

Discover

Hope & Caergwrle



Welcome to Hope & Caergwrle

These communities in the Alyn Valley have a long and rich history, influenced by their location in the Welsh borderlands and the underlying mix of rocks.

The area has often been a battleground. In the Dark Ages and Medieval periods, the Welsh fought a succession of Saxon, Norman and English invaders. During the Civil War it was in the midst of the fighting between Royalist and Parliamentary troops.

The two sandstone hills at Caergwrle were ideal vantage points, overlooking the valley roads and the Cheshire Plains. They were used to good effect by the Celts, who built Caer Estyn hillfort, and the Welsh prince, Dafydd, who built Caergwrle Castle.

The fast flowing River Alyn powered mills and factories along the valley. The fresh spring waters at Caergwrle were used to brew tasty beer, and also led to the development of Caergwrle Spa that drew tourists to the area.

Collieries, brick and ironworks developed around the rich coal seams in the Nant-y-Ffrith Valley at Llay, Cefn-y-bedd and Ffrwd. The limestone of nearby Hope Mountain was quarried for building stone or burned to produce lime. Sand and gravel were quarried at Fagl Lane, Hope, and at Ffrwd.

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The Alyn Valley itself became an important transport route, playing a key role in the development of the nearby industries. Pack-horse trails, drovers routes and later turnpike roads crossed the valley but the biggest impact came in 1866 with the opening of the railway along the valley.

The trains also brought 20th century tourists to the area, both Edwardian visitors, to take the health giving spring waters, and ramblers and cyclists from Merseyside, to explore the beautiful scenery.

Farming has always played an important part in the village communities, with most of the population employed in farms or associated crafts before 1750. Crops were grown on the fertile boulder clay in the valley and the less fertile hillsides were grazed in the summer months. Farming remains the major land use today.

This booklet has been produced by the local community to celebrate the rich cultural and natural heritage of the area. Many thanks to all who have provided photographs or shared their memories and knowledge. The booklet can also be downloaded from www.cadwynclwyd.co.uk or www.flintshire.gov.uk/tourism



Through the ages

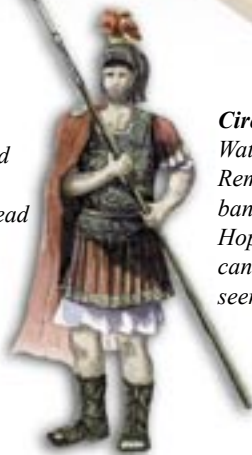
2000BC
Bronze Age tribes farmed locally. A Bronze Age shale bowl decorated with gold leaf was found on the banks of the River Alyn.



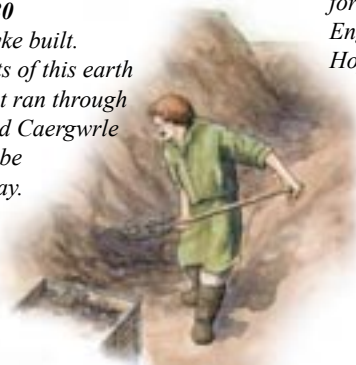
250,000 - 8000BC
Prehistoric tribes roamed here. Flint tools have been found locally.



48 - 400
Roman soldiers based in Chester passed en route to lead workings in Ffrith.



Circa 780
Wat's Dyke built. Remnants of this earth bank that ran through Hope and Caergwrle can still be seen today.



750BC - 47AD
Iron Age people built Caer Estyn hillfort.



Early Christian
Hope church, dedicated to 5th century Saint Cynfarch, was one of the first churches in Flintshire.



1277
Dafydd ap Gruffydd began to build Caergwrle Castle.



circa 1675
For centuries long packhorse trains carried goods through Caergwrle.

1403
Owain Glyndŵr's forces burned the English settlement of Hope in 1403.



1860
Caergwrle brewery established.



1866
Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay Railway opened.



1905
Pumphouse for Caergwrle spa was built.



2010
Modern day visitors walk Wat's Dyke Way and explore the castle ruins.



Border country

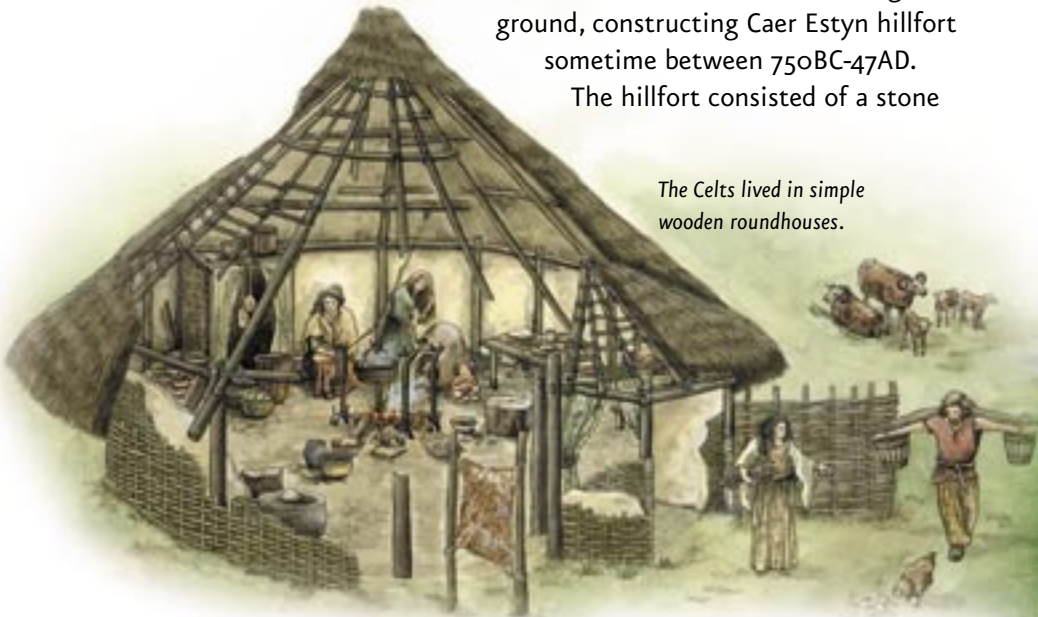
Hope and Caergwrle have had a turbulent past due to their location on the border of Wales and England. Successive waves of invaders from England sought to take Welsh lands and ownership of the settlements changed several times. These changes are reflected in the place-names. 'Hope' is originally Old English, meaning 'enclosed land in a marsh'. 'Caergwrle' may mean 'crane's meadow by the castle' and is a combination of the two languages. Caer is Welsh for fort, and the ending is thought to be a Welsh version of the original Old English name, corley meaning crane (a heron-like bird) and Leah meaning clearing or river meadow. Most of the outlying houses and farms have Welsh names, reflecting the origins of most of the locals, despite the changes in overall landownership.

Caergwrle Castle Hill and Caer Estyn provided excellent defensive positions with wide views east across the Cheshire Plain, north and south along the Alyn Valley, and west along the Nant-y-Ffrith Valley.

The Celts were the first to build on the high ground, constructing Caer Estyn hillfort sometime between 750BC-47AD.

The hillfort consisted of a stone

The Celts lived in simple wooden roundhouses.



faced earth wall that encircled the summit. The remains of a stone faced wall around Caergwrle Castle hill has been dated between 250-400AD, which suggests that the Celts or Roman invaders may have also used that hilltop.

Another reminder of the area's borderland history is Wat's Dyke. This tall bank, with a ditch on its western side, may have been dug in the 8th century for the Saxon rulers of Mercia, to protect their boundary with North Wales. The 65km dyke ran from marshland south of Oswestry, to Wrexham, along the eastern side of the Alyn Valley to Basingwerk Abbey at Holywell. Construction of the dyke was no mean undertaking as it was, on average, a little over 8m wide at its base. It was mainly composed of soil strengthened with turf layers. One estimate suggests that it would have taken one hundred men approximately a year to build the 65km dyke! The raised bank, along which the footpath from Rhyddyn House to Gresford Farm runs, is the remains of the dyke.

Wat's Dyke Way Heritage Trail, a 61 mile (99km) walk through the border country between England and North Wales, from Llanymynech in Shropshire, to Holywell, is based on the course of Wat's Dyke and passes through Hope and Caergwrle. (www.watsdykeway.org)



Continuing unrest

These borderlands continued to be an area of conflict long after Mercia had declined and Wat's Dyke had lost its importance. The dramatic hilltop ruins of **Caergwrle Castle** bear testament to the continued turbulence.

In the late 13th century, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, Prince of Wales, refused to pay homage to the new English ruler, King Edward I. In retaliation, Edward invaded Wales in 1276 and forced Llywelyn to retreat into Snowdonia. Llywelyn's younger brother, Dafydd, joined forces with Edward as he felt Llywelyn had cheated him of his inheritance. As a reward, Edward gave Dafydd the rich lands around Caergwrle and Hope and, in 1277, Dafydd began to build his castle at Caergwrle.

However, Dafydd felt unfairly treated when English lords were given more power and, five years later, he changed sides and fought against the English invaders. Dafydd attacked nearby Hawarden Castle, which triggered a fierce rebellion across North Wales. Eventually, Edward's immense army proved too strong for the rebels and Edward gained control of the whole of Wales. Llywelyn

was killed in battle but Dafydd was captured. In retribution for his defection, he was convicted of high treason and was the first person in England to be hung, drawn and quartered for that crime. Caergwrle Castle didn't fare much better. Edward began to rebuild it but, a year later, a fire ripped through the wooden parts of the castle and the work was abandoned.

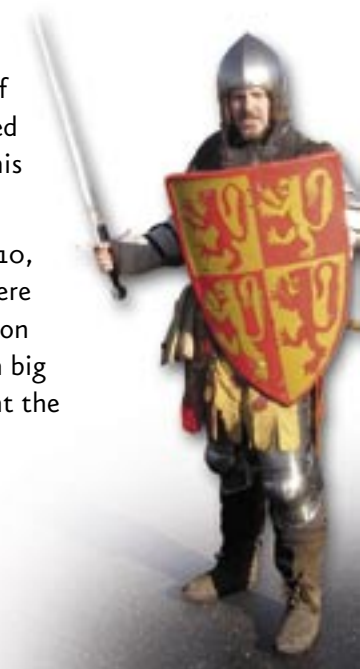
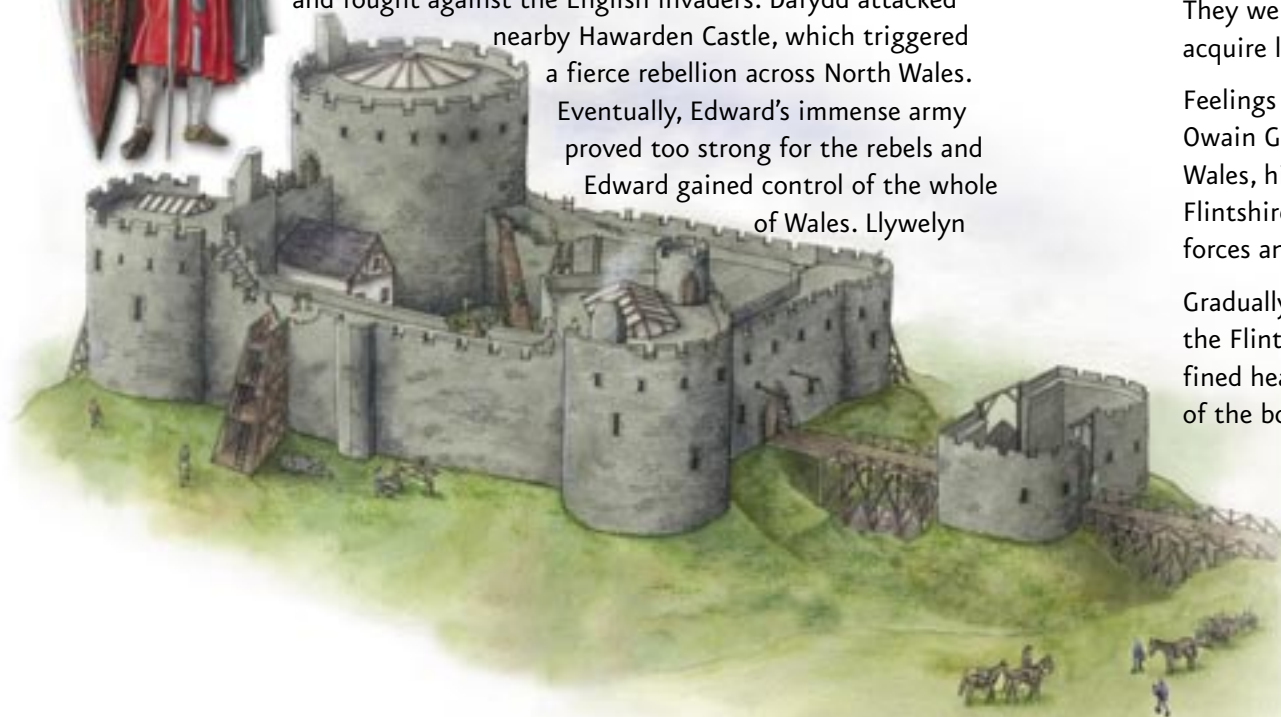
For more information about the castle refer to the panel situated in the castle grounds.

Owain Glyndŵr

During the 14th century, the rights of the local Welsh population were restricted severely. In Hope, they were not allowed to drive livestock through the borough and could only sell goods at the borough market. They were denied positions of high office and were not allowed to acquire land that was in English ownership.

Feelings ran high and, in 1400, when Welsh nobleman, Owain Glyndŵr, rebelled and proclaimed himself Prince of Wales, his support grew rapidly. By 1403 he had infiltrated Flintshire, urging revolt. The local Welsh flocked to join his forces and burned the English settlement of Hope.

Gradually, King Henry IV's armies regained control. By 1410, the Flintshire Welsh had submitted to the English and were fined heavily for their part in the rebellion. The destruction of the borough and the disruption of the war years had a big impact and it was not until the 19th century that the area began to prosper.

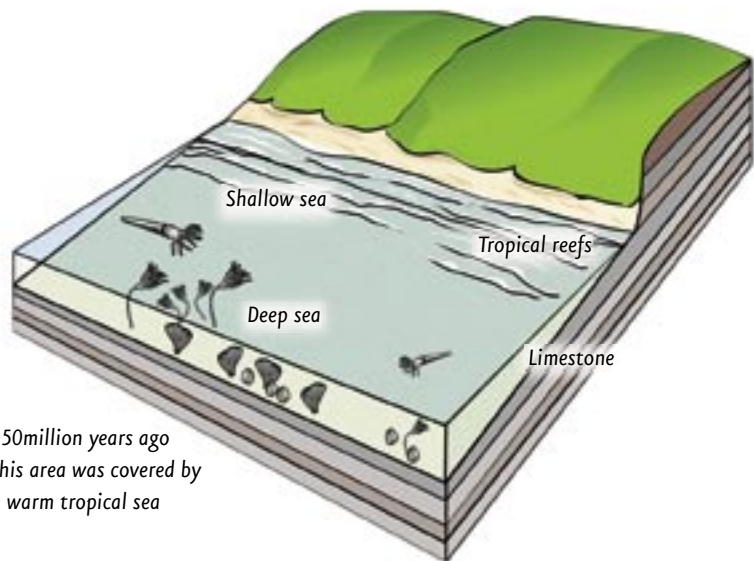


Below your feet

The rocks below your feet have shaped the landscape and land use of the Hope and Caergwrle area. Over many millions of years, layers of different rocks built up. Limestone, from the calcareous bodies of marine life, was deposited when this part of Wales lay near the equator beneath a warm tropical sea. Then, as sea levels dropped vast river deltas developed, depositing sands and pebbles that formed the Cefn-y-Fedw sandstone, a hard millstone grit. Later, swamps and huge forests grew on the deltas, which eventually formed valuable coal deposits.

Over time these rock layers were folded, fractured, faulted and uplifted by Earth movements forming the Alyn and Nant-y-Ffrith Valleys and the surrounding hills.

The Ice Ages of the last two million years further shaped the landscape as the flow of the thick glaciers stripped layers of rocks, exposing layers that formerly had been covered, rounding hills and gouging valleys. An icesheet, up to a kilometre thick, flowed from Snowdonia, down the Nant-y-Ffrith Valley, then turned north cutting

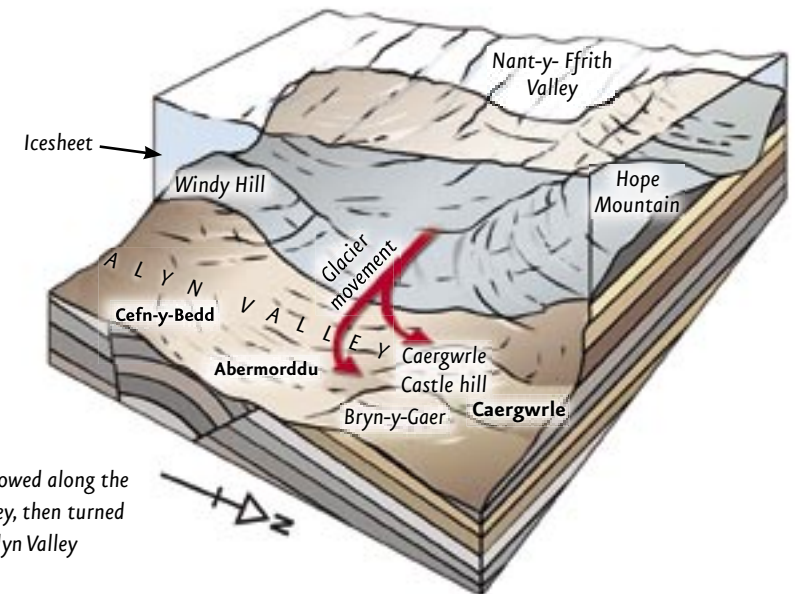


350million years ago this area was covered by a warm tropical sea

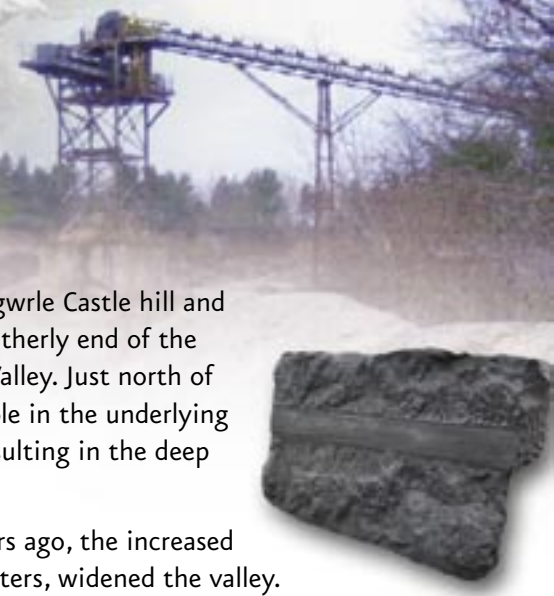
the gaps between Hope Mountain, Caergwrle Castle hill and Bryn-y-Gaer, before joining with the southerly end of the Irish Sea glacier further along the Alyn Valley. Just north of Caergwrle, the ice gouged out a deep hole in the underlying rock, which filled with glacial debris, resulting in the deep sand and gravel deposits at Fagl Lane.

As the climate warmed over 14,000 years ago, the increased river flow, swollen by the glacial meltwaters, widened the valley. The melting glaciers deposited a rich layer of boulder clay on the valley floor, resulting in the fertile farmland around Hope that was so valued in the days of the Marcher lords.

The earth movements and the subsequent glacial action exposed rich seams of ironstone, coal and fire-clay, which were later mined, and limestone on the southern slope of Hope Mountain, which was quarried for building stone or burned to produce lime for building and agriculture.



A thick icesheet flowed along the Nant-y-Ffrith Valley, then turned north along the Alyn Valley



An industrial past

The local stone and minerals have been quarried and mined on a small scale for centuries. The Romans may have smelted lead at Ffrith and many of the older buildings are built using local stone. However, from the mid 18th century, larger scale industry began to develop along the rivers Alyn and Cegidog, triggered by the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution.

Local men would have worked in the massive ironworks and colliery at the Ffrwd in the late 19th century. Others became miners in the developing collieries. Llay Hall operated from 1887 to 1949 and Llay Main from 1917 to 1966, and there were smaller collieries at Hope and Cefn-y-bedd. Several brick works opened too, using the plentiful fire-clay found alongside the coal, making house bricks, drain-pipes, tiles and chimney-pots.

The River Alyn itself provided power for industry. Numerous mills were built along the river for grinding corn, making paper and sawing timber, with power generated by large water-wheels.

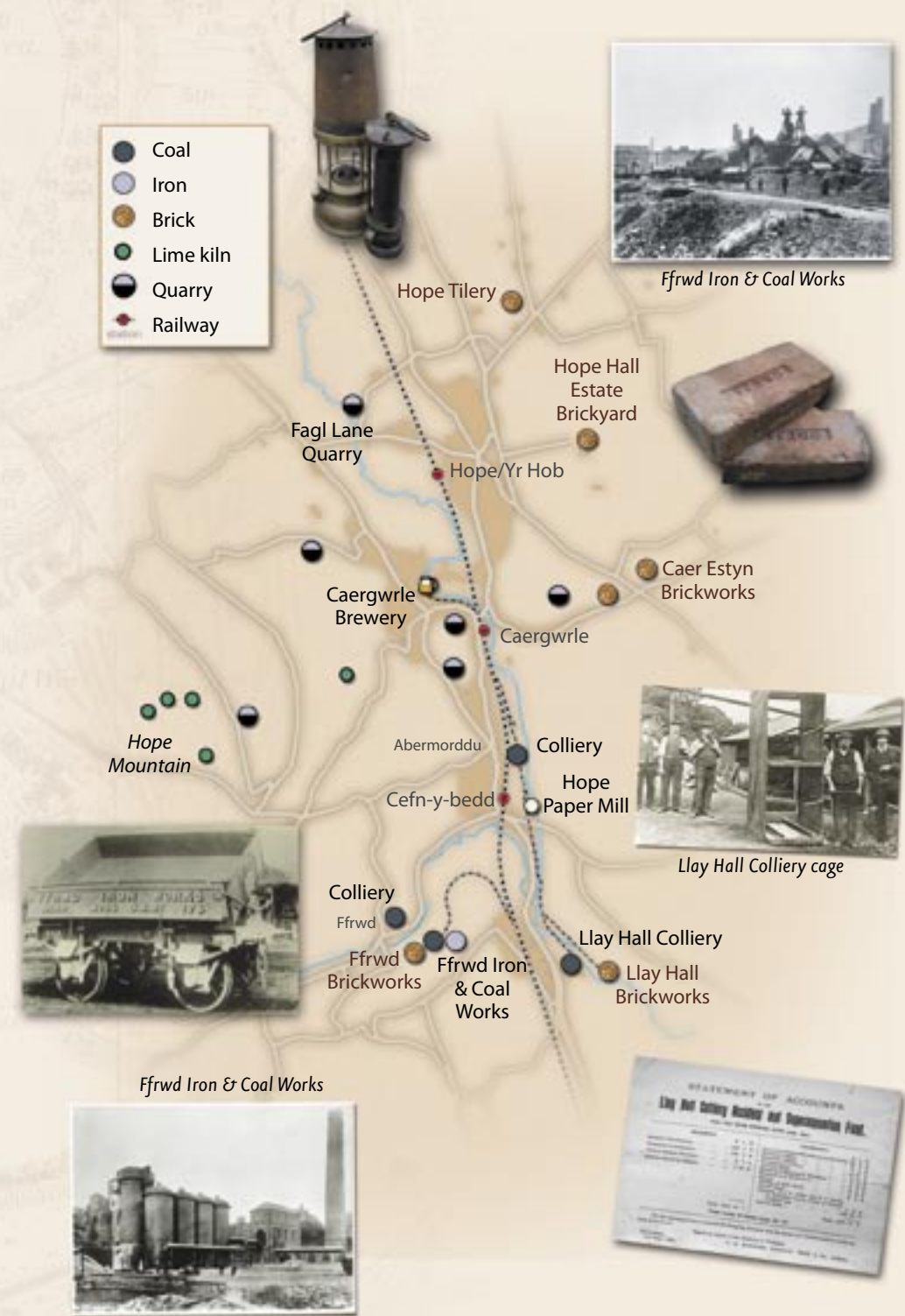


Sawmill, Caergwrle

As the industries developed, the population of the two villages grew steadily. By 1901, coal mining and agriculture employed similar numbers and many more were employed in other industries. The numbers of tradesmen, servants, shopkeepers and professionals had also risen, reflecting the increasing population and growing wealth.

However, the industrial prosperity did not last, due to cheap imports and the changing needs for raw materials. By the time Llay Main, the last local colliery, closed in 1966 the area was once again largely rural with most locals commuting out of the villages to work.

-  Coal
-  Iron
-  Brick
-  Lime kiln
-  Quarry
-  Railway



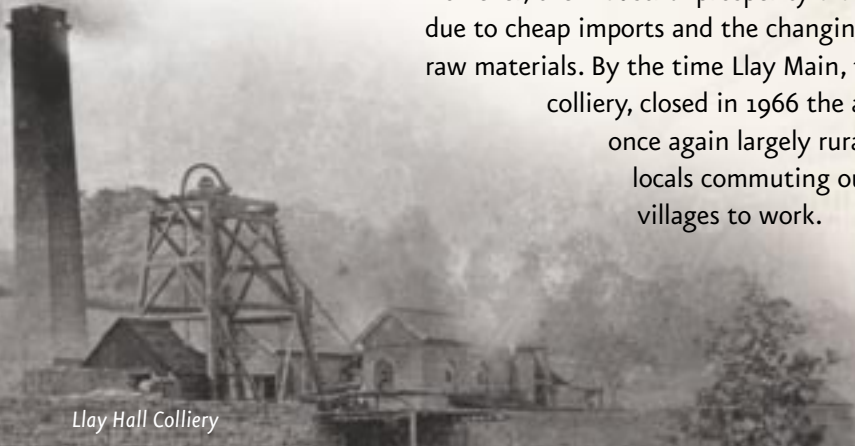
Ffrwd Iron & Coal Works



Llay Hall Colliery cage



Ffrwd Iron & Coal Works



Llay Hall Colliery

Working the land

A millstone is built into the walls of Hope Church.



Bridge End Mill



Sheep being driven down Caergwrle High Street

Whilst the fortunes of local industries have fluctuated, farming always remained the major landuse. Up to the 1750s, it was also the main occupation but, as farming became mechanised, larger farms could be worked by fewer people and it is now a minor employer locally.

Most farms were mixed, growing cereals and a variety of other crops, such as turnips, beans and potatoes, and keeping milking cows as well as sheep, one or two pigs, and a few chickens. Until the Second World War, many local farms still used horses to pull machinery. The railway enabled produce to be transported to the growing cities. Milk from Hope Hall Farm and Hafod Farm was sent daily to Merseyside.

Each farm would take cereals to the local mills for grinding. Millstones were made from the hard Cefn-y-Fedw sandstone which was quarried locally. In 1662 there were three corn mills on the River Alyn. Bridge End Mill at Caergwrle continued to grind flour well into the 20th century. Its flour was used to make one of the first self-raising flours.

Hay making

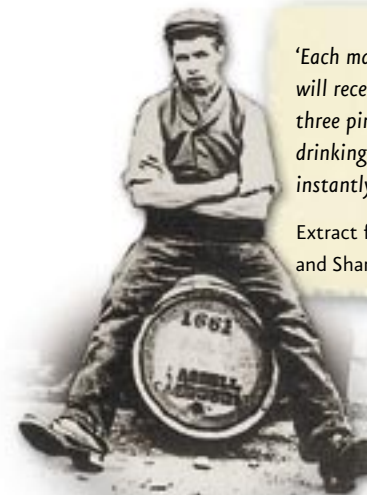
A tasty brew

At one time Caergwrle Ales were renowned. Mr Lassell of Leicester established the brewery in 1861, realising that the local spring water was ideal for brewing beer. The brewery prospered, supplying many local pubs with pale, mild and bitter ales and an invalid stout. Barrels were sent by rail to Shotton for distribution and there was an off-licence at the brewery. Workers also received a daily beer ration!

In 1937, it was one of the first breweries to offer canned beer. In 2001 an unopened can of Caergwrle Ale sold at auction for £21!



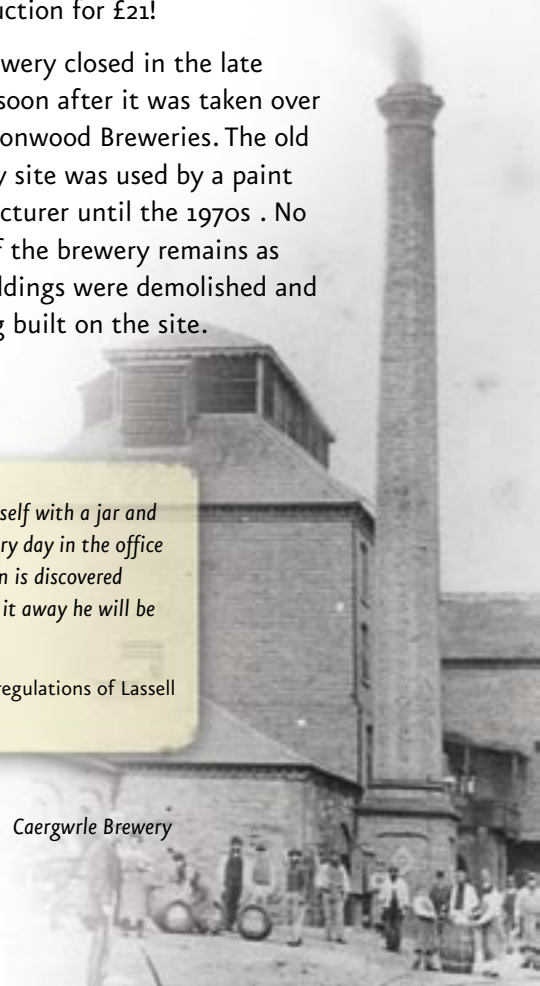
The brewery closed in the late 1940s, soon after it was taken over by Burtonwood Breweries. The old brewery site was used by a paint manufacturer until the 1970s. No trace of the brewery remains as the buildings were demolished and housing built on the site.



'Each man must provide himself with a jar and will receive at six o'clock every day in the office three pints of ale. If any man is discovered drinking other ale, or giving it away he will be instantly dismissed.'

Extract from the Rules and regulations of Lassell and Sharman Brewery, 1898

Caergwrle Brewery



Travelling through

Prehistoric hunter-gatherers, Bronze Age farmers and Iron Age tradesmen may have used ancient trackways across the higher ground.

Roman soldiers may have been seen marching through Caergwrle as the Roman road from Chester to the trading settlement and lead smelting works at Ffrith would have crossed the River Alyn close to Caergwrle.

For centuries, pack-horses were used to transport goods along roads that were too rutted and muddy for carts and wagons. Long pack-horse trains of up to thirty animals, laden with wicker baskets or panniers carrying goods such as corn, metal ore, coal and cloth, would travel considerable distances. The lead pack-horse had bells on its harness to warn villagers of their approach. Caergwrle was on the Chester to Bala pack-horse trail and a special pack-horse bridge, with low parapets that allowed the heavily laden mules to pass easily, was built over the river.

The present bridge on Fellows Lane may date from the late 17th century.



Former toll house, Abermorddu (beside the present day traffic lights). It later became the Toll Bar stores and café but was pulled down in 1929.



The Wrexham to Mold road was evidently a well established route by the 17th century as it was one of only four roads in Flintshire that was mapped by John Ogilby, a famous early map maker, in 1675. Pressure on the roads increased as industry developed and wheeled traffic increased. Turnpike Trusts were set up to improve and maintain important roads and a Turnpike Act for the Wrexham to Mold Road was passed in 1756. Tolls, to pay for road maintenance, were collected at toll-gates positioned at major road junctions. Locally, one toll-gate was situated at the road junction at Abermorddu and another at Rhanberfedd near the junction with Fagl Lane.

The Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay Railway, which has stations at Caergwrle and Hope, opened in 1866. It soon took most of the freight traffic from the roads, allowing goods to be transported quickly to the Dee at Connah's Quay and then shipped further afield. A branch line, serving Hope colliery and mill and the nearby colliery and brick works at Llay Hall, joined the mainline at Abermorddu. Caergwrle Brewery also built a small branch line.



Caergwrle Station



The Welshman worked the mineral line. It was derailed in 1948.

Caergwrle a tourist attraction

The train service also helped Caergwrle develop as a tourist destination. The passenger service ran three trains per day, with 1st, 2nd and 3rd class carriages. The service grew in popularity after 1870, following the introduction of Bank Holidays and half day working on Saturdays, as manual workers had time to take excursions into the countryside. Extra trains were run on Saturdays to meet this increased demand.

The opening of the swing bridge over the River Dee at Hawarden in 1889 enabled the train service to be extended to Liverpool and Seacombe. Other visitors came from Manchester as well as local towns and villages. Caergwrle drew visitors from far and wide, drawn by the castle ruins, the natural beauty and the spa.

To meet the needs of the walker, the railway company even produced a book, 'Rambles Around Caergwrle', which gave detailed descriptions of walks, including longer walks around Hope Mountain.

'At Bridge End Station visitors can leave the train, if so disposed, for a visit to the ruins of Caergwrle Castle which are seen on a mound to the left. Caer Estyn, an ancient British camp is on the right. Still better, it would repay the pedestrian tourist to explore Hope Mountain.'

1894 'Gossiping Guide to Wales'

Caergwrle station, originally known as Bridge End, was renamed Caergwrle Castle and Wells, and the platforms were extended to accommodate the longer excursion trains that

The Bridge Hotel and Temperance Tea Rooms near Caergwrle Station

were run on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. At busy weekends seven or eight trains each day would bring hundreds of people. In 1914, passenger numbers were estimated to be 1500 on May Bank Holiday and 2-3000 on 20th June! Other visitors came by bicycle or charabanc and, later, by motor car, motor bike and bus.

Local people took opportunities to make money from the visitors, by serving teas and offering accommodation. Numerous pubs and hotels allowed the drinker to slake his thirst and the Temperance tea-rooms, opposite the station, offered a more abstemious service.

However, locals sometimes complained about incidents of rowdiness and drunkenness, particularly when the peace of Sunday chapel was disturbed. Fights broke out and the police were often called to keep order!

By the 1930s, the popularity of the area had begun to wane, but the numerous postcards that remain reflect its enormous popularity in the early 20th century.



Taking the waters



The biggest early 20th century attraction was undoubtedly Caergwrlle spa. The springs in the grounds of Rhyddyn Hall had been renowned for their curative properties for centuries.

In 1740 Dr Short of Sheffield wrote: 'The water is as clear as crystal, none can be finer. It has much been used as a purge and is sent for a great way into Wales. One Eliza Jones of Mold, having a great scurf all over her body that she was even loathsome, drank for some time of the water, about three pints a day, and is now cured.'

Over the years, the tenants of Rhyddyn Hall changed many times and the wells were not always open to visitors. In 1902 the owner, Lieutenant Roe Brown, had the spring water analysed.

'From the saline spring an excellent aerated table water was obtained, equal, if not superior to the much vaunted German water. The water from the sulphur well was also found to be most valuable for certain disorders.'

By this time, Caergwrlle was already attracting a good number of visitors and Roe Brown could see the commercial potential of the wells.

In 1907 he sold Rhyddyn Hall and the wells to a syndicate who developed them into a successful tourist attraction.

Visitors entered via a dramatic portcullis gateway in the tall stonewall, paying their entry fee at the stone pay booths on either side. They then walked down the drive, passing St Cuthbert's Tower where the spa manager lived, and a large red-brick bottling plant that produced 14,000 bottles of saline fizzy water each day.

Rhyddyn Hall itself was turned into a hotel, catering for the wealthier visitor, but the focal point for day-trippers was the impressive pavilion and tea-room in the grounds. French windows led to a terrace that was used for all sorts of entertainments. Buckley Band often played at the bandstand and there were slot-machines, a bowling-green and other attractions. Visitors could also sample the medicinal waters at the pump-house above the sulphur well or stroll through the riverside grounds.



The Pavilion in Caergwrlle



Church and chapel

Hope Parish Church, dedicated to 5th century saints, St. Cyngar and St. Cynfarch, is considered to be the oldest church in Flintshire. The remains of a Celtic cross, discovered during the 2000 restoration, suggest that it has

been a place of worship since the 9th or 10th centuries. The oldest part of the present building dates from 1180 but it has been added to several times. The sturdy tower dates from 1500. The church had strong ties with the Trevor family from Plas Teg Hall, and the south aisle of the church became the Trevor Chapel in the early 17th century.

Not all residents chose to worship in Hope Church. By the early 1800s itinerant preachers were drawing large audiences. John Wesley himself may have preached locally and is believed to have stayed nearby at Rackery Farm. His supporters established Methodist societies there in 1790.

Nonconformist worship gained support rapidly within the community. At first, groups of devout folk met to pray in private houses but, as numbers grew, larger venues were needed and the small chapels were

built. Support grew quickly and, at one time, there were nine chapels in Caergwrle. The first chapels were small, simple buildings but as support grew some became too small to house the congregations and larger more elaborate buildings replaced them, built with money raised by local people.

The current Presbyterian Church on the High Street is the third place of worship built by its congregation. The

The new Evangelical Church, Mold Road, Caergwrle



Methodist Church, Castle Street, Caergwrle

first small chapel was built around 1770 at an unknown site, where the first Sunday School in the parish was started. In 1809, it was replaced by a new chapel that seated 100 but this too became too small and the present building, with seating for 260, was built in 1894.

The first Wesleyan Methodist Church was built on Derby Road in 1823 and may have been an offshoot of the one formed at Rackery Farm. It also became too small for the growing congregation and a larger church was built on the High Street in 1900. It is now closed and used as a Masonic Hall.

The Methodist Church on Castle Street, was built in 1859 but replaced with a larger building in 1914. The Caergwrle Boys' Brigade met at the church and still attends the service on the third Sunday in the month.

Bethel Welsh Congregational Church was first built in 1842, and a new building on Mold Road built in 1908 with room for 350 members. Supporters ran fundraising events to pay off the building debts. By the mid 20th century the Welsh congregation was dwindling and it was agreed that the building would be shared with the new Evangelical Church. The old church building had structural problems and was demolished in 2002, and a new church was constructed and opened in 2003.



Wesleyan Methodist Church, High Street, Caergwrle



Hope Parish Church

The font in Hope Parish Church



Daily life



Old Post Office, Caergwrle



Conde shoe shop, Caergwrle



Temperance Tea Rooms



Bicycle shop, owned by the Hughes family

Before widespread car ownership, few people travelled far from their homes. The villages of Hope and Caergwrle had a much wider range of shops, catering for every need. In 1936, Caergwrle boasted four butchers, a fishmonger, four fish and chip shops, three drapers, seven grocers and bakers, and numerous sweet shops and newsagents.

Many locals packed the trains to Wrexham and Mold on market days. The first bus service to Wrexham began in 1914, which further widened opportunities for travel, but it was only when car ownership grew that the use of the local shops began to decline. However, Caergwrle still has a good variety of shops and Hope's village stores and post office still thrives.

Enjoying a pint

The villages were also well served with pubs, with at least six in Caergwrle and three in Hope in the 19th century. Profits were not high and so the landlords usually had another job and the women of the family ran the pub. The influx of visitors brought by the railway was good for business and several of the pubs expanded to offer accommodation and meals.

In contrast, the Temperance movement, which discouraged drinking, gained much local support in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Temperance Tea Rooms opposite the Bridge End Inn, provided refreshments for the teatotalter and, in the 1930s, The Queen's Temperance Hotel had apartments and served meals. A branch of the Church of



Ye Olde Castle Inn, Caergwrle

England Temperance Society was established in Hope in 1879.

Although some of the old pubs have closed there is still plenty of choice of refreshment in Hope and Caergwrle. One of the oldest pubs in Caergwrle is 'Ye Olde Castle Inn', which has a date stone of 1732, and is shown as thatched on an 1840 painting. It remains a popular local to this day.

The Halfway Inn is at least 160 years old. The Crown Inn is documented from 1863. It may have started as a simple beer house but later expanded to cater for the increased number of visitors.

The Bridge End Inn, at the crossing point of the River Alyn may be the oldest pub in Caergwrle. It was very popular with visitors to the spa and offered accommodation. It is now an Oriental Restaurant as well as a pub. The Derby Arms may date from the 17th century. It expanded to provide accommodation and meals for visitors and also had an assembly room used for local political, musical and sporting occasions.

The Red Lion, Hope, was originally a low thatched building but was later expanded and rebuilt in brick with a tiled roof. The White Lion, Hope, may be much older than its 1828 date stone suggests.



The Derby Arms



The old Red Lion



The White Lion

"A special effort should be made to counteract our great national sin of drunkenness... this society admits not only total abstainers but all who are prepared to pledge themselves in the practice of moderation in the use of strong drinks."

Hope Parish Magazine, July 1879



High days and holidays

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries numerous community carnivals, fetes, parades, agricultural shows and enactments have been held in the two villages.

Many locals took pride in their gardens and would have had a productive vegetable plot. 'Cottagers whose rent did not exceed £10 per annum and who did not have greenhouses' could show their produce in the Annual Hope Horticultural Show. All kinds of flowers and garden produce were exhibited and awards were highly prized.



Parade through Caergwrle, possibly to celebrate the Coronation of King George V



Caergwrle Carnival 1935



Music was always an important part of local celebrations. Regular Eisteddfodau were held and local brass bands often led processions or provided the music for dancing.

National events, such as Royal weddings and coronations were also commemorated with great enthusiasm.

'... an excellent repast at the Castle Dining Rooms. The Ffrwd Band then played for dancing and sports held in the castle grounds. Lassell and Sharman gave all the older residents a pint of beer in a coronation mug, which they kept.'

Account of the celebrations for the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary.

One of the earliest recorded events was the Hope and Caergwrle Festival, which began in 1837, but the

carnivals continued to be popular throughout the 20th century.

Community events continue to be well supported today. Hope Parish Church holds monthly Activity Days, which include a tour of the church tower and a range of annual events, including a Victorian Fair. Abermorddu and Ysgol Estyn Primary Schools hold Summer Fairs and Castell Alun High School put on public performances, notably St David's Day and Christmas celebrations.

The Caergwrle Historical Festival was started in 1987 when a well-supported pageant of Caergwrle's history was staged. Several North Wales Medieval and Living History societies can trace their roots to earlier activities in Caergwrle. Re-enactors continue to add colour to the annual commemoration of the 'Liberation of Hope' by the supporters of Owain Glyndŵr, which has also traditionally involved members of the Cambria Drum Band.

Derby Cinema House

The owners of the nearby Derby Arms pub, commissioned the building of the cinema in 1920, with seating for 380, including a balcony. Locals remember when Castle Street used to be lined with people queuing to see the latest films. The cinema closed in 1962 but the original black and white building still stands.



Derby Cinema House, Caergwrle

A place for wildlife

The countryside around Hope and Caergwrle is a superb place for wildlife, with its mixture of riverside and meadow, lakes, mature woodland and scrub.

Heather and bilberry thrive on the acidic soils of Caergwrle Castle and Caer Estyn with pockets of *birch* and *sweet chestnut* woodland. In autumn, many fungi grow here, including *fly agaric*, the red toadstool with white spots that is renowned in folklore.

Slow-worms are found around the castle and also in the gardens edging Caer Estyn. They are often mistaken for snakes, but are actually legless lizards. They feed on slugs and snails and are often found in compost heaps.



Slow-worms

The oak woodland on the western side of the river near Bryn Yorlin is carpeted in *bluebells* in spring and the strong smell of *wild garlic* fills the air near the riverside.

The woodlands provides homes for many other birds and animals, including *greater spotted woodpecker*, *nuthatches* and *tree creepers* who feed on insects living under the bark.

Greater spotted woodpecker

Fly agaric

Wild garlic

The hedgerows and scrub add to the wildlife value of the area, providing food and shelter for birds and small mammals. Some local gardens are managed for wildlife too and well-stocked bird feeders are attracting a fascinating array of birds, including flocks of delicate *long-tailed tits*, *goldfinches* and *bullfinches*.

Jackdaws are a familiar site around Hope, feeding on the meadows, and roosting at night on chimneys and on the church tower.

Flocks of *lapwing*, once a common farmland bird but rarer now as farming methods have changed, are still regularly seen flying over fields around Shordley.

Lapwing



Peacock butterfly



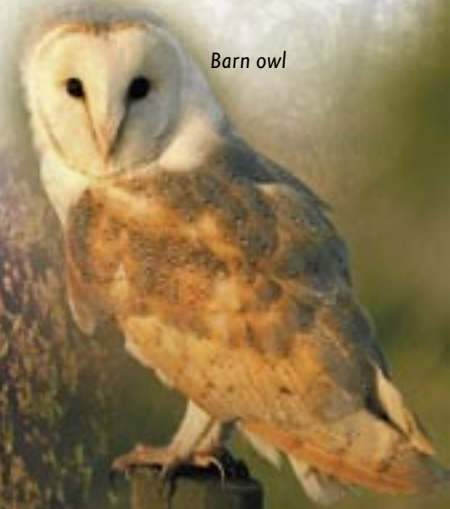
Bullfinch



Long-tailed tit



Barn owl



Along the river

The River Alyn is fringed with *alder* trees, with red-tinged catkins and clusters of tiny cones that provide food for birds such as *siskins*.

The river is popular with fishermen as *brown trout* thrive in the clean water and *salmon* and *grayling* are also increasing. Otters regularly use the river too but you are unlikely to see this shy creature.

You may see the brilliant turquoise flash of a *kingfisher* or *spot dippers*, perky brown birds with white bibs, bobbing up and down on riverside rocks or flying rapidly along the river.

Colourful slender damselflies hover above vegetation at the water's edge and larger dragonflies, including the *four-spotted chaser*, are often seen near the river or foraging near hedgerows.

Wildflowers thrive in the riverside meadows, attracting butterflies and other insects, such as *honeybees* and *bumblebees*, to feed on their nectar.

The flooded gravel pits at Fagl Lane Quarry attract many different birds. In winter geese and wildfowl migrate from the Arctic. Up to 500 *greylag* geese spend winter here with a few pairs remaining to breed in the summer. You may hear them honking or see them flying slowly in formation. *Goosanders*, distinctive white and black birds with sharp, curved beaks, are often seen swimming on the water or diving for fish. In summer *little ringed plover* nest at the quarry. Small numbers of *sand martins* nest in the sand banks and are seen swooping above the water, catching insects as they fly.

Barn owls are becoming very rare in Wales but have been seen in the quarry. *Bats* hunt for insects above the water and roost in Hope church or old trees. During early summer the ground is dotted with pink spikes of *pyramidal* and *common spotted orchids*.

It is hoped that North Wales Wildlife Trust will manage the disused quarry as a nature reserve. There are plans for a new bridge and footpath around the lake.



Kingfisher



Dipper



Four-spotted chaser



Common spotted orchid

Pyramidal orchid



Small copper



Little ringed plover



Greylag geese

Goosander



Otter

Hope & Caergwrle Yr Hôb a Chaergwrle

Fagl Lane Quarry
Chwarel Lôn Ffagl

Mold
Yr Wyddgrug

A541

A550

7

6

Station
Gorsaf

B5373

Hope
Yr Hôb

Packhorse
Bridge
Pont ceffylau
pwn

Caergwrle

1

4

4

4

4

3

Caergwrle
Castell
Caergwrle

Bridge
End

5

HOPE
MOUNTAIN
MYNYDD
YR HÔB

Bryn Yorlkin
Manor
Plas Bryn
Yorlkin

A550

A541

Abermorddu

Rhyddyn Hall
Plas Rhyddyn

River Alun
Afon Alun

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Caer Estyn

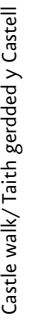
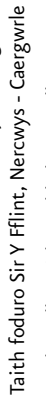
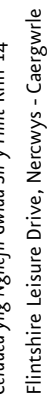
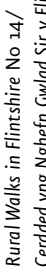
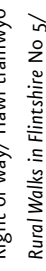
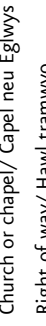
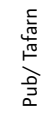
Station
Gorsaf

Cefn-y-bedd

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B5102

Wrexham
Wrecsam



1. Halfway Inn - 01978 760 521
2. Crown Inn - 01978 760 302
3. Ye Olde Castle Inn - 01978 769236
4. Derby Arms
5. Bridge Inn - 01978760977
6. Red Lion - 01978 760 417
7. White Lion - 01978 760572
8. Holly Bush - 01978 761716

