

## Visit to Shotwick Village 7th July 2025

**Object:** To record the trees, shrubs and any plants of interest in the Village.

**Present:** Jenny Sneddon, Shotwick Church Warden  
Kath Gee, Ros & David George, Frodsham and District History Society

### Introduction:

Following our initial visit to Shotwick Village with FDHS on June 18th, to look at the Church and other buildings of interest, we were requested to carry out a further visit to look at trees and other vegetation, to see if they might have any historical significance.

### Churchyard:

The notable trees here are two 'Irish' Yews, with their characteristic 'fastigate' (upright) branches. 'Common Yews' are recorded at over 2000 years old and is a spreading tree whose branches tend to the horizontal, common in churchyards in the south particularly on chalk and limestone. The 'Irish' yew is said to have originated in Co. Fermanagh in 1780, and can now be found in most churchyards and large gardens throughout GB. So our trees are unlikely to be older than 200 years!

There were also two Large-leaved Limes by the boundary wall, probably 150 years, together with a Cherry, Holly, Elderberry and Spruce, all relatively fast growing. By the Limes, there was also a purple-green leaved tree whose identity we were uncertain of. Possibly a variety of *Prunus* (plum) or *Malus* (Apple) of which there are many. It would be interesting to follow up this tree to record its flowering time in early spring and photograph the young leaves, shoots and flowers. (It is unlikely to be of much age or historical interest, although it might have been planted as an ornamental tree or in memory of some one local??)

### Hedges on Village roads leading to Shotwick Hall Farm.

There were a considerable number of elm shoots in the hedge, probably suckers from the roots of previous elm trees that had succumbed to Dutch elm disease. (Do any residents of the Village remember any?)

A tall London Plane by the hedge was showing its distinctive dangling globular nutlets, presumably planted in a neighbouring garden. This species is a hybrid between Oriental and American Planes, thought to have first occurred in 'Spain or southern France in about 1650. First planted in England in 1680 and still going strong. Abundant in town and city streets, parks and gardens' (Alan Mitchell, *Trees of Britain* etc, 1974).

In the hedge were sycamore, oak and hawthorn, all pruned back to the height of the hedge, together with some untrimmed ash trees, not yet affected by 'ash die-back'. Opposite were plants of the rampant climbing perennial Hop, just coming into flower. It is probably no coincidence that just across the road is the now redeveloped public house 'The Greyhound'. It is likely that most village ale houses brewed their own beer, using hops that they grew locally. Hop is thought to be a native plant, particularly in southern Britain, but is now naturalised throughout.

### Long hedge running NNW from Shotwick Hall Farm

This very straight track leads eventually to Puddington. In an attempt to date this hedge the species in it were noted. Dr Max Hooper\* in the 1970's hypothesis was that in every 30 metres of hedge the number of woody species increased by one per century. This measurement should be repeated a minimum of three times. (We neglected to take a tape measure with us so could not carry out the correct assessment). Even so we only noted 3 'woody' species in the 250 metres of hedge, so the likelihood is that we would have found perhaps 2 species in any one 30 meter length which could indicate an age of 200 years. (NB The likely accuracy is put at +/- 200 years!!)

This lane is shown on the Shotwick Tithe Map of about 1848, in the same location and length as now, so the track has been there for over 177 years. Earlier maps do not show field boundaries, so when the many field boundaries were established is not clear. Much of the land around Shotwick is apparently 'reclaimed' as the Dee was canalised. Enclosures started in earnest in the mid 18th century in England, but when here is not clear. Many of the fields shown on the current OS maps follow the same outlines as on the Tithe map, apart from some amalgamations, and may be said to be rectilinear, a characteristic of enclosures.

\* <https://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/hedgerows>

Ros and David George  
19.07.2025

Attached: Map showing route taken as red dashed line.