

Plan to name north Flintshire 'Pennant Country' to boost tourism

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PART of Flintshire could be named 'Pennant Country' in a bid to rival popular tourist destinations including Brontë Country.

The idea is the brainchild of the Thomas Pennant Society, who want the 18th-century naturalist, historian and travel writer Thomas Pennant to receive greater recognition in his native county.

In the West Yorkshire Pennines there is Brontë Country where the Brontë sisters lived and wrote their famous novels, Hardy Country in Dorset is home to author Thomas Hardy's birthplace and his later home and if the society gets its wish, Holywell and the north Flintshire area could soon be known as 'Pennant Country'.

Paul Brighton, secretary of the Thomas Pennant Society said: "We strongly feel that tourism would be enhanced if Holywell and the north Flintshire area was designated 'Pennant Country' or 'Thomas Pennant Country'.

"We believe that if the county council adopts our proposal and adds 'Pennant Country' to its tourism and historical portfolio and signage it will enhance the attraction to tourists and scholars alike to a county which is full of interest, rich in history with striking scenery."

Thomas Pennant was born on June 14, 1726, the son of David and Arabella Pennant. He lived all his life at Downing Hall, Whitford. The house was burned down in 1922.

He died in December 1798, aged 72, and was buried near the altar in Whitford Church.

Pennant wrote at least 18 books according to the society, who have described him as 'The Literary Squire of Downing'.

The Thomas Pennant Society has written to town and community councils including Holywell, Bagillt and Whitford to seek their support for the plan. A letter has also been sent to Colin Everett, chief executive of Flintshire County Council, outlining the proposal.

At a meeting of Holywell Town Council on Tuesday evening members expressed their reservations about the idea. Cllr Peter York said: "Thomas Pennant was not universally seen as a great hero, particularly by working people. We have to remember what Thomas Pennant represents. We don't really need 'Thomas Pennant Country' with the connotations attached to that."

Cllr Mary Auty added: "Holywell is about St Winefride and the town's role in the industrial revolution. 'Thomas Pennant Country' might detract from our true history."

A spokesman for Flintshire County Council said: "Flintshire County Council has received a letter from Cymdeithas Thomas Pennant (Thomas Pennant Society) and is considering the proposal suggested."