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CHESHIRE
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REVEALING CHESHIRE'S PAST

Archaeology in Cheshire

a young person's guide



People have lived in Cheshire for thousands of years, leaving behind thousands of objects.

50,000-2,350BC

Stone Age

Before metal was discovered, people made tools out of stone. They needed tools to build shelters and hunt for food.



Stone Age axe head

2,350-800BC

Bronze Age

When metal was discovered people could make better tools.



Bronze Age axe head

800BC-43AD

Iron Age

People lived in roundhouses and kept sheep, cows and pigs. They even had jewellery in the shape of animals!



Iron Age bull's head

43-410

The Romans

The Roman Army invaded Britain in 43AD and built roads and forts. This helmet must have been lost by a soldier.



Roman Helmet from Northwich

410-1066

Saxons & Vikings

After the Romans left, the Anglo-Saxons invaded, settled and lived in peace. In Cheshire they made stone crosses with beautiful carvings.



Saxon crosses, Sandbach

1066-1485

Medieval Cheshire

In 1066 the Normans invaded Britain. They built castles in Cheshire to make sure they kept control.

Hundreds of years later, the families of these Norman lords built timber houses inside moats, to show how rich they were.

1485-1603

The Tudors

Later, rich Tudors turned these plain timber houses into much grander homes with lots of decoration on the outside.



Little Moreton Hall

1837-1901

The Victorians

Silk thread from China and Italy was made into cloth in Macclesfield and Congleton. Everyone worked in the mills, even children.



Woven silk

Every object tells a story...

The Vikings raided Britain to look for treasure and new land. The Saxons built defended settlements to hold them back.



Beeston Castle

What is archaeology?

Archaeology is about finding out how people lived in the past, through the things they have left behind.

What Do Archaeologists Do?

They look for clues (evidence) that show where people lived and what their homes were like. They also want to know what food people used to eat and what things they made.

What Survives?

When people have lived in a place, they leave behind clues that show what they have been doing.

Buildings, or objects like pottery, coins and jewellery can give information about how people lived. You can tell what people ate by looking at bones, shells and seeds in rubbish

dumps. Some things last better than others. Cloth, wood and leather can rot away and metal can go rusty. Stone, pottery and brick are difficult to destroy.

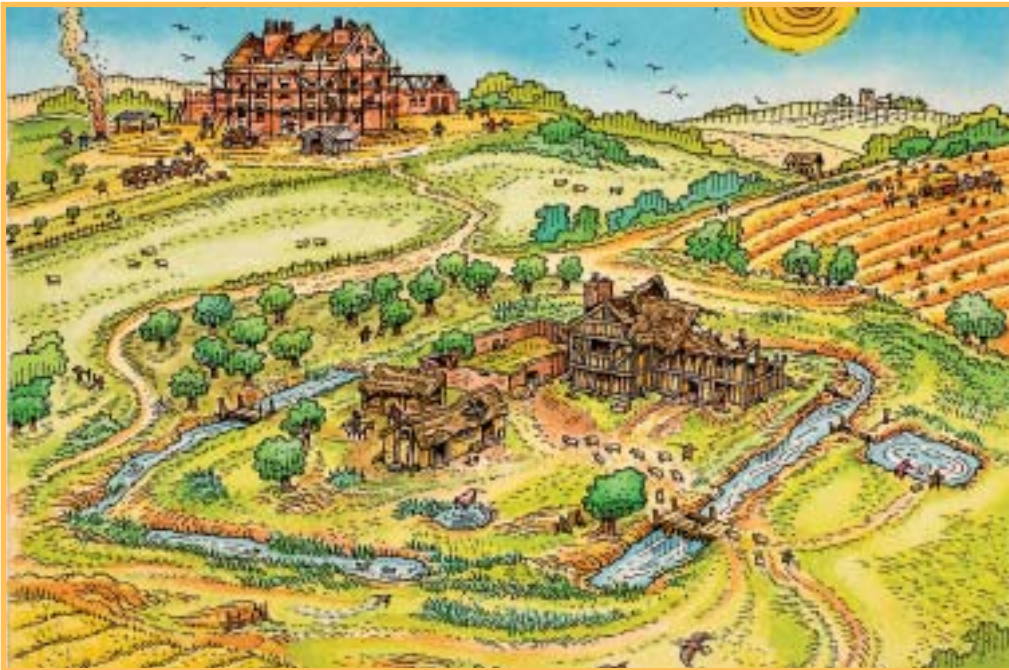
Looking for Evidence

Sometimes you can still see the places and buildings where people used to live. These buildings can be hundreds of

years old. They have been looked after and repaired.

Sometimes the stone and brick from old buildings was used for new buildings. Recycling is not a new idea!

Buildings will fall down if they are not looked after. The place where people used to live will be buried under the soil.



A new house is being built so nobody wants to live in the old one. It is falling down.



The old house has disappeared but you can still see the place where it used to be

Finding a buried site

Archaeologists find buried sites in lots of different ways.

Documents

Books, maps and old papers can sometimes show if people once lived in a place.

Field Walking

After a farmer has ploughed a field, archaeologists sometimes walk over it to look for objects that the plough has brought to the surface.

Aerial Photography

Archaeologists sometimes take photographs from a plane, of crops growing in fields. Buried sites show up as different coloured patterns in the fields.



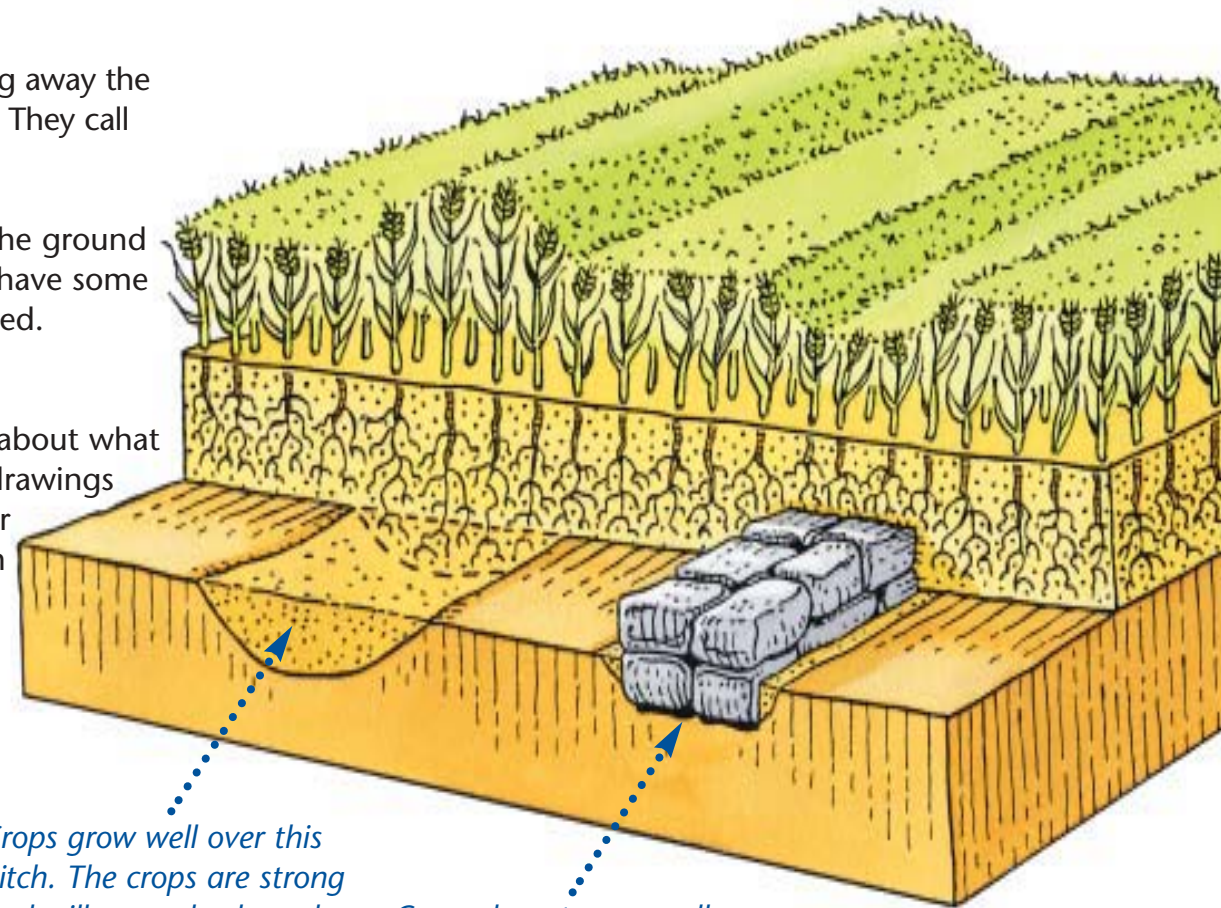
Excavation

Sometimes archaeologists dig away the soil that covers a buried site. They call this an excavation or "dig".

Archaeologists only dig in the ground if they think a place might have some important archaeology buried.

Recording the Evidence

Archaeologists make notes about what they find. They also make drawings and take photographs. After the "dig", a report is written to show what has been found.



Crops grow well over this ditch. The crops are strong and will grow slowly and stay green for longer.

Left: Aerial photograph showing cropmarks

Crops do not grow well over this buried wall. The crops are thin and will grow quickly and go yellow in hot weather.

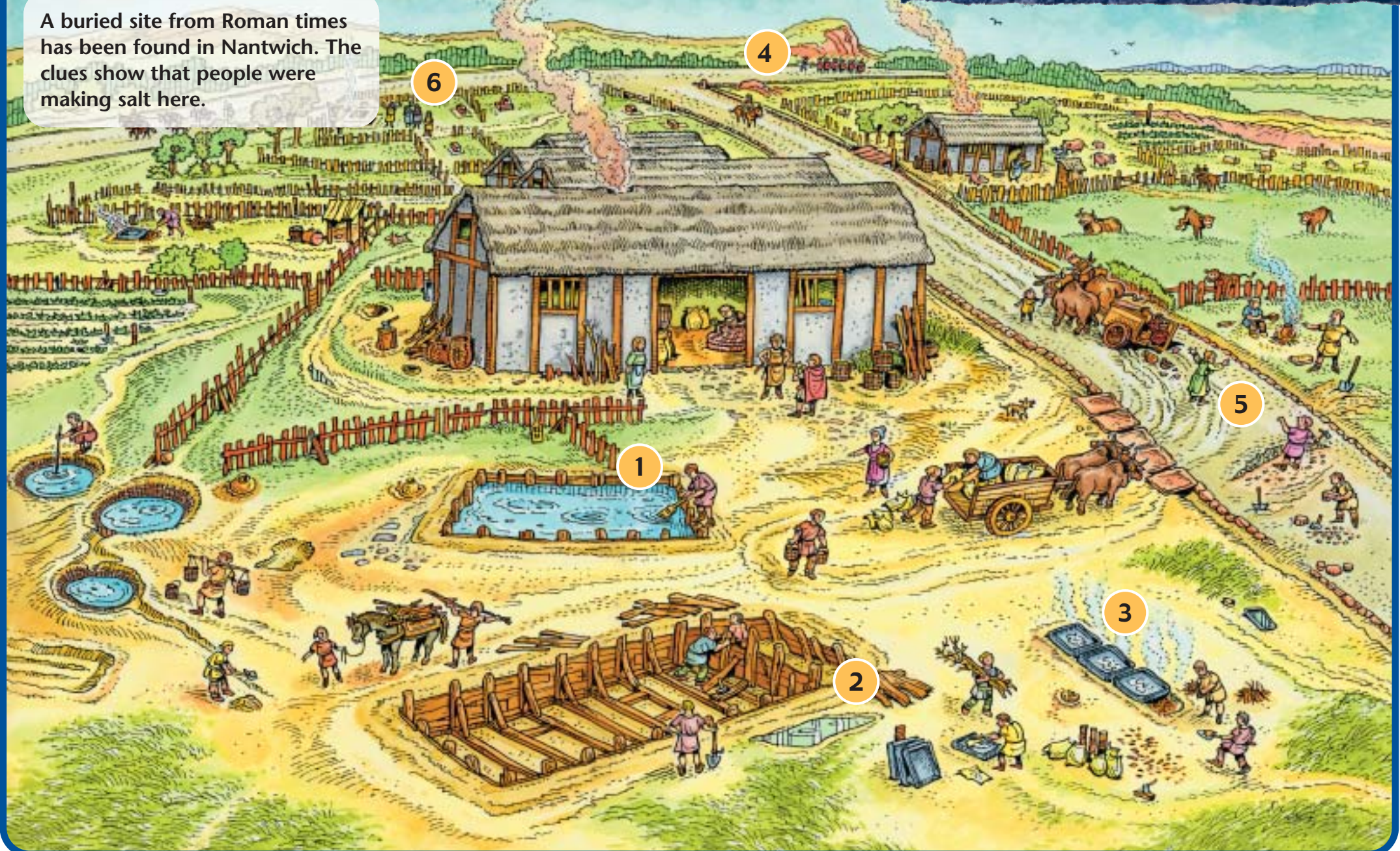
Where they lived

- Some cows? They were very different to the ones you see today. They were skinny and much smaller.
- A dog? They were used for hunting and also helped to protect the farm animals.

Living in Roman Cheshire – 2000 years ago

Where they lived

A buried site from Roman times has been found in Nantwich. The clues show that people were making salt here.



Living in Roman Cheshire – 2000 years ago

Where they lived

A buried site from Roman times has been found in Nantwich. The clues show that people were making salt here.

1. The salty water (brine) came from springs in the ground and was stored in big pits. The inside of the pit was covered in clay to stop the brine soaking away.
2. The end of this pit has collapsed. A new wall is being made out of wood.
3. The brine was boiled in lead pans to make salt. When the water turned to steam, the salt crystals were left behind.

4. The Roman army built roads so it was easier to travel. The roads were very straight. The army had forts at Northwich, Middlewich and Chester.

5. This road is being repaired. The roads were made out of rock, pebbles, sand and clay. Ditches carried away the water when it rained.

6. Roman law said people must be buried outside the towns and forts. People would visit the graves to make offerings of food and drink.

Explore the illustration on the previous page

Can you find...

- A bronze saucepan? Ones like this were used to cook with.
- A pottery bowl? This one was made in France. It would have cost a lot of money.



Found by archaeologists in Nantwich



Can you find...

- A quern stone? This stone was used to grind grain into flour

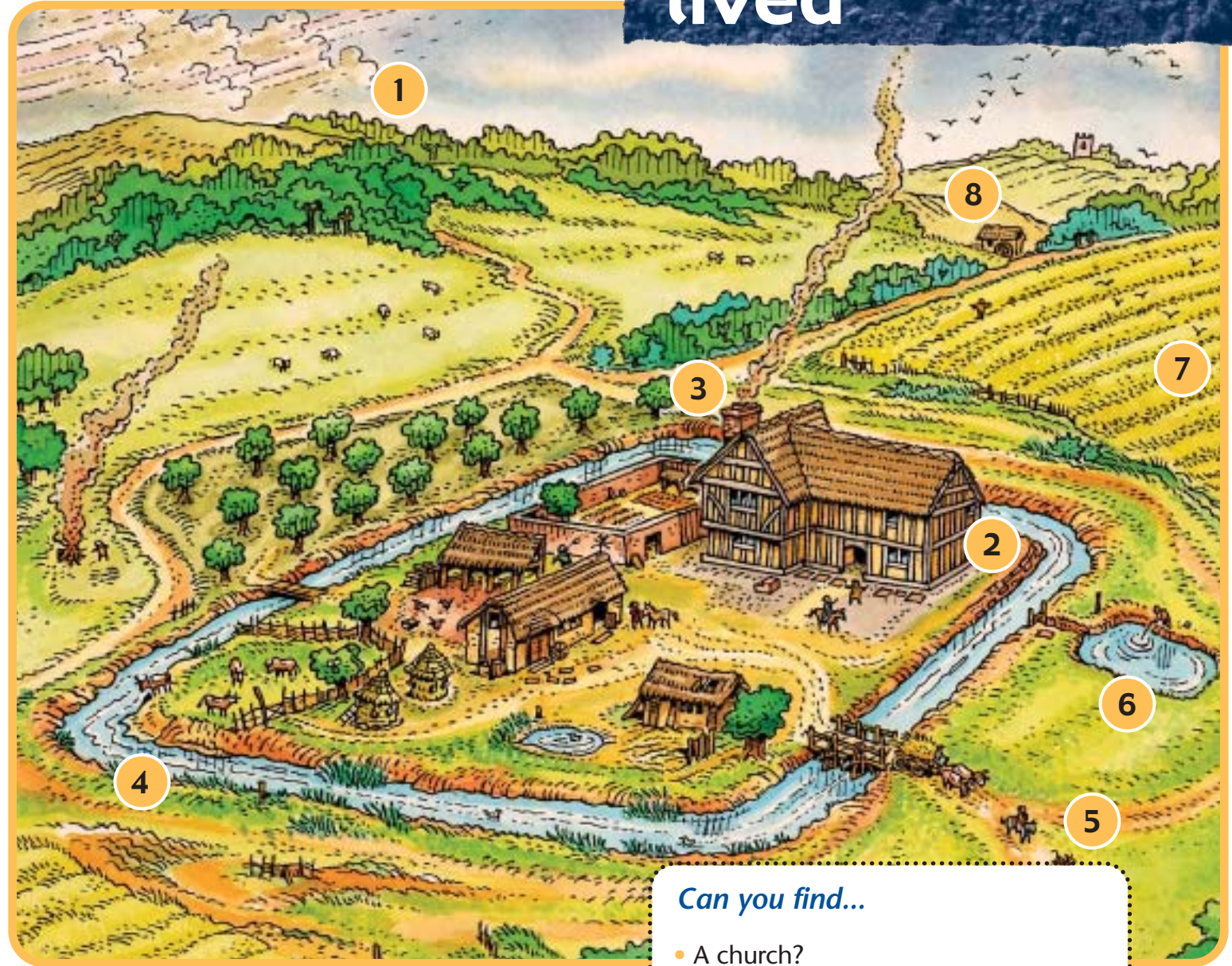


Living in Tudor Cheshire – 500 years ago

Where they lived

If you were rich in Tudor times, you would have had a house like this.

1. The house was made of timber cut from the woods.
2. The walls were made of wattle (thin branches woven around wooden stakes). They were covered in daub and plaster. Mud, straw and animal dung were used to make daub.
3. The chimney was made out of brick or stone so it didn't catch fire.
4. There is a moat around the house to protect the house and animals.
5. The roads were narrow and bumpy. Most people walked or rode horses. Travelling by cart was very uncomfortable and slow.
6. It was difficult to keep food for a long time without fridges or freezers. Fishponds were a good way of having a fresh supply of food.
7. Poor people worked in the fields. The fields were divided into narrow strips. Each strip was ploughed by someone different. The farmers had to rent the land from the rich lords.



8. Watermills were used to grind corn into flour. Everyone had to pay to have their corn ground. There were punishments for those who tried to grind it at home.

Can you find...

- A church?
- A kitchen garden where vegetables and herbs were grown?
- The barns where animals were kept?

Places to Visit

There are lots of museums, castles and old houses to visit in Cheshire. They show some of the objects that have been found by archaeologists. *Opening times vary. Please check before making a visit*

Congleton Museum

Market Square, Congleton, CW12 1ET. Tel: 01260 276360
www.congletonmuseum.co.uk
Admission Charge

The Grosvenor Museum

27 Grosvenor Street, Chester, CH1 2DD.
Tel: 01244 402008
www.grosvenormuseum.co.uk

Nantwich Museum

Pillory Street, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5BQ.
Tel: 01270 627104
www.nantwichmuseum.org.uk

Norton Priory Museum & Gardens

Tudor Road, Manor Park, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1SX.
Tel: 01928 569895
www.nortonpriory.org
Admission Charge

The Salt Museum

162 London Road, Northwich, CW9 8AB. Tel: 01606 41331
www.saltmuseum.org.uk
Admission Charge

Warrington Museum & Art Gallery

Bold Street, Warrington, WA1 1JG. Tel: 01925 442392
www.warrington.gov.uk/museum

For more museums near you visit
www.24hrmuseum.org.uk

www.cheshire.gov.uk/archaeology

