

A discussion regarding the Prehistoric Origins of Calderstones Park

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Background

In 2007-2008 the Merseyside Archaeological Society received a grant from Liverpool City Council under the Creative Communities Grants Programme to carry out a new study of the six remaining Calderstones which are now housed within a vestibule in Calderstones Park in Allerton, a suburb in south Liverpool (see Nash and Stanford, this volume, for a location plan). The key outputs from the project were a new photographic survey of the stones and a booklet entitled 'The Calderstones a prehistoric tomb in Liverpool'. Alongside this important work two sub-projects were undertaken. The first involved a search through 18th- and 19th-century documents to see if it was possible to pin-point the original site of the Calderstones. The second piece of work was a joint project between members of Merseyside Archaeological Society and students from Calderstones Community School looking at the 'prehistoric' landscape within the Park. The results of this work are summarised below.

The search for the original site of The Calderstones



Figure 1. Modern view of the stone retaining wall which was constructed in 1845 to hold six of The Calderstones with Calder Cottage in the background.

At the junction of Menlove Avenue and Calderstones Road opposite the main entrance to Calderstones Park in Allerton can be found a low circular stone wall some 10 metres in diameter (figure 1). This was the point at which the Calderstones lay for over one hundred years (figure 2). Within the wall there is a stone plaque which reads 'The Calderstones Enclosed & Planted 1845' which was placed there by Joseph Need Walker, some years after he purchased the 'Old House' and estate which became known as Calderstones in 1828 (Stewart-Brown, 1911) and which was later incorporated into the modern Calderstones Park.

The Calderstones are the remnants of a four thousand year old Neolithic burial chamber. Although



Figure 2. View of the Calderstones in 1905 with Calder Cottage in the background

only six stones survive to the present day, many more would have been needed to construct the original tomb. The original form and a description of the monument has been discussed elsewhere (Cowell (2008), Faulkner (this volume) and Nash and Stanford (this volume)). However, there is considerable speculation about the exact location of the original site of the burial tomb. Through an examination of maps and documents and using features that still survive in the landscape today a view of the present state of the evidence is summarised below.

The earliest pictorial evidence of The Calderstones is on the plan which was drawn in 1568 to illustrate a boundary dispute between the townships of Allerton and Wavertree (PRO MR1/11-001). The original plan is drawn on cloth which is faint and frayed and difficult to read. Later copies of the plan survive and a colour version in Liverpool Record Office (LPRO 354 WAV 1/8/1) shows the stones as four brown blobs within a circular green space (figure 3). Underneath them is the caption: 'The Calldway Stones called by the Quenes tenantes. And called bye y tenantes of Rich. Lathame the Dojer Stones, otherwife Roger Stones or Calldway Stones'. The plan also shows other prominent features which were present within the 16th-century landscape and are discussed below.

The claims of Allerton and Wavertree to disputed land rumbled on over the next 150 years and the Calderstones continued to appear in the documents as a key boundary marker. In 1700, a contest concerning the commons of Allerton and Much Woolton describes The Calderstones as 'three stones, set up upon a little ascent or rising ground, called the Dogger Stones or Caldway Stones; at which place the township of Little Woolton joined them, one of the said stones standing in Allerton, another in Wavertree, and the third in Little Woolton' (Lancashire Chancery Depositions, THSLC 72, 1920, 88-9).

The Yates and Perry survey of The Environs of Liverpool in 1768 is the earliest map to show the



Figure 3. 1568 boundary dispute plan between Allerton and Wavertree.

Calderstones in relation to features that still survive in the 21st-century landscape (figure 4). The location of the stones is indicated by a circle at the junction of the road that became known as Druid’s Cross Road in 1868 and Beech Lane. Beech Lane followed the course of what is today the southern carriageway of Menlove Avenue as shown in an early 20th-century photograph (figure 5). A more detailed plan of Wavertree, by Eyes in 1769, shows the name Caldway Stones in an open space at the meeting of the aforementioned roads with a third road, later known as Spencer’s Lane and roughly following the line of the present day Calderstones Road. Unfortunately, the precise location of the stones at the junction is not shown (figure 6).

The first detailed record of the location of the Calderstones (labelled Caldway Stones) is on the map of the township of Allerton drawn up by John or Charles Eyes in 1771 and subsequently updated by Edward Eyes in 1814 (Stewart-Brown, 1911). Unfortunately, an original copy of the plan cannot be found in Liverpool Record Office although at the time of writing his ‘History of the Manor and Township of Allerton’ in 1911 Stewart-Brown noted that the document was in the hands of Liverpool Public Library. Fortunately, Stewart-Brown included a photograph of the map in his book, part of which the author of this paper has reproduced (figure 7). The map clearly shows the Calderstones as three dots in the roadway just beyond a point where the eastern boundary of a field called Caldway Croft meets the road,



Figure 8. View of The Calderstones drawn by William Latham in 1825.



Figure 9. View of Childwall Hall from the south-west.



Figure 10. The Calderstones and Childwall Hall on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map 1846. Druid's Cross Road is shown as running approximately north-east from The Calderstones towards Woolton Lodge.

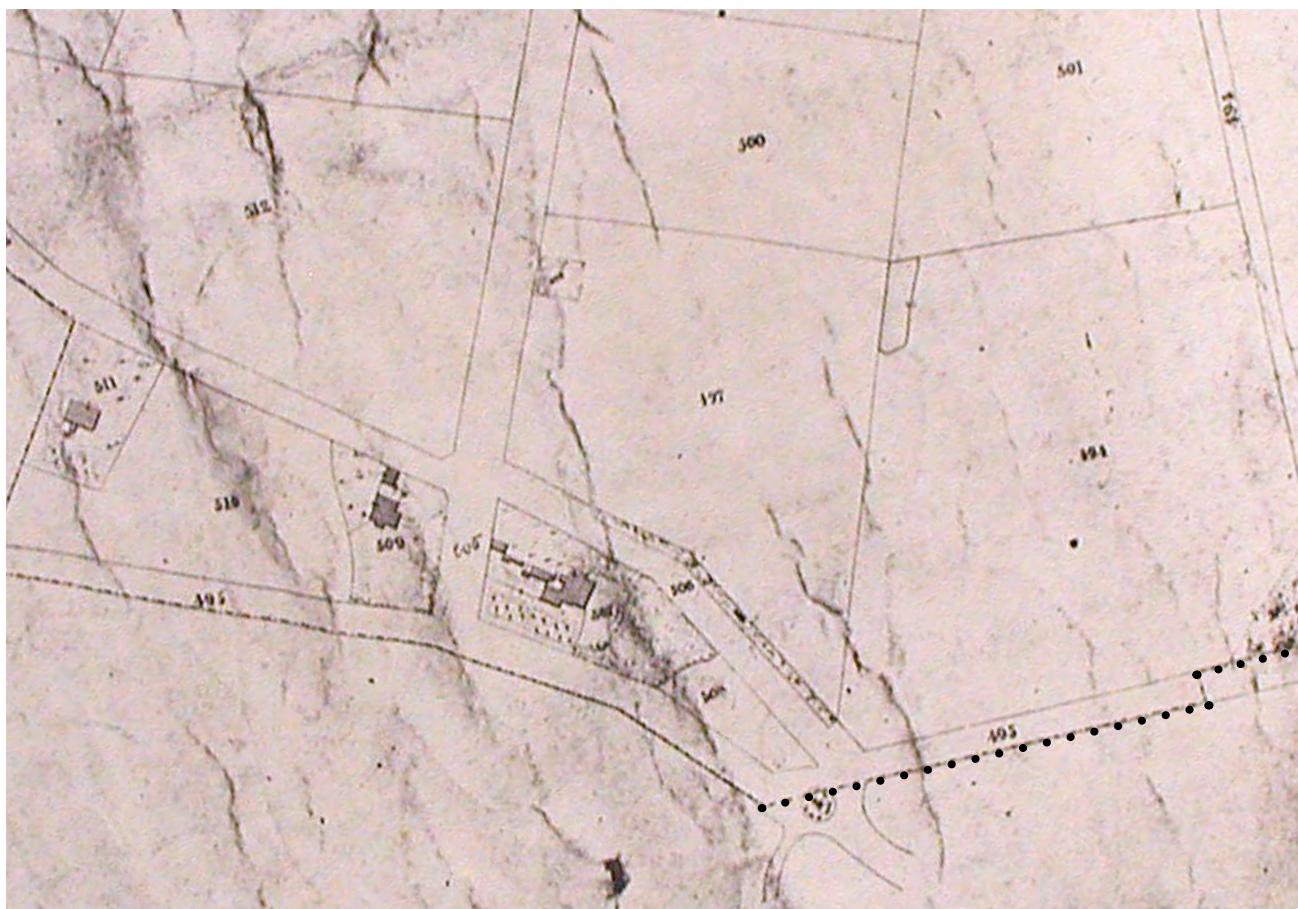


Figure 11. Wavertree Tithe Map dated 1846 with the bank of trees to the north of the Calderstones. The plan also shows the boundary (black dotted line) between Little Woolton and Wavertree running down Druid's Cross Road and just clipping the south-west segment of the Calderstones retaining circle.

mound and the stones lay scattered around in front of the lodge'. The lodge is reputedly a new building which was built around this time at the entrance to Calderstones Park. However, the lodge does not appear on the first edition of the ordnance survey map of 1846 possibly suggesting that it was not yet complete. The final witness recalls that before 1845 'there were three or four (stones) standing upright and others lying about, one or two at some distance' (Stewart-Brown, 1911). The three statements are not necessarily contradictory and it is quite feasible that some of the stones were removed from the site to a farm, perhaps never to return. Statements two and three could be considered as complementary with the third witness suggesting that three or four of the stones may not have moved from their original situation although their alignment may have been changed. See Faulkner (this volume) for further discussion regarding the orientation of the stones.

It is likely that the stones were disturbed when Spencer's Lane was widened in the early 1830s. Following this act Stewart-Brown states that the 'Allerton boundary was (then) taken as running along the wall of the present park, and not to the Calderstones' (Stewart Brown, 1911). The plan accompanying the Wavertree Survey of 1836 shows six stones in a roughly circular

arrangement in the road (figure 12). A drawing made by Aspland about 1840 shows the stones arranged in a circle in this manner (figure 13). By comparing the 1836 plan with earlier and later maps it is possible to determine where the road was altered. Prior to 1836 the line of the south side of the road at the junction where Spencer's Lane and Beech Lane meet is an uninterrupted curve. By 1836 the western edge of the road had been moved to the south to accommodate the new carriageway to Need Walker's property. It is suggested that the place where the road was re-aligned can still be seen by following the line of the Park wall today (figure 14).

Although the stones had been disturbed and their setting changed their undoubted historical importance as a place which marked the boundary between three townships remained. The present day boundary between Wavertree and Little Woolton is shown on the 1900 twenty five inch ordnance survey map and later plans as running down the middle of Druid's Cross Road (figure 15). This was not always the case. A plan of Little Woolton Common dated 1813, which does not mark the site of the Calderstones, shows the boundary running along the hedge on the south east side at the foot of the road (figure 16). Bennison's plan of 1835 (figure 17) and the Wavertree Tithe Map of 1846 (figure 11) show the

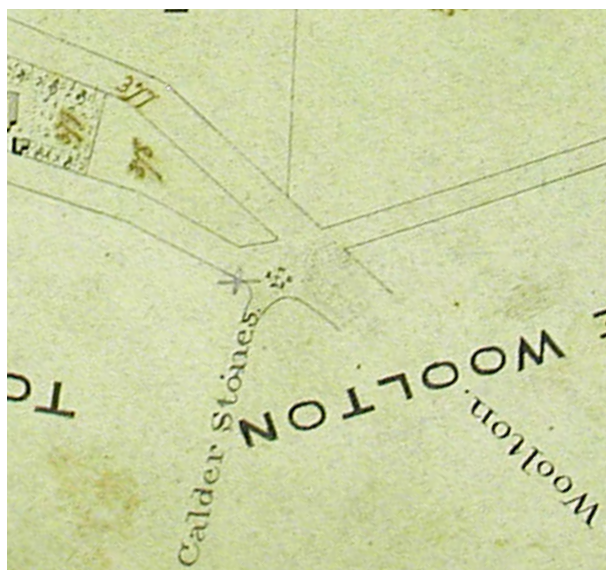


Figure 12. A plan which accompanied a survey of Wavertree in 1836.



Figure 13. View looking east along Beech Lane in 1840.

same alignment. This can be confirmed on the ground today by standing in front of the ancient boundary marker between Wavertree and Little Woolton which can be seen in the wall of the present day Calderstones Park (figure 18) and looking to the north-east (figure 19). The line of site from this point is along the south-east wall and not up the centre of Druid's Cross Road.

In 1828 Need Walker bought the house that became known as Calderstones. By 1835 a carriageway road had been installed which appears to follow the same line as that leading from Calderstones Road to the former stable buildings of Calderstones today. By comparing the 1835 and 1846 maps (figures 17 and 10) it can also be seen that the south end of the mansion house was undergoing alteration, the surrounding parkland was under development and the fields which existed fifty years before were in the process of being swept away. However, in the mid 1830s this process was still in transition and the Bennison map not only shows the line of the Wavertree – Little Woolton boundary where it meets the wall to the Calderstones estate and the position of the new carriage road but also the old Caldwell Croft boundary that lies between the two.



Figure 14. View looking west along Calderstones Park wall showing a curve where it joins the park entrance.

Assuming that the position of the wall, the boundary stone and the alignment of carriageway road have not changed since 1835, and there is no evidence to suggest that they have, it is possible to locate where the eastern edge of Caldwell Croft meets the modern day park wall to within about 1 or 2 metres. The distance between the boundary marker and the western edge of the park gate is 15 metres. Bennison's map shows that the Caldwell Croft boundary falls nearer to the park gate than the boundary marker. The evidence suggests that due to the widening of the road in the 1830s the alignment of the present day Calderstones Road was moved to the south to accommodate the carriageway, which makes some sense given the need to improve access to the estate in order to carry materials in and out during renovation. It is, therefore, suggested that the original site of the Calderstones is largely in the road between the west side of the park gate and the 1845 retaining circle. Tantalisingly, part of the site may also fall within the south west segment of the stone circle.

From the current state of the evidence the most likely scenario is that the stones were disturbed sometime between 1825 and 1836. Some of them may have been removed to another location whereas others were left on or near the original site. By 1836 six of the stones had been erected in a circle adjacent to or on their original site. Some of the larger stones may have been 'stood up'. In 1845 Need Walker built the circular retaining wall and possibly re-arranged the stones, probably to tidy up the main entrance to his estate which was nearing completion.

The Prehistoric Landscape of Calderstones Park

In addition to the Calderstones, the 1568 plan (PRO MR 1/11-001) also shows two other interesting landmark features called Pikeloo Hill, also referred to as Pykeloo, Pykelaw, Pikelow and Pykloohill (HER ref. Number: 4087-018), and the Rodgerstone (HER ref. Number: 4087-019) (figure 20). It is quite

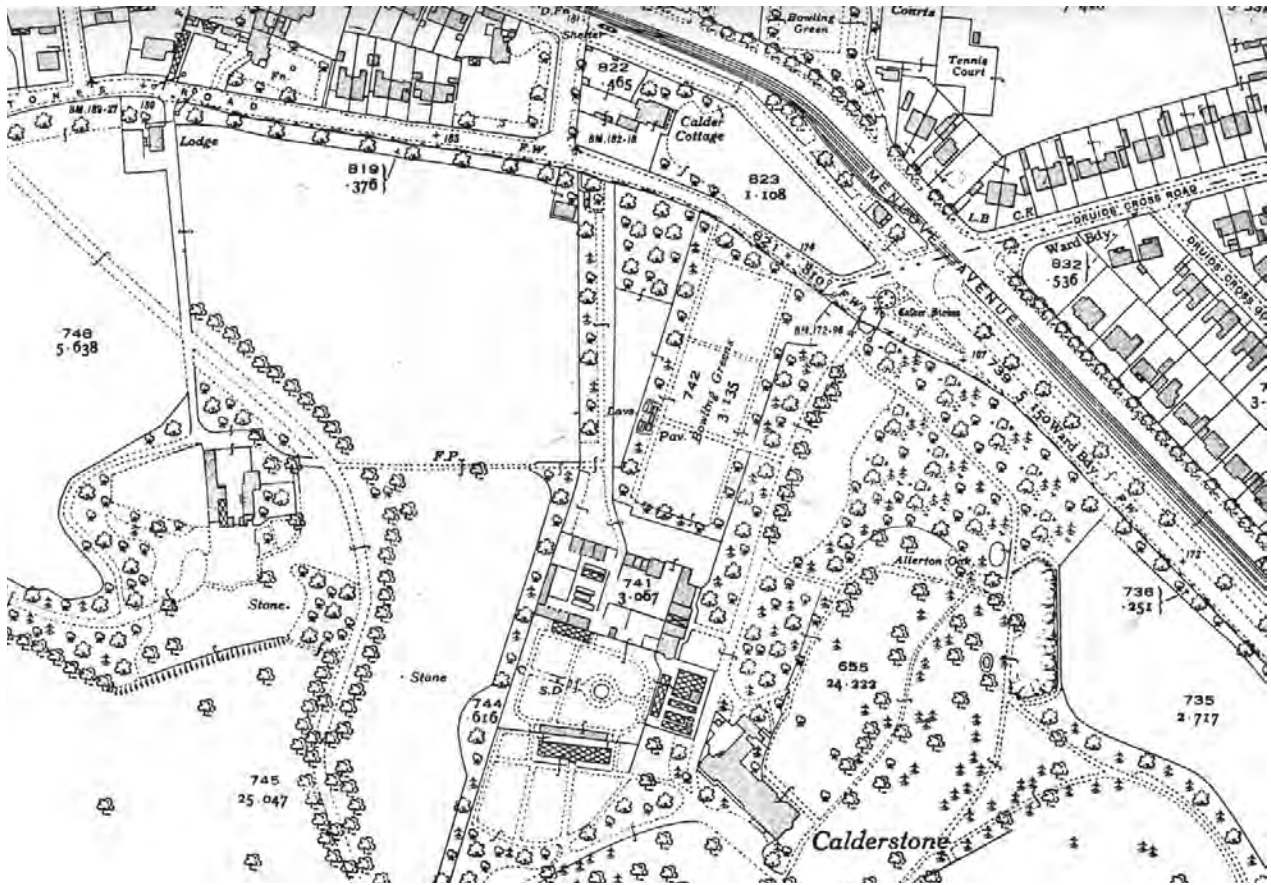


Figure 15. The 1900 25" ordnance survey map showing the Wavertree - Little Woolton boundary running down the centre of Druid's Cross Road.

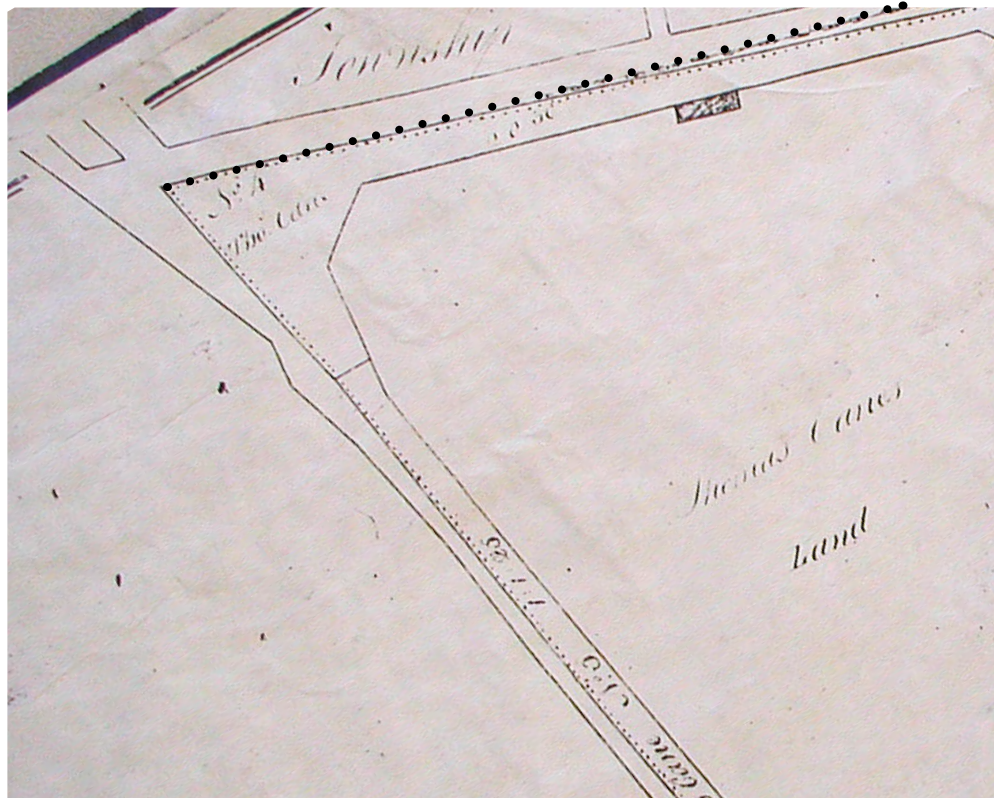


Figure 16. Plan of Little Woolton Common dated 1813 showing the boundary (black dotted line) between Little Woolton and Wavertree cutting the south-eastern corner of Druid's Cross Road where it meets Beech Lane.



Figure 17. Bennison's plan of 1835 showing the boundary (black dotted line) between Little Woolton and Wavertree meeting the wall of what is now Calderstones Park, the lane that became the carriageway road to The Calderstones estate and the triangular shaped field called Caldway Croft.



Figure 18. Little Woolton-Wavertree boundary marker in the wall of Calderstones Park.

possible that these two sites may also have prehistoric origins and together with the Calderstones comprise a part of what was a prehistoric burial landscape, in the area of the present day Calderstones Park, over four thousand years ago. In the autumn of 2007 members of Merseyside Archaeological Society undertook a project with students from Calderstones Community School to look at a 19th-century copy of the 1568 plan together with later documents and to try to use them to locate the 'lost' sites of Pikeloo Hill and The Rodgerstone.

The original 1568 plan shows Pikeloo Hill as a circular mound flanked by two mere (boundary) stones although the stones are not shown on the 19th-century copy of the plan reproduced at figure 3. The probability



Figure 19. View from in front of the boundary stone looking north-east up Druid's Cross Road.

is that the mound is the remains of a neolithic chambered tomb or perhaps a bronze age barrow and it is likely that the two outlying stones were once contained within its structure. Early medieval placename derivation reveals that the first element 'Pike' means hill or summit with the second element 'Hlaw' meaning burial mound. The 'ley' has also a early medieval derivation, meaning wood clearing (Nash pers. comm.).

A short distance away a free standing stone named the Rodgerstone is shown. The Wavertree claim mentions the Calderstones: '.....standing 45 roods from the 'Rodger Stone' and of the witnesses called to make depositions all referred to three mere stones called 'caldwaye stones', 'the great stone called Rodger Stone' and the 'Roger stones otherwise called Dawger stones or Caldway stones....' Based on the description, the Rodger Stone must have been a large menhir which probably stood west of the Calderstones monument as an outlier, acting a similar role as the Robin Hood's Stone (See Nash, this volume). All visible traces of this group of monuments have long since disappeared apart from the six surviving Calderstones which are now re-housed in the vestibule in Calderstones Park.

The purpose of the 1568 plan was to illustrate the dispute between the adjacent townships of Allerton and Wavertree with regard to a common boundary. Both townships set out their claim and the disputed territory was roughly defined and documented using features in the 16th-century landscape, the 'step' between each feature being noted in terms of distance and orientation. The details of each claim are shown in the 'scrolls' at the foot of the document. Distances are measured using the 'roode' which is defined on the plan as being 8 yards. Measurements of orientation are given using true compass bearings at 11.25 degree intervals. For example, in the Wavertree claim below, the stone standing on the south-west of Pikeloo Hill is described as being at a distance of 104 roodes east by north from the corner of Henry Mossocke's hedge, that is 78.75 degrees from

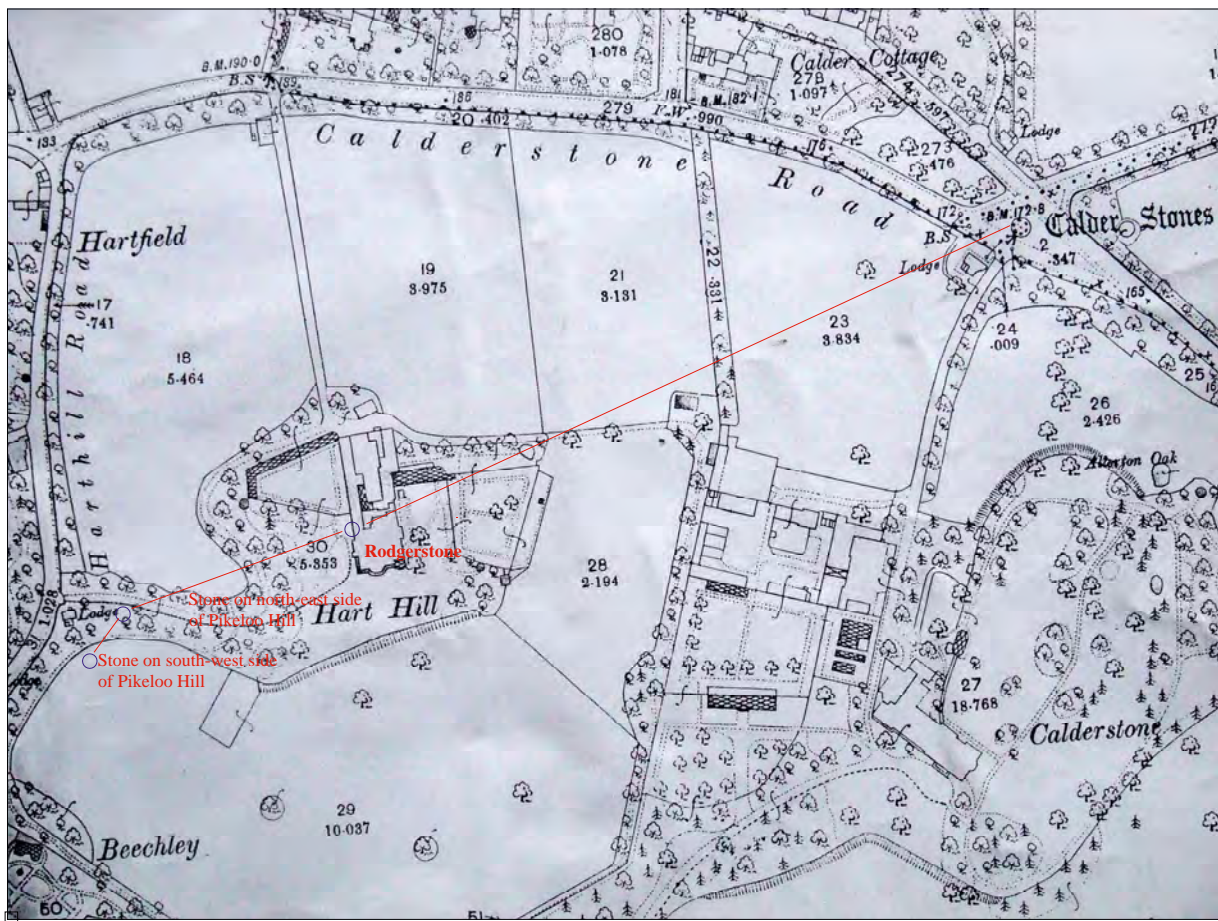


Figure 20. Information from the 1568 plan transposed to the 1893 1:2500 series Ordnance Survey map showing the suggested position of the Rodgerstone and Pikeloo Hill in relation to the Calderstones.

true north at a distance of 832 yards. Using information contained in the Wavertree claim reproduced below it was possible to plot the relative positions of 16th-century features within the landscape on the 1st edition of the 1893 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 series map:

'In this table is mentioned how the mears and boundaries alledged for our soueraigne lady the Quene doo lye and bounde, and what distaunce they bee from one another. Fyrst begininge at a Yatte in the end of Bowells Lane and so following Northe to ye corner of the hedge of the severall landes of Henry Mossocke beinge distant from ye sayde Yatte Twenty Seven Roodes. From the sayde corner goinge Est by Northe unto a Stone standinge on the Southwest side Pykeloohill Ffyve score fowre Roodes. From the sayde stone Northe to another stone standinge St on the Northe side of the sayde Pykeloohill Fowre Roodes From ye stone Est by Northe to another stone called Rodger stone Sixtene Roodes. From that stone Est Nortewst to three stones called Calldway stones Ffortye five Roodes & a halfe'.

In order to minimise the number of 'steps' required to orientate between the 3 sites it was decided that it would be best to use the suggested original site of The Calderstones as the starting point. Working from the Calderstones,

using the information given in the Wavertree claim, it was possible to determine the approximate location of Pikeloo Hill and the Rodgerstone within the grounds of the former Harthill Estate, adjacent to Harthill Lodge (figure 20). In December 2007 a proton-magnetometer survey was carried out in an area to the south of the lodge situated on Harthill Road. Unfortunately, the survey did not reveal any features that could be interpreted as having archaeological potential.

In order to assess the accuracy of the information detailed on the 1568 plan it is first necessary to understand the limitations of the document if it is to be used as a tool for landscape reconstruction. Because the plan showed features which could be seen clearly in the landscape when the document was drawn up there was no reason for it to be 100% accurate. It is likely in a document such as this, the nearest true bearing would have been used when orientating between different features in the landscape. Consequently, it is assumed that each measurement of orientation, in units of 11.25 degrees, could be in error by up to 5.625 degrees either side of the true bearing. Slight changes in magnetic declination over the centuries could compound this error. Furthermore, measurements of distance on the plan will probably not have allowed for rises and falls in ground level. Given these factors,

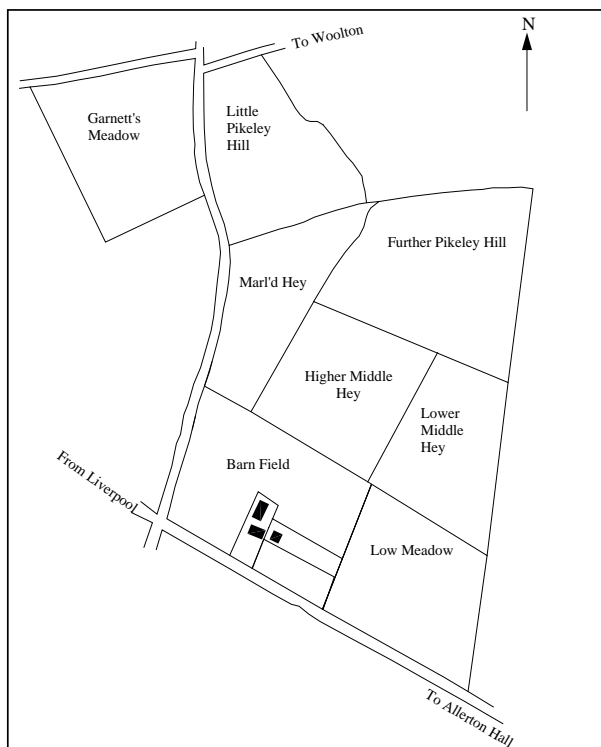


Figure 21. Early 19th century plan (not to scale) showing the fields using the name 'Pikeley' which later became 'Mercer's Land' as shown in Figure 7.

the more 'steps' there are between features, the greater the cumulative error becomes. In addition, there is no scale on the plan and distances appear to be deceptive. For example, the 'parishe church of Childwall' shown to the north of The Calderstones appears a lot closer than it actually is.

However, in 1771 the map of Allerton township was made by John or Charles Eyes (Figure 7). The original site of the Calderstones is clearly shown. The land which became the Harthill Estate is described as Mercers Land, the property of Jonathen Mercer. A copy of an early 19th-century plan made by Richard Occleshaw survives in a notebook (Stewart-Brown, undated) and shows the individual named fields within Mercers Land, which include Further Pikeley Hill and Little Pikeley Hill lying 'between the road to Allerton Hall' (Allerton Road) and the 'road by Pikeley Hill' (Harthill Road) (Figure 21). Although the site of the mound known as Pikeloo Hill and the Rodgerstone have not yet been discovered the name of the former still survives in the documentary record in the area not too distant from the lodge on Harthill Road.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks are due to the staff at Liverpool Record Office for their assistance and for permission to reproduce archive material used in figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 17. The maps at figures 10, 15 and 20 are sourced from plans drawn produced by the Ordnance Survey over 50 years ago which are now out of copyright. The author would also like to thank Barry Faulkner, Dee Toth-Jones, Paul Eatock and students from Calderstones Community School for help with the landscape survey.

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