

BRIDGES
in the Chester County Pleas,
CHES 29/1-22
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Wych Malbanc
(Nantwich)

The *Weaver* is truly a Cheshire river, rising on Bulkeley-heath, and never quitting the county during its whole course, 'till its confluence with the Mersey at Weston; passing through Ridley, by Cholmondeley-Hall, to Wrenbury; by Audlem,. Hankelow, Nantwich,. Minshall, and Weever, to Winsford-bridge thence by Vale-Royal, and Eaton, to Hartford-bridge, and Northwich, where it joins the Dane, and soon afterwards the Peover; after which junction it passes by Weverham, Aston, Dutton, Frodsham, and Rock-Savage to Weston, where it joins the Mersey.³⁴

Hugh or Hulle Colefox and Hugh son of Beatrix, burgesses of Wych Malbanc were found to have extorted undue sums for pontage in the town on a suit by Richard de Hunsterson.

1:76: 27 January 1260

T'minatur dampn' .di. M^ar. data cl'icis.

Ricard' de Hunst'ton' q'r de Hulle colfox. & Hug' filio Beat'c^s. de Wich'. de vi recenti. de vad' suis indebit' p pontag' in Wich' maubanch' captis. & ret'ntis & est inquisic'o p br'e d'ni Edward' inde aramiata & Jurata que dic' quod d'cs. Hug' colfox & Hug' filius Beat'cis burgens' de Wich'. vad' sua malo modo & indebite s'cdm quod continet^r in br'i d'ni Edward'. cepunt & retinuerunt. +eo+ q hi^s pontagiu' i' Wich' nu'q^a. dare co'suevit n' p uoluntate sua. & I'o p'd'ci. Hugo & Hug' in m'ia. & d'cs ric' recessit quiet^s.

It would seem that the mediaeval bridge was of timber —

Nantwich 196:

In 1663 the Town Bridge was first built of stone, mainly through the exertions of Roger Wilbraham, Esq., who writes:—

“ Our Town Bridge w^{ch} was of timber, being in decay, I obtained of the Justices of the Peace at the Quarter Sessions held here in July 1663, that we might have a substantial Stone Bridge. It being referred to me by the Bench to contract with some sufficient workman, I agreed with Tim Adams, Mason, to build the bridge, as it now is, for which he had £90 of the County, & the Materials of the Old Bridge.

My little boy, a Twin of 2 years old, was the first corpse that was carried over the new Bridge the begin^s of July 1664.”

Nantwich, 208:

“A Memoriall of y^e Concernes of y^e Towne since Xmas an^o 1649”

Our Towne Bridge over the River as appears by Sundry Orders of y^e Justices at Chester hath bin repaired & maintained at y^e Town charge, & upon that consideracon we were alwaies exempted from contributing to y^e charge of repairing y^e County Bridges untill ye year 1652, that the then Justices of P. repined at our not contributing to other Bridges: And thereupon against our Will ordered ours to be a County Bridge, & us to contribute with the County to all the County Bridges. After his Maj^{ties} Restauracon, when ye known Lawes came to be in force again, Some of us began to think y^e Countrey might haply put it upon us to maintain o^r owne Bridge at our charge, after 12 yeeeres contribucon to y^e County Bridges.

³⁴ *Magna Britannia: Cheshire*, p. 420.

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Whereupon to put y^e matt^r out of doubt, we caused our Bridge to be presented at the Quarter Sessions in Town an^o. 1663, to be in decay. Whereby y^e County might be put to prove, Whether it did belong to us, or them to repaire: And for lack of defense on their part, it was established a County Bridge. And wee had Ninety Pounds by Order of y^e Justices to make it a substantiall Bridge of Stone, & XX Marks [£13 6s. 8d.] afterwards to pave y^e s^d Bridge; and so many yards at either end thereof. The overseers were of my nomination to ye Justices, & y^e Work was compleated the year after by Tim Adams, Mason, who had ye Materials of ye Old Bridge by Bargaine, & y^e s^d 90£ allotted us as afores^d.