16%	

Ownership of land in the parish of Warrington in 1840 in acres.

Mr. Pemberton then outlined the history of the Moston Manor Estate. It consisted of eight properties including Moston Manor, Moston Mill and Greenbank Farm and was owned by the Vernon-Venables family until 1801. The legend of the Moston dragon originates from this family. Apparently many years ago a toddler had strayed into a bog in Moston and was about to be killed by a dragon. Sir Gilbert Venables heard the cries of the toddler and entered the bog and slew the dragon. The image of the dragon is still used on the road signs for Moston and there is still a Dragon's Lane.



Moston parish road sign (John Pemberton)

In 1801 the Moston Manor estate was sold to the Reverend John Armitstead for £9,900. He was the vicar of Goostrey and also owned the advowson, the right to appoint the vicar, of Sandbach parish. In 1814 he also bought Cranage Hall and when he died in 1815 the ownership of the Hall and the Moston Manor estate passed to his son Lawrence Armitstead. In 1828 Lawrence appointed his half-brother, John Armitstead as vicar of Sandbach. In the same year Lawrence sold part of the Moston estate and Mr Pemberton believes this was to fund the purchase of the Hermitage in Holmes Chapel for his brother to live in.

In 1845 Lawrence Armitstead sold the estate to John Bright, a cotton manufacturer from Coventry. John died in 1851 and left the Moston estate in trust for his three daughters. Mr. Pemberton said that the family was an influential one and numbered several members of Parliament including John Sutton's son-in-law, Walter McLaren. Walter became the Liberal MP for Crewe in 1886 when George Latham of Bradwall Hall stood down due to ill health.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the repeal of the Corn Laws allowed the import of cheap corn from the vast plains of America leading to a fall in the price of home grown cereals such as wheat. This caused a slump in British agriculture and by the early 1900s many large country estates were becoming financially unviable and were sold. In 1910 the Moston Manor estate was sold and Mr Pemberton showed a newspaper cutting from the Cheshire Observer with details of the sale.



Cheshire Observer 8th October 1910

Sale of Moston Manor Estate 1910 Source: BritishNewspapersArchive

As part of this sale Moston Manor Farm was bought for £7,500 by Alderman Simon Gleave for his son. Also, Greenbank Farm was bought by Cheshire County Council for £4,500 and rented out as smallholdings.

Mr. Pemberton then said he had used the various records including the Land Tax return and Census data to list the occupiers of all the properties in Moston that are shown on the tithe map. Most of the houses were leased out to tenants. From this he has produced a property and family history for all the houses, as well as others that were built later in the nineteenth century.

Mr. Pemberton gave the example of the family history of Moston Manor Farm which was owned by Lawrence Armitstead but occupied by John Buckley at the time of the 1841 census. It was then leased to John Sutton in 1851. John Sutton married Martha Remer in 1860 and they had four children, but his wife died in childbirth in 1865. As well as losing his wife that year, John also lost his entire stock of 43 cows, 12 heifers, 1 bull and 20 calves to rinderpest. This was a contagious viral disease similar to foot and mouth, which was prevalent at the time. He erected a memorial to his animals in a farm field which still stands to this day.



Memorial to John Sutton's stock which died of rinderpest.

John Sutton remarried his deceased wife's sister Elizabeth Remer a few years later. Mr Pemberton has found the marriage certificate which states the name of the bride as E. Runee rather than Remer and suggested that this was a mystery. However, he said it may be that the couple were trying to hide the union as it was still against the law then to marry your deceased wife's sister.

After John Sutton died in 1890, the 1891 census shows that Moston Manor Farm was occupied by his son Thomas who lived there until his death in 1910. Then the Moston Manor Estate was sold to Simon Gleave and occupied by his son, Leonard for 70 years before it was sold in the 1980s. Mr. Pemberton concluded by saying he was planning to research further the adjoining townships of Elton, Tetton and Warmingham and the Society looks forward to hearing about this research in the future. If anyone wishes to contact Mr. Pemberton his e-mail address is jpembo44@gmail.com



Moston Manor Farm (1980)

The next meeting of Sandbach History Society will be on Tuesday May 7th at 7.30pm at Sandbach Library when Bob Knowles will talk about "The Remarkable Story of Edith Smith, Britain's First Warranted Police Woman". Please note the earlier start to this meeting as the AGM will follow the talk. For more information, go to the Society website, <https://sandbachhistorysociety.org.uk>, Visitors are most welcome but please contact the Society beforehand at info@sandbachhistorysociety.org.uk