

SITE NAME:	Davenport Hall				
Address	Davenport Park Lane, Brereton Heath, Congleton CW12 4ST				
Unitary Authority:	Cheshire East (former Congleton B.C.)				
Parish:	Brereton CP				
Location:	c. 4 km ESE of Holmes Chapel				
Grid Ref:	662 794				
Owner:	Mr. and Mrs. Mackintosh				
Recorder	IBW	Date of Site Visit	16/11/2014 PRO only	Date of Report	03/06/2015

The house is private and not open to the public. Access was not granted for the purposes of recording.

Summary

Medieval to Jacobean times: Manor of one of Cheshire's leading families.

The core of the old **hall** appears to remain extant; parts may date back to the C15.

The building is not listed by English Heritage or noted by historians of architecture.

1676 - c.1923: For 250 years Davenport Hall was not inhabited by its owners but was maintained and leased out as 'the residence of a gentleman's family'¹. Thus, the site **escaped** the radical **alterations** and landscape **improvements** undertaken during the C18 and C19 by the owners of neighbouring estates.

There appears to have been no major change to the **layout** of the associated **landscape** and small **gardens** until the **1990s**, when the hall was extended, its **gardens re-designed** and a **cascade of 7 ponds** created E of the hall.

Principal remaining features

Unconfirmed

History (Numbers refer to historic images appended)

The Davenport family's origin goes back to one Orme at the time of the Domesday Book. He was given the manor of Davenport by the Venables of Kinderton and assumed the local name². In the **1180s** the Earl of Chester granted the **master forestership of the forests of Leek and Macclesfield** to Richard de Davenport. The office was hereditary. At the succession of each Davenport son, the grant was confirmed - in **1217** as the "**magisterial serjeancy of the hundred of Macclesfield**". The powers of this office were the highest which the earl could bestow, as it placed at the disposal of the serjeant and his itinerant subservients, the lives of his subjects, without delay, and without appeal"³. The Davenport **crest** was probably adopted at that time; it shows a man's head, the neck in a noose (2).

The importance of the serjeant's office diminished over the centuries, but the Davenports prospered. In **1511** Ralph Davenport of Davenport held the manors of Davenport, Marton, Swettenham, and a considerable amount of land in these townships⁴.

The house was described in John Leland's *Itineraries*⁵ of 1535-43: "The best and firste house of the Davenportes is at Davenport, a great old house coverid with leade on the river Daven (Dane)." Leland also notes the family's junior branches at Bramhall, Woodford, Henbury and Calveley, the last being of "lesse landes than the residew"⁶.

In **1617** John Davenport of Davenport, High Sheriff of Cheshire, was knighted by the king.

His great-grandson John was the last of more than 20 generations of lineal male descent. He died in **1671**⁷, having divided his estates into two equal parts between his two daughters. **Elizabeth** inherited the manor and mansion of Davenport and a moiety (½) of Marton. She married Robert Davies of Manley in 1676.

With Elizabeth's marriage began 250 years of **succession** through the **female line**⁸. The Davenport estate became the dowry of her female descendants and, on their marriage, their husbands' property. None of the descendants ever lived or raised a family at Davenport. The Hall was leased to a tenant and the agricultural land was split between tenant farmers.

Two Davenport women made spectacular marriages as regards social status and wealth: **Phoebe Davenport**, who married Eusebius **Horton** of Catton Hall, Derbyshire⁹, in 1778, and her daughter **Anne Beatrix Horton**, who married the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert John Wilmot of Osmaston in 1806¹⁰. The couple inherited Catton Hall and estate in 1823 and changed their name to **Wilmot-Horton** (3). Lady Wilmot-Horton accompanied her husband when he was appointed governor of Ceylon from 1831-37. In **1839** her Davenport inheritance comprised more than 500 acres of land¹¹, and the hall was "still used as the residence of a gentleman's family"¹² (1).

The Tipping family at Davenport (lessees) 1839-1922

In 1839 the lease-holder was **Thomas Tipping** (1774-1846), heir of an old North Manchester family with considerable land holdings in Bolton, Crumpsall, Manchester and Salford¹³. In 1810 he had married Anne Hibbert of Birtles Hall, Cheshire. The family's six children were raised at Fulshaw Hall, Wilmslow, until Tipping leased Davenport Hall. The lease included 58 acres of pasture/meadow, probably as required by the horses of a prosperous household. 26 of these acres lay further E as separate plots.

Davenport Hall became "the seat of the Tippings"¹⁴.

After Thomas Tipping's death in 1846, his widow erected the S aisle and a family vault at the parish church of St. Peter's Swettenham (4). She continued the lease of Davenport Hall, as did her children and grandson.

According to census returns **1851 - 91**¹⁵, the heads of household were Mrs. Tipping (d.1863), then her 3rd son Edmund (d. 1888), followed by her daughter Maria (d. 1897). Their households comprised between 6 and 11 servants, including a butler, coachman and grooms, sometimes a gardener. Under 'rank, profession or occupation', the census describes the Tippings as 'landed proprietor' or 'living on own means'. Presumably, the sale of any one piece of land in the fast expanding cities of Manchester and Salford would have resulted in a considerable sum¹⁶.

From 1897 the Davenport lease was taken by **Col. Robert Francis Gartside-Tipping** (1852-1926), grandson of Thomas Tipping¹⁷. He had spent his life as a career soldier of the Indian Army (Bengal Lancers). He was invalided in China during the campaign against the Boxers¹⁸, and retired to Davenport with his wife and daughter in 1901.

He was still at Davenport in 1914¹⁹, but had left by 1923.

Davenport Hall Farm

Kelly's Directory of Cheshire **1923** shows Davenport Hall occupied by **Mr. Harrop**, farmer and overseer, and the **owner** and Lord of the Manor as **Henry Anson-Horton** (d. 1925).

According to his solicitor's letter²⁰, Henry Anson-Horton had put Davenport up for auction in October 1917, but the estate had not been sold. It appears that either Henry Anson-Horton or his heir, George Anson-Horton, **sold** Davenport in the early 1920s.

Later families living at Davenport Hall are cited as those of farmer **Alfred Thorley** (1928) and farmer **Herbert Stanley Fox** (1934 and 1939).²¹

Davenport Hall

The OS Explorer map 268 (© 2004) still names the site as Davenport Hall Farm, although since c.1992 it has been a **private residence** named Davenport Hall.

Planning Applications²² of 1992-94 cite the owners as Mr. and Mrs. **Woodward**, and from 1996 as Mr. and Mrs. **Mackintosh**.

Description (Letters in brackets refer to maps appended)

Two C19 descriptions of Davenport Hall refer to the **antiquity** of the house and praise its **situation** above the valley of the Dane and its **views**:

1819: "The hall is a low building of various materials..., and doubtless retaining in its walls many relics of the antient mansion which occupied its site... It stands on high ground above a range of rich meadows, through which the Dane flows rapidly."²³

1847: The hall is "a long, low, irregular building principally of two storeys high, probably of a very early origin and of various dates of architecture.... The house is situated on a wooded eminence of high table land. The rich valley below is intersected by the river Dane, which flows in a winding course through wooded and often precipitous banks; and the surrounding scenery comprises views which, for picturesque beauty, are little, if at all, inferior to any in the county – the range of the Derbyshire and the Macclesfield hills forming a fine background to the landscape."²⁴

Neither author refers to any park or gardens.

Situation: The hall stands at the E end of a level plateau, or table land, of approximately 34 acres. This plateau is protected by steep, wooded valleys and escarpments formed by the river Dane (N) and two of its tributaries (W and E) – a good defensible site.

A deserted ancient site? The site is "reported to have been the site of a Danish settlement"²⁵, or thought to be the Anglo-Saxon forerunner of the town of Congleton and destroyed by Vikings in 920 AD²⁶. Cheshire Historic Environment Records classify the site as a "possible deserted medieval village"²⁷. [Conjecture: could the enclosure (walls?) around hall and stables still extant in 1839 (G) suggest an earlier fortified site?]

To date, there has been no archaeological exploration.

Roads shown in 1777 (A) remain extant:

- **A 54** runs W to E from Holmes Chapel to Congleton;
- the road branching off to the **North** leads to Davenport Hall, crosses the river Dane and continues to the parish church at Swettenham. It is now a restricted byway named **Davenport Hall Lane**. Shown in 1777 (A), **Davenport Bridge** is now a modern metal bridge.

Parkland

Maps (A,B) of **1777** and **1819** place the hall at the centre of a **large park** extending S from the river Dane. These enclosures may show a former deer park – a likely feature in view of the Davenports' wealth and status in medieval to Jacobean times.

From the **1830s** (C, D) the owners put most of the former parkland to agricultural use and took control over the woodlands. Thus, parkland leased to the hall's occupants diminished in size. By **1875** and **1910** (E) only the triangle of the **W plateau** is marked as parkland consisting of a large **meadow** with single **trees** along the W escarpment and in clumps N of the hall.

2014 (F) There is little change on the **W plateau**: it retains its **parkland aspect** of meadow surrounded by woodland. The W plateau may still be part of the property.

Gardens

Analysis of C19 and C20 maps suggests 4 phases of development.

- 1• To 1839: The tithe map (G) shows hall and stables sited within a man-made rectangular **enclosure**. Within lie a **garden** by the hall's **E** elevation and a **W walled (kitchen) garden**. Another **garden plot** is listed **S** of the stables, outside the enclosure.
- 2• After 1839 – 1910: OS maps (H, J) suggest that some changes were made to the property, either by the Tipping family or the owner on their behalf:
 - **N lodge** built on the road to Swettenham (E), probably around 1846, when Mrs. Tipping had the S aisle built at St Peter's Church. The **S lodge** at the crossroads remains in use.
 - **Gardens** to the **W, N and E** of the hall were slightly enlarged by strips of land and enclosed with straight walls or fencing. The **walled kitchen** had one, later 3 **glasshouses** (J).
 - The **E garden** contained a **lawn, shrubberies** and a **path** along the escarpment.
 - SE of the hall, a **plantation** screened the stable yard from the road.

3• c.1923-92: Davenport Hall Farm.

Early **1990s**: The aerial view (K) suggests that the gardens have been given up and many trees have been lost. The **boundaries** of the **N and E gardens** have disappeared.

The **W strip garden** and the **walled kitchen garden** have been put to grass.

The **SE plantation** between stables and road has virtually gone, as has much of the **tree/shrub cover** on the escarpment and in the valley E of the hall.

4• 1993 – 2014 (L): Conversion of Davenport Hall Farm into a private residence brought **significant changes** to the hall and its surrounding **gardens**.

- **W**: the **walled kitchen garden** now contains a cruciform extension to the hall and a tennis court. A new building occupies the S half of the **W strip garden**. Parts of the old garden walls have been retained.

- **N and E**: The N garden has been extended beyond the old N boundary and enclosed. The N and E gardens have been **re-designed** in a coherent planting style of **lawns** with **groups of trees** (many of these appear to be of recent planting).

- The former **stables**, coachman's cottage and outbuildings appear to have been converted into a separate private dwelling with its own drive from the public byway. Many **trees** have been planted S and SW of the former stables block.

- The valley E of the hall has been transformed by the creation of a **cascade of 7 linked ponds** (photos 9 and 10). The ponds vary in size; the largest, already shown in 1839 (G), has an island and a footbridge. Several signs attached to the timber post and rail fencing notify users of the bridleway that the land is private.

Additional Information:

Heirs of Davenport Hall 1676 – 1920s

- **Elizabeth Davenport** (born 1655) married Robert **Davies** of Manley, Cheshire in 1676

↓

- Thomas Davenport **Davies** of Manley

↓

only daughter **Salisbury** Davies married Matthew **Deane** of Dromore, Co. Down, Ireland.

He **sold** Davenport Hall in 1740 to:

↓

Richard **Davenport** of Calveley, Cheshire

("the representative of the eldest known existing male line of its antient possessors" (Ormerod (see 1), p.67)

Richard Davenport died in 1771. Under his will, Davenport passed to his grand-daughter:

↓

Phoebe Davenport married Eusebius **Horton** of Catton, Derbyshire in 1778.

She left Davenport to her daughter:

↓

Anne Beatrix Horton married the Rt Hon. Sir Robert John **Wilmot** of Osmaston, Derbyshire, in 1806.

The couple inherited Catton in 1823 and changed their name to **Wilmot-Horton**.

In 1887 the Catton and Davenport properties passed to her granddaughter:

↓

Augusta Theresa Tufnell (1832-99), widow of the Revd. Henry **Anson**.

Her son, Henry Anson (1854-1925) inherited Catton in 1899 and changed his name to **Anson-Horton**.

It appears that Henry **Anson-Horton**, the owner of Davenport Hall in 1923 (Kelly's Directory),

sold Davenport Hall around **1923-24**.

(Sources:

Lysons, Daniel and Samuel. 1806-22. *Magna Britannia*... (www.books.google.co.uk)

Ormerod, George (see 1)

www.ancestry.co.uk

www.catton-hall.com

Kelly's Directory of Cheshire 1923

Please note that this report contains the research and recording information available to Cheshire Gardens Trust at the time. It does not purport to be the finite sum of knowledge about the site as new information is always being discovered and sites change.

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¹ Ormerod, George. 1819. *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*. vol.iii, p. 67 (<http://openlibrary.org>)

² History of the Davenport family 1086-1671 based on research by Ormerod (see 1), vol. iii, p.61-69

³ *ibid*, p. 61-62

Ormerod explains: "The crest is said to have been borne on the helmets of the master serjeants in their perambulations through the Peak hills, and the forests of Leek and Macclesfield, to the terror of the numerous gangs of banditti which then infested those wild districts. There is now in the possession of the Capesthorpe family a long roll (without date, but very antient), containing the names of the master robbers who were taken and beheaded, ...and also of their companions, and of the fees paid to them (the Davenports) in right of their serjeancy". (p. 62)

⁴ *ibid*. p. 65-66.

His son John's estate at Davenport alone comprised "24 messuages, 500 acres of land, 500 of pasture, 100 of meadow, 100 of wood, 100 of heath... together with the advowson of the church of Swetenham."

⁵ John Leland (1506-52). Toulmin-Smith, Lucy (ed.) 1910. *The Itinerary of John Leland*. London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd. Vol. v, part ix, p. 27 (www.archive.stream)

⁶ Of these estates, only Capesthorpe (acquired later) is still owned by the family Bromley-Davenport.

⁷ Ormerod (see 1), p. 66. Lysons give the date of his death as 1676: Lysons, Daniel and Samuel. 1810. *Magna Britannia*... p. 491 (www.books.google.co.uk)

⁸ Details in Additional Information

⁹ Catton Hall has been held by the Horton family since 1407. The House, rebuilt in 1740 to designs by James Gibbs, is still owned by Horton descendants. Its 200 acres of countryside are now run as a venue for group and corporate outdoor activities. (www.catton-hall.com)

¹⁰ Anne Beatrix was considered to be one of the most beautiful women of her day and is said to have inspired Lord Byron's poem, "She walks in beauty". (www.catton-hall.com)

¹¹ Tithe apportionments: owner Sir Robert John Wilmot Horton (www.maps.cheshire.gov.uk/tithemaps)

¹² Ormerod (see 1), p. 67. In 1816, Davenport Hall was the seat of Lieut.Col. Parker (*The Gentlemans Magazine*, London, vol.119, p.238)

¹³ Descent of the Tipping family from C16-C19 in: Burke, Bernard.1863. *A genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*. (www.archive.stream)

Thomas Tipping was lord of the manor of Little Bolton and owned Crumpsall Hall. Documents of the Tipping family are held by Bolton Archives; for example, *Thomas Tipping: Plans of estates in Little Bolton, Manchester and Salford with details of rents, names of lessees and purchasers 1841-93*, Reference: GB 125.ZZ/91 q.792 3251

¹⁴ as quoted in *Wilson's Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales 1870-72*, Editor J.M. Wilson (www.visionofbritain.org.uk/descriptions)

¹⁵ Census returns: www.ancestry.co.uk

¹⁶ Bolton Manor remained the property of Thomas Tipping's eldest son, Gartside Tipping (died 1890), who also held, and lived at, the estate of Rossferry, Co. Fermanagh.

¹⁷ 2nd son of Thomas' eldest son, Gartside Tipping of Bolton Manor and Rossferry, Co. Fermanagh

¹⁸ Silbey, David J. 2012. *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China*. ©fsgbooks.com, (www.books.google.co.uk) (page numbers not given)

¹⁹ Kelly's Directory of Cheshire 1914

²⁰ Letter dated 18/09/1918. Derbyshire Record Office, reference D3155/WH/1866

²¹ Kelly's Directories of Cheshire 1928, 1934, 1939

²² www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning.aspx:

for example, historic planning decisions No. 25330/3 (1993), 28548/3 (1996)

²³ Ormerod (see 1) p. 67

²⁴ Twycross, E. 1847. *The Mansions of England and Wales*. vol. iii, p.140

²⁵ *ibid*.

²⁶ www.thornber.net/cheshire/htmlfiles/capesthorpe.html

²⁷ Cheshire Historic Environment Record, Revealing Cheshire's Past HER Number 1186:

Davenport "may have been a market-place for a Danish settlement or possible early medieval trading settlement."